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Seeking Common Ground: First-Year U.S. University Students'
Experiences with Intercultural Interaction and Friendship
in an On-Campus Residential Community

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Michelle Elise Gaston

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Seeking Common Ground: First-Year U.S. University Students'
Experiences with Intercultural Interaction and Friendship
in an On-Campus Residential Community

by

Michelle Elise Gaston

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Val D. Rust, Chair

The number of international students on U.S. campuses has increased more than 84 percent over the past decade (IIE, 2016). Although it is well-known that interaction and friendship with local students has long been determined to be a key element in international student adjustment to a foreign university, little is known about how these relationships develop, and even less from the domestic student point of view. This dissertation uses a case study approach to add to the small, but growing, body of literature. Grounded in a conceptual framework consisting of Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, the more recent updates by Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, and Christ (2011), and principles of social identity theory (Brown, 2000; Tajfel, 1981) the study sought to learn more about how the relationships between domestic

students and international students developed over the course of a year. Ten first-year domestic students living with international students in the residential halls at UCLA twice over the course of the year to gain insight into their intercultural relationships on campus, particularly the relationship(s) with their international roommate(s). The findings indicate that domestic students perceive and experience intercultural interaction and friendship as a complex process with multiple layers of facilitating and inhibiting factors, and while the experience of living with an international student did offer them a direct opportunity for intercultural interaction and friendship, sharing a living space alone was not enough to guarantee meaningful interaction or the development of any type of relationship. Multiple layers of facilitators and inhibitors played a significant role in the development of deeper relationships. Perceived cultural similarity seemed to be the most salient of these facilitators, and perceived cultural distance the most potent of the inhibitors. Despite the lack of relationship development in some of the pairs, this study has also shown that despite participants demonstrating signs of intercultural learning and growth over the course of a year, many of them are still unsure how to apply the abstract concepts of diversity and interculturalism that they have learned in concrete ways. The findings presented here suggest that in order to better facilitate intercultural interaction and friendship among a diverse student body, institutions may need to be more deliberate in their programming to offer students not only ways to increase their intercultural knowledge, but also opportunities to practice and develop their intercultural skills.

The dissertation of Michelle Elise Gaston is approved

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2017

DEDICATION

For all the inspirational teachers throughout my life who instilled in me a deep love of education.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

International Student

International student will be used to refer to students who are temporarily in the United States for the purposes of study, whether in a degree program, a professional certification program, or a non-degree language program. The literature also refers to students temporarily in a host country for the purposes of study as *student sojourners*, *foreign students*, and *overseas students*. These alternate terms may appear in this paper when citing literature.

Domestic Student

Domestic student will be used to refer to students who were raised and educated in the United States. While these students may not be citizens or native speakers of the dominant language (English) of the host university, they do have distinct advantages over international students in that they are more familiar with the academic and social customs. Other literature has used other terms such as *host-national student* and *home student* interchangeably. These alternate terms may appear in this paper when citing literature.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A compelling argument can be advanced which recognizes the *potential* of student diversity as an educational resource, but one which simultaneously acknowledges the vital need for meaningful contact in order for such benefits to be achieved. That is, the mere presence of students from diverse backgrounds, be that based on nationality, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic class or some other variable, is insufficient to secure the desired potential outcomes. Instead, positive intercultural contact must take place.

—Dunne (2013), p. 569

Statement of the Problem

In the current age of globalization, an increasing number of students are choosing to leave their home countries to study abroad, whether for the experience alone or for the better educational opportunity (Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008). The past decade has seen a more than 84 percent increase in the number of international students in U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs), from 586,000 in 2003 to approximately 1.04 million in 2016 (Institute of International Education, 2016b). While all first-year students likely face adjustment issues when arriving at college, international students have an additional layer of cross-cultural adjustment issues to contend with, as well. Interaction and friendship with local students has long been determined to be a key element in international student adjustment to a foreign university (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002), as interaction with host-nationals offers international students the opportunity to learn about norms of social interactions, linguistic irregularities such as idiomatic language, and customary behaviors in academic settings (Li & Gasser, 2005). However, these intercultural friendships can prove elusive for international students. In studies as far back as 1929 addressing

international student adjustment issues, a Chinese student stated, “I have been attempting to form some friendship with Americans. But to the present, I have not found any that can be entitled as ‘true’” (Cheo, 1929, p. 101). These sentiments have been echoed in recent research (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007) and by my own undergraduate international students here at UCLA in conversations we have had. I find it staggering that in more than 85 years, we have not found a viable solution for addressing basic issues of intercultural interaction and friendship on campus.

Although UCLA has no published policy of internationalization, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on diversity in recent years, as evidenced by the recent campus-wide research into the racial climate, and the establishment of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and the hiring of its first Vice-Chancellor. International students are included under this umbrella, despite frequently being excluded from explicit mention in discussions of diversity. The same cross-cultural understanding and competencies expressed as being necessary for successful interethnic and interracial dialogue can, and should, be applied to relationships between international and domestic students. With one of the highest international student populations in not just California, but in the United States, UCLA cannot afford to ignore the importance of intercultural relationships on campus in general, and in particular those between domestic and international students.

Importance of Intercultural Friendships

Interaction and friendship with local students has long been determined to be a key element in international student adjustment to a foreign university (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Li & Gasser, 2005; Summers & Volet, 2008), as interaction with host-nationals offers international students the opportunity to learn

about norms of social interactions, linguistic irregularities such as idiomatic language, and customary behaviors in academic settings (Li & Gasser, 2005). Kim (2001) argues that cross-cultural adaptation of sojourners into the host culture can only happen if the sojourner remains in contact with the host community. She sees adaptation as a communicative process: “This interactive, communication-based conception... conceptualizes cross-cultural adaptation not as an independent or dependent variable, but as the *totality* of an individual’s personal and social experiences vis-à-vis the host environment in and through a complex system of communicative interfaces” (p. 32). Thus, it is imperative for international students’ successful integration and engagement both academically and socially to interact with domestic students on a regular basis.

In addition to host national student friendships, international students also tend to seek out co-national friendships and friendships with other international students (Kudo & Simkin, 2003). These findings support Bochner’s (1977) functional model of friendship, which divides international students’ social networks into three categories: co-nationals (students from the same home country), host nationals (students from the host country), and multinationals (international students of an origin other than their own country). He argued that each of these groups serves a specific purpose in international students’ social lives: co-national friendships allow international students to “rehearse” and “express” their own cultural values and practices; multinational friends and acquaintances provide recreational companionship for “non-cultural” or “non-task-based” activities; while host nationals provide academic and professional support, by means of language practice and adjusting to the host academic environment. Co-national networks were the strongest relationships for both international students and host-national students (Bochner, Hutnik, & Furnham, 1985; Bochner et al., 1977; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985).

Despite the dearth of research showing that interaction with host nationals is important for international students' successful transition into studying in another culture, the contact levels between international and domestic students remains low (Brown, 2009b; Leask, 2009; Nesdale & Todd, 2000; Ward, Masgoret, & Gezentsvey, 2009). While there is an abundance of literature on international students' dissatisfaction with their relationships with host national students (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Poyrazli et al., 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), to date there has been very little research on host-national student attitudes towards international students and their perceptions of the barriers to and benefits of forming intercultural friendships during their university experience.

To fully understand the nature of intercultural friendships and why they do and do not form, it is imperative to examine attitudes and experiences of both international and domestic students in regards to how they relate to each other. While we know much about the desire of international students to acquire domestic student friendships, we know very little about how domestic (or host national) students feel about these relationships. In the past fifteen years, Gareis (2000, 2012), Spencer-Rodgers (2001), Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002), Kudo and Simkin (2003), Lee (2006, 2008), Halualani (2008, 2010), and Dunne (2008, 2009, 2013) have led the field in developing the body of research on domestic students and their interactions with international students, but it remains relatively sparse in comparison to what we know of international students.

My dissertation research aims to add to this body of literature by examining first-year domestic students' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship on campus in general and, in particular, with their international student roommates.

Significance of the Study

This study will add to the small, but significant body of literature on the role that domestic students play in international student adjustment. I aim to provide some insight into how and why contact does or does not result in friendship formation for intercultural roommates. Gaining an understanding of why intercultural friendships either succeed or fail, and the role that perceptions of attitudes and actions of all parties involved play in those relationships, can help individuals—whether student, teacher, advisor, or administrator—deal with potential conflicts of this nature. In addition, the findings of this research may be able to help shift institutional policy away from deficit models of programming only for international students to additive models for all students. And finally, because international students face many of the same adjustment issues as underrepresented populations on university campuses, the findings could potentially provide new insight into the overall diversity picture for universities.

Researcher Positionality

In quantitative research, the role of the researcher is to eliminate as much of the subjectivity from the interpretation of the data as possible by accounting for as much variability as possible. With qualitative methods, the role of the researcher is often intertwined with that of the participants. Interpretation of the data is a key aspect of this type of research. As such, it is necessary to reflect on the biases, beliefs, and assumptions that all participants and executers of research hold. However, as Corbin and Strauss (2008) state:

This is not necessarily a negative happening; after all, persons are the products of their cultures, the times they live in, their genders, experiences, and training. The important thing is to recognize when either our own or the respondents' biases, assumptions, or beliefs are intruding into the analysis. Recognizing this intrusion is often difficult because meanings are often taken for granted. (p. 80)

At the age of 30, after being fired from a job for the very first time, I took a month off and traveled overseas (another first for me). When I returned from that trip, I immediately enrolled in a master's degree program for teaching English as a second language, studied in Spain for a year during my coursework, and upon completion, I became U.S. State Department English Language Fellow teaching in universities in Kosovo. The next time I worked or lived in the United States was nearly six years later.

My last job overseas was in China working for a large American-based multinational company whose employees worked directly with English speaking customers all over the world. The team I managed was responsible for delivering training in basic English skills, as well as delivering cross-cultural communications training, to help the Chinese team work better with their customers and fellow employees in English-speaking countries. The training, based in Geert Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions, was eye-opening for both the trainees, who were all Chinese nationals, and for the trainers, who were all expats living abroad. Through the trainings, we all learned how our own belief systems color our judgments of the world around us, even beliefs that we didn't know we had. We learned how to try to see the situation from a different perspective and to think about what beliefs might be behind the behaviors we witnessed and the things we experienced. We learned to reach across cultural gaps to find a place of mutual understanding where meaningful interaction could take place.

When the training ended and we had to evaluate the performance of the trainees on their interactions with customers, I was struck by the changes. I saw these trainees begin to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of the situation rather than react based on assumptions. I also noticed that the trainers on my team related differently to the Chinese managers that they worked with. While this training was a positive experience overall for the Chinese side of the

business, I began to question the one-sidedness of the training. The company was spending a fortune on training its Chinese employees to behave more “American” or “Australian,” but absolutely no action was being taken on the American or Australian side of the business to improve the cross-cultural communication skills of their employees, who regularly worked with the Chinese group. The general message was one of assimilation—“you must become like us”—rather than one of mutual consideration and adaptation. I suggested to the CEO of the Chinese business that we offer the training to the Australian team and while he said he found the idea intriguing, it never materialized.

When I began my doctoral research on international students, I quickly learned that the assimilationist approach is not singular to the corporate world. As international students arrive on U.S. campuses, they will find services to help them speak better English, learn about American customs and food, behave appropriately in the American classroom, and countless other programs to help them “fit in” (a.k.a., become more like an American). However, programs on U.S. campuses very rarely address the other side of the cross-cultural communication equation and provide training or support for intercultural communication skills to domestic students. The appearance, then, is that the institution assumes that international students are somehow deficient, as only they are offered “help.” The goal of my research is to re-center the conversation about international student adjustment around improving intercultural communications and interaction skills as a whole across campus, rather than trying to “fix” international students, who are not broken.

Chapter Summary and Structure of the Dissertation

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the problem at hand: the lack of interaction between international and domestic students on university campuses, despite knowing that both parties benefit from and desire to have more contact. It also gives an explanation of my own personal experiences with intercultural interaction and intercultural communications training and how these have influenced my interest in this area of research. Chapter 2 will give a more in depth look at the literature surrounding intercultural interaction and friendship on university campuses. Chapter 3 will explain the methods used in this study and the process for making these decisions. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 lay out the findings and discuss their significance in terms of the existing literature. Chapter 7 will give a summary of these findings along with the implications and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

The first chapter provided background for why I was personally interested in studying the intercultural interaction between international and domestic students on the U.S. university campus and gave a brief introduction to some of the gaps in the research in this area. This chapter will provide context for the development of this study by first giving an overview of internationalization of higher education, specifically in the United States and California. From there, I will operationalize what is meant by *intercultural* for this study, followed by a discussion of the relevant literature on intercultural contact and communication in higher education. Finally, I will discuss the conceptual framework for this study and give the research questions.

The Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States

In the current age of globalization, information, goods and services, and even people flow more freely across national boundaries (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2004). In addition, the influence of economic globalization and neoliberal ideologies can be seen in the commodification of knowledge and the manner in which higher education institutions (HEIs) are driven by market ideals—students are seen as consumers, knowledge as a tradable good, and tenure and teachers’ unions as a threat to competition and quality education (Torres & Van Heertum, 2009). As a result of this commodification, and to compete for the increasingly mobile international student body, English-speaking universities have begun to establish satellite campuses in foreign countries, and universities in non-English speaking countries have begun to establish English-language graduate and undergraduate programs. This mobility across borders raises questions of identity, culture, dominance, and marginalization in the educational domain.

Should international students be expected to assimilate to the dominant culture? What is the institution's responsibility to these students? Institutions must find the balance between meeting the expectations of the 'local' while preparing all for the needs of the 'global.' To address this, many universities have adopted policies of internationalization to some degree "to enhance research and knowledge capacity and to increase cultural understanding" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 292).

Internationalization has been defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2015). In higher education practice, this takes the form of increasing the international presence on campus, in both the faculty and the student body; promoting foreign language acquisition and study abroad; and internationalizing the curriculum; the goal of which, purportedly is to promote global citizenship and to provide students with the skills necessary to succeed in a multinational workplace (Parsons, 2009).

One of the primary differences between *globalization* and *internationalization* is the tendency of *globalization* rhetoric to revolve around a flattening of individual cultures into a unified 'global culture;' whereas, the language of *internationalization* focuses more on the inclusivity of working across differences and not privileging one cultural practice over another. Contextualizing the debate in academic settings, Turner and Robson (2008) argue that the discourse surrounding internationalization is inherently dialogic, providing "a practical space in which to identify, discuss and bridge differences in the context of celebrating diversity rather than seeking to eradicate it" (p. 11). This framework of inclusivity, rather than exclusivity, if adopted, has the potential to shape the way HEIs approach not only inclusion of international students, but diversity in general.

Internationalizing the Student Body

The United States remains the top study abroad destination for the more than 4.5 million globally mobile students, with 1.04 million international students in various degree- and non-degree seeking higher education programs in the 2015-2016 academic year, more than twice the number of students hosted by the U.K., the next closest receiving country. Since 2000, the number of international students in the United States has increased by 84.7%, with much of this growth coming from Chinese, Indian, and Saudi Arabian students. Although the United States holds the top spot for the number of international students, only 5.2% of total enrolled students are international students, compared to up to 20% in destinations such as the U.K. or Australia, signifying that there is still room for growth in the international student market (Institute of International Education, 2016c).

California has more international students than any other state, and UCLA has the second largest international student population in California with more than 11,513 international students from 85 countries all over the world (Institute of International Education, 2016a).¹ In the 2016-2017 school year, 739 international freshmen enrolled at UCLA, making it the second largest class of incoming first-year international students in UCLA's history (UCLA Undergraduate Admissions, 2016). These enrollment numbers cap a five-year trend of increasing international student presence on the UCLA campus. Beginning in 2012, large numbers of international students were intentionally recruited from heavy sending markets like China. At the same time, contrary to popular belief, the number of domestic students admitted was not decreased. Instead, the size of the freshman class was expanded overall (UCLA Undergraduate Admissions, 2016).

¹ This number includes both graduate and undergraduate students.

The contributions international students make to the U.S. university are immeasurable. International students contribute to the better sharing of knowledge, experiences, ideas, and perspectives on a broad scale through interactions in the classroom, in dormitories, and other locations on and off-campus (Andrade, 2006). These interactions benefit not only the international students, but also the domestic students by improving opportunities for cross-cultural understanding, and thus preparing all students to be better global citizens, and by proxy, better global employees. Demonstrated competence in international and intercultural settings has become a highly desirable trait and marketable skill in an increasingly globalized job marketplace (Turner & Robson, 2008).

Financially, international students contribute to resolving some universities' budget issues as international students frequently pay higher tuition than their domestic counterparts. For state schools, like UCLA, this is due to international students paying "out-of-state" resident fees on top of resident tuition. Out-of-state domestic students are generally reclassified as in-state students by their second year. However, because of international students' visa status, they can never achieve in-state resident status. Thus, they will pay higher tuition for the entire four years of their undergraduate education. They are also frequently self-funded or funded by outside sources, meaning the university does not provide any sort of stipend or financial support. In fact, only 20 percent of international students are primarily funded by their respective universities (Institute of International Education, 2016b). The additional fees overseas students pay directly to the institutions help to ease the university's burden of decreasing federal funding and rising costs. The economic benefits are not limited to the institutions alone. In the 2013-2014 school year, international students added approximately \$24 billion dollars to the U.S. economy overall

(NAFSA, 2014). However, this is not to say that international students are viewed solely as cash-cows meant to resolve an institution's budget shortfalls.

International students also add a much needed contrastive perspective to bodies of research that have been dominated by Western views due to the dominance of English in top tier academic journals in many fields (see Flowerdew, 2008 for a complete review of issues facing scholars who use English as an Additional Language). Research universities, in particular, actively recruit the best and the brightest from all markets to ensure that their labs and institutes remain on the cutting edge of innovation.

Although many universities across the United States are actively recruiting international students to improve the social, academic, and financial capabilities of their institutions, it should be noted that many of these universities are not prepared for the reality of a heavy international student presence on campus. International students need more than just a visa in order to be successful in a foreign university. Moving to another country to take on rigorous academic work in a foreign language can be incredibly stressful and difficult, and most international students face some adjustment difficulty at one point or another along their academic journey.

International Student Adjustment Issues

Most of the literature on international student adjustment deals with the identification of adjustment obstacles that one must face upon arrival in the host culture. These international student adjustment issues can be grouped into three overall categories: academic, social, and personal/psychological (Altbach, Kelly, & Lulat, 1985). It should be noted, however, that none of these issues are entirely independent of one another, as difficulties in one area can affect the others. For instance, if an international student is struggling with language, he or she might begin to fall behind academically, which may lead to depression or feelings of personal inadequacy,

which in turn may lead to withdrawal from social activities. Social isolation may in turn affect academic performance.

Academic adjustment. In the classroom, international students may find themselves in an exceptionally unfamiliar environment, with no foundation for understanding the “rules of engagement” in the classroom, how to create academic support networks with their peers, or even how the grading system works. Wan, Chapman and Biggs’s (1992) study showed that international students found the academic pressures of workload, fast paced student-instructor interaction, and lack of academic support structures extremely stressful. Studies have found that many international students have difficulties with academic English skills, such as listening to lectures, oral communication, note-taking, and managing the reading load (Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999; Senyshyn, Warford, & Zhan, 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). While grade point averages do not necessarily indicate that international students are struggling academically—international students are frequently doing as well, if not better than their domestic counterparts (Andrade, 2009b)—there are other indicators of adjustment difficulties. As noted above, international students commonly identify English language ability as a primary stressor in the academic arena. The lower a student’s English proficiency, the more difficulties they will face in adjusting to the university (Senyshyn et al., 2000); and conversely, international students with higher levels of English proficiency are able to cope with stress of adjustment more easily. However, Yu and Shen (2012) found that proficiency alone is not enough—*confidence* in one’s language ability is a key predictor of academic, social, and personal adjustment. This is not surprising, considering the criticality of language use to each of these subsets. The U.S. classroom generally requires active, vocal participation. Interaction and communication with

faculty and peers depends on one's willingness to speak up in academic settings. Making friends outside one's own cultural group also requires confidence in communications.

Social and personal adjustment. Another key factor in international student adjustment is social integration and involvement with the university (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Astin (1999) defines involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). In addition to participation in one's studies, this also means spending time on campus, having membership and participating in student organizations, and developing relationships with peers and faculty members (p. 518). This includes building a support network of friends from co-national groups, other international students, and host-nationals (Bochner et al., 1977). Co-national friendships are important to international students, one, because they are easy, and two, because they reinforce cultural identity and values. However, other studies have consistently shown that at universities with large groups of conational students, over-reliance on these friendships can create stronger feelings of “culture shock” (Major, 2005; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Although it has been well-documented that international students find it difficult to make friends with host-nationals (Andrade, 2006, 2009a), this type of interaction is one of the key factors to international student adjustment (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). It is intercultural interactions such as these that lead to further cross-cultural adjustment for international students as questions are asked, stereotypes are contested, and new cultural meaning is derived.

The Messiness of the Terms *Culture* and *Intercultural Interaction*

Before embarking on a study of the intercultural interactions of domestic students with international student roommates at UCLA, I wish to acknowledge the messy nature of the term *culture*, and, thereby, the messiness of defining *intercultural*. In more than a century of trying, scholars have yet to agree on a singular definition for *culture*. In fact, more than 60 years ago, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified 164 definitions of the concept of culture (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012).

An early, but classic, definition of culture comes from (Tylor, 1874), who stated:

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (p. 1)

It is interesting to note that Tylor's definition equates *culture* to *civilization*, evidence of the heavily Western-centric thinking of the time that valued Western cultures over others. For example, Lewis Henry Morgan's theory of social evolution, explicated fully in his 1877 book *Ancient Society*, which argued that human societies developed along a continuum from "savage" to "barbaric" and finally to "civilized," with civilized meaning modern, industrialized, and Westernized high-society. Notes of this Victorian-era valorized viewpoint echo in Tylor's all-encompassing definition; nevertheless, Tylor's definition was also the first to assert that culture was something learned, rather than inherited. Critics have also argued that Tylor's definition assumes homogeneity amongst members of a given society, remains hierarchical (some societies are more 'cultured' than others) (Stocking, 1966), and does not offer any means to account for those members of society outside the mainstream (Dunne, 2009). Despite its shortcomings, Tylor's definition of culture was the standard in anthropology for many years.

In the early 1900's, Franz Boas began to question the evolutionary nature of culture, moving towards cultural determinism. Stocking (1966) wrote about Boas: "...[he] maintained that the difference between our own and primitive mentality was the 'product of the diversity of the cultures that furnish the material with which the mind operates' rather than a reflection of 'fundamental difference in mental organization' (1904:2)" (p. 877). In other words, the structure of the mind is not what determines behavioral development, rather the social context does.

As semiotic epistemologies took root in anthropology in the 1960s, definitions of culture became centered around interpretation and meaning-making. For example, Geertz (1973) defined culture as:

an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. (p. 89)

In this viewpoint, culture is a process of interpreting one's surroundings and interactions through a specific lens. This interpretive lens is learned through socialization as a member of the group, but can be altered via interactions with others. One can "develop their knowledge" and acquire new ways of interpreting the world around them.

More recent definitions of culture have broadened to account for *intragroup* differences rather than just *intergroup* differences, leaving room for the role of the individual within groups.

In 2008, Spencer-Oatey gave this definition:

Culture is a fuzzy set of assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior. (p. 8)

Spencer-Oatey's notion of culture furthers other interpretivist definitions of culture by recognizing the agency of the individual within the group, asserting that although an individual may be "influenced" by the belief systems of the group to which they belong, ultimately, the

individual must interpret and make meaning of their interactions themselves. All the defining characteristics of culture are “fuzzy,” as they are seen through various interpretive lenses.

Individual identities and experiences indeed color the way that one sees the world. As Tanaka (2007) notes:

The term ‘culture’ must now operate as a broader rubric that accounts for identities formed around such disparate categories (themselves far from monolithic) as race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, immigrant status, age, religion, and physical capability. These meanings change over time, and in most cases and individual will have more than one basis for culture. (p. 37)

Thus, according to these definitions by Spencer-Otey and Tanaka, culture is fluid, not fixed, and an individual may belong to multiple cultural groups at any given time.

A key takeaway from this examination of cultural definitions is that culture is both an individual and a collective concept. Although individuals interpret and make meanings of interactions for themselves, these interpretations are influenced by the shared “assumptions and values, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioral conventions” of group membership, thus an individual does not constitute a culture in itself. But, because of interpretive frameworks learned from the group and through individual experience, any interaction could be considered intercultural. As Kim and Gudykunst (2013) state:

All encounters are considered intercultural to an extent, and the degree of interculturalness of a given encounter would depend on the degree of heterogeneity with the life experience of the communicators. (p. 173)

In other words, whether someone would consider an interaction intercultural or not would depend on how different the interactants perceive themselves and their experiences to be from each other. This concept, also known as *cultural distance*, has been defined by Ward (2001) as “the perceived similarity/dissimilarity between two cultures,” and has been shown to play a significant role in different types of intercultural interactions, including those between

international and domestic student interactions on university campuses (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004).²

Much of the previous literature on intercultural communication and contact, based in social and organizational psychology, has used national borders to place clear boundaries around cultural groups for the purposes of study (e.g., Gannon, 2004; Hofstede, 1984). However, it is also necessary to recognize the *intracultural* differences that exist between members within a national group and that there may be more similarity between members of different national groups based on their individual life experiences. For this reason, both Halualani (2008) and Dunne (2009) argued that basing a study of intercultural interaction on a pre-determined notion of what *intercultural* means would inherently be flawed, as it would not take into account these individual experiences and interpretive lenses.

It follows, then, that imposing a definition of *intercultural interaction* that only included interactions with international students on the participants in this study would exclude their own background and experiences, the lens through which they interpret the world around them and make meaning of their encounters with those that they perceive to be culturally different from themselves. Thus, following the methodology used in Halualani (2008) and Dunne (2009), participants in this study were asked how they defined *intercultural interaction* and how they experienced these interactions.

² A deeper discussion of the role of cultural distance in international student and domestic student interaction can be found in the section titled "[Factors that Inhibit Intercultural Interaction and Friendship](#)" in this Chapter.

Intercultural Interaction and Friendship Development

Friendships are unique interpersonal relationships characterized by their voluntary and personalistic nature (Wright, 1984). Unlike other types of personal relationships (e.g., kinship, collegial), friendships are entered into by choice and develop over time. Intracultural friendships are facilitated by shared understandings of cultural context clues, values, and belief systems. However, intercultural friendships can be more complicated because of cultural differences, particularly in the expectations of friendship (Lee, 2008). In addition, the opportunities for contact and interaction may be limited. Multiple studies have concluded that the presence of a diverse student body on a campus in and of itself does not facilitate intercultural interaction (e.g., Campbell, 2012; Dunne, 2008, 2013; Fischer, 2008; Harrison & Peacock, 2009; Nesdale & Todd, 2000; Peacock & Harrison, 2008), and while the majority of the literature to date has focused on the factors that prohibit intercultural interaction and friendship, several factors have been identified that facilitate it. The following will address some of the factors that have been identified in the literature as facilitators and inhibitors of intercultural interaction and friendship formation on university campuses.

Factors that Facilitate Intercultural Interaction and Friendship

Several key factors have been shown to positively influence intercultural friendship development. These include *perceived similarity* in terms of interests, values, and beliefs (Gareis, 2000; Sias & Cahill, 1998) and *perceived cultural similarity* (Groepel-Klein, Germelmann, & Glaum, 2010; Gudykunst, 1985a; Sias et al., 2008); *opportunities for interaction*, including physical proximity (Gareis, 2000; Hays, 1985; Kudo & Simkin, 2003; Ujitani, 2006), shared activities (Duck, Hay, Hobfoll, Ickes, & Montgomery, 1988), and shared social networks (Kudo

& Simkin, 2003); and *prior intercultural experience* (Sias et al., 2008; Summers & Volet, 2008). Each of these will be addressed in more detail below.

Perceived similarity and perceived cultural similarity. Perceived similarity of personality and attitudes is an important factor in adolescent friendship development (Linden-Andersen, Markiewicz, & Doyle, 2008). In intercultural relationship development it has been shown to reduce uncertainty between groups (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). In their study of students at border universities, Groeppel-Klein et al. (2010) found that perceived cultural similarity rather than nationality played a bigger role in intercultural interaction. These findings are not surprising, considering the role of cultural distance in inhibiting intercultural interaction and friendship (Ward, 2001; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

Opportunities for interaction. Research from social psychology has long shown that frequent interaction between groups leads to reduction in intergroup bias (see the discussion of the contact hypothesis in this chapter; see also Pettigrew et al., 2011; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Gareis's (2000) case study of five German students in the United States noted "proximity" as a key factor in facilitating these types of interactions. This was supported by Kudo and Simkin (2003), who argued that propinquity in terms of sharing physical spaces—such as shared dorm rooms and classrooms—were key to providing opportunities for international and domestic students to interact and for those relationships to develop. However, noting that physical proximity was not enough to guarantee interaction, they additionally identified shared social networks as another important facilitator of intercultural interaction. The importance of

mutual friends as a resource for intercultural interaction was also noted in studies by Ujitani (2006) and Dunne (2008).

Prior intercultural experience. Prior meaningful intercultural experience has been shown to be closely related to a positive orientation toward intercultural contact in general (Sias et al., 2008). For example, Summers and Volet's (2008) study on mixed-culture group work found that students, both domestic and international, that were multilingual and had deeper intercultural experience prior to the project had more favorable attitudes towards working with a culturally mixed group of students for the semester project. In addition, Sias et al. (2008) found that prior intercultural experience in terms of travel and/or living abroad or having other intercultural friends made domestic students more willing and eager to develop friendships with those who were culturally different from themselves. They noted these students' prior experiences had taught them the value of intercultural interaction and friendship.

Factors that Inhibit Intercultural Interaction and Friendship

In addition to factors that facilitate intercultural interaction and friendship, research has also identified numerous factors that inhibit intercultural interaction and friendship. Among these are *perceived cultural distance* (Brown, 2009b; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Ward, 2001); *homophily and co-national support* (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Major, 2005; Peacock & Harrison, 2008); *perceived discrimination and negative attitudes* (Karuppan & Barari, 2010; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Wadsworth et al., 2008); *differences in the meaning of friendship* (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Lee, 2006); *lack of opportunity to interact* (Dunne, 2008; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001); and *anxiety and negative emotions* (Spencer-Rodgers

& McGovern, 2002; Trail, Shelton, & West, 2009). Each of these will be examined in more detail below.

Perceived cultural distance. As noted previously, Ward (2001) defined *cultural distance* as “the perceived similarity/dissimilarity between two cultures.” One of the more common frameworks used by researchers of intercultural communication, *cultural dimensions*, is useful for discussing perceived cultural distance. A *dimension*, according to Hofstede (2005), is “an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (p. 23), and is part of the “software of the mind” that dictates how we react to and interact with others. Thus, two cultures that fall on opposite ends of the spectrum of one or more dimensions could be considered to have greater cultural distance than two that score similarly on these dimensions. In terms of intercultural interactions on campus, then, the more differences domestic students see between themselves and their interactant, the bigger the barrier to overcome in terms of interaction.

Hofstede’s (2005) framework consists of five dimensions: *power distance (hierarchical vs egalitarianism)*, *individualism vs collectivism*, *masculinity vs femininity*, *uncertainty avoidance (high-comfort vs low-comfort)*, and *time orientation (short-term vs long term)*.³ The two dimensions that are likely to be of particular consequence in this study are *individualism vs collectivism* and *time orientation*, as these are the two that most affect interpersonal relationships and friendship development the most. In terms of interpersonal relationships, individualist cultures tend to put the good of the individual ahead of the good of the whole whereas collectivist cultures tend to put the good of the whole ahead of the individual; in individualist

³ See [Appendix A](#) for full definitions and examples of national cultures that fall on either end of these spectra.

societies, the smallest unit of analysis is the individual and in collectivist, it is the family. This orientation affects how members of these societies relate to and move through the world around them, including their communication style, orientation towards privacy and personal space, and how they relate to in-group and out-group members (Hofstede, 2001). In terms of friendship development, cultures that are more long-term oriented (like East Asian cultures) tend to develop life-long friendships built around mutual obligation and deep emotional attachment built over time. In contrast, short-term oriented societies (like the United States) tend to make friends quickly, but also dissolve them more readily. Members of individualistic and short-term oriented societies tend to move around more frequently, and while interpersonal relationships are deeply valued, they may serve a particular purpose and dissipate along with the functional need for the friendship (Hofstede, 2001).

Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) found that the degree of interaction between host-nationals and international students decreased as the degree of cross-cultural societal differences between the two countries increased. These findings are consistent with other research that has shown that students from Asian cultures may have a more difficult time adjusting socially than international students from other Western countries (Major, 2005; Sam, 2001; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Brown (2009b) found that white European students were less likely to be confronted with overt instances of discrimination, xenophobia, and Islamophobia than Asian and Muslim students faced at a UK university. Since East Asian cultures tend to fall towards the collectivist and long-term orientation ends of these spectra while American culture tends to fall towards the individualist and short-term, cultural distance along these two dimensions becomes particularly relevant to this study, as all but one of the participants in this study has at least one East Asian roommate.

Homophily and co-national support. Homophily, in the simplest of terms, mimics the old adage “birds of a feather flock together”—it’s the idea that like attracts like, and friendship groups tend to contain members that are similar to one another. As defined by McPherson et al. (2001), “Homophily is the principle that a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people” (p. 416). In accordance with this principle, Dunne (2013) argues that international students and domestic students are less likely to belong to the same friendship groups in the first place. Additionally, the more co-national students that are on a given campus, the lower the degree of interaction between domestic and international students (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004).

Both international students and domestic students sometimes find it “easier” establish relationships with their co-nationals. Dunne (2009) found that domestic students reported intercultural contact to be “less rewarding..., yet more demanding” (p. 12) than co-national contact, primarily because of perceived language and cultural barriers and the amount of effort put into the interaction. Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) found that “identity continuity” was an important part of “why some of them [international students] preferred to stick close to their ‘ingroup members’ for emotional support while others tried to branch out to create intercultural friendship with US American classmates” (p. 562). Others have suggested that this search for affinity in friendships stems from a fear of rejection (see McAdams, Healy, & Krause, 1994). For adolescents, in particular, the need to “fit in” with their peers is a constant driver for seeking out the familiar (Linden-Andersen et al., 2008).

Perceived discrimination/negative attitudes. Domestic student preconceptions towards international students have been identified as one of the key barriers to interactions between international and domestic student friendships (Lee, Abd-Ella, & Burks, 1981; Summers & Volet, 2008). International students have reported overt discrimination (Hanassab, 2006), and “host indifference and antipathy towards their presence” (Brown, 2009b, p. 440). Despite the extreme variation in nationality, languages spoken, physical appearance, and a host of other characteristics within the group “international students,” it has been found that American students still tend to lump international students into one over-arching category as “foreign” and to hold stereotypical beliefs about them (Spencer-Rodgers, 2001). They may also see international students as “socially awkward, naïve, and clueless, rather than as individuals who are coping with extraordinary adjustment demands and pressures” (Spencer-Rodgers, 2001, p. 651). Some domestic students’ impatience for listening to accents different from their own likely also plays a role in forming stereotypes and discriminatory perceptions (Abel, 2002). Summers and Volet (2008) also found that domestic students’ negative perceptions and attitudes towards working with international students kept the international students from joining mixed groups for project work, while another study found that breakdowns in communication brought about “feelings of exclusion” for the international students (Joyce & Hopkins, 2014).

However, stereotyping and discrimination is not totally one sided. Perceptions on both sides that the other is unwilling or incapable of understanding or overcoming the cultural differences in order to form closer ties inhibits interactions that go beyond polite formalities and superficial academic interaction (Lee et al., 1981; Volet & Ang, 2012). In addition, international students come to the United States with preconceived notions of what Americans are like, and

what it means to be a “real” American. With these perceptions come instances of racial prejudice, misunderstanding of social cues, and the potential of reinforcement of stereotypes.

Differences in the meaning of friendship. In collectivist and long-term oriented cultures, relationships are built around communities and are long-lasting, sometimes even life-long. There is a greater sense of responsibility to one another than in more individualistic and short-term oriented cultures, whose relationships may develop and dissolve quickly (Hofstede, 2005). Gareis (2000) found that some of the dissatisfaction that international students had with their friendships with Americans was due to very different expectations on the role of a “friend.” Americans tend to use the word *friend* even for very casual relationships, and this can be confusing and misleading to many international students. Conversely, the intensity of some international students’ efforts at establishing relationships may be off-putting to domestic students. Because of the potentially conflicting notions of what it means to be a “friend,” asking participants to define their expectations from friendships will be an important part of this study.

Lack of opportunity for interaction. Studies have shown that there are few spaces where international and domestic students cross paths socially on campus—most interactions happen in a classroom setting. Nathan (2005) found that because of the structure of U.S. university education, repeated interaction and friendship formation is difficult unless someone shares nearly identical interests. For example, students are randomly assigned to dorm rooms, if they didn’t self-select a roommate. If this roommate is of a different major, then the two students will not be taking the same classes, and quite possibly, would be isolated on different areas of campus. Add to this the myriad of intermural activities, such as sports, social clubs, fraternities

and sororities, and on- or off-campus jobs, and repeated interaction or shared interests becomes even more unlikely (Summers & Volet, 2008). In addition, many host-national students, especially those attending an institution that is close to home, may have come to the university with friendship groups already established (Nathan, 2005; Volet & Ang, 2012).

Anxiety and negative emotions. Domestic students may feel anxious about intercultural contact based on assumptions and preconceptions regarding contact. They may feel that international students are a threat to their academic success (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). Other studies show that domestic students fear being rejected by, offending, or stereotyping international students (Harrison & Peacock, 2009; Peacock & Harrison, 2008; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001). These anxieties may prevent domestic students from initiating contact with international students, or worse, if the experience of initial contact is perceived as negative, may cause domestic students to avoid further interaction altogether.

Conceptual Framework

Two key theoretical approaches have influenced the development of this study: the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1979, originally published in 1954) and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981). Allport's contact hypothesis has long been used as a framework for examining the reduction in intergroup prejudice (Bennett, 2012; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2011). The basic premise of the contact hypothesis states that repeated quality contact between groups fosters understanding and reduced prejudice between the two. Originally constructed to examine bias reduction between Black/White racial groups, it has since been applied to other intercultural contexts. As Fischer

(2008) states, “The reduction of prejudice through intergroup contact is...conceptualized as the mediating factor between social structural factors and the formation of intergroup friendships” (p. 634). Social identity theory and its derivatives have helped to explain how individuals categorize themselves and others into “ingroups” and “outgroups” (Kim, 2009). It also provides a useful framework for examining outgroup bias and discrimination and their effects on intercultural friendship formation. The following discussion will give an introduction to each of these theories and explain how they are particularly salient for this dissertation research.

Allport’s Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

One of the most significant theories used in studying the reduction of intergroup bias is Allport’s intergroup contact hypothesis, which was originally developed in the 50s to study race relations (Dovidio et al., 2003). Allport (1954) posited that repeated intergroup contact could reduce prejudice between groups. In other words, with increased contact comes increased understanding, and the more one group knows about the other, the more favorably they see each other (Triandis & Tranfimow, 2001). However, he also noted that all contact was not equal, and that four conditions were necessary for the positive effect of prejudice reduction to occur: (1) the two groups must have equal status in the context; (2) they must have common goals to work towards; (3) there must be cooperation between the groups; and (4) there must be perceived support of authority, whether that be legal, institutional, or social (Pettigrew, 1998). Studies of desegregated merchant marine ships and police forces in the early 1950s supported Allport’s hypothesis and its conditions, finding that interdependence grew between black and white officers, and found that those who had more contact, had more positive views of the other race (for a complete review of the early literature, see Pettigrew, 1998). More recent research has expanded the application of the theory from racial and ethnic groups to other marginalized

groups, such as the disabled and LGBTQ populations, with equally as promising results (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

In much of the early research on the contact hypothesis, focus was placed on testing one or more of the conditions. And indeed, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of more than 500 research articles using intergroup contact theory showed that providing structured contact that met all of Allport's optimal conditions showed the strongest positive prejudice reduction effects. However, the analysis also showed that these conditions were not essential, as positive outcomes were found in studies that met none of the conditions, but rather they found that the conditions "act as facilitating conditions that enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge" (p. 766). More recent research has identified two additional factors as critical for successful intergroup contact: 1) personal acquaintance, especially when those in the contact situation do not meet the stereotypical expectations of the other (Miller, 2002), and 2) intergroup friendship development (Pettigrew, 1997). These two additional conditions are important to the generalization of bias reduction from the "outgroup" individual to the "outgroup" as a whole (Dovidio et al., 2003).

Many of the conditions of the intergroup contact hypothesis overlap with conditions for friendship—common goals and cooperation, for example. In addition, friendship, specifically intercultural friendship, requires self-disclosure and reciprocity (Gudykunst, 1985a; Kudo & Simkin, 2003), both facilitators of intimacy, another key mediator of intergroup contact's positive effects (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Kudo and Simkin (2003) found that "domiciliary proximity and friendship formation were closely linked, and residence halls on campus afforded more opportunities for intercultural contact and friendship formation than university flats and off-campus accommodation" (p. 108). Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, and Sidanius (2005) argued

that college roommates make an ideal setting for testing intergroup contact theory, as nearly all of the conditions for Allport's (1954) hypothesis are met. They argued that students in a university setting for the first time are likely to hold equal status, regardless of ethnic group; they have a common goal of living together peacefully, which requires cooperation; and universities are generally supportive of interethnic contact and cooperation, and provide institutional support for such initiatives. An additional condition that they suggest that studying roommates provides, is "high acquaintance potential" (p. 331), which could provide opportunity to notice not only their differences, but also their similarities—a key aspect of intercultural friendship formation as well as an essential component of the contact hypothesis, and a key reason why I chose domestic students with international students as roommates as the subject of this study.

In his study that identified intergroup friendship as an essential condition of the contact hypothesis, Pettigrew (1997) also noted that "effective intergroup contact relates more closely to the study of long-term close relationships than it does to the initial acquaintanceship literature. Optimal intergroup contact requires time" (p. 182). As much of the literature on the contact hypothesis was quantitative and either cross-sectional or single-encounter oriented, this study is designed as qualitative and longitudinal.⁴

Integral to understanding how contact between groups decreases intergroup bias is understanding how individuals conceptualize groups and their belonging to them. Social identity theory and the closely related social categorization theory (and their derivatives) are helpful in understanding these processes.

⁴ I use *longitudinal* somewhat loosely here, as this study is only across one academic year. The limitations of this approach are further discussed in Chapter 7.

Social Identity and Social Categorization Theories

Identity has been conceptualized as a multi-layered, complex construct consisting of the self and the relationship of the self to the world (Hecht, 2009). Social identity theory (SIT) proposes that an individual's self-concept comprises two-parts: the personal and the social. The personal identity is the parts of one's self that remain fixed, regardless of social context (e.g., personal tastes, physical attributes, etc.) (Turner, 1982), while social identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group... together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Social categorization theories address the processes by which we as humans organize and classify ourselves and those around us. As Brewer (2001) states, "social categories are merely cognitive concepts that help individuals to make sense of their social world and to direct their behavior toward other individuals" (p. 20). These social categories include (but are not limited to) nationality, ethnicity, age, profession, and political affiliation, and each of them carries with it a set of shared beliefs and customs (Abrams, O'Connor, & Giles, 2002).

The process of self-categorization into and identification with these groups provides the basis of 'ingroup' ("like me") formation, and conversely, 'outgroup' ("not like me"). This process involves "both the application of stereotypes to others, and the depersonalization of self. Depersonalization means that the self-inclusive category becomes self-defining" (Abrams & Hogg, 2001). When one's own identity is closely entwined with that of the group, "self-worth is both projected onto and derived from positive ingroup evaluation" (Brewer, 2001, p. 21). That is to say that positive identification with a group gives validation to both the group and the individual. However, positive in-group valuation is always in comparison to some outgroup, which necessarily must be seen more negatively. Group members seek to boost their own self-

esteem via positive group identity (Brown, 2000), providing the basis for in-group bias. As Brewer (2001) states:

Categorization of the self as an ingroup member entails assimilation of the self to the ingroup category prototype and enhanced similarity to other ingroup members. Self-categorization provides the cognitive substrate for attachment to ingroups and differentiation from outgroups—the first step toward ingroup bias and discrimination. (p. 20)

Our desire to see ourselves and our ingroup in a positive light leads us to negatively evaluate groups that we do not belong to, the outgroups. Thus, as Dunne (2008) noted, “social identity theory offers a social psychological explanation for ethnocentrism, in-group favoritism, intergroup discrimination and outgroup derogation, even in the absence of scarce resources or realistic competition (van Oudenhoven et al. 2006; Rubin and Hewstone 2004; Brown 2000; Capozza and Brown 2000)” (p. 277). However, others have argued that a causal relationship between ingroup identification and outgroup bias only happens in certain circumstances:

- a) the individual categorizes “the self” in terms of membership in the relevant group;
- b) the social identity is salient with respect to some comparative judgement;
- c) the in-group and out-group are perceived to be interrelated within an overall social structure;
- d) the dimension of intergroup comparison is relevant to intergroup status relationships; and
- e) the out-group is relevant to the particular comparative judgment being made. (Turner, 1999 as cited in Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004, p. 97)

As Sidanius et al. (2004) note, these are conditions likely to be met on any multiethnic U.S. university campus. Thus, in a study of the relationship between domestic and international student roommates on a U.S. university campus, the concepts introduced here are likely to play a significant role. I expect that social identity theory will be particularly useful in the analysis of domestic students’ perceptions of their intercultural interactions.

Research Questions

As seen through the literature review above, much of the research on the nature of friendship between domestic and international students has come from social psychology, is quantitative in nature, and has focused on the international student perspective. And while there is a great deal of value in this type of research, it gives but a snapshot of self-reported attitudes of international students at a given moment in time. Of the few existing studies on international and domestic student relationships from the domestic student point of view, only a handful were conducted in the United States (see Halualani, 2008, 2010; Lee, 2006). A qualitative study, such as the one proposed here will help to better understand the underlying processes that drive relationship formation between international and domestic students at U.S. universities, and, in turn, help to develop better policy for facilitating such relationships.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do domestic students with international students as roommates define intercultural contact?
- RQ2: What do domestic students with international students as roommates look for in a friend?
- RQ3: What are domestic students with international students as roommates' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship?
- RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates' experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction?
 - a) What do domestic students perceive to be the barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - b) What do domestic students perceive to be the benefits of intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - c) At the end of their first year, what have these domestic students learned about intercultural interaction and friendship?

Chapter Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter

This chapter attempts to lay a theoretical and empirical basis for this research project. I have tried to paint with broad strokes the situation of international students both in general and here at UCLA to demonstrate the importance of the relationships between international and domestic students to the academic, psychological, and social development of both groups. I explored the difficulty of studying *culture* and *intercultural interaction* as phenomena, noting that my definition of these terms may differ from the participants' definitions and thus concluded that, methodologically, it was important to allow participants to define these terms for themselves. I then reviewed the existing literature on intercultural interaction and friendship on college campuses, identifying several factors that facilitated and/or inhibited these relationships. The conceptual framework outlined the importance of two key theoretical approaches to intergroup interaction research—the contact hypothesis and social identity theory—that guided my thinking in the development of this study. Finally, this chapter also included my four research questions. The next chapter explains the methodological decisions that I made and the methods employed in conducting this research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This dissertation project is a qualitative case study of first-year domestic students living in on-campus residential communities at UCLA who were randomly assigned at least one international student as a roommate. The study explores the development of these domestic students' intercultural relationships and friendships over the course of the year, specifically focusing on the relationship between themselves and their international student roommate(s). The goal was to examine how domestic students' experiences with their international student roommates shaped their intercultural interactions, attitudes, and friendships as a whole.

I chose a qualitative approach because qualitative methods for several reasons. First, qualitative methods allow researchers to capture the deeply complex nature of a phenomenon in context, and a especially useful when the context is “highly pertinent” to the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2008). The context of this study, domestic and international freshman randomly assigned to live together in one particular housing community at a major university, is almost a participant in and of itself in that the context is a key factor in facilitating the relationships between the students. Without a clear understanding of the context, these complexity of the relationships between roommates would be difficult, if not impossible to understand. One key feature of qualitative research is the use of *thick description*, an ethnographic term meaning “the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated (Merriam, 2009, p. 43), throughout the narrative to help the reader empathize with the experience of the participants (Creswell, 2007).

A second reason I chose a qualitative approach is its ability to answer questions of “how” and “what” from the perspective of the participants themselves (Patton, 1987; Yin, 2008). In this

study, I asked a) how domestic students defined intercultural interaction and friendship and b) what they saw as the benefits and barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship. These two questions formed the basis of the worldview that the participants framed their experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship. Qualitative methods afford researchers the ability to view and answer these types of questions through the experiences of the participants themselves.

Third, qualitative research methods are useful for uncovering the meaning participants give to their lived experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007). As Merriam (2009) states, “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 5). My third research question asks how students experience intercultural interaction and friendship on campus

Qualitative case studies in particular are well suited for studying lived experiences across time (Yin, 2008). My final research question asks “How does continued contact over time with a roommate of a different nationality alter domestic students’ perceptions of intercultural contact and friendship?” As I aim to examine how domestic student experience intercultural interaction on the campus of UCLA and how domestic students’ relationships with their international roommates developed across the period of a school year, I chose a qualitative case study design for this dissertation research.

The remainder of this chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research that provides a basis for this study, describes the design and limitations of the methods chosen, and discusses the measures taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Qualitative Research and its Theoretical Underpinnings

Qualitative research has its roots in multiple fields, most notably anthropology, sociology, and psychology. While most experimental research is situated in a positivist orientation, where reality “exists ‘out there’ and it is observable, stable, and measurable,” most qualitative research finds itself situated a constructivist/interpretivist orientation, which assumes “that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). The significance of an object or an event is assigned by the observer through his or her perspective—a view of the world through a cultural lens that is influenced by previous experience, knowledge, beliefs, and values. Reality, therefore, is in the eye of the beholder.

Searle (1995) argues that there are two modes of existence: *intrinsic*, which is independent of human interpretation, and *observer relative*, which takes into account the meaning assigned by humans through their experiences. For example, if there were a rock in the center of a table on top of a stack of papers, an *intrinsic* observer might state, “That is a rock,” i.e., there is no doubt in terms of the physical world that the object on the table is a rock. In contrast, an *observer relative* statement regarding the same object might be, “That is a paperweight,” which relies on the observer’s interpretation of the purpose of the object, a meaning and interpretation that had likely been learned through human interaction and experience—the observer’s social context. In this interpretivist viewpoint, meaning is constructed through social interactions with those around them: “Objects, people, situations and events do not possess their own meaning; rather, meaning is conferred on them” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 27). The job of the qualitative researcher, then, is to interpret the meaning that subjects give to experiences, interactions, and objects around them (Charmaz, 2004).

Research Design

Qualitative Case Study Research

Yin defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2008, p. 18). Creswell (2007) adds to this, emphasizing that case studies are particularly useful when the researcher has little to no control over the phenomenon of interest. Yin (2003) notes that qualitative case studies are useful when the researcher is interested in answering questions of “how” or “why” (p. 9). Qualitative case studies are characterized by holistic description and in-depth explanation of a phenomenon in context. These “thick descriptions” provide the reader with the basis for understanding the complexity of the case (Creswell, 2007). The context of this study is inextricable from the participants’ experiences of intercultural interaction and friendship. Without an understanding of the context in which domestic students interact with international students, among other intercultural experiences, the researcher would find it difficult to explain these experiences, and the reader would be left without a framework for comparison to their own experiences.

One feature that distinguishes case studies from other types of qualitative research is the unit of analysis, or the case itself. Cases are intrinsically *bounded*—there is a finite end to the period of time for observation, or the number of people that could be interviewed, or other limits to data collection (Merriam, 2009). In this study, the phenomenon to be studied is domestic students’ intercultural interactions and friendships, bounded by both time (the course of their first year of college) and location (residential communities at UCLA).

The final distinguishing characteristic of qualitative case studies is the expected result: grounded theory research is expected to result in a theoretical model to account for the

phenomenon under study; ethnography is expected to result in a deep cultural description; and phenomenological studies are expected to distill the essence of an experience (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative case studies, on the other hand, according to Stake (1995) is the researcher's emphasis on particularization—defining the uniqueness of the particular case—rather than on generalization. For this study, I seek to explore how domestic students at this university experience interaction across cultures, and how the context itself affects those interactions, and while we know much about how international student experience these interactions, there is little in the literature to help us understand how domestic students experience them. The exploratory and explanatory nature of a qualitative case study approach was perfectly suited for the purpose of this study.

Site

Site selection. UCLA has the second highest international student population in the state of California, bested only by the University of Southern California (Institute of International Education, 2016a). Over the past four years, the average number of international freshmen who enrolled at UCLA has hovered around 12% of the total freshmen class (UCLA Academic Planning and Budget Office, 2015).⁵ Freshmen who meet the regular application deadline are guaranteed three years of on-campus housing, and 98% of all freshman live in university housing (UCLA Undergraduate Admissions, 2016). This means that international students are highly likely to apply for on-campus housing and to be assigned to a room with a domestic student.

The high percentage of international freshman and the high likelihood that both domestic and international freshman will live on campus in one of the many residential communities,

⁵ In 2012, nearly 20% of the freshman class were international students due to heavy recruitment from China.

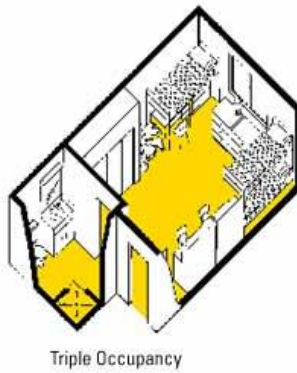
made UCLA an ideal site for examining the relationships between domestic and international student roommates. As I am a student and employee at UCLA, access was also a key factor in choosing this university as a study site.

Description of housing at UCLA.

Approximately 14,000 students live on “the Hill,” the area of campus where all undergraduate residence halls are located. All first-year students are guaranteed three years of on-campus housing, and 96% of all first-years live in university housing. Approximately 10% of all residents on the Hill are international students. In the residence halls where participants in this study lived, approximately 16% of the residents were considered international students, quite a bit higher than the average for the Hill as a whole.⁶

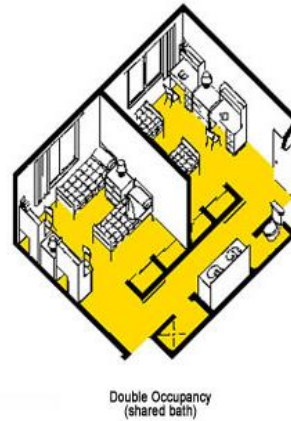
All participants lived in the same style residence hall with plaza style rooms, which offered two options: in-room private bathroom or a shared bathroom between two rooms. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the typical layout for these types of rooms. In contrast to the illustrations shown, however, as of the 2015-2016 academic year, all first-year rooms are triple occupancy. For a clearer idea of the layout of triple occupancy with a shared bathroom, see the bedroom layout of Figure 1 combined with the bathroom layout of Figure 2. The bedrooms measure 12’5” x 12’10” and include a bed, a small study carrel, and wardrobe space for each resident. The assumption made for the purposes of this study, is that, in such small quarters, roommates will have no choice but to interact. The question is, will this forced contact lead to a deeper understanding and possibly friendship?

⁶ UCLA Housing was unable to provide information regarding the percentage of first-year residents at the time of request.



Triple Occupancy

Figure 1. Triple occupancy with private bath.
Source: <https://housing.ucla.edu/student-housing/freshman-students/living-on-campus/residential-plazas>



Double Occupancy
(shared bath)

Figure 2. Double occupancy with shared bath.
Source: <https://housing.ucla.edu/student-housing/freshman-students/living-on-campus/residential-plazas>

Participants

Recruitment. The participants in this study were selected using purposeful sampling, meaning that selective criteria were applied to the sampling frame in order to narrow the selection pool and to capture an “information-rich” group for the study (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). The original sampling frame for this study was first-year domestic students living on The Hill, a concentrated area of residence halls on UCLA’s campus, in one particular facility: Humboldt Hall. I chose to only include first-year students in order to capture in-depth the initial stages of friendship formation upon arrival to university. While students in their second, third, and fourth years of university have likely had some experience with intercultural contact and relationships, direct observation across time will only be possible with first-years who are in the process of developing those relationships. Humboldt Hall was selected because of the large number of first-year students, and because of ease of access, as I personally knew the residential director of the

hall, and he agreed to distribute my recruitment email and surveys for me to all his first-year students.

An initial recruitment email and initial screening survey (see Appendix A) was sent via the Resident Director of Humboldt Residence Hall to 970 first-year undergraduate students. Participants were offered \$10 contributions to their BruinCards or a \$10 gift card to Amazon for their participation in the study. From the original recruitment email, 35 students responded (a 3.6% response rate), and of those, 11 were deemed eligible participants. Two of these participants declined to participate once contacted directly for scheduling interviews. One additional participant was directly recruited after I heard about her experience from another participant during the first round of interviews. She was asked to complete the recruitment survey, and after she cleared the qualifying questions, I contacted her to schedule interviews. The total number of qualified participants at the end of recruitment was ten. There was no attrition by the end of the study—all followed through to completion of the final interview. The sample selected here is not representative of the population at UCLA, but as the purpose of this case study is to provide deep description and analysis.

Overview of participants. All ten participants in the study were first year students at UCLA living away from home for the first time, all were native English speakers (although three participants identified as bilingual: English/Teo Chew, English/Spanish, and English/Punjabi; see Table 2), and all were 18-years old before participating in this study. All participants were also from high schools in California; no out-of-state residents participated in this study. Of the ten participants, nine identified as female and one identified as male. Demographic profiles of the final list of participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant demographic information

Participant name	Gender	Hometown	Father level of education	Mother level of education	Need to work
Katie	F	Santa Barbara	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work summers only
Hannah	F	Diamond Bar	Other/ Unknown	High School	Must work part-time
Haley	F	Berkeley	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work summers only
Jason	M	Los Angeles	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work summers only
Patricia	F	San Diego	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work summers only
Melissa	F	Bishop	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work summers only
Connie	F	San Francisco	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Do not need to work
Amy	F	San Francisco	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Do not need to work
Marisela	F	Los Angeles	High School	High School	Must work part-time
Aparna	F	Sacramento	College or Beyond	College or Beyond	Must work part-time

Additional criteria applied to the selection of participants was the level of intercultural experience as evidenced by their own ethnic background, languages spoken other than English, the ethnic make-up of the high school that each participant attended, and the level of international travel experience. The responses to these questions can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant prior intercultural experience

Participant name	Race/ Ethnicity	Self-identified level of fluency in languages other than English	High school ethnic make-up ^a	International travel experience ^b
Katie	Asian or Pacific Islander	n/a	Different	Some
Hannah	Asian or Pacific Islander	Teo Chew (bilingual) Mandarin (conversational) Spanish (conversational)	Similar	None
Haley	White	Spanish (conversational) Italian (conversational)	Diverse	Moderate
Jason	White	Spanish (conversational)	Similar	Some
Patricia	Asian or Pacific Islander	Tagalog (conversational)	Diverse	Extensive
Melissa	White	n/a	Similar	None
Connie	Asian or Pacific Islander	Cantonese (bilingual) Mandarin (conversational) French (survival)	Diverse	Moderate
Amy	White	Spanish (conversational)	Different	Moderate
Marisela	Hispanic/Latino	Spanish (bilingual)	Similar	Some
Aparna	Asian or Pacific Islander	Punjabi (bilingual) Spanish (survival)	Different	Extensive

^a Source: Participant selection survey. Participants were asked about their high school ethnic make-up. The responses shown here correspond to the following full answers: similar = most people in my high school were racially and ethnically similar to me; different = most people in my high school were racially and ethnically different from me; and diverse = there was a wide variety of people of all different ethnic and racial backgrounds at my high school.

^b Source: Participant selection survey. International travel experience was defined in the following ways: None = I have never travelled outside the United States; Some = I have traveled outside of the United States for short vacations a few times; Moderate = I travel frequently outside the United States for short visits; Extensive = I have lived outside of the United States for an extended period.

Table 2 also shows the variation in participants' international travel experience: only one participant had never traveled outside of the United States, seven had at least some travel experience outside the United States, and two had lived outside the United States for a period longer than two months. One participant, Aparna, was born outside the United States and immigrated when she was very young; the other, Patricia, lived in Guam for two years and spent

summers with family in the Philippines. Table 3 gives a brief description of each of the participants' roommates' country of origin, race and/or ethnicity.

Table 3
Participant roommate country of origin and ethnicity

Participant	Country of origin (race and/or ethnicity)	
	Roommate #1	Roommate #2
Katie (S01)	USA (Taiwanese)	India (Indian)
Hannah (S02)	Canada (Chinese)	China (Chinese-Vietnamese)
Haley (S03)	Singapore (White/Swiss)	Singapore (Chinese)
Jason (S04)	USA (White)	China (Chinese)
Patricia (S05)	USA (White/Asian)	UAE (Indian)
Melissa (S06)	USA (Vietnamese)	Korea (Korean)
Connie (S07)	China (Chinese)	China (Chinese)
Amy (S08)	Turkey (Turkish)	Hong Kong (Chinese)
Marisela (S09)	USA (Guatemalan)	China (Chinese)
Aparna (S10)	USA(unknown)	Indonesia (Indonesian)

Participant profiles.

Katie (S01). Katie is an 18-year-old, first-generation Korean-American female, who grew up in an upper-middle class community in southern California. She went to a public high school, and noted that “most students were ethnically different” from her on the qualifying survey. Her parents immigrated from Korea when they were quite young: her mother was three and her father was 15. While she describes her immediate family’s values as traditional Korean, she also feels mostly “Americanized,” meaning she doesn’t identify with what she describes as the typical Korean teenage girl. While both her parents are fluent in Korean, neither she or her brother do, and the family speaks English at home. She characterizes her own intercultural experience as

limited, despite having travelled several times to Korea to visit extended family. One roommate is from India and the other is Taiwanese American.

Hannah (S02). Hannah is an 18-year-old, female, first-generation college student. Her Chinese-Cambodian parents immigrated to the United States in their 20's after fleeing Cambodia during the war. She has to work part time throughout the year to pay for some of her own expenses. She attended a public high school in a small city east of Los Angeles where the surrounding community, and thus the student population, was primarily ethnically and racially similar to her. She estimated that her high school was approximately 70-80% Asian, a mix of primarily Taiwanese, Chinese, and Korean. She describes her schoolmates as also holding similar values—a focus on academic achievement and competition (she was one of 20 valedictorians in her graduating class). At home, her parents insist that they speak Teo Chew, a dialect of Mandarin, so that the children don't lose their native language. Hannah considers herself fully bilingual, but she also speaks some Mandarin and Cantonese, and is conversational in Spanish. She has never travelled outside the United States. One roommate is Chinese-Canadian and the other is from China, but is of Chinese and Vietnamese descent.

Haley (S03). Haley is a 19-year-old white female from a small, liberal college town in the San Francisco Bay area of northern California. She attended a private Catholic high school, but noted that religion wasn't a primary focus. She was thankful for the cultural diversity represented in her school, as it gave her the opportunity to interact with all different kinds of people. She estimated that the student population was about 35% white, 30% black, 20% Hispanic, and about 15% Asian. Many of the students at her school came from neighboring

cities, and a large percentage were receiving some type of financial aid. While she didn't mention many international students in her school environment, she did mention that her family was frequently invited to visit their international neighbors in their home countries during school breaks. Because of this, Haley has traveled extensively through Europe and parts of Asia. Her mom prides herself on her Italian heritage, and has instilled a sense of "Italian values" in her children. Haley is a native speaker of English, but says that she is conversational in both Italian and Spanish. One roommate is Swiss, but was raised in Singapore. The other roommate is ethnically Chinese, but also from Singapore.

Jason (S04). Jason is a 19-year-old white male, from a wealthy enclave about an hour northwest of Los Angeles, and is an only child. He attended an exclusive private high school that he says was not very diverse, and that the only non-white students were the "athletes that were there on scholarship." Although there was little ethnic diversity, he did note that there were quite a few international students, and that one of his closest friends was from India. He studied Spanish in high school, but doesn't consider himself to be fluent. He has not travelled much outside the United States, but is curious about other cultures. He was looking forward to experiencing more diversity while studying at UCLA. One of Jason's roommates is from the United States, the other, Allan, is from China.

Patricia (S05). Patricia is an 18-year-old female from a small town just west of San Diego. Both of her parents immigrated to the United States, making her a first-generation Filipino-American. While her parents are fluent in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines, she laughed about her own fluency in Tagalog, and said it was "very bad." She

attended what she describes as a very culturally diverse charter school, with many Somali refugees and other Muslim students. She described the ethnic breakdown of her high school as approximately 30% white, 30% black (of which half were African-American and half were African), 25% Hispanic, and the rest Asian. There were not many people that were ethnically similar to her at her high school. When she was younger, she lived in Guam for two years. In addition, she has made several trips to the Philippines to visit extended family. Patricia is majoring in the life sciences at UCLA. One of Patricia's roommates is from the United States, and the other is ethnically Indian, but from Dubai, UAE.

Melissa (S06). Melissa is an 18-year-old, white, native English speaker from a small town in central California, close to the Nevada border. Both of her parents are college educated at the Master's level or above. She attended the local public high school, which had a large Native American population due to the town's proximity to a Reservation. However, as she described it, people at her high school mainly stuck to their own ethnicities:

Within our quad area, there was what we called the Native wall, which was where all the Native Americans sit. There's the Cowboy Wall, which is where all the cowboys sit. The Mexicans would hang out over by the tables and the white kids would stand in the middle.

There was little crossover between groups. According to Melissa, this division reflected the belief system of her home community as a whole. She has never travelled outside the United States, and has travelled little within. Thus, upon arrival at UCLA, she had little to no experience with interacting across cultures. Her roommates are from the United States and Korea.

Connie (S07). Connie is an 18-year-old female from a small town south of San Francisco. She attended a public high school that she said had been rated one of the most racially

diverse high schools in the country. Her parents are first generation immigrants: her mother is from mainland China and her father is from Hong Kong. She attended a Chinese immersion school elementary through middle school and her parents spoke Cantonese at home, ensuring that she was bilingual English/Cantonese. She has travelled frequently outside the United States for visits with extended family. More recently, her family has been travelling to other parts of the world. Although she is fluent in Cantonese and conversational in Mandarin, she has never used her language skills to communicate with her two roommates, who are both from the same small town in mainland China. One of her Chinese roommates moved out mid-way through the spring quarter because she had rented an apartment with friends.

Amy (S08). Amy is an 18-year-old white female from an urban area in northern California. She attended a Spanish language immersion school when she was young and grew up around mostly Hispanic kids. Then in high school, she attended a competitive charter high school, where the population was more than 80% Asian. She noted that the few white kids that attended her school tended to “stick together,” and that her friend group from that period was racially similar to her, although the majority of the students in her school were very different. She has travelled some outside the United States for short vacations with her family. She has two international student roommates, one from China and one from Turkey.

Marisela (S09). Marisela is an 18-year-old Hispanic female from Los Angeles, whose parents immigrated from El Salvador when they were teenagers. At home, they generally speak English, but occasionally her parents insist on speaking Spanish so that they don’t lose their native tongue. Marisela’s grandparents do not speak English at all. She has travelled a few times

out of the United States for vacations and to visit extended family. The community where Marisela grew up was largely Hispanic and African American. She attended a public high school where there were few Asian or white students—the majority of the student body was Hispanic and African American. She looked forward to experiencing the diversity that UCLA offers. One of her roommates is a Guatemalan-American also from Los Angeles, and the other is from mainland China.

Aparna (S10). Aparna is an 18-year-old female who was born in India. Her parents immigrated from India to the United States when she was just a baby, leaving her to live with her grandmother until she was able to join her parents at the age of four. Thus, she grew up speaking both Punjabi and English and is fully bilingual. Her family moved around between Texas and California quite a bit when she was younger. They settled in northern California, and she attended all four years of high school at a public school in what she considered a low-income neighborhood. Her high school ethnic make-up was primarily African-American, with a few Asians and Hispanics. There were few white students in her school, nor were there many other students that were ethnically similar to her. Her roommates are from the United States and Indonesia.

Data Collection

Initial screening survey. In addition to ensuring that participants were qualified to participate in the study, demographic data and prior intercultural experience information was collected as part of the initial screening survey. These responses provided a key basis of comparison between cases in this study.

Interviews. Interviews are the primary source for data in this study. In qualitative research, interviews are a key technique for gaining insight into participants experiences using their own words as evidence (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), especially when the researcher is interested in behavior, thoughts, and feelings that cannot be observed directly (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) also states that interviews are “the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals” (p. 88), as I am in this study. A skillful interviewer can elicit rich data regarding the participants’ experiences in their own words to help us see the things we cannot observe from participants’ perspective. Patton (2002, as cited in Merriam, 2009) writes:

We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. (pp. 340-341)

Interviews are a necessary form of data collection for learning more about a phenomenon when we cannot directly observe the participants experiencing it. In the case of this study, I cannot live in the dorms with the students to observe their interactions with their roommates, thus I must rely on their accounts of those experiences to try to make sense of how they experience those interactions.

For this study, I used both unstructured/informal interviews and semi-structured interviews for data collection. Informal interviews are characterized by their conversational tone, their open-ended questions, and their exploratory nature, while semi-structured interviews are guided by a list of questions or topics that are used to extract more or less specific information from each of the participants (Merriam, 2009). Informal interviews are a good way of establishing rapport and trust with your participants while exploring topics of interest for additional interviews. During the first interview with participants, I started the interview in an

unstructured format, allowing the conversation to develop naturally as the participants began to feel more comfortable. Once I felt that they had relaxed some, I began to ask questions around a set of themes listed in the semi-structured interview protocol found in [Appendix A](#). These interviews were used to develop areas for further exploration in the more semi-structured second interview.

In contrast to unstructured interviews usefulness for exploring areas for further questions (Merriam, 2009), semi-structured interviews are valuable tools for identifying key variables and themes (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). The structure allows for targeted questioning while also allowing the interviewee freedom to elaborate on their answers. Using semi-structured interviews for this study thus served three purposes: 1) to identify how first-year domestic students define *intercultural interaction* and *friendship*, 2) to identify how domestic students experience *intercultural interaction* and *friendship*, and 3) to begin to understand the role that living in a residential community plays in the formation (or failure) of these relationships. The sampled participants were interviewed for approximately 30-75 minutes on two separate occasions. The first interviews were at the beginning of the winter quarter in January and the second interviews took place in June of the spring quarter, just before final exams. In the first interview, questions covered topics regarding their relationship with their roommate, their friendships in general, and their intercultural experiences, both on campus and off. The first round of interviews began with informal conversations, as advised by Spradley (1979), in order to establish rapport with the subject and begin to identify areas for further exploration. Once the subjects began to feel more comfortable, I delved more deeply into the topics of intercultural interactions that this study is concerned with. A second round of 30-60 minute interviews was conducted in June focusing on the concept of intercultural interaction more broadly and the

development of the participants' relationships with their roommates and other friends since we last spoke.

Data Analysis

Once each round of interviews was completed, I scrubbed the recordings of identifying information using audio editing software. Then the recordings were forwarded to Rev, an online transcription service, which returned completed transcripts to me within 24 hours of submission. Transcripts were then reviewed for accuracy of transcription and forwarded to each individual participant for review, asking participants if there was anything they would like to add or a delete from their statements. All participants were satisfied with the overall content of the interview transcripts, with the exception of a few minor transcription errors that were corrected.

Transcripts were then uploaded into a web-based qualitative data analysis software tool called Dedoose. Using a software tool like Dedoose for data analysis has many advantages: it allows for quick creation and organization of codes; it allows easy access to excerpts and the codes attached to them, making constant comparison a much simpler task; it automatically creates charts that are easily configured to help visualize the data and reveal intersections of codes and descriptors that might not have been as readily apparent if coded by hand; and being web-based, it meant I had access to my data wherever I went. In addition, I was able to incorporate the data collected via the introductory surveys into the software as descriptors, which added an additional layer of analysis once all other coding had taken place.

The data were coded using *open coding* methods in order to identify major themes. Open coding is defined as “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 61). Developing the first round of codes involved using some codes that were predetermined based on the literature and my own research

questions. In addition, I used *in vivo coding*, in which I used the participants own words to create categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65). This phase of the analysis involved developing and naming categories, identifying phenomena, and writing code notes, or memos. These memos served as a reflective process for identifying categories and their describing their properties. Memoing also allowed me to make note of questions that arose as I sorted through the data, and to explore ideas that were formulating through the process of *constant comparison*, “the analytic process of comparing different pieces of data for similarities and differences” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65).

This first round of coding yielded 292 codes, applied 2985 times across 1,032 excerpts. These codes were then consolidated into 11 major code families. As I moved codes from one “pile” to another, I constantly questioned my own categories and the relationships between ideas. Patterns eventually emerged, and I began to narrow the focus for the second round of coding.

The second round of coding utilized *axial coding*, which Strauss and Corbin (1990) define as “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences” (p. 96). This phase of analysis focused on developing the features of the emerging categories and determining the relationships between ideas. As the features of the categories became more salient, I returned to the literature and checked my categories against extant studies and recent findings in order to refine my coding further. This refining process revealed the set of facilitating and inhibiting factors of intercultural interaction and friendship. Once these factors were identified, I returned to the data for a third round of coding to identify specific features of each factor. The coding scheme for this can be found in Chapter 5.

Once codes had been narrowed and defined in a final codebook, I returned to the data a fourth and final time to ensure that codes had been applied consistently and accurately, and that I had not missed any relevant data. For this final round of coding, I opened a second account in Dedoose so that I could code the data “blind”—without being able to see how I had coded the data in previous rounds. The final round of coding reassured me that the categories I had determined and the themes that were emerging were indeed salient and that all pertinent segments of the had been coded consistently.

Ethical Considerations

Because this study involved human subjects, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (IRB#15-001734) was required and obtained prior to participant recruitment and data collection. The process for approval consisted of submitting a version of the research proposal along with all recruitment materials, a plan for data collection, and a plan for securing data once collected. As noted previously, recruitment materials can be found in Appendix B.

Informed Consent

Because recruitment began with an online survey, the informed consent was included at the beginning of this survey. If potential participants did not select the “I consent to participate in this study” box on the first page of the recruitment survey, then they were exited from the survey and thanked for their time. Those that selected the “I consent” option were continued to the next part of the recruitment questionnaire. This Study Information Sheet can be found in Appendix B.

Privacy and Data Security

The interviews for this study were conducted in a reserved room away from other students and observers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis by a paid transcription service, then double checked by me for accuracy. The recorded interviews are stored on a password protected computer away from campus insure the security of the data. After transcription, to protect the anonymity of the participants, all names were changed and any personally identifying data was left out of any description of the project participants and any of the other people that they mentioned in the course of their interviews.

Trustworthiness

While the “rigor” of quantitative research is measured in terms of validity, generalizability, and reliability, qualitative research necessarily has different measures of its “trustworthiness” (Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1986) posited that establishing trustworthiness consisted of four criteria: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility refers to building confidence in the “truth” of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggested prolonged engagement with the subjects and the context, persistent observation, triangulation of data, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checks as means of establishing credibility in a study. In this study, the following methods were used:

- a) *Prolonged engagement*. This refers to a “lengthy and intensive contact with the phenomena (or subjects)” of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77). The collection of data in this study took place over the course of one year, giving me an opportunity to get

to know the subjects of the study well. In addition, I am a student at the university where the study took place, which gave me ample opportunity to engage in the environment and context of the study.

- b) *Triangulation of data*. Triangulation of data refers to inclusion of data from multiple sources (Merriam, 2009). In this study, sources of data were interviews, field notes, and institutional data.
- c) *Peer debriefing*. My dissertation advisor as well as other professors in my department consulted with me along the way, reviewing my findings to ensure accuracy.
- d) *Member checks*. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to all participants to check for accuracy of their answers and to ask for any additional information to include in their accounts. After data analysis, vignettes including interpretations were sent to selected members for accuracy of interpretation of my findings and additional input.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability to apply the findings to other contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that this can be established by using “thick description” in narrating the findings. Thick description in case studies mean the “complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated....such description can be creative, using prose and literary techniques to convey the researcher’s understanding of the case” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 43-44). I have explained the participants’ experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship in as much detail as possible to facilitate transferability of the findings of this study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Although the other criteria for trustworthiness have been dealt with individually in this section, I will discuss dependability and confirmability together, as the means for achieving them in a qualitative case study are quite similar. One of the ways of creating dependability and confirmability is to establish an audit trail through careful documentation of the procedures and steps taken throughout the life of the research study so that it could be checked by an external auditor. The previous chapter details my theoretical considerations and the current chapter documents the methodological considerations and reasoning for the decisions made in choosing and employing the methods in this study. My advisor and other faculty members who have worked carefully with me throughout this process have served as my external auditors.

Chapter Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter

This chapter has provided a rationale for qualitative methods, given an overview of the participants and the site, and detailed the procedures followed for data collection and analysis. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will discuss the findings from the analysis of data. Chapter 4 will address the questions of how domestic students with international roommates define 1) the term *intercultural* and 2) what they expect from a friend.

CHAPTER 4
MAKING MEANING: DEFINING INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION AND FRIENDSHIP
EXPECTATIONS

Friends are the family we choose for ourselves.

—Edna Buchanan, journalist

The purpose of this case study was to examine the intercultural interaction experiences of domestic students with international students as roommates over the course of the year. One concept stood out in participants' interviews with regards to intercultural interaction and friendship: commonalities. Whether it referred to their interests, values, most intimate thoughts, or even simply occupying the same locations—the idea of shared experience was a common thread. The first section of this chapter will address my first research question:

RQ1: How do domestic students with international students as roommates define intercultural interaction?

I will present the five most common characteristics of *intercultural interaction* identified by participants and how they relate to each other. This will be followed by a summary and discussion of these points.

The second part of this chapter turns to my second research question:

RQ2: What do domestic students with international students as roommates look for in a friend?

In this section, I present a discussion centered around the two main categories that emerged from the data—self-disclosure and reciprocity—followed by a summary and discussion.

Defining Intercultural

Although the focus of this study was the development of the relationships between domestic students and their international student roommates, I was hesitant to limit the definition of *intercultural interaction* for this study to the boundaries formed by nationalities. As discussed in Chapter 2, this definition of *intercultural* is problematic, as it assumes homogeneity amongst populations within national borders. Limiting the definition thusly would also exclude the experiences and identities of the participants themselves. As noted in the Chapter 2, Kim and Gudykunst (2013) stated:

All encounters are considered intercultural to an extent, and the degree of interculturalness of a given encounter would depend on the degree of heterogeneity with the life experience of the communicators. (p. 173)

Therefore, following methodology set forth in Halualani (2008, 2010) and (Dunne, 2008), for the purpose of this study I asked participants to define for themselves what they considered to be intercultural interaction. All participants gave some variation of a definition similar to “an interaction between people from different backgrounds,” but how they interpreted the significance of different aspects of those backgrounds varied a great deal. The responses ranged from the very visible aspects of culture (race and ethnicity) to the deeply invisible (beliefs and values), and frequently led to a bit of grappling with self-identification. Table 4 shows the five most frequent characteristics of “intercultural” across participants. These responses form the basis for discussing the first research question:

RQ1: How do domestic students with international students as roommates define intercultural interaction?

Table 4

Common defining characteristics of culture/intercultural differences

Participant	Characteristics ^a				
	Race/ Ethnicity	Nationality	Customs/ Traditions/ Experiences	Beliefs/ Values	SES/Social Class
Katie (S01)	x	x*	x		
Hannah (S02)	x	x	x	x	
Haley (S03) ^b	x	x		x	
Jason (S04)	x		x		x
Patricia (S05)	x	x*			x
Melissa (S06)		x			
Connie (S07)	x	x		x	
Amy (S08)		x			
Marisela (S09)	x		x		
Aparna (S10) ^b	x		x	x	x
TOTAL	7	7 ^c	5	4	3

Notes. ^a Two participants also mentioned gender as a characteristic of intercultural interactions, but this did not make the top five. ^b Neither Haley nor Aparna gave an explicit definition of intercultural interaction in their interviews. These characteristics were gleaned from their responses regarding interactions that she considered intercultural. ^c Two of the participants (marked with an asterisk) mentioned nationality as a characteristic only after being prompted by a clarifying question from the interviewer.

Although the characteristics the participants identified are presented in Table 4 as separate concepts, the individual characteristics were almost never spoken about in isolation and, thus, were not easily teased apart. For discussion and presentation of findings, I have clustered

them together into three groups: 1) race, ethnicity, and nationality, 2) customs/traditions/experience and beliefs/values, and 3) SES/class.

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality as *Intercultural*

The majority of participants identified interacting with someone of a different race or ethnicity as something that they considered an intercultural interaction. However, as the interviews progressed, and on further analysis, it became clear that *race/ethnicity* was not entirely a separate concept from *nationality*, and the interactions that the participants identified as *intercultural* and the people that they identified as culturally different in terms of race or ethnicity were almost always also of a nationality different from themselves.

My very first interview for this study was with Katie, a Korean-American student who was very much grappling with her own ethnic identity and trying to find a place where she fit in. In high school, she only had one friend who was ethnically and racially similar to her, and, in her application survey, she noted that she didn't have much intercultural interaction experience prior to coming to college. However, when asked what *intercultural* meant to her, she identified race and ethnicity as a primary characteristic of those types of interactions:

Katie: I think of two people who have different backgrounds and different customs kind of sharing their experiences with each other and at least for me just like bonding over things that you wouldn't expect yourself to connect with that person, but I think a lot of people share the same experiences just in a different way, so I feel like part of opening up is learning about how that other person experiences like the same thing that you did.

Interviewer: So when you say different backgrounds, what do you mean by background?

Katie: I think of different races because like one of my roommates is from India, so I think of it like that, like different ethnicities.

Katie's initial description of *intercultural interaction* included sharing customs and experiences with people from different "backgrounds," and finding unexpected commonalities. In this comment, she alludes to the deeper aspects of an individual's culture—that which lies beneath the surface. When pressed to further define what she meant by background she emphasized different ethnicities and races, focusing on visible characteristics that were easy to identify and label. However, Katie also points out that her roommate is not only racially and ethnically different from her, but she is also "from India," indicating a deeper level of perceived difference based on the concept of *nationality*. As mentioned earlier, most of Katie's friends before coming to UCLA were white (she only had one Asian-American friend growing up), yet she did not consider any of those interactions as intercultural. She only began to identify race and ethnicity as an intercultural characteristic when speaking about her international student roommate.

Patricia also described *intercultural* in terms of people of different backgrounds, both ethnically and nationally:

I think it depends on a lot of things like how old are they? What's their gender and what's their class? I guess that's all I can really think about off the top of my head...[N]ationality is important and ethnically it can be, it really depends... I guess it depends how, well, I guess how much they've adopted the culture of the place they're currently in. Because honestly, it really depends on the person. Sometimes they really, really adopt it and they want to forget about their ethnic ties or rather it's the opposite and they really embrace it. I guess it really depends.

What makes Patricia's interpretation interesting is that as she defines intercultural, she also begins to speak about loss of culture and adaptation/assimilation to "the culture of the place they are currently in." This phrase signals that, for her, *intercultural* is tied to geographic boundaries and for an interaction to be intercultural, one or more of the interactants must be outside his/her geographic area of origin. This is similar to the way Katie identified race and ethnicity as an important characteristic of *intercultural*, but indicated that differences in race and ethnicity were also tied to a different country of origin.

In addition to this geographic tie of culture to place, Patricia also acknowledges the ethnic traditions and customs that would have been brought from the point of origin and the conscious decision-making processes involved in assimilation into a new culture: how much of their “ethnic ties” to keep or “forget.” By the end of her response, Patricia seemed to suggest that the more assimilated someone is to the culture of the place they are in, then the less intercultural she would consider that interaction.

In my interview with Amy, her only consideration seemed to be nationality. When asked what types of interactions she considered to be intercultural, she responded:

I guess someone just non-American. When I talk to a Black person I don't think of it as an intercultural ... What's the word? Interaction. It's just normal, or when I talk to someone who's not native American I guess I would think of as intercultural.⁷

Amy's conceptualization of *intercultural interaction* is limited to a person from another country. She doesn't view race or ethnicity within a nationality as a cultural divider; instead, she sees nationality as a boundary of cultural unity. Melissa shared a similar point of view:

I think more nationality than race. I would consider myself and an African American to be culturally similar as Americans versus like myself and perhaps like a white person living in China. I think of culture as more nationality versus race.

In her view, the shared language and somewhat shared experience (via pop-culture) of Americans gives them an inherent cultural bond.

Amy's and Melissa's interpretations of intercultural interaction seem to be different from Katie's and Patricia's on the surface, because they both overtly identified nationality as the salient feature of intercultural interaction while simultaneously downplaying the role of race and ethnicity. In contrast, both Patricia and Katie identified race and ethnicity as important

⁷ In this excerpt, it is clear she is not referencing Native American populations—she means those born and raised in the United States.

characteristics of intercultural interaction, but closer examination revealed that both were describing race and ethnicity as a feature of a nationality other than their own. All four of these participants' definitions of *intercultural interaction*, in effect, present American culture as a singular, homogenized whole. And while there is a solid argument that citizens of particular nations share certain values and characteristics, there is an equally strong argument for great variation in *intracultural* differences, as well (see Dunne, 2008). This 'flattening' will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 5, when I discuss participants' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship.

Customs/Traditions/Experiences and Beliefs/Values as *Intercultural*

The second cluster of characteristics frequently mentioned when participants were defining *intercultural* and *intercultural interaction* were related to the customs, traditions, and life experiences that one is exposed to, and the beliefs and values that are learned from being socialized into one culture or another. Jason, for instance, defined an intercultural interaction as shared experience between people with different upbringings:

Intercultural relationships are people with different backgrounds, customs, languages, kind of experiences, all converging into one. Now it's a shared experience between so many different cultural people, that they're all going to have similar or the same memories that I'm going to have or that another student that has different ethnic background or different whatever background will have.... it's based on your experiences. Based on how you were brought up, what kind of customs and culture you were brought up with or shown at a young age, all the way up through high school and everything like that. I'm sure mine [experiences] are different than other white kids', but I'm sure that they're also different from other black kids, Asian kids, Hispanic kids, things like that.

His conceptualization of *intercultural* takes into account the various customs and beliefs that shape an individual's life experiences. He also seems to recognize the various *intracultural* differences that may exist between members of the same nationality, acknowledging that the experience of a white male is going to be different from that of other ethnicities and genders. His

definition is in no way tied to nationality, but to what is learned from parents and peers as one is raised in a particular segment of society.

For other participants, the differences in customs/traditions and beliefs/values that made interactions *intercultural*, were tangled up with nationality and sometimes, also, with personal identity. In Haley's attempt to define intercultural, she said:

That's kind of a hard question, because culturally, my one roommate, she's Swiss, she's from Switzerland even though she's only lived there one year of her life. Her family is Swiss, and that's how she was raised—with Swiss cultural values.... I don't know what I would say about how I was raised culturally—I guess like American. My family has lived here 3 or 4 generations, but my mom always prides herself on being Italian and incorporates those family values, so I think it's a mixture of both where your family sees themselves ethnically, and also nationality too--it's kind of a mixture of both.

Haley's definition of intercultural is centered around the values and belief systems that you receive from your family. In her frame of reference, these values are tied to nationality. For example, she feels that her roommate has "Swiss cultural values," although those are never defined and despite her roommate having lived in Switzerland only for the first year of her life. Part of Haley's confusion and difficulty in addressing the question of what intercultural means to her stems from her inability to identify salient features of her own culture for comparison to another. She struggled to define "American cultural values," instead describing the "family values" that her mother's Italian heritage brought to her upbringing. American cultural values were mentioned by multiple participants, but none were unable to precisely identify or define exactly what those values were.

Hannah's response demonstrates this struggle with identity. Because she is a first generation Asian-American daughter of immigrant parents, she feels a pull between her family's cultural traditions and the "Americanization" she experiences by participating in mainstream American culture and schooling. For her, tackling the concept of *intercultural* meant first

determining what was part of her own culture so that she could more readily identify that which was not:

I guess we have to define culture first and I would say culture really depends on both the family and the country we grow up in. Growing up here, I guess, I am very Americanized for my family but they are strongly ... I don't know how to say it. They haven't really synthesized a lot of the American things that I would call specifically American. My dad prefers that we don't speak English at home. That's mostly because he doesn't want us to lose our native languages. It also depends I think on our traditional practices. Just familiar traditions. Even ethnic traditions and things like that. Intercultural would have to be, I guess, I feel like I'm living in a very intercultural society especially considering that I feel like my family and the outside society is almost two completely different cultures.

Hannah sees all her interactions as intercultural, as she herself lives in a bi-cultural world: she is both Chinese/Vietnamese and American at the same time. With her family, she is an American trying to fit into traditional Chinese/Vietnamese culture. She talks about “synthesizing” the two sides of herself into one cultural identity, but it seems that she still feels as if she lives somewhere in between the two. She mentions her family’s ethnic traditions, such as celebrating the Lunar New Year, and her father’s insistence that they speak only Teo-Chew, her family’s native language, at home as practices of cultural maintenance. She feels that in many ways she has been “Americanized,” but her family has not. She is both insider and outsider at the same time.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)/Social Class as *Intercultural*

SES was a frequent topic of discussion in these interviews. Although class wasn't always specifically mentioned as a characteristic of intercultural interaction, it was clear that many of the participants used SES as a defining characteristic of in/out groups and who they felt comfortable interacting with. Some felt that class divides led to differences in overall cultural values, and many felt intimidated by ostentatious displays of wealth of some international

students. Others, who considered themselves to be of higher SES, recognized that they might not be able to relate to the struggles of less advantaged students.

As noted in the section above, much of one's cultural beliefs and value systems is a byproduct of the environment in which a person is raised. For many, the boundaries of social class create an intercultural barrier that is sometimes difficult to overcome. Patricia explained:

I mean it's also really awkward to hang out with someone from a different class than you. Just your experiences are different. I feel like class actually influences your thinking the most. Just how you just say things in general like your values and stuff. I've found that people who tend to have more money have the view, hard work can get you anywhere. Whereas poor people I've found are just I don't want to generalize but I feel like poor people just I mean obviously poor people just struggle more in general and thus tend to be more sympathetic to things. Sometimes if I talk to someone a lot more wealthy they'll just say something that's completely ridiculous and completely ignorant. I'll be like, whoa, are you kidding me? I guess it bothers me and I guess other people a lot when they talk about spending a lot of money so casually.

For her and others SES is the lens through which one experiences and views the world—it affects one's beliefs and values as much, if not more, than ethnicity and nationality. She believes that growing up poor has given her a view of money and hard work that is vastly different from someone who grew up with more economic privilege. For Patricia, this is the primary basis of cultural division and how she views intercultural interaction.

Jason addressed the cultural divide between socioeconomic strata in our second interview also, but from the opposite end of the continuum. For him, successful intercultural interaction means:

...seeing past the obvious, "Oh, I'm an upper-middle class whatever, so I don't see the struggles of the daily poor person," but then when you meet someone who has a lower socioeconomic background, you learn about what kind of things it takes, how much, what kind of a burden is being put on them to pay for this education to pay for them being here. It just makes you think differently. It doesn't make you change your situation, how you feel about yours, but it'll definitely make you change the way you feel about other people in situations like that other person.

Here Jason appears to recognize that his SES gives him a different experience and outlook on the world. He also acknowledges that these differences in experiences will change the way he views others and how others will view him. Thus, without explicitly stating that SES is a factor in what he considers to be an intercultural interaction, Jason acknowledges that people in a lower SES are part of a different social group, based on their experiences, than the one he is part of. An interesting point to note here also though, is his understanding that interacting with this other “cultural” group will give him a better understanding of that experience and how members of that group might see the world differently than he does.

It is widely known amongst local California students that international students pay full out-of-state tuition to attend UCLA, which for the 2016-2017 academic year was an additional \$26,682 on top of the resident fees of \$12,918.⁸ This knowledge has led to a stereotype among domestic students that all international students must necessarily be wealthy, as the cost of attendance for international students is more than triple that of California residents. For many of the participants in this study, personal experience has confirmed this stereotype. In our second interview, Haley gives voice to this commonly held belief:

[W]hat’s interesting is that I kind of know with most of the international friends that I’ve met, if you are here and you’re paying for tuition, you have a lot of money. It’s definitely very clear. Even with my roommate, she doesn’t flaunt it but you can tell that she has a lot of money.

Other participants expressed their discomfort with some of the (un)intentional displays of wealth from international students. These experiences and the results of those experiences are explored more fully in the next two chapters.

⁸ Source: <http://www.financialaid.ucla.edu/Undergraduate/Cost-of-Attendance#495781581-residence-halls>

Summary and Discussion of *Intercultural*

The participants in this study identified differences in race/ethnicity, nationality, customs/traditions/experiences, beliefs/values, and socioeconomic status as key components of what they considered to be intercultural interaction. However, as presented above, the differences in race/ethnicity, customs/traditions/experiences, values/beliefs, and socioeconomic status seemed salient only when the person they were referring to was of a different nationality. However, it seemed as if more was going on than participants having internalized an equivalence between culture and nationality, especially when we take into account the emphasis of socioeconomic status as a cultural barrier with this group of participants. How, then, can this discrepancy be explained?

Despite differences in race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality within their innermost friend circles, most of the participants in this study characterized their friend groups as culturally similar to themselves. This seems to support Halualani's (2008) findings that students did not classify interactions with members of their friend groups as intercultural; in fact, in her study, they vehemently denied it at times. She argued that this was because participants did not see their friends as "cultural." This would seem to suggest that beyond participants seeing their friends as having no culture, then they must also perceive themselves as being without culture: if they perceive their friends to be culturally similar to themselves and their friends aren't "cultural," then by default, the participants must also categorize themselves as without culture. However, this argument does not entirely hold up when presented with the evidence here, as there are multiple participants who struggled a great deal with their own cultural identity in the process of defining *intercultural*. This seems to suggest that instead of being *culturally neutral*, they were using their own identity as a cultural center point against which all others must be compared, a much more ethnocentric categorization of "like me" or "not like me."

The common ingroup identity model, an outgrowth of social categorization theories (see Chapter 2), offers a suggestion for what process could be at work: recategorization (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). The model posits that “incorporating members of different groups within a common, inclusive identity can extend the affective and cognitive benefits of ingroup categorization to those formerly seen as members of an outgroup” (West, Pearson, Dovidio, Shelton, & Trail, 2009, p. 1266). According to Gaertner et al. (1993), recategorization happens as ingroup members and outgroup members interact, communicate, and self-disclose, thereby discovering commonalities. This process of discovery allows the ingroup member to “recategorize” the outgroup member and incorporate him/her into the ingroup. Those participants that formed close relationships with people who would have fallen into their intercultural category but that they later described as “culturally similar” could very well have “recategorized” their intercultural friends into their ingroup, thus erasing the boundaries that once stood between them.

Defining Friendship Expectations: Self-disclosure and Reciprocation

One of the main goals of this study was to better understand how friendships developed (or didn't) between domestic students and their international student roommates. Part of understanding those relationships and how they developed was gaining an understanding of how the participants viewed friendship in general. Given that the nature of friendship varies from one culture to another (Goodwin, 2013), and from individual to individual (Lee, 2008), I wanted to gain an understanding of how these participants characterized the qualities of a friend and how they defined the expectations from that relationship. This section explores these topics in hopes of answering the second research question:

RQ2: What do domestic students with international students as roommates look for in a friend?

In their first interviews, each of the participants was asked what they looked for in a friendship, what their key characteristics were, and what they valued most. The qualities of friendship mentioned by participants could be grouped into two categories: self-disclosure and reciprocation. According to social penetration theory (SPT) (Altman & Taylor, 1973), self-disclosure is a key aspect of friendship development. SPT claims that in the beginning of the relationship, self-disclosure is more surface level, but as trust and intimacy grows, the depth of the disclosure does as well. It is this deep disclosure that allows friendship to deepen. In this study, participants spoke of truth, honesty, trust, and the ability to be themselves as primary characteristics of self-disclosure that they look for in a friendship.

The concept of *self-disclosure* is inextricable from the concept of *reciprocity*, in which people in an interpersonal relationship develop trust through reciprocating self-disclosure and demonstrating the value placed on the relationship (Gudykunst, 1985a). In this study, participants discussed reciprocation in terms of loyalty, reliability, and being there for each other. While both self-disclosure and reciprocation were important, being there for each other and providing physical and emotional support emerged as a key aspect for all but two of the participants. The characteristics attributed to friendship expectations from the data are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants' expectations of friendship

Participant	Expectations of Friendship					
	Self-Disclosure			Reciprocation		
	Truth/ honesty	Trust	Be myself	Loyalty	Reliability	There for me/ each other
Katie (S01)	x	x	x			x
Hannah (S02)	x			x		
Haley (S03)						x
Jason (S04)		x				x
Patricia (S05)		x		x		x
Melissa (S06)					x	x
Connie (S07)	x		x			x
Amy (S08)			x			x
Marisela (S09)	x	x				
Aparna (S10)	x	x	x		x	x
TOTAL	5	6	4	2	2	8

Friendships are an important part of late adolescent and emerging adults' social support networks (Arnett, 2000), and are closely related to feelings of belonging, a key factor in adjustment to university life (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). When young adults move away to college, friends are often the primary, if not sole, source of social support (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). This sentiment is echoed in the data:

I value honesty, trust, someone who's there for you when you're down and I think that's a big part. I think friends can be your anchor sometime. Someone hugging you in place when you're about to sink.

Friendships are a source of solidarity and grounding for acclimation stress. They also serve as an antidote to the loneliness that frequently accompanies arriving somewhere new without a social safety net (Kim, 2001), as noted by Jason:

I just want friends to be fun to be around, trustworthy, they can help you whenever you need help with anything, whether it's reading over a paper or going to go get food with

me when it's cold at 12 o'clock in the morning or anything like that. I value friendship very, very highly. I wouldn't take any of the relationships I have with my friends for granted.

Despite the high value placed on friendships among college students, they are not always easily come by and often require a bit of work to develop and maintain. Truth, honesty, and trust emerged from the data as key characteristics of lasting friendship. For Marisela, it is the only thing that matters:

In friendship I guess, just honesty. With honesty, I feel like you'll go far because that just reveals again how truthful you are with a person and you're not hiding things between people and so I guess honesty is like the main thing in what I seek in friendships.

Marisela herself finds it difficult to open up to others and trust them, thus she also perceives that the self-disclosure aspect of getting to know each other takes a longer period of time for her than for others. But she also acknowledged that being truthful and open with each other leads to trust, a necessary part of friendship development. This is a theme that ran through many of the participants narratives regarding friendship. An element of being able to be authentic also ran through the narratives of being truthful. Many participants described the need to be able to be themselves in front of their friends. Amy defined a friend as:

...someone I can be open and myself with and someone who's there for me and cares about my problems obviously and just is a support system as well as someone I can go and have a fun time with. Someone I can have just as much fun going out and partying as just lying in my bed and watching Netflix. You know what I mean?

Amy's commentary throughout her interviews were dotted with concern for the way that others perceived her. As a member of a sorority, she didn't always feel comfortable being herself in those types of situations. She felt that she was expected to look and act a particular way in order to "fit in." For her, friendship was a respite from this type of social pressure, a place where should could be her authentic self and not be judged for it. Katie had similar expectations of friendship:

I think honesty, and being truthful to each other. I think that's a huge thing, because if I can't trust a friend, it's like why should I even open up to you or why should I even take the time to get to know you if you're not going to show your true self to me? I think that's definitely the most important thing. . . . I think in a friendship it's really important that you're vulnerable with each other. Because everyone is not perfect, everyone has their flaws, and if you can't trust a friend enough to show them that, then I didn't think that your friendship is really going to go beyond surface level. I think that's one thing, and I think it's good to keep each other accountable. It could even be like "how are you doing" or stuff like that. Just making sure your friend is doing what they need to do because I think that shows your friend really cares about you. It shows they are invested in you enough to ask about your day or stuff like that. And yeah, being truthful and being vulnerable.

For Katie, being "vulnerable" and "flawed" in front of each other strengthens ties, as it allows you to build trust without fear of rejection, but also holds you somewhat accountable for your actions, as a true friend would not be afraid to tell you that you are heading down a wrong path. At the same time, this established tie allows you to make mistakes (and give corrections) without fear of losing the friendship.

"Accountability" to each other for being a good friend, for taking care of each other emotionally (as well as physically sometimes), is an important part of reciprocal relationships—those that are supportive in both directions. This sense of reciprocity and being there for each other was found throughout the data. For some, the reciprocity manifested as *loyalty*:

I consider honesty, loyalty to be the strongest characteristics in a friend. As long as we communicate well, I think if we can find things to say, to talk about, or just to get a long in general, that's always a core thing to making a friend. After that, I think I need people who can be honest with me about what they feel in case I'm doing something wrong or I don't know, or just about what they think. I like to know that. Yeah, loyalty is a big factor.

Hannah's description echoes Katie's notion of "accountability"—keeping each other in check morally and emotionally. For Patricia, loyalty is equal to an expression of love, but without the "warm and fluffy" feelings:

Well, kind of off topic but for church yesterday my priest was talking about what love really means and he says how in current American culture love is just like all interpreted as warmth and fluffy feelings. He said that back in the day in Middle East love was

loyalty. I guess that resonated with me. I feel like for friendship it's someone that you can be loyal to. I guess that you'll be there for them and stuff.

Patricia's approach to friendship differs from other participants: for others, friendship is tied up with the "warmth and fluffy feelings," but for her, loyalty means being there for the other person no matter what, whether you agree or not. Patricia's approach to connecting with others relies heavily on avoiding upsetting the other person all costs, even if she perceives them to be completely wrong:

I just I don't have conflicts with friends. I really don't like conflicts with friends. I try to avoid it. Like I will, honestly, I will lie or just be ridiculous in order to avoid a conflict with a friend.

She feels that demonstrating the lengths she is willing to go to in order to support a friend shows her own sense of loyalty. However, she also expects equal reciprocation of this loyalty in return.

When friendship qualities are perceived to be unequal or unreciprocated, it can lead to frustration and mistrust (Whitmore & Dunsmore, 2014). Melissa's narrative below demonstrates this:

I definitely value reliability. If you say you're going to do something then do it. Reliability, caring about what's going on in other people's lives and not just what's going on in your life. I think for one of the reasons Jenna and I aren't super good friends is because she will tell me every single detail of her day and not ask a thing about mine. The day I had an interview and actually dressed and she came in the room and told me every single thing about this important meeting she just had and didn't even question why I was wearing professional clothes. I think just being aware of your friends and their needs and their day and what's going on in their life. That's really important. I want someone who remembers that I have a trip planned this weekend or is aware of me. Those are the two biggest things I think. Those are what I've lacked in friends in the past. Those are number one for me right now.

It is clear that Melissa doesn't feel that the relationship is equally strong on both sides—that Melissa feels she is more invested than Jenna. This seems to support findings that equality and reciprocity are important aspects of building strong friendships (Markey & Kurtz, 2006; Ujitani,

2006). The perceived lack of reciprocity can lead to feelings of frustration, and in this case, may have led to a decline in interaction and the failure of friendship formation.

Chapter Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter

This chapter presented data in relation to my first two research questions: 1) How do domestic students with international students as roommates define intercultural interaction? and 2) What do domestic students with international students as roommates look for in a friend?

The data showed that participants identified *race/ethnicity*, *traditions/customs/experiences*, *beliefs/values*, and *socioeconomic status* to be key factors in cultural differences, and, thereby what they termed to be intercultural interaction. However, for some, these features were only salient if the interaction they were discussing involved someone of another nationality. This finding seems to support Halualani (2008), whose participants did not classify their interactions with their own friends as intercultural, despite their varying ethnicities, genders, and nationalities. However, for others, the question of intercultural, instead of negating the notion of their own culture, brought up strong questioning of their own identity and how their own culture matched or did not match their interactants. The process of social “recategorization” introduced in the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993) may offer an explanation for why these participants did not see themselves as culturally different from the members of their friend group.

Participants’ expectations for friendships revolved around two key aspects of intimacy development: *self-disclosure* and *reciprocation*. The construct of *self-disclosure* included three characteristics: *truth/honesty*, *trust*, and *be myself*, while the construct of *reciprocation* comprised *loyalty*, *reliability*, and *there for me/each other*. These findings further support the

well-acknowledged work in intercultural relationship development, intergroup interactions, and intercultural communication (e.g., see Abrams et al., 2002; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Chen, 2002; Gudykunst, 1985a; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Kim & Gudykunst, 2013).

While these participant-generated definitions are not surprising in any way, the processes they describe did affect their intercultural relationships. This will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6, as I examine participants' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship.

CHAPTER 5
SEEKING COMMON GROUND: FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS OF
INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION AND FRIENDSHIP

...a friend may be waiting behind a stranger's face.

—Maya Angelou, *Letter to My Daughter*

Chapter 4 explored the way participants in this study defined intercultural interactions their friendship expectations. This chapter will focus on the development of domestic students' relationships with their international student roommate(s) and other intercultural relationships over the course of the year. I will discuss factors that facilitated and inhibited intercultural interaction and the development of friendship, including the participants' perceived barriers. This examination will help to answer the third research question and the first sub-question of research question four:

- RQ3: What are domestic students with international students as roommates' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship?
- RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates' experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction?
- a) What do domestic students perceive to be the barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship?

The coding process revealed two distinct sets of factors that influenced the way participants experienced intercultural interaction: those that facilitated it and those that inhibited it. This chapter will take these two sets of factors in turn, then discuss the role they played in

participants' intercultural relationships, both with their roommates and across campus. The final analysis chapter, Chapter 6, will discuss the perceived benefits of intercultural interaction and friendship and other intercultural learning the participant'.

Factors that Facilitated Intercultural Interaction and Friendship

Five major factors that facilitated intercultural interaction emerged from the data in this study:

- 1) participants' *motivation* to interact across cultures,
- 2) *proximity*, that is, the opportunities the participants had to be in close physical proximity to and to interact with students that they considered culturally different,
- 3) *self-disclosure* (i.e., sharing details about oneself to establish intimacy),
- 4) *perceived similarity* (i.e., the more ways the participant was able to connect or find commonality with their intercultural partner, the more likely it was that the relationship continued), and
- 5) *time/time spent together* (i.e., the more time the participant spent with their intercultural partner, the more their relationship deepened).

These five factors appeared across various stages of the participants' relationships, but rarely in isolation from one another. Thus, while I will describe the coding and evidence for each of these factors singularly, the summary discussion at the end of this section will demonstrate how they work together to facilitate continue interaction and friendship development.

Table 6 gives the coding framework for these factors; sub-factors are identified in the descriptions.

Table 6

Coding framework for factors that facilitated intercultural interaction and friendship

Code	Description	Example from the data	Support in the literature
Motivation	Participants' motivation for seeking intercultural interaction and friendship, for example: - lack of existing social structures on campus - genuine curiosity regarding other cultures - openness to trying new things	We just kind of talked for a bit about where we're from and our names, and it went very nice I think. Then we went to a hall meeting and then we all went to ... do you know when the chancellor talks? Yeah that's what happened the first day. We all went there and then diner with our hall. <i>We all stick next to each other because we didn't know anyone and that helped in the first week definitely.</i> (emphasis mine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee (2008) • Ujitani (2006) • Volet & Ang (2012) • Dunne (2013)
Opportunity	Participants' intercultural interactions facilitated by shared location or social group, for example: - living situation - shared class/academic activity - shared social activities/networks	That was a cool class...The professor was also from China...It was a smaller environment. I was able to talk to students and hear their experiences. It was cool because some people were there from the US but lived in China for 5 years. Some people were from China and this was their first time in the US. That was a cool comparison.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareis (1995, 2000) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Dunne (2008)
Perceived similarity	Participants' intercultural interactions continued due to perceived similarity, for example: - shared pop culture interests (books, sports, movies, TV, etc.) - shared cultural identity (ethnicity, values, beliefs, traditions, customs)	No matter what your cultural values are and where you are from, you still have common ground based on your personality. We're all the same generation. We share media and all those things. You could be friends with someone even if they are from a different place. You can still find common ground in a lot of ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berg (1984) • Gudykunst (1985) • Gareis (1995, 2000) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Sias et al. (2008) • Dunne (2008, 2009)
Self-disclosure	Participants' intercultural interactions facilitated by moments of sharing personal details with each other.	Slowly we started talking and...I guess that slowly progressed to just you know really hanging out with her not just making it like a gym kind of thing, it was more like you go out to eat dinner or you go, I recently went with her to an Arabic show to go see and it was really fun, so that's how it progressed I guess forming to a really close bond. From my first time that I had the interview with you I said that it was hard for me to talk about my own personal family stuff or whatever, so with her it's like we both share certain things like that, so it was nice to see that I can do that with someone now you know.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareis (2000) • Chen (2002) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Lee (2008)
Time/Time spent together	Participants' intercultural relationships deepened by the passage of time and time spent together	It just takes more time to cultivate a real relationship I think with someone who's international. I wasn't super tight with Zeynep first quarter. We did our own thing, but now I'm like, "Okay I get you." Now we're becoming good friends. It's just a longer process...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berg (1984) • Pettigrew (1997, 1998) • Peng (2011)

Motivation

Motivation refers to the factors that drove participants to seek out intercultural interaction in the first place. While all of these participants had international students as roommates, and thus interaction of some sort was inevitable, this construct looks beyond that to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drove students to seek out interaction. *Motivation* comprises two sub-factors: *lack of existing social support structures* and *curiosity/openness*.

Lack of existing support structures. This factor was primarily important in the early parts of the fall quarter of the school year, when everyone was a bit new to the environment. While some participants had friends or family members that had come to UCLA either prior to this school year or that joined them this year, most of the participants did not know anyone. For those who did not have a previously existing social network on campus, contact with their roommates was the most convenient and often preferred option. When I asked Aparna what initiated the relationship with her roommates, she spoke fondly about the day that they met:

We just kind of talked for a bit about where we're from and our names, and it went very nice I think. Then we went to, what's that called, a hall meeting and then we all went to ... do you know when the chancellor talks? Yeah that's what happened the first day. We all went there and then to dinner with our hall. We all stuck next to each other because we didn't know anyone, and that helped in the first week definitely.

Having her roommates for companionship in the early part of the school year was an important piece for her initial adjustment to being away from her friends and family. Hannah expressed similar sentiments:

My [international] roommate and I, we didn't know that many people here so we spent a lot of time together. Went to like everything together. Went to eat together all the time.

In fact, many of the participants who did not come to UCLA with previously established friends, who didn't have family members here, or who did not choose to participate in rushing a fraternity or sorority initially relied on their roommates to provide social support.

Genuine curiosity about/openness to other cultures. Many participants' curiosity about other cultures motivated them to initiate intercultural contact—some because they had grown up in an environment that they considered very diverse, and others because they had grown up in very homogenous communities and wanted to know about other cultures. This factor was especially important in the selection of roommates. While many of the participants' roommates were assigned randomly, some found their roommates online in Facebook groups or other forums prior to coming to UCLA. This is how Haley and her roommates found each other.

Haley grew up in Berkeley surrounded by a cadre of international friends with parents from all over the world. These surroundings afforded her the ability to travel frequently with her friends' family members, and gave her a sense that having that type of interaction was important. When she made the choice to come to UCLA, she deliberately sought out roommates who were culturally different from her:

I kind of knew I wanted to be with someone who had a different background than me just because like I'm from Berkeley and so by coming to UCLA I'm already staying in the same state, I mean the Bay Area is different from Southern California, but I wanted someone from outside of California or outside the country just to build friendships outside of that...

Haley knew that by coming to a state school, she was more likely to find friendships with students from California if she didn't make a concerted effort to seek out relationships outside of that circle. Haley stated later in the same interview, "I'm lucky to have grown up somewhere where I've heard a lot of languages spoken and a lot of different faces, and I'm used to that, so I'm interested in interacting with those people." This interest could be a product of the

environment that she grew up in, as studies have shown that prior intercultural experience is an indicator for positive intercultural interaction (Sias et al., 2008).

Similarly, Connie also had prior intercultural experience coming into UCLA. She grew up in a home where both parents were first generation immigrants and a language other than English was spoken and described her high school experience as diverse. She, too, looked forward to the possibility of continued intercultural interaction on campus when she came to college. Connie spoke of the diversity on the UCLA campus:

I enjoy it, I don't know. I really don't want to be stuck in my own little bubble and not really know what are people are thinking, and what other people are doing, and how different people live, like their different lifestyles...

In contrast, Marisela is also the child of first generation immigrants that grew up in a Spanish-speaking household. However, her home community was fairly homogenous. She saw UCLA as an opportunity to experience cultural diversity in ways she never had before:

I feel like [intercultural contact is] very accepted here. Most people tend to seek it, in a way. Others, I've only seen a few groups where they still have their cliques, where you still have your same groups, trying to keep it within your culture. A lot of the groups I've seen they've been mixed...but coming from a place where it's been that way [keeping to your own ethnic background], coming here where it's more like a mixed thing, it's a major difference and I see that here. It's an embracing thing for different cultures.

Because Marisela came from a fairly homogenous community, where social groups tended to form around ethnic identity, she viewed the diversity on campus as welcome opportunity to explore cultures outside of her own. She found the campus a place that empowered and encouraged intercultural interaction and thus she felt more motivated to reach out across boundaries.

Others' openness manifested in the social clubs they joined and the activities they participated in. For example, Hannah, who is Chinese-Vietnamese American, joined a Filipino organization on campus just to learn more about the culture:

[T]here's so many different clubs here that are ethnically different. They're so focused on different ethnicities, nationalities, and they kind of welcome everyone, so you can just go and experience the different cultures. I've been to one of the Filipino clubs. It was interesting... It was really fun. I did see a couple of the dances. Most of the [first] night was actually them talking about what their club was about. The different clubs, Filipino clubs on campus, is about, and I learned about the different ways that everyone was so bonded to each other.

Katie joined a program sponsored by the Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars called Global Siblings, which pairs domestic students with international students for social interactions, in order to meet someone from another culture:

I joined this thing called the Global Siblings program... I was paired up with an international student and he was a grad student from India, and the purpose of the program was to meet like twice a month and get to know each other and stuff. So, we went to dinner and just... I'm kind of someone to make preconceived notions about people, so I was kind of expecting us not to have a lot to connect on, because he was like nine years older than me and different majors and stuff like that. But it's kind of funny because we found out that we both like the same kind of food, just like me and my other roommate. It's just random things the same TV shows and like he really likes this one celebrity that I like.

Although Katie's motivation here feels somewhat superficial, as she admits that she typically holds "preconceived notions about people," the pull of curiosity was strong enough to motivate her to join a program specifically designed to facilitate intercultural interaction.

Summary of *motivation*. Motivation manifested in different ways for different participants, but each needed a driver outside of their living situation to push them towards initiating intercultural interaction. Cultural curiosity and openness have been identified as important factors in facilitating intercultural interaction on college campuses (Dunne, 2013; Groeppel-Klein et al., 2010; Nesdale & Todd, 2000). In addition, Dunne (2013) also found that the "perceived utility" of an interaction was a significant motivator for intercultural interaction. In the beginning of the school year, the participants without other support structures may have seen their interactions with their roommates to be particularly useful as a means of invaluable

social support at a time when they had none. Although the sample size in this project is small, the findings seem to support these studies; I should note, however, that motivation and contact dropped for more than half of the participants by the second interview as participants established their own social ties, immersed themselves academically, and diversified their experiences overall. These inhibitors will be discussed more thoroughly in the second half of this chapter. While the need for social support and genuine curiosity frequently served as the impetus to initiate contact, *motivation* alone was not enough to facilitate the development of participants' intercultural relationships—they also needed the *opportunity* to interact.

Opportunity

The second factor that facilitated intercultural interaction on campus was *opportunity*, meaning that participants 1) shared a physical space with someone they perceived to be culturally different and 2) had a shared reason for being there. One of the unique features of this study is that participants all had at least one international student as a roommate for the course of the year. Therefore, in at least one aspect of their lives, these participants were in regular and repeated contact with a person that they perceived to be culturally different from themselves via their shared living situation. In addition to their roommate situations, other opportunities to interact across cultures presented themselves, albeit infrequently. This section will highlight those opportunities outside of their own living situation.

Shared classes. One of the most commonly mentioned facilitators of interaction outside of roommate situations was shared classes. This was an especially powerful strengthener of the relationships between roommate pairs because they not only occupied the same physical space, but they had a common purpose and could rely on each other for academic support:

I think, especially this quarter, because all three of us are taking the same class, I think classes are having the same schedule really makes, made us really close. It will be interesting to see what happens next quarter when we do not have the same schedule. to see if that bond lasts, and since I feel like it all kind of dissipate a little bit, but now, since we have a foundation, that we'll be able to connect more. Because last quarter we didn't have anything really, like no base to start from, and I feel like now that we do, it'll be easier to connect.

We had two or three classes together, and at the same time, so we'd just go to and from, eat together, just spend a lot more time together. Circumstance brought us together.

Having a class with their roommates gave participants a shared experience with their roommates, a basis on which to begin to form a deeper connection. Shared classes also gave participants the opportunities to interact with culturally different students outside of their living situation, as

Katie notes:

[T]hen the guy [from China], I met him initially through ... mutual friends, but we weren't friends until we had the same class, and I would say I initiated [contact] because I was like, "Oh, we're in the same class. We should sit together."

Even though they had met previously through mutual friends, it wasn't until they shared a class that the relationship began to develop. As in the first two examples, the shared academic experience gave the pair an opportunity to share the same physical space, which in turn gave them a shared interest around which to build a deeper friendship.

Volunteering/service learning. Other areas where participants had the opportunity to interact with those they considered culturally different was through various volunteer and service learning projects. In one of the examples above, we saw Katie volunteering her time through the Global Siblings program, a university sponsored program specifically designed to increase interaction between international and domestic students. In addition to this type of programming, students at UCLA are encouraged to participate in service learning courses and projects. Aparna

found this to be a place where she was able to interact in a meaningful way with other international students:

I went to Mark Twain Middle School, and I tutored there. Some people went to clinics in Venice and other places. When all these international students and local students went to all these service-learning sites, we saw the injustices in Los Angeles, and I feel like that changed everyone's perspective, especially the international students... There's one of them [international students] that I still talk to. She went to tutor at Mark Twain with me...[S]he was also Indian. She came from Dubai. She was a third year. She was really nice to talk to. She was a great person, and she genuinely had the same passions as me. She was very caring toward these students, although we were completely different majors.

Without having worked with her international student friend, Aparna wasn't sure that they ever would have met because of their differences in age, major, and living situation. Projects such as these bring students from different social and academic circles together to work towards a common goal, affording an opportunity for connection that might not have existed otherwise.

Shared social networks. Previous research has demonstrated that individuals who know that an in-group member has a friend who is a member of a particular out-group tend to hold attitudes that are less prejudiced toward that out-group (Wright et al., 1997). The literature also mentions connections through one's own friendship network also facilitate intercultural interactions on campus (Dunne, 2008; Ujitani, 2006). This also bore out to be true with many of our participants—many of the opportunities that they had to interact across cultures came through social activities arranged by someone in their immediate friend network. For example, Marisela's roommate, Daniella, who is Guatemalan American, attended one of the last orientation sessions for first-year students offered two weeks before school started. The last two orientation sessions are primarily filled with incoming international students due to student visa

arrival date restrictions,⁹ thus, many of the friends Daniella made before school started were international students. Daniella frequently invited her newly made intercultural friends to the dorm room that she shared with Marisela, as well as inviting Marisela to join them when they were going out. Many of the intercultural interactions that Marisela described in her interviews were a direct result of the friendships that her roommate made and maintained. This offers support for the extended contact hypothesis, which posits that being aware that an ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup member can lead to more positive intergroup attitudes (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). The extended contact hypothesis works along the principle of “my friend’s friend is my friend” (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). In essence, one sees their ingroup as part of “self” and thus treats all ingroup members as they would treat themselves, but outgroup members are not seen as part of “self.” However, should one of the ingroup members have a friend who is a member of the outgroup, then that outgroup member becomes absorbed into the ingroup and thereby the “self,” reducing boundaries between ingroup and outgroup (Wright et al., 1997).

Summary of *opportunity*. The data in this study showed that participants’ opportunities to interact across cultures were widespread—from their own dorms, to their classes, volunteer projects, and even their own friendship networks. For the purposes of this study, I have defined the construct *opportunity* as a shared location or social group. Similarly, Gareis (2000) identified “proximity” as a key factor in intercultural interaction. However, recognizing that shared physical space alone did not necessarily facilitate interaction, Kudo and Simkin (2003) instead

⁹ F-1 visa restrictions state that a student cannot enter the United States more than 30 days before their courses begin. See <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html> for more information on the F-1 visa process.

suggested that “functional propinquity, based on close residential proximity, shared places of contact, shared activities, or shared networks of friends” (p. 107) was more likely to influence intercultural interaction and friendship formation. The data here seem to support this analysis, as both shared physical proximity and shared social networks were important to facilitating intercultural contact for the participants.

Perceived Similarity

The third factor that facilitated intercultural interaction in this study was *perceived similarity*. This perceived similarity included shared interests, personality, shared experiences, and, for some, shared culture. I asked the participants whether they found it difficult to make friends with someone who was culturally different from them. Aparna’s response best demonstrates the importance of perceived similarity in this process:

Aparna: A little bit, because if you're different, they might not open up to you as much, so you have to build the trust. If they have something similar, they'll be like, "Oh, I like that too!" or like, "I agree," but if you first meet them and you disagree, you don't want to straight-out say that, because they might not like it. It's going to take a little longer for you to express your views.

Interviewer: You think that's important, having a common interest in the beginning, for establishing relationships?

Aparna: Yes. I feel like having something in common helps you be like, "Oh, that person's like me, so if they agree with this, they might agree with this." Even if they don't agree, you feel comfortable telling them.

Finding that “something” in common sparked interest in the other person in the early stages of the relationship, which in turn led to further interaction, a building of trust, and in many cases a deepening of the relationship.

Common interests (sports, TV, music, movies, etc.). Getting to know someone involves exploratory conversations around one's interests, especially popular culture, such as sports teams, movies, TV shows, and current events. This is how many of the participants began their conversations with intercultural interactants. Jason, for example, describes his process getting to know someone new:

If ... you're interested in similar things, if you're interested in international soccer, you're more interested to be able to say different things about soccer. Then you can assume different things maybe about sports in general, or something like that. I think that it's not just with international students, but even with domestic students, as well.

Finding something small in common, like an interest in international sports, could be a conversation starter in intercultural interactions, especially when both parties are a little anxious about interacting with each other.¹⁰ In the case of participants interacting with their roommates, the conversations often started off with the trivial and moved towards deeper conversations as the trust built:

We started off ... At first we clicked mostly off books. We just talked about all the different kind of books that we read. Surprisingly, we had very similar tastes. I think we started recommending books to each other, discussing the books that we've read, and then that kind of moved on to movies, music, and I think now we just talk about life in general. Since like we play games with a lot of different people we share friends. We can talk about daily life stuff. Things like that. Classes.

Finding the small similarities formed the basis for continuing the interaction and learning more about each other. Having common interests, such as sports, music, and movies, also gives intercultural interactants opportunities to occupy the same social spaces, especially when playing sports or attending events on campus around their interests. These small discoveries frequently led to spending more time together, more discussion, and further development of the relationship.

¹⁰ This will be discussed in the next section on "Factors that Inhibit Intercultural Interaction"

Personality. While common interests gave participants common topics for conversation and the opportunities to spend more time together, having a compatible personality is also a key sub-factor in seeing each other as similar. Many participants mentioned the role of personality or a shared sense of humor as a one of their similarities:

I guess we just make each other laugh. I can't really say what she likes and stuff. I know she likes tennis and just, honestly, it's kind of weird. I'm not really one to bond over interests but just her personality is very much like mine.

Patricia's reliance on personality alone is unusual amongst participants, but the sentiment of having a similar sense of humor, a shared way of looking at the world, a similar way of dealing with conflict was a common thread through almost all when discussing their relationships on campus, both intra- and intercultural. Haley put this succinctly:

No matter what your cultural values are and where you are from, you still have common ground based on your personality. We're all the same generation. We share media and all those things. You could be friends with someone even if they are from a different place. You can still find common ground in a lot of ways.

Haley's explanation also shows an openness to finding the commonalities across difference, that the process of sharing will help develop those commonalities. This seems to support Volet and Ang (2012)'s finding that cultural differences, as well as similarities, facilitate interaction—curiosity about others can drive those with different cultures, but similar personalities towards interaction and friendship.

Perceived cultural similarity. One of the more important factors that facilitated intercultural interaction in this study was *perceived cultural similarity*. In particular, ethnic similarity seemed to play a role here—for example, Asian-American participants assumed their East Asian roommates shared similar cultural values, and white students assumed their European

roommates to be culturally similar to themselves. This initial assumption facilitated initial interactions between the domestic students and their international roommates.

Hannah's friendships throughout her life had developed around people with similar cultural backgrounds, or families with shared cultural values; for example, her closest childhood friend was Cantonese. When she met her Asian American roommate at UCLA and her international student roommate, she learned that they all shared a similar cultural background: Hannah is Chinese-Cambodian American, her domestic roommate is Chinese-Vietnamese American, and their international roommate is mainland Chinese who lived in Canada until high school, when she returned to Shanghai. Hannah felt this cultural similarity made the transition from strangers to roommates seamless:

I think they [my domestic student roommate's parents] are Chinese-Vietnamese. It was easy ... I think we grew up the same way because my family was mostly Chinese-Cambodian. Hers is Chinese-Vietnamese and the Cambodian Vietnamese cultures are very similar. We're both Chinese Southeast Asian growing up in America so we had a lot of the same experiences. Then our families also had very similar values. When we moved in there weren't much arguments over rules and things. We just kind of like assumed we didn't want to be bothered.

Hannah saw the three of them (including herself) all as very much alike from beginning of the relationship. According to Hannah, there was never any conflict or misunderstanding, rather everyone got along quite well. Hannah attributes this to the assumption of shared cultural values:

We moved in and I guess we just settled down in whichever desk was closest to our beds so there was no argument over that. I think part of the reason why we just got along so easily is because we were all from similar ethnic backgrounds so our background cultures, anyway, already clicked.

From this excerpt, it becomes clear that she never related to her roommates as culturally different from herself, even though at times she referred to her international student roommate's different life experiences, she still related to her as a cultural "equal." Hannah assumed from their ethnic backgrounds that they shared similar cultural values and beliefs, long before they got to know

each other well personally. This perceived cultural similarity was a key driver in facilitating the intercultural interaction between Hannah and her roommate.

Similarly, when Haley spoke about her expectations for international roommates, she frequently mentioned how “cosmopolitan” Singapore was, and that no one was really “from” Singapore. Both of her international student roommates had attended (rival) English speaking international schools,¹¹ and thus Haley assumed that they would have both been surrounded by Americans and American culture. Prior to meeting either of them, she had already begun to think of them as culturally similar to herself. Both of her roommates were from Singapore, but were from vastly different backgrounds. One was Swiss, but had lived in Singapore for eight years. The other was born in Singapore, but was ethnically Chinese. Her experience and expectations were a bit different, however. Haley noted about her Swiss roommate:

You would think that she’s American. She talks exactly like me. I think that’s the first huge marker if someone sounds and talks the exact same slang or talks just like you. That’s a clear marker that you’re from a similar place. I think that language and how you speak is a huge significance of connection which is kind of interesting on a more subconscious level. It definitely caught me off guard. I was expecting her to have an accent.

Haley’s first meeting with her Swiss roommate challenged her preconceived notions of what it meant to be ‘international.’ She expected her roommate to have an accent, or to somehow be marked as ‘different.’ When Haley found that her roommate spoke exactly like her, it confused her, as Haley had conflated the notion of shared language with that of shared experience: she speaks like me; therefore, she is like me. Haley was not alone in her assumptions—other American students also assumed that her Swiss roommate was like them:

¹¹ For the purposes of this paper, when I refer to *international schools*, I am referring to private schools outside of the United States that are generally attended by the children of diplomats, international business people, and other expatriates. Although some local students also attend, the majority are expatriates living in a country outside of their country of origin. The high school curricula is frequently follow either a U.S. high school or the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, and the language of instruction is frequently English.

It's been interesting talking to her because everyone thinks she is American. She doesn't have an accent or anything. She said people automatically think she's from here and treat her differently. Whereas, if they probably knew that she never lived in the US before and if it was more clearly visible, like if she had an accent or something, it's very interesting to see how people interact differently with her...I remember her talking about how culture shock. She's like "This is a culture shock for me and no one understands that or recognizes that."

Because Haley's roommate was white, "looked European," had attended American international schools, was familiar with some American popular culture, and spoke English like other American teenagers, most American students saw her as just like them and did not recognize that she was struggling to adjust, like other more 'marked' international students. The assumption of cultural similarity facilitated intercultural interaction with Haley's international roommate.

Summary of *perceived similarity*. Similarities in terms of interests, personality, beliefs, and values have long been a part of research on friendship and intercultural friendship development (see Duck, 1975; Gudykunst, 1985a; Sias et al., 2008). The data in this study shows that perceived similarity is a key personal factor that helps to facilitate intercultural interaction and friendships, supportive of previous research. Similarities in personality and interests played a significant role in sparking interest and initiating conversation. Sias et al. (2008) found that perceived cultural similarity was a key factor in reducing barriers and facilitating intercultural communication, especially in the beginning stages of intercultural friendships. Similarly, the participants in this study found perceived cultural similarity a significant factor in easing the initial transition from stranger to acquaintance as they got to know each other as roommates. Ethnic identity is also a key social identity category (Tajfel, 1981), thus perceived similarity here could have helped participants see their international roommates as part of their social ingroup rather than an outgroup.

Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure has been identified as a key element for both intra- and intercultural friendship development (Gudykunst, 1985a; Hays, 1985; Lee, 2008). In the case of their intercultural interactions and friendships, participants reported disclosing things to each other nearly constantly for the purposes of support, comfort, advice, or just having someone to vent to. Participants reported feeling closer to each other and more included because of these acts of self-disclosure. As Aparna noted:

Well that's when we started opening up to each other about our families and got to know each other a lot better, that's when I got like we can relate, that's when we clicked. We both saw that and we even like ... Right now, we are even planning to go for summer together because we are saying here for summer school.

Aparna has a fraught relationship with her family; when she learned that her roommate from Indonesia faced the same struggles of finding balance between her own independence and deference to her parents' wishes, their relationship became much closer. Disclosures about family backgrounds and values revealed similarities that could not be seen on the surface, slowly building the trust that participants indicated was so important to friendship development. Often, these discussions would come at the end of the day, after the lights were out, and the participants were lying in bed talking about their days. Marisela shared a memory:

I remember one night specifically, we just shut off the lights and it was just Alice and I who were in the dorm and Daniella, I forgot where she was but she wasn't there that night. Alice just started talking to me and then- it was really nice. It was just a conversation in the dark and- it's a bunk bed so I'm on the top and she's in the bottom one. We were getting into conversations of like the whole one-child policy in China and how that's changing and how her parents were sort of happy and at the same time sad at the fact that during when they had Alice they could only have one child.

Patricia had similar experiences with her roommate from Dubai:

Honestly, we just talk about what happens in our day and stuff and people we meet. If there's anyone particularly unusual we'll talk about them or I don't know, honestly. I guess I ask her a lot, I actually ask her a lot about Dubai and she asks me stuff a lot about the U.S.

These types of personal disclosures not only build trust, but also reveal information about each other's cultures that foster a deeper understanding of belief systems, values, and world-views. More often than not, with frequent self-disclosure, participants saw each other as more trustworthy and honest, and were open to sharing more. As the disclosures became more personal, the relationships deepened.

Time/Time Spent Together

Many participants reported the amount of time it takes to make new friends--whether an intercultural friendship or not, time is required for adequately getting to know someone, developing trust, and determining the level of intimacy one is willing to share with that person.

As Aparna noted:

The experience I've had with making friends it happens over time. You can't just go to school and instantly make friends and find your group. You have to talk to different people, see who you want to maintain really good friendships with and some loose friendships. I think it all happened gradually overtime because friendships evolve with experience. I'm not going to make my best friends like freshmen year.

Patricia expressed a similar sentiment, noting the importance of the passage of time in order to have had enough time to "get a feel" for someone and their trustworthiness:

Definitely trust and I guess not necessarily time, but time definitely helps. Yeah, I guess enough communication that you really know about the person that you can really trust them and stuff.

In addition to the length of time that it takes to get to know someone, participants also reported that the amount of time spent with facilitated the development of that relationship, especially with intercultural friends. Thus, frequency of interaction was also a facilitator of intercultural friendship development. Hannah talks about getting to know her roommate from Shanghai:

My other roommate [from China] and I we didn't know that many people here so we spent a lot of time together. Went to like everything together. Went to eat together all the time.

This time spent together led to more frequent self-disclosure and discovery of more commonalities, thereby deepening the relationship. These findings seem to support Peng (2011), who also found that frequent contact and length of time knowing each other contributes to the advancements of the relationship, as “spending time together is part of the friendship routine” (p. 56).

Summary of Facilitating Factors

Five key factors facilitated the initiation of intercultural interaction and the development of intercultural friendships in this study: *motivation*, *opportunity*, *perceived similarity*, *self-disclosure*, and *time/time spent together*. The initiation of interaction was most facilitated by *motivation* and *opportunity*. Participants were motivated by social need (lack of other social support networks) and their own curiosity to initiate intercultural interaction. Initial interactions outside of the living situation were also facilitated through shared classes, campus activities, or shared social network members. The development of intercultural (and intracultural) relationships were facilitated by the factors *perceived similarity*, *self-disclosure*, and *time/time spent together*. Self-disclosure led to the discovery of shared interests, cultural values, and personality traits, which led to more time spent together, which led to additional self-disclosure and discovery of similarities, and so on. While participants were able to articulate the differences between these different factors and understood the role that they played in the development of their intercultural relationships, the individual factors rarely appeared independent of another in the interviews. The five seem to be heavily dependent on each other in the process of intercultural friendship development, and the absence of any one of these factors potentially inhibited intercultural interaction, as will be discussed in the next section.

Factors that Inhibited Intercultural Interaction and Friendship

Many of the factors that facilitated intercultural interaction above became inhibitors if they were missing from the interactions. However, the data revealed that anxiety also played a significant role in participants' lack of interaction with those they considered to be culturally different. Table 7 gives a breakdown of the coding framework and examples for these inhibiting factors. This section will address each of these factors in turn.

Anxiety

Anxiety is commonly associated with intercultural interaction. *Anxiety* refers to participants' feelings of apprehension, fear, or emotional discomfort in the context of intercultural interaction (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Nesdale & Todd, 2000). In the data, these feelings manifested as fear, intimidation, self-doubt, and even suspicion. This category emerged as one of the most significant factors that inhibited participants from initiating or continuing intercultural contact.

Perceived lack of interest from international students. Many of the participants in this study felt that there was little interest from international student in interacting with American students. Some of these perceptions were based in negative experiences the participant had while interacting with international students on campus, while others were based in preconceived notions about international student preferences in language use and friend groups. The participants' perceptions fell into three main groupings along the following themes: *negative experiences with intercultural interaction, international students speaking a language other than English* and *“international students more comfortable with each other.”*

Table 7

Coding framework for actors that inhibited intercultural interaction and friendship

Code	Description	Example	Support in the literature
Anxiety	Participants' interactions inhibited by anxiety and uncertainty about what is happening in an interaction - fear of rejection - lack of international student interest	I feel that in a lot of ways, international students stick together and they continue to speak their native language. I don't speak that language. That's an automatic isolation from other students. Even in classes, if I was in a section and I wanted to speak to those students in the rest of the group, but <i>I feel they don't really want to interact with American students.</i> (emphasis mine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nesdale & Todd (2000) • Spencer-Rodgers (2001) • Gudykunst & Mody (2002) • Peacock & Harrison (2008) • Harrison & Peacock (2009)
Expected Communication Issues	Participants' inhibited by an expectation that communications will be difficult	When I found out who my roommates where, they were both originally Indian, ...so coming here I kind of thought, that they were both not going to be very Americanized, I guess. I kind of thought that I wasn't going to be very close to them because I thought that maybe we wouldn't have things to connect on. And because I thought they both like didn't speak that fluently in English so I wasn't really sure whether we would like be friends just because I feel like I'd have a hard time communicating with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Volet & Ang (2012)
Lack of Motivation/ Opportunity	Participants' intercultural interactions inhibited by lack of motivation or opportunity for contact, for example: - Social obligations - No shared activities/ social networks	At the beginning of the year, we would seek each other out more. We would all hang out more. As you meet other people, join clubs and get into different class schedules, you become busy with studying. Unless you are actively making that time again, you're not going to have that time together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan (2005) • Summers & Volet (2008) • Volet & Ang (2012)
Perceived lack of similarity	Participants' intercultural interactions not continued due to perceived dissimilarity, for example: - No common interests - No sense of shared identity - Cultural distance	She's out of the room a lot. She's busy. She's in like a dance group, and she's also a figure skater and everything, so I don't like see here as much, and she's very like sweet and caring as well.... Um... we just don't really have as much in common.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gudykunst (1985a) • Gareis (2000) • Sias et al. (2008) • Dovidio et al. (2016)
Apathy	Participants' interactions not continued because of the effort required	It's just comfortable not to [interact outside your cultural group]. It's easier just to remain friends with people in your cultural group. There won't be any misunderstandings or any tensions so yeah, might as well just take the easy way...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward (2001) • Dunne (2008) • Burkhardt (2013)

Negative experience with intercultural interaction. For Patricia, multiple negative experiences have cemented for her the notion that international students are not interested in interacting with American students:

My admittedly limited experience with international students here for the most part have been not too great. I feel like I've said hi to a few of them before and a lot of times they just ignore me. I know for a fact that they heard me because they didn't have headphones on and we were the only people there. It was like hmm.

She felt ignored, and more importantly, disregarded. After several experiences like this, she stopped trying to initiate interaction with those she thought might be international students as she perceived the interaction to be unwelcome. Other students also felt ignored or left out when they were faced with intercultural interactions, especially if the other students were speaking a language other than English.

International students speaking a language other than English. It is not uncommon to hear several different languages being spoken walking from one side of campus to another as students scurry to their classes. The university is host to students from approximately 80 countries.¹² Many of the participants in this study commented on the way they felt when students around them were speaking in a language they could not understand. Some felt that using a language other than English helped international students to intentionally isolate themselves from other groups on campus, and others acknowledged that it was likely just more comfortable to speak their mother tongue. Even with this acknowledgement, however, some were still uncomfortable when students around them were speaking a language other than English.

¹² Source: <https://www.admission.ucla.edu/prospect/intl.htm>

During the interviews, I asked participants who were hesitant about intercultural interaction what kept them from seeking out intercultural friendships. Haley noted her own insecurity and how that added to her feelings of discomfort:

In a lot of ways, I know that I am a shy and nervous person. I would want to talk to [international students], but, for one thing, they are not speaking English. Two, I don't feel that it's an interaction that's necessarily desired by them.

In addition to her own shyness, Haley felt that international students, by speaking in their mother tongues with other international students, were sending a message to domestic students that they didn't want to interact. In both of our interviews, Haley noted that international students speaking a language other than English isolated international students from other students on campus, but in our second interview, she touched upon how it made her feel:

I feel that in a lot of ways, international students stick together and they continue to speak their native language. I don't speak that language. That's an automatic isolation from other students. Even in classes, if I was in a section and I wanted to speak to those students in the rest of the group, but I feel they don't really want to interact with American students.

Haley's perception of international students on campus is that they "stick together" and that they "continue to speak their native language." She perceives this behavior as a snub, that even if she wanted to interact, she feels "they don't really want to interact with American students." Haley's speech takes on a tone of indifference, as if she didn't feel like the interaction was worth her effort. While Haley interpreted the interaction as an intentional snub, Connie found students speaking in a language other than English to be intimidating:

I guess it's just because maybe I don't know what they're talking about or when they're speaking another language, it kind of sends a message that they don't want other people to understand what they're saying. It's probably not true, but it kind of makes it seem like that. If you're able to gossip in another language and no one knows what you're talking about, then you probably don't want a lot of other people to understand what you're saying.... It's probably the fact that we don't know what they're saying. When we speak English, they probably know what we're saying. Maybe a part of it is an intimidation factor.

Connie assumes that students speaking a language that she doesn't understand to other students must be saying something that they "don't want a lot of other people to understand." She equates the speech to "gossip," and worries that these students must be hiding something if they aren't speaking in English. She is uncomfortable and intimidated that students who can speak more than one language can understand what she's saying when she speaks in English, but that she cannot understand what they are saying when they speak another language. When asked what is so intimidating about students speaking another language, Connie said, "Just the fact that they can speak in another language and say all these things that you don't know what they're saying." She seemed embarrassed by her own admission that these students speaking a language she didn't understand was intimidating. She quickly added, "I don't know," and looked away. Connie's reaction is curious, considering that she herself speaks Cantonese and some Mandarin. She doesn't consider herself fluent in either, but she and her family speak Cantonese at home, and she attended a Chinese immersion school as a child. Perhaps the intimidation is a result of feeling her own second and third language skills are lacking.

Similar to Connie's worry of gossip, Melissa feels uncomfortable when her roommates and suitemates only use Korean when speaking to each other in the room:

All my suitemates and roommates are all international and they all ... They rarely speak English to each other. That probably makes them more comfortable. It's super uncomfortable for me because if I walk into the room they'll stop talking ... Our bathroom has a closed door so when you go in you feel like you're in another room but you can hear everything, almost amplified, so I'll walk into the bedroom and they'll stop talking and then I'll walk into the bathroom where it looks like I'm gone and they'll keep talking. In Korean. I have no idea what they're saying either way. Then I'll come out of the bathroom and they'll stop. Of course, I'm sure they're not talking about me but that's the way it makes me feel. If someone walks in and they stop talking, you're like ... You know? That happens a lot. I know they're not doing it out of malicious intent or to make me uncomfortable but I notice it.

Melissa's feelings are hurt by her roommates' and suitemates' excluding her from the conversation. She tries to make sense of it for herself, stating that speaking Korean "probably

makes them more comfortable” and that she’s sure “they’re not doing out of malicious intent,” but her underlying feelings of isolation and hurt are clear. She is uncomfortable when they stop talking when she comes into the room and start up again as soon as she leaves. She perceives these behaviors as intentionally exclusionary, and makes her feel that if someone is speaking a language other than English when she is present, it is because they don’t want to interact with her or that they are talking about her.

Connie’s and Melissa’s responses reveal an underlying anxiety about not fitting in with their peers and about others thinking and speaking negatively of them, manifested in suspicion and questioning of international students’ motives for speaking their native tongue in their presence.

“International students are just more comfortable with each other.” These experiences of feeling left out and ignored may have led to the perception that “international students are just more comfortable with each other.” One of the more significant barriers to intercultural communication and friendship that many participants in this study noted is the tendency for international students to be friends with other international students. Most of the participants in this study attributed this to a level of “comfort” or finding their “comfort zone,” and perceived it as an indication of lack of interest in interacting outside of their own cultural group. Melissa speculates:

They're more comfortable, I think, because they have more in common [with each other]. I can't relate to someone who's not from America. If they're having a hard day I can't really empathize with them because I don't understand what they're going through. Whereas, another international student can.

Melissa recognizes that she might not be able to “empathize” with the international student experience, and acknowledges that it may be very different from hers. She “can’t relate to

someone who's not from America" because she feels the cultural divide is just too great to overcome those differences. What this excerpt demonstrates most clearly, however, is that she fails to recognize that international students may also be experiencing many of the exact same things that she is, too, as most first-year students face some kind of adjustment stress.

Amy speculates about why a particular group of Chinese students is always hanging out together in one of the lounge areas in the residence hall:

I think they're just more comfortable with each other. I always saw on my floor, they all hang out together. They get the food they like from the Café or something. They actually...they talk and they can speak to each other how they like to and be loud and just enjoy each other's company and it's like totally cool but I think it is kind of a cultural thing.

She attributes international students befriending each other to cultural familiarity—similar tastes in food, shared language, etc.—noting that they “get the food they like” and “can speak to each other how they like.” She thinks it is “totally cool,” but remarked that not everyone on her floor was as comfortable with international students. Some other students filed a complaint about the lounge “being taken over” by Chinese students with the resident advisor (RA), citing the “noise” level. This resulted in guest rules being changed and had the immediate effect of eliminating the lounge as a gathering space, not just for international students, but for all.

In an attempt to get more residence hall residents to get to know each other, resident directors (RDs) and RAs plan social events for the whole community or the whole floor, respectively, on a fairly regular basis. These events are well-meaning, but don't always have the intended effect of increasing interaction. Aparna talks about attending one of these building events during her first week on campus:

On my first week here, ...we went to a Humboldt event and a lot of the international students, they stick to each other. Especially if they're from the same country. That might be a challenge, because unlike domestic students, they just want to stick in their little group—seek the comfort zone.

Aparna noticed that international students tended to group together based on shared nationality or language, and felt that any kind of interaction would be seen as an intrusion and could be difficult. She made a comparison between international students and domestic students, stating that international students “just want to stick in their little group—seek the comfort zone,” thereby implying that domestic students were more willing to reach out and make more varied connections, but this has not borne out in the research, which has shown that neither side is particularly adventurous in reaching across the aisle without a little help.

Fear of offending. While many of the participants felt anxious about initiating intercultural interaction, others were anxious about saying the wrong thing while interacting with a person they perceived as culturally different. Many were worried about saying something culturally inappropriate out of their own ignorance of various cultures, including those within the United States. For example, Hannah had never heard of “blackface” before coming to UCLA, and thus had no understanding of the issues with a Kanye West-themed sorority party. Others were concerned with having a lack of understanding of “national” cultural norms for those from outside of the United States. Recognizing the importance of cultural identity, Patricia noted:

I don't want to...shoot...I don't like to offend people when it comes to something that I feel like is something important to them. Something as important as their culture. I don't ever want to make someone feel like I'm totally disrespecting them.

Patricia's recognition that cultures outside of her own might have different norms and that she could potentially violate those norms demonstrates a certain level of intercultural awareness on her part. However, in her case, instead of resulting in a push to learn more about other cultures, for her, she said she has a tendency to avoid situations where she is uncertain how to behave. This has the effect of limiting her interactions to those that she perceives to be culturally similar to herself.

Beyond not knowing the cultural expectations of others, uncertainty about interpersonal relations also caused anxiety among participants when it came to dealing with issues with their roommates. For example, Amy was having a problem with her Chinese roommate taking extraordinarily long showers in the morning that often led to Amy having to skip them before class because her roommate didn't leave her enough time. She was uncertain how to approach the situation without causing more problems:

I guess not knowing which boundaries to push... Whether to bring up the bathroom thing or whether or not that is a sensitive subject. Just like I know things that wouldn't offend people in America could offend someone else from another country. I guess it just makes it a little more uncomfortable when you are discussing room issues.

Amy had an intensely personal issue speak to her roommate about, but she was unsure whether the topic of bathroom use was a cultural taboo. While she really wanted to ask, "What are you doing in there?" she didn't want to offend her roommate, if it was the cultural norm to take long showers. In addition to the cultural anxiety, she also didn't feel like she knew her roommate well enough personally to approach such a private topic without being offensive. Instead of addressing the situation, she ignored it and avoided interaction.

Summary of *anxiety*. Anxiety was a strong driver of avoidance of intercultural interaction among participants in this study. Participants were reluctant to interact with those they saw as culturally different from themselves when they perceived that the interaction was not welcome. That perception may have come from an interpretation of students speaking a language other than English as a deliberate attempt to exclude them from the conversation, as Melissa and Haley felt, or as an attempt to "gossip" about them, as Connie felt. Furthermore, international students' tendency to spend time with other international students was also frequently perceived as an unwillingness to interact with American students. Finally, others were anxious about

offending their interlocutors. It seems as if two different uncertainties were driving this particular anxiety: 1) not knowing the culture well enough to know what is and is not an acceptable means of communication, and 2) not knowing the individual well enough to feel comfortable initiating a potentially conflict-laden interaction. All of these anxieties seem to be rooted in a deep-seated fear of not fitting in, a common anxiety amongst adolescents, and uncertainty about how to initiate and conduct thoughtful interactions in intercultural situations. These findings suggest that cross-cultural communications training (Young & Scharner, 2014), facilitated activities (Bennett, 2012), and targeted socialization (Sias et al., 2008) could be useful strategies for mediating anxiety in interactions between domestic and international students.

Communication Issues

Whether international students have issues communicating or not, they are often perceived as having communication problems by their domestic student counterparts (Volet & Ang, 2012). Frequently, international students are stereotyped prior to interaction as having low levels of fluency in English or as having a heavy accent, both of which could make communication challenging (Andrade, 2009a). However, many of the communication issues between domestic and international students do not stem from language issues at all, but from differences in communication styles. If domestic students perceive an intercultural interaction as communicatively difficult, they may lose interest in continuing the interaction or avoid initiating contact altogether.

One of the most commonly identified concerns that participants had when they found out that they would be living with an international student is whether they would be able to communicate well in English. Although many of the participants soon learned that fluency in English was not going to be an issue, some still had difficulties with communication.

Katie was also certain that the language barrier would hinder her ability to connect with her international roommates:

When I found out who my roommates were, they were both originally Indian, one of them from India, then another from Dubai, but they are both Indian, so coming here I kind of thought, that they were both going to be not very Americanized, I guess. I kind of thought that I wasn't going to be very close to them because I thought that maybe we wouldn't have things to connect on. And because I thought they both like didn't speak that fluently in English so I wasn't really sure whether we would like be friends just because I feel like I'd have a hard time communicating with them.

Katie assumed that because both of her roommates were Indian that they would have difficulties communicating in English, and because they wouldn't be able to communicate clearly, she wouldn't be able to find anything in common with them. She worried that they wouldn't be "Americanized," a term that comes up in several interviews, generally meaning that they wouldn't understand American pop culture. Later in the same interview, Katie laughed at how wrong she had been about her roommates' ability to communicate. Although one of her two roommates moved out and another American student moved in, the one Indian student that remained has no issues whatsoever with communicating in English, and she and Katie have become close friends.

For Jason, however, the communication issue became a serious impediment for any type of interaction. One of Jason's roommates, Allan, was from China, while the other, Michael, was an American friend Jason knew in high school. In his first interview, Jason noted that he didn't think Allan could communicate very well in English and how challenging the relationship had become during the first few months of living together:

I don't know if it's a communication issue or language issue or anything like that, because I've talked to him and he doesn't speak great English, doesn't totally understand English that well. But there's just a lack of communication with what he's doing and what we're doing. It can lead to some tension between us a little bit.

This inability to communicate led to Jason feeling more and more frustrated, but also to some compassion for the situation that Allan must be in:

I've always found it easy to make any kind of friends. It's just with the communication issue, it's been a lot tougher than I imagined....He can never totally formulate what he's trying to say....I've walked past him and a couple of his friends, walking down or whatever. His friends are speaking to him in English, and they're also international students. They speak like a heavy accent or something like that. They'll talk to him in English and he'll seem really confused and respond back in Chinese. I don't know if it's ... I don't know if his English is poor, or what. He doesn't know it totally well, but I don't know. It seems really tough on him to be expected to speak English all the time and to understand English all the time.

In this excerpt, Jason expresses his conviction that Allan does not speak English well, citing examples of Allan's own friends even resorting to Chinese to communicate with him. He also takes as evidence Allan's "confused" face. This incident provided Jason with confirming evidence for his perception that Allan's ability to communicate was limited, and by the end of the year, any attempts at communication between the two Americans and their Chinese roommate had ceased.

While many of the participants in this section expected their international roommates to have difficulties communicating in English, this was not the experience in most cases. Katie and Haley both found their preconceived notions challenged. Other participants, like Amy, Marisela, and Aparna, also had no issues with communicating with their roommates. In contrast, Jason and his American roommate Michael, had significant difficulties communicating with Allan, their Chinese roommate. They placed the blame almost solely on Allan's perceived limited ability with the English language.

Lack of Motivation and/or Opportunity

One of the clear inhibitors of interaction with their international roommates in this study was the lack of motivation (no driving need) and/or opportunity (no shared space or social networks) to

interact with their international. For many participants, either they or their roommates had established social networks when they arrived on campus. Katie noted:

It was hard for me to connect with my Indian roommate at first because I felt like she kind of had her own friends and her group of friends are from India, so they all met up in India before they came to UCLA, so they all kind of knew each other. So, I felt kind of like a little barrier between her and I.

Katie felt excluded from her Indian roommate's friend group because they all already knew each other. Knowing that those relationships were already established inhibited both Katie and her roommate from reaching out to each other for anything other than immediate room needs. Katie, too, had an exclusive friend group in the form of her Korean Christian Fellowship and the Korean American Student Association. These formed her primary social circle at the beginning of the year.

Other participants' roommates had exceptionally busy schedules and outside social obligations, as Haley's did:

She's out of the room a lot. She's busy. She's in a dance group, and she's also a figure skater and everything, so I don't see her as much, and she's very sweet and caring as well.

In addition, participants' participation in intermural sports (Katie played volleyball and Haley played lacrosse, for example) also kept them out of their dorm rooms, limiting the opportunities they had for interaction with their roommates.

Membership in a sorority also seemed to be a major factor in inhibiting intercultural interaction between roommates in this study. The intense social and academic schedule kept those who were in a sorority out of their dorm rooms until after 9:00 pm most nights. Participants who were in a sorority also reported that most of their friends were also members of their same sorority, indicating that opportunities for socialization, whether intercultural or intracultural, outside the Greek structure were likely limited.

Sharing a class with their roommates was a facilitator of interaction for many participants, as noted in the previous section. However, some participants reported that even with sharing a class, there was still little motivation to connect with each other. Melissa noted:

We even took the same class fall quarter and every so often we would talk to each other about it if one of us needed quick help but we'd never study together. I feel like if we had it'd be a lab section together and we needed to work on a common project together or a common thing that we both needed. So far, we've both just done our own things and not needed each other for anything. Not needing each other didn't allow any time to get to know each other.

This excerpt is a representative example of the way many participants felt: they did not need their international roommate for social or academic support. Outside support structures rendered the roommate relationship unnecessary in those aspects, thereby impeding intercultural interaction and relationship development. For Melissa and her roommate, the level of communication dwindled to virtually non-existent by the end of the year.

(Perceived) Lack of Similarity

A key factor in most friendships, including intercultural friendships, has been shown to be a perceived similarity in personality, values, beliefs, interests, among others (Gudykunst, 1985a; Sias et al., 2008). Data in this study showed that a lack of similarity, whether real or perceived, had a profound effect on the development of intercultural friendships.

Lack of shared interests. As noted in the section above, similarity of interests, especially those surrounding pop culture, can help to facilitate the “getting to know you” conversations between strangers. However, when those pop culture reference points do not exist between interactants, it can lead to disappointment and even disinterest in continuing the conversation, and even the relationship. Conversations between co-national interactants are

generally rife with pop culture references, often without their awareness. Many participants reported not knowing what to talk about with international students, especially those from non-Western countries.

One participant, Jason, was concerned that he wouldn't have anything in common with international students from Asian cultures. During our first interview, he stated that he was interested in learning more about his Chinese roommate, but he wasn't sure they would have anything to talk about. He generalized this sentiment to all international students, stating, "It's difficult to gauge what they're interests are and how I can connect with those interests." Jason worried that he wouldn't be able to find anything in common with international students, unless, he mentioned, they were also interested in basketball.

Haley also found it difficult to find commonalities with her international student roommate, especially after they had both rushed a sorority and only one of them followed through with the process:

Although we don't really have as much in common, and I don't know, after the whole rush thing and it didn't really work out for her, I think she kind of held a grudge against me because I was like in the house that she wanted to be in, and then it didn't work out, and I felt a little bit like I couldn't really talk about like what is going on in my life because I didn't want to make her feel left out from that experience ... we just don't really have as much in common.

In addition to spending most of her time socializing with other members of her sorority, Haley also felt that Soo, her Korean roommate, resented her for joining the sorority. This caused Haley to avoid further interaction with Soo, but she attributed it to not having much in common.

Shared cultural identity. In contrast to those in the previous section who found that a shared cultural identity with their intercultural interactants facilitated the interactions, this particular group of participants found themselves drawn to those that were culturally similar to

themselves, thereby unintentionally shutting out anyone who they perceived to be culturally different. These participants found themselves drawn to people who shared a similar cultural identity and developed friendships through actively seeking those with similar backgrounds:

I've noticed that from recent new friends that I have made they have been more, they have been mainly Hispanic. Just recently though I've made, like I said the only people that I have communicated with or spoken to that are from different backgrounds they've only been acquaintances, they've never been people that I'm really close to or that I see on daily basis. As the year progressed I see that the new friends that I have made have been similar backgrounds as mine, which I kind, I like it but you want to get to know, get that whole idea of what the UCLA is known for the diversity, but yeah that's how it is.

While Marisela was friendly with her roommates, and enjoyed the interactions that those acquaintances afforded her, the strongest ties that she formed over the course of the year were those that supported her own social identity. In fact, by the end of the year, she was considering seeking membership in a Latina sorority for the following year.

When Katie came to UCLA, she expected her friendships to be somewhat similar to those she had in high school—mostly white, upper middle class. What she found instead, however, was a deepening connection with her Korean roots. Her Korean identity is very important, but she sometimes feels like she is caught between two cultures—she finds herself concerned that others judge her for “not being Korean enough.” She joined a Korean Christian fellowship when she first arrived on campus, but she felt a little out of place because she was unfamiliar with some of the more traditional customs of Korean culture:

There's a certain etiquette among Koreans when you go out to eat, like the oldest person is always supposed to eat first. You're not supposed to touch your food until the oldest male eats first or something. Things like that that I don't know, so I'll kind of like do my own thing, what I'm used to, and I kind of get looks for that... So there's customs like that that I didn't know and then coming to college I just felt a little out of place, like I was inadequate or something. I wasn't experienced with any of that.

She had a very specific idea of what stereotypical Korean girls are supposed to be like: thin, pale, always impeccably dressed and made up, reserved in demeanor, and, most importantly,

subservient to males. She doesn't see herself this way at all—she likes to wear yoga pants and express her emotions freely. By the end of the year, she had connected with KASA, the Korean American Student Association on campus, whom she found to be “less judgmental.” Her connections with those she deemed culturally similar to her gave support to her Korean American social identity, for which she had not had much opportunity to explore in the past.

Cultural similarity did not only center around ethnic identity, but also around location. Many participants identified strongly with the region of California where they were raised and found themselves drawn to other people from there as well:

I just find I relate a lot more to people from the Bay Area. It's interesting coming down here. I didn't think it would be such a thing but I do. I have my sorority sisters, they're from the suburbs and they're just from a slightly different world. This sounds so messed up but they're just not ... Those friends, I love them and they're great, but I'm just not as myself around them.

Amy grew up in San Francisco, a densely populated city, and found that she had difficulties relating to students (both domestic and international) who did not share this similar upbringing. This relationship with home region was particularly salient in the participants from Northern California, who found Southern California “interesting” and people from there to be “funny.” Another participant, Haley, recognized that she would likely be drawn to people who were from her home region

Perceived cultural distance. Ward (2001) defines *cultural distance* as “the amount of perceived similarity/dissimilarity between two cultures.” This cultural distance has been noted in the literature as a source of anxiety and tension in intercultural interactions (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002). In other words, the more culturally different someone from the outgroup is seen in comparison to members of the ingroup, the more likely there is to be tension or

misunderstanding. In this study, students mentioned divisions between Eastern/Western cultures and socioeconomic status/class.

The concern over the East/West divide was most prominent in white students who had Asian roommates. For example, Melissa downplayed the cultural differences between the United States and other Western countries, and laughed at the “funny” things her Korean roommate did when she first arrived:

Even England and Norway I feel like aren't that different for the most part. We're both predominantly white. They grew up speaking English. Like I said, the culture change wasn't as different, whereas like for Soo the first week of school we took her out to get pizza. We had to teach her how to eat pizza. She put the fork in the crust and tried to pick it up. We're like, "No, this is how you eat pizza."

In this case, Whiteness and Western-ness were seen as clear definers of cultural similarity.

Melissa perceived English and Norwegian students as similar to her because they looked and sounded like her, even though she mistakenly characterized Norwegians as native English speakers. In contrast, her Korean roommate, Soo, was perceived to be very different because of her lack of familiarity with American cultural norms around eating pizza. Although in this example, Melissa seemed to be characterizing Soo's behavior as abnormal, Melissa also demonstrated her willingness to teach Soo about American life and culture. There was no malice towards her roommate because of the perceived cultural divide, but these differences eventually led to a decline in interaction between Melissa and her roommate.

Patricia's observations of the East/West divide extended beyond racial and linguistic barriers into the behavioral:

Honestly, I feel like international people don't really hang out with international students. It feels like there's a very big divide like international students all hang out with each other... It's like even if it's like a Chinese-American and person from China, I feel like they wouldn't hang out together... I think that it's a really big cultural divide. I feel even like their mannerisms are completely different.

Patricia noted that, in her experience, “international people” (meaning Americans of mixed ethnic heritage) also tend to avoid interaction with international students because of the vast cultural distance between the two groups behaviorally, despite what she perceived as shared racial and linguistic heritage.

As discussed earlier when defining intercultural from the participants’ point of view, one important, but unexpected, finding was the inclusion of class differences. Multiple participants noted their discomfort with interacting with those they perceived to be of higher socioeconomic status than they considered themselves to be; this discomfort was a salient theme amongst participants when discussing barriers to interactions. Haley describes her experience going for a birthday dinner with a friend from Dubai who she perceived to be of a much higher social class:

[T]hey definitely live just a different lifestyle because a lot of students, if you are international, you're paying a price for it so you have to have a certain amount of affluence, I've kind of noticed...I went to a birthday party for the girl from Dubai. We showed up in what we thought were pretty nice clothes, but not compared to them. And we went to this place, and it was extremely expensive...[W]e sat down, and we were really nervous, like, “How much are we going to have to pay?” and she was like "Don't worry, I invited you. I'm going to be paying for the dinner," and we were like "Ok" and she was like, "Order two plates" and we were like, “Ok, let me find the cheapest plates,” because I felt bad. So, we found the cheapest things, and the bill ended up coming to \$800 or something and me and my friend were like "What??"... I looked at my debit card and I was like, "I have \$25. That's all that's going to happen," and she said, "Ok, you two just pay \$25, and we're going to split the rest," and they just like put down their cards without a second thought, and me and my friend were like "Where are we??" That was the most surreal international experience... We were like, “This is NOT what I grew up with.” This is a very different lifestyle.

Haley’s assumption that all international students are wealthy was confirmed in this interaction with several international students out for dinner at a birthday party. When they arrived at the venue for the dinner, Haley and her friend, another American student from northern California, were immediately intimidated by the prices on the menu and the way the international students were dressed. They both felt out of place and uncomfortable with spending above their means, even though their friend from Dubai, whom they were celebrating, assured them that the cost

was not to be borne by them—in her culture, if you invite, you pay. This assurance did little to settle Haley’s anxiety. From Haley’s description of the interaction, it is unclear whether she is uncomfortable with the wealth of her international companions or uncomfortable with her own inability to participate in the event on an equal footing. When asked about the experience again in our second interview, she noted that she felt “fortunate” to have had that opportunity, but that she had avoided getting herself into those types of situations since.

Like Haley, Patricia also assumed that international students must be of high socioeconomic standing in order to attend this university:

Honestly, another thing well at least for me, honestly, some of it is like the class thing. Because I know in order to come here as an international student I just assume you have to be like really rich. I thought you had to be super rich to come here because I know it's super expensive. I was like I don't know. I guess it's also easier to interact with people in the same class as you. Yeah, I guess it's not just the whole international thing.

For Patricia, the barriers for intercultural interaction extend beyond the “whole international thing” and are specifically and particularly related to class. She places herself in a low socioeconomic group and finds it difficult to relate to those in a different socioeconomic group. This came up more than once in our general discussions of diversity and intercultural interactions on campus. She viewed the culture of the university to be vastly different from the community where she grew up:

I feel like I have to be a lot more, I guess, polite and formal and stuff. My old high school, most of the people there are from a low socioeconomic group so we're just like just “whatever.” I guess most of the people here are a higher socioeconomic group. Everyone, I guess, is super polite about everything and stuff...Just saying sorry when you don't need to say sorry like just for the littlest of things. I guess being overly polite in a way that it makes it seem kind of fake... Just like even when someone casually pokes you like, "Oh my gosh, sorry," as in a totally exaggerated way. As if that's a big deal. Honestly, I don't dislike it, just it obviously is insincere. You're not really, really sorry about accidentally poking someone.

Patricia feels that it is necessary to pretend to be more “polite and formal” when interacting across class lines at the university. The social norms that she associates with higher

socioeconomic status seem “fake” and “obviously insincere,” which makes her uncomfortable. Patricia tends to steer clear of interactions that could result in conflict (this will be discussed further in the next section) and has a strong affinity for the familiar, which leads her to interact primarily with others she perceives to be of similar socioeconomic background.

In this section, I discussed the perceived cultural divide between Eastern/Western cultures and social class. In each case, the interviewee found these perceived differences to be a significant barrier to intercultural interaction. Also in each instance was an undercurrent of feelings of not fitting in, the fear of rejection mentioned earlier in this section. In our first interview, Hannah made an intuitive observation of her fellow domestic students:

I think ... there's a lack of willingness to kind of like step outside comfort zone. Especially with international students. They're so used to a certain type of people, certain values, certain languages. They're more unlikely at any rate to try to make friends that are different from them. I think that's a really big issue.

Hannah recognizes that it is difficult to leave the comfort of the familiar to make friends outside of your perceived in-group. The next section addresses this tendency to take the “easy road.”

Apathy: Ease of “Sticking with the Familiar”

Domestic student apathy towards interacting with those who they perceive to be culturally different is a well-documented barrier to intercultural interaction on university campuses (see Ward, 2001). Most of the students in this study are no exception to this. They tended to seek out friends with shared characteristics, values, language, even hometown. Like the international students that they observed as “sticking together,” they, too, leaned towards the “comfort” of the familiar. Many of their friend groups consisted of others that they described as *culturally similar* to themselves. This trend seems to support the findings in other recent research (Burkhardt, 2013; Dunne, 2008; Smart, Volet, & Ang, 2000) (Dunne, 2008).

When asked if she had thought about why her friend group consisted of people that were primarily culturally similar not only to her but that were similar to each other as well, Haley responded:

I think...that people tend to go towards who they are similar with, similar to... I mean, most of my friends are also from the Bay area that I've made here. You just kind of you are drawn to people who are similar to you in how they think and how they act. You can also, you're also in college so you're homesick, so if you can talk to someone about your favorite food place and they've been there too, that makes you feel a lot better. And so, I wouldn't necessarily say that that's like a barrier, that's just like a natural tendency that people have and that contributes to making it hard to sort of enter a group that you don't maybe have as much similarities with

Haley seeks out the familiar in friendships. She is most comfortable with those who are similar to her in how they “think and act,” and in her case, who are also from the “Bay Area.” She feels that only those with similar experiences to her will be able to understand what she is feeling. She also finds relief from homesickness when she can share memories with someone who shares her background, like someone who is familiar with her “favorite food places.” She doesn’t find the unfamiliar to be a total barrier to interaction, but does note that it is significantly more difficult to enter a group of friends if you are the outsider, without shared connections or interests.

For Patricia, the ease of the familiar reflects her own discomfort with conflict of any kind.¹³ She has a strong tendency to avoid conflict, even with those that she is close to, thus when approaching someone whose background she is unfamiliar with, she adds an extra layer of caution:

It's just comfortable not to [interact outside your cultural group]. It's easier just to remain friends with people in your cultural group. There won't be any misunderstandings or any tensions so yeah, might as well just take the easy way...

¹³ “I guess it's just me in general. I just I don't have conflicts with friends. I really don't like conflicts with friends. I try to avoid it like I will, honestly, I will lie or just be ridiculous in order to avoid a conflict with a friend. I have lied in order to avoid conflict.”

Patricia's need to not offend anyone affects her motivation for reaching out across cultures. She wants to avoid "misunderstandings or... tensions," which keeps her friend circle relatively culturally similar. As with Haley, Patricia mentions how much easier and more "comfortable" it is to interact with those similar to her.

In contrast, when Katie arrived at University, she expected to have a more diverse friend group, as she had growing up, but her actual experience has been quite different:

I think there are a lot of cultural differences, and I think that a lot of times we tend to flock towards our own culture and our own race. I feel like just from what I've experienced I've noticed that a lot of my friends are also Asian; whereas, at home when I didn't have to make friends for myself and I was just 'given' friends through elementary school, there was a lot more diversity within my group. I feel like, especially because it's a big public school, there's going to be inevitably a lot of different groups you can join, so I feel like that's a plus, because there is a lot of cultural diversity, but I feel like a lot of it is concentrated within its own groups.

Katie grew up in a neighborhood where most of her classmates were ethnically and racially different from her. Her best friend growing up shared her Korean heritage, but most of her other friends were of other ethnicities. She expected to have a similar experience before coming to University, but when she arrived, she found herself drawn to the Korean cultural clubs, first one based in religion and later one based on ethnicity only. Because of her participation in these groups, Katie found that most of her friends are culturally similar to her. She does note that it is tendency for both international students and domestic students "to flock" to their same race or ethnicity, that it is not an attribute of one group or the other. She feels that with the level of diversity on this campus, and the number of clubs that are based on ethnic or national origin, that it is inevitable for these culturally similar sub-groups to form, despite the diversity on campus.

Summary of Inhibiting Factors

Several key factors played a role in inhibiting participants' intercultural interactions: *anxiety, expected communication issues, lack of motivation/opportunity, (lack of) perceived similarity, and apathy*. Much of the anxiety seems to be rooted in adolescent fear of rejection. Even though it has been shown that international students want to interact and have domestic student friends (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Kudo & Simkin, 2003), the data here shows that many domestic students feel that the interaction is unwelcome. Many participants reported that international students speaking in their native languages was intimidating and off-putting. In addition, they expected that communications with most international students would be difficult due to low levels of fluency (although, most found this to not be the case once they initiated an interaction).

Intercultural interaction, especially with participants' international roommates, was also inhibited by *lack of motivation and opportunity*. Social obligations, in particular, such as Greek life and intramural sports, clubs, and other activities, proved to be major inhibitors, as the roommates rarely occupied the same spaces physically or socially. Social obligations often kept participants and/or their roommates away from the residence halls until late at night, or class and study schedules were widely varied, also inhibiting roommates from having the need or opportunity to spend time together. As one participant noted, "we just didn't need each other for anything," and thus, further interactions were minimal and limited to functional communication.

Lack of perceived similarity was the fourth key factor that inhibited intercultural interaction. Lack of common interests or cultural references made participants feel as if they would not have anything to connect with their intercultural partners on. The East/West divide was particularly salient here. For some, particularly the non-Asian participants with East Asian international roommates, the perception that the cultural divide was too great to find anything in

common seemed to play a significant role. If commonalities were not found early in the interaction, attempts at further connection and relationship development were abandoned. One of the more interesting findings in this section was that *perceived cultural similarity* for some participants was an *inhibitor* of intercultural interaction rather than a *facilitator*, as we saw in the previous section, in that participants sought out those who were culturally similar to themselves as a means of exploring their own ethnic identity. This had the effect of blocking other intercultural contact.

A fifth and final factor that inhibited intercultural interaction and friendship development, and the one I found to be the most disheartening, was *apathy* on the part of the domestic students. Many of the participants found that it was much easier to make friends with someone who they deemed as culturally similar, and that the effort required to reach out across cultural lines was ultimately not worth it. Since the participants were finding their social needs met with ease in other areas, the tendency was to not make the additional effort to seek intercultural interaction or friendship.

As with the factors that facilitated intercultural interactions and friendships, these factors did not work in isolation. They, too, had impact on various parts of the friendship development process. The next section will examine the role these influencing factors played in participants' intercultural relationships over the course of the year.

Outcomes: Roommate Relationships

To learn more about how the participants' relationships evolved over the course of the year, I interviewed each of the students twice: once at the end of the fall quarter/beginning of the winter quarter and once at the end of the school year. In the first interviews, the participants were

just starting to feel comfortable at UCLA, had begun to make some good friends, and had had but a few intercultural experiences outside of their rooming situations. Their relationships with their roommates had developed enough at this point for them to have some opinions about whether those relationships would continue or not, and they had all experienced both positive and negative intercultural interactions both inside the living situation and out.

By the second interview at the end of the year many of these relationships had changed drastically: only four of the ten (40%) participants categorized their relationship with at least one of their international roommate(s) as “friends” and said that they would maintain this friendship over the summer and beyond. Of the six others, five said that they had no relationship with at least one of their international roommates. Three had a friendly, but not close, relationship with at least one of their international roommates, meaning that while they would greet their former roommates if they saw them on campus, they did not believe that there would be any other intentional contact after the year was over. In contrast, of the six that had one domestic student and one international student as roommates, four said that they would continue to be friends with their domestic student roommate after the current school year ended. A close examination of the four successful intercultural relationships and the four that failed, and the two that were somewhere in the middle, revealed some intriguing patterns. First, I will discuss relationship outcomes in terms of the facilitating and inhibiting factors that emerged from the data, then I will briefly address the commonalities in terms of demographics.

The Role of Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors in Relationship Development

The next section will examine the outcomes of participants’ intercultural relationships in terms of the factors that facilitated and inhibited intercultural relationship growth as defined by the literature and the experiences of the participants in this chapter. Figure 3 illustrates the

presence of factors that either facilitated or inhibited intercultural friendship in each of the participants' relationships with their international roommate(s). The data is arranged by the three categories of outcome for the roommate relationships: friends; friendly, but not close; or not friends.

Participant Roommate country of origin	Outcome	Facilitating Factors					Inhibiting Factors				
		Motivation	Proximity	Self-disclosure	Perceived similarity	Time/time spent together	Anxiety	Expected communication difficulty	Lack of motivation/opportunity	Perceived lack of similarity	Apathy
Katie India	Friends	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	White	White	White
Hannah China	Friends	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	White	White	White	White	White
Patricia India	Friends	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	White	White	White	White	White
Aparna Indonesia	Friends	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	White	White	White	White	White
Haley 1) Switzer- land	Friendly, but not close	White	Green	Green	Green	Green	White	White	Orange	White	Orange
Connie 1) China	Friendly, but not close	White	Green	Green	Green	White	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	White
Amy 1) Turkey	Friendly, but not close	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	White	White	Orange	Orange	White
Marisela China	Friendly, but not close	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	White	Orange	Orange	White
Haley 2) Singa- pore	No relationship	Green	Green	White	White	White	Orange	White	Orange	Orange	Orange
Jason China	No relationship	White	Green	White	White	White	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Melissa Korea	No relationship	White	Green	Light Green	White	White	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Connie 2) China	No relationship	White	White	White	White	White	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	White
Amy 2) China	No relationship	White	Green	White	White	White	Orange	White	Orange	Orange	White

Figure 3. Roommate relationship outcomes by influencing factors. This figure illustrates the influencing factors present in each of the participants' relationships with their international student roommate(s). In successful relationships, facilitating factors outweighed the inhibiting factors. Unsuccessful relationships were marked by inhibiting factors and few facilitating influences. The light-colored square in Melissa's row indicates that there was some self-disclosure at the beginning of the year, but this stopped after the first quarter. The participants who are listed twice in this figure had more than one international roommate with different relationship outcomes.

Friends. All of the roommate pairs that resulted in friendships showed evidence of all five factors that facilitate intercultural interaction and friendship (*motivation, proximity, self-disclosure, perceived similarity, and time/time spent together*). If we examine Hannah's relationship with her roommate from China as an example, the interaction of these facilitating factors becomes even more evident. In her interviews, Hannah spoke of spending a significant amount of time (*time/time spent together*) with her roommates, especially at the beginning of the year, because none of them knew many other people on campus (*motivation*), and how easy it was because of their shared or similar cultural backgrounds (*perceived similarity*). The more they talked and shared details about themselves and their lives (*self-disclosure*), the more they learned they had in common in terms of interests (*perceived similarity*) which led to more time spent together. When Hannah spoke of spending time with her international roommate, it was always with great fondness:

I feel like with my international roommate, we've just had a lot of fun. I find myself spending so much time with her....She just brought in so many new things...I like spending time with her a lot.

By the end of the year, Hannah and her two roommates had developed a very close friendship and had decided to continue to room together in the coming year.

Although Katie exhibited evidence of anxiety and expectations of communication difficulty early in the relationship, these became non-factors as she learned more about her roommates and these fears were ameliorated. For example, she originally thought that her roommate from India would have issues communicating due to a lack of fluency in English. However, she quickly learned this was not the case:

Katie: I kind of thought that I wasn't going to be very close to them because I thought that maybe we wouldn't have things to connect on. And just from talking to them I guessed that they both like didn't speak that fluently in English so I wasn't really sure whether we would be friends just because I felt like I'd have a hard time communicating with them...

Interviewer: And so those expectations that you had before, of not being very fluent in English and ...

Katie: Oh yea, I was like totally wrong. [laughter] She went to an international school...

Once these early anxieties had dissipated, Katie's relationship with her international roommate developed much along the same lines as Hanna's had with hers. In fact, all four of the relationships in this category followed along similar lines. Two of the pairs had even become so close that they decided to continue to room together in the coming year.

Friendly, but not close. The four pairs in this category characterized their relationship with their international roommate as friendly, meaning there was no conflict between them (other than normal roommate spats), and they enjoyed the company of their international roommate. However, the relationships in this category never developed beyond the acquaintance level, or the domestic did not count their international roommate among their close friends. Each of the four relationships in this category demonstrated a combination of facilitating and inhibiting factors, and even though the participants in this category exhibited evidence of most, if not all, of the facilitating factors, the pull of the inhibiting factors was strong enough to override the other positive influences. In Haley's case, for example, she spent a lot of time in the room and in/around the residence hall with her roommate from Switzerland, who—because she was from Western Europe, white, and spoke with unaccented American English—Haley saw as culturally similar to herself. Even though they occasionally went to eat dinner together in the dining halls, they did not socialize much outside of their living situation. This is likely due to Haley's heavy outside obligations (*lack of motivation*). She is very involved in her sorority and spends the majority of her time with her sorority sisters, whether it is for academic study groups or for

purely social events. She also plays intramural lacrosse and spends a fair amount of time with her teammates. In addition, her best friend from high school also attends UCLA. These obligations keep her away from her room the majority of the time, thereby lessening the time she had available to develop the relationship with her roommate.

No relationship. In contrast to the relationships above, the five pairs that resulted in no relationship exhibited evidence of most, if not all, of the inhibiting factors (*anxiety, expected communication difficulty, lack of motivation/opportunity for interaction, apathy, and lack of time spent together*) and very few of the facilitating factors. The only facilitating factor that most had in common was *proximity*, as living together naturally puts one in a similar physical location on a regular basis. The one exception to this was Connie, whose second roommate from China moved out into an apartment prior to the end of the spring quarter. What had already been a minimal-contact relationship then became non-existent.

For Jason, the primary cause of relationship failure stemmed from an inability to communicate with his roommate from China. When asked to describe the relationship, he responded:

Tense. It's not as smooth as I thought it would be. I don't know. I don't know if it's a communication issue or language issue or anything like that, because I've talked to him and he doesn't speak great English, doesn't totally understand great English that well. But there's just a lack of communication with what he's doing and what we're doing. It can lead to some tension between us a little bit.

In his few attempts to communicate with Allan, his Chinese roommate, Jason found the efforts to be difficult and fraught with misunderstanding. This led him to avoid further communication, thereby eliminating any possibility of finding commonalities or developing any desire to spend additional time together. From there, the relationship devolved into one of mutual avoidance and silence until the end of the school year.

In Melissa's case, a combination of factors determined the course of her relationship with her Korean roommate, Soo. Soo was close friends with the three Korean girls who lived in the other room in their shared-bathroom suite, and the four of them frequently spoke to each other in Korean rather than English. This made Melissa wonder whether they were speaking in a foreign language intentionally to exclude her or because they wanted to talk about her (*anxiety*). This was a consideration in her dealings with all international students, not just her roommate. In our interviews, Melissa frequently mentioned the "funny" things Soo would do, like picking up a piece of pizza with a fork to eat it, or the "weird" things Soo ate in the room. These mentions indicated a sense of curiosity about Soo's culture, but they were also an indication of Melissa's feelings of *cultural distance* from her roommate. In addition, Melissa was raised in a community where "people tend do what their family did before them. There's not much mixing things up." This applied not only to career choices, but also to with whom one socialized. At her high school, there was very little effort to promote diversity in friendships, and this generally went unquestioned:

It's been like that forever. I think people just don't ... They're just comfortable. They can relate to each other better and they just don't see the need to change anything, to shake things up for the sake of maybe making a better friend somewhere else.

This attitudinal attribute from her community permeated much of Melissa's approach to interacting across cultures: she assumed that people she deemed as culturally different were not interested in interacting with her, she found it easier to interact with those that she perceived as culturally similar, and at times, she felt threatened by interactions she did not understand. The culmination of these factors led to an avoidance of intercultural interaction across the board.

Summary of the role of facilitating and inhibiting factors. Patterns in friendship development between domestic student participants and their international student roommates in

terms of facilitating and inhibiting factors followed predictable patterns: participants who were friends with their international roommates at the end of the year were supported by all or almost all of the facilitating factors, while relationships that did not work out had few, if any, of the facilitating elements and nearly all of the inhibiting factors. This supports the findings in Gareis (2000) and Kudo and Simkin (2003). This will be addressed more completely in the discussion at the end of this chapter.

Patterns in Participant Demographics

Although the sample size in this study is too small to make any generalizable claims about the role of participant background in their experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship formation, it is interesting to note some of the key patterns that emerged when demographic data was overlain on the relationship outcomes from this study. Table 8 shows key demographics of participants who classified their relationships with at least one of their international student roommate(s) at the end of the year as “friends.” Table 9 shows demographic data on participants who classified their relationships with at least one of their international student roommate(s) as either “friendly, but not close” or “no relationship.” Strikingly, none of the participants classified their domestic roommates as “no relationship.” In examining the two tables, the relationships categorized as “friendly, but not close” reveals variation in demographics, much like Figure 3 showed an assortment of the facilitating and inhibiting factors. The most striking patterns emerged in the differences between the “friends” and the “no relationship” categories. These will be described individually below.

Table 8

Characteristics of participants with successful friendships with their international roommates at the end of the year

Participant				Roommate 1		Roommate 2		
Name	Race (Ethnicity)	Parental background	Languages Spoken at home	Member of a sorority/fraternity	Country of origin/Race (Ethnicity)	Relationship with participant	Country of origin/Ethnicity	Relationship with participant
Katie	Asian (Korean)	Mother immigrated to USA at 3 years old, father at 15	English	No	USA/ Asian (Taiwanese)	Friends	India/ Indian	Friends
Hannah	Asian (Chinese-Cambodian)	Both parents immigrated to USA in their 20s	Teo Chew English	No	Canada/ Asian (Chinese)	Friends	China/ Chinese-Vietnamese	Friends
Patricia	Asian (Filipino)	Immigrated to USA after college	English Tagalog (only with older generation relatives)	No	USA/ mixed (Asian/White)	Friends	UAE/ Indian	Friends
Aparna	South Asian (Indian)	Family immigrated to USA when she was 4 years old	Punjabi English	No	USA/ unknown	Friendly, but not close	Indonesia/ Indonesian	Friends

Table 9

Characteristics of participants without friendships with their international roommates at the end of the year

Participant					Roommate 1	Roommate 2		
Name	Race (Ethnicity)	Parental Background	Languages Spoken at Home	Member of a sorority / fraternity	Country of Origin/Race (Ethnicity)	Relationship with participant	Country of origin/ Ethnicity	Relationship with participant
Marisela	Hispanic (Salvadorian)	Parents immigrated as teenagers	Spanish English	No	USA/ Hispanic (Guatemalan)	Friendly, but not close	China/ Asian (Chinese)	Friendly, but not close
Connie	Asian (Chinese)	Parents immigrated to attend college in the USA	Cantonese Mandarin English	Yes	China/ Asian (Chinese)	Friendly, but not close	China/ Asian (Chinese)	No relationship (moved out)
Haley	White	Both parents born in USA	English	Yes	Singapore/ White (Swiss)	Friendly, but not close	Singapore/ Asian (Chinese)	No relationship
Jason	White	Both parents born in USA	English	No	USA/ White	Friends	China/ Chinese	No relationship
Melissa	White	Both parents born in USA	English	Yes	USA/ Mixed (Vietnamese/ White)	Friendly, but not close	Korea/ Korean	No relationship
Amy	White	Both parents born in USA	English	Yes	Turkey/ White (Turkish)	Friendly, but not close	Hong Kong/ Asian (Chinese)	No relationship

Friends. The four participants who designated their relationship with their international student roommate as “friends” shared many characteristics. All were first-generation children of immigrant parents and all but one spoke a language other than English at home. All were from East or South Asia, and all had international roommates from East, Southeast, or South Asia, even though they were not always “matched” pairs (e.g., Aparna’s roommate was from Indonesia, whereas she is of Indian origin). Finally, none of these four were members of a sorority.

No relationship. The five participants who ended the year with no relationship with at least one of their international roommates also shared some interesting demographic characteristics. Four of the five were white children of two parents born in the United States and spoke only English at home. All four of the female participants were members of a sorority. All five had East or Southeast Asian international student roommates.

Implications. The relatively similar cultural backgrounds to those of their international roommates of the four participants that developed friendships, and the very different cultural backgrounds to their international roommates of those who ended the year with no relationship with their roommates seems to offer further support to notion that the greater the perceived cultural distance, the bigger the impediment to intercultural friendship formation (Brown, 2009b; Harrison & Peacock, 2009; Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

These findings also seem to support Sidanius et al.’s (2004) findings that membership in Greek organizations had a negative effect on outgroup friendships for White students. They found sororities and fraternities functioned like ethnic enclaves for White students, and that “contact with ingroup members through segregated fraternities and sororities increased levels of

social distance to ethnic ‘others,’ increased the sense of ethnic victimization, and decreased the perception of social inclusiveness” (as cited in Van Laar et al., 2005, p. 330). Thus, participants’ memberships in sororities, in addition to inhibiting motivation and opportunity for interaction with their international roommate, further inhibited interaction by potentially increasing the perception of cultural distance between them, especially those of different ethnic backgrounds than their own.

Discussion

This chapter examined the intercultural experiences and relationships of the ten participants in this study in order to answer RQ3 and part of RQ4:

RQ3: What are domestic students with international students as roommates’ experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship?

RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates’ experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction?

a) What do domestic students perceive to be the barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship?

In attempting to answer these questions, I found myself wondering whether domestic students’ experiences shaping their perceptions of intercultural interactions and friendship was bidirectional: did their perceptions also shape the experiences themselves? This led me to delve deeper into the factors that influenced intercultural interaction and friendship and the discovery of notable patterns in background characteristics of the participants. The following discussion

will further contextualize the findings in this chapter within the literature and explore the process of intercultural friendship development.

The Role of Intercultural Friendship Facilitators and Inhibitors in Various Phases of Relational Development

Five factors that facilitated and five that inhibited intercultural interaction and friendship development emerged from the data. The five facilitators that emerged in this study were *motivation, opportunity, self-disclosure, perceived similarity, and time/time spent together*. Inhibitors included *anxiety, expectation of communication difficulty, lack of motivation/opportunity, lack of perceived similarity, and apathy*.¹⁴ These factors in combination played a significant role in the development of intercultural friendships between roommates: in the simplest terms, when the facilitators were present and the inhibitors absent, friendships flourished; when the inhibitors were present and the facilitators absent, the relationships floundered. Although participants did develop outside intercultural relationships, the data here were not enough to support identification of the presence or absence of these factors in those relationships.

The findings in this study support the factors included in similar taxonomies that explain necessary factors for intercultural friendship to occur (see Table 13 in Appendix D). In each of these studies, similar to the findings in this study, the absence of various “ingredients” resulted in separation/ending of the relationship or avoidance of interaction all together (Dunne, 2008).

Ujitani’s (2006) study on the relational development between international students and host students noted that not only were there differences in the importance placed on various

¹⁴ Each of these factors comprised several subfactors. See Tables 6 and 7 in this chapter for definitions of each.

factors by international and domestic students, but that these factors had relevance at more-or-less different phases of relationship development for both groups. For example, while she found repeated and frequent contact to be important in the beginning stages of intercultural relationships, this became less important in the deeper stages. Although “stage theories” of relational development have been criticized for being too overly simplistic and linear,¹⁵ as Ujitani (2006) pointed out, it is possible to discuss relationship development in stages without defining where they begin or end, or specifying the length of each stage. To this end, Lee’s (2008) study on intercultural relational development offers a useful framework for examining the findings of this study.

Lee (2008) identified three main stages of relational development (*initial encounter*, *interaction*, and *involvement*) interspersed with two transitional phases (*needs/interests* and *turning point*). The *initial encounter* stage includes the first meeting and initial conversations, which tend to be “light and general” and focused on “school or work related topics” (p. 59). The first transition, *needs/interests*, is when interactants began to evaluate whether their partner met some sort of need or satisfied some sort of interest (e.g., a study partner or an interesting conversation partner). The *interaction stage* is characterized by greater self-disclosure, more time spent together, and a deepening understanding of their similarities and differences. Lee described the second transition, the *turning point*, as a specific moment or event in a relationship in which the interactants consciously decide to move the relationship to a deeper level. The final stage, *involvement*, is characterized by a deepening of the understanding of the other’s culture and worldview. In applying this framework to the current study, I will examine only the first two

¹⁵ Stage theories are generally based in social penetration theory, which states that interpersonal relationships develop in intimacy through communication and self-disclosure, from the non-personal to the innermost self (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

phases and the first transition, as this study occurred over a relatively short period of time in terms of relational development and most of the participants had not yet moved past the interaction stage to involvement. The data in this study, however, does show strong support for these first two phases. Figure 4 illustrates how each of the five facilitators works within each of these relational development phases to promote intercultural friendship development.

If the old adage, “you never get a second chance to make a first impression” holds true, then initial interactions between intercultural interactants may prove to be some of the most important, as this is when the greatest social penetration takes place (Chen, 2002). Indeed, studies have shown that decisions are made relatively early in an interaction whether or not to continue exploring the relationship (Berg, 1984). Congruent with Kudo and Simkin’s (2003) findings that proximity in and of itself is not enough to ensure intercultural interaction, the “forced” proximity of being roommates was not enough to initiate additional interaction for participants in this study. They also needed motivation, such as not having other social support structures, in order to move the relationship along.

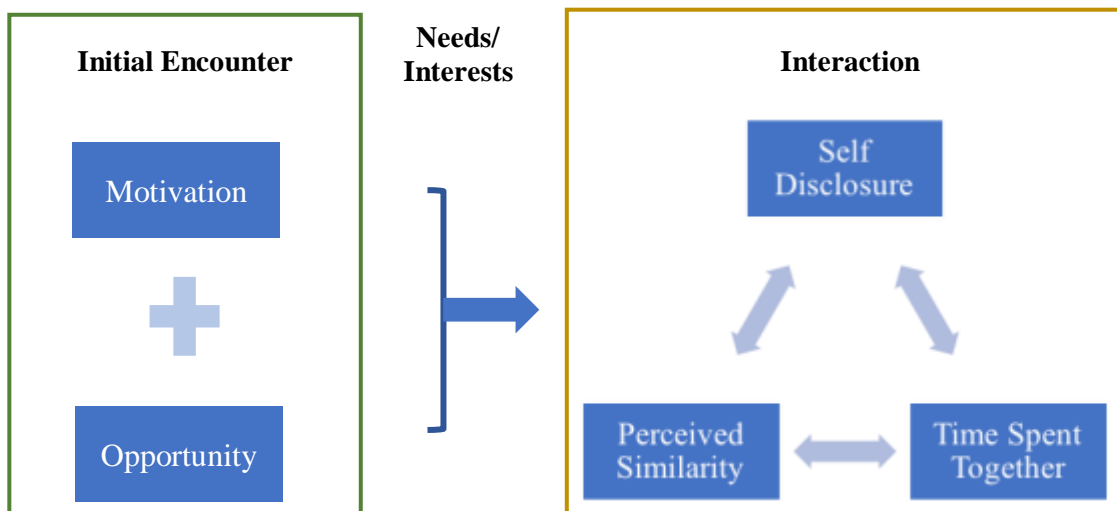


Figure 4. Illustration of intercultural friendship formation facilitators within each phase of relational development. This figure demonstrates the interconnected relationship between self-disclosure, perceived similarity, and time spent together in terms of the stages of relational development derived from Lee (2006). This does not represent a full model of the intercultural friendship development process.

In the absence of motivation (e.g., having strong social support elsewhere, like the Greek system) or opportunity (e.g., busy with outside obligations), participants found that they didn't "need" each other for anything, essentially halting the development of the relationship at the first transition, *need/interest*. Haley's comment below illustrates this point:

At the beginning of the year, we would seek each other out more. We would all hang out more. As you meet other people, join clubs and get into different class schedules, you become busy with studying. Unless you are actively making that time again, you're not going to have that time together.

She laments not knowing her roommate better, but acknowledges that her schedule did not really afford her the opportunity to spend the kind of time necessary to develop a deeper relationship. Because Haley was in a sorority and played intramural sports, she was rarely in the same location as her roommate. She lacked both motive and opportunity because her social obligations kept her in different physical spaces. This was a common occurrence among the participants whose relationships with their international roommates never developed past the initial interaction phase—most were members of sororities or other social clubs that kept them away from the physical spaces that their international roommate occupied.

However, if participants had both motivation and opportunity, the relationships likely moved forward into the interaction phase, where they would spend more time together, self-disclose and learn more about each other, which helped them to find more similarities. As Chen (2002) noted:

Greater perceived similarity facilitates a communicative relationship; interactions, once started, may lead to perception of greater similarity or convergence of partners' behavior, or both. (p. 244)

A key point for understanding the development of relationships in this phase is understanding the circular and reciprocal nature of the three other facilitating factors: self-disclosure, perceived similarity, and time/time spent together. They work in tandem to develop deeper levels of social

penetration and intercultural understanding. These findings are consistent with Dunne (2013), Lee (2006), and Ujitani (2006). For all four of the participants who described their relationship with at least one of their international student roommates as “friend,” evidence that all five of these facilitators were present and working in conjunction with each other was found.

The absence of these facilitating factors in conjunction with the presence of inhibitors also seemed to play a powerful part in intercultural relational development. With strangers (e.g., classmates, friends of friends, random encounters), the presence of inhibitors, particularly anxiety, could block interaction from ever taking place. As noted previously, participants frequently assumed that interaction was unwanted by the international students. Many participants viewed international students speaking a language other than English as a confirmation of international students’ disregard for interacting with domestic students. Anxiety over saying the wrong thing or offending someone because of unfamiliarity with cultural norms has been shown to be a strong inhibitor of initiating interaction (Gudykunst, Nishida, & Chua, 1986). The findings of this study offer further support for these findings.

The most powerful inhibiting factor, however, seemed to be *perceived lack of similarity*, in particular, the subfactor of *perceived cultural distance*. Gudykunst (1985b) found that cultural differences played a significant role in relational development, but usually only early in the relationship (e.g., the *interaction* phase) when self-disclosure would begin to take place. The data in this study supports this finding, but suggests that, in combination with *expected communication difficulties*, the effects of *perceived cultural distance* might be felt even earlier than the *interaction* phase, preventing interaction from moving beyond the *initial encounter* phase. This seemed particularly salient with White students with East Asian roommates, all of whose relationships deteriorated early on in the year amidst reports of difficulties with

communicating with their international roommates and a perceived lack of common interests. These findings are consistent with Brown (2009b).

The Potential Effects of Pluralistic Ignorance and Attributional Bias

In their study to determine how ingroup members interpret avoidance of intergroup contact and their interpretation of why outgroup members avoid intergroup contact between Black and White students, Shelton and Richeson (2005), found evidence of *pluralistic ignorance* and *attributional bias* at work. *Pluralistic ignorance* occurs when

people observe others behaving similarly to themselves but believe that the same behaviors reflect different feelings and beliefs (Miller & McFarland, 1987). People perceive their own behavior as reflecting fears of social exclusion but do not consider such fears as an explanation for the other person's behavior. Instead, they take the other person's behavior at face value, and believe that the behavior reflects the person's true feelings. (Shelton, Richeson, & Bergsieker, 2009, p. 180)

Thus, they attribute their own failure to initiate contact to fear of being rejected by outgroup members, and outgroup member's failure to initiate contact to lack of interest. Shelton et al. (2009) stated that these “individuals demonstrated an *attributional bias* [emphasis mine] by weighting their own rejection concerns more heavily than those of potential outgroup interaction partners” (p. 180). In other words, their own fears mattered more than the potential motivations of the outgroup members. Their study also showed that those most open to intergroup contact and friendship were also susceptible to the effects of attributional bias, and that it interfered with their potential to make outgroup friends over time. Although both of these studies conducted by Shelton and Richeson (2005) and Shelton et al. (2009) investigated racial attitudes between Black and White university students, their findings raise provocative questions regarding intergroup relations beyond race and ethnicity, and particularly for the participants in this study.

Many of the students who self-proclaimed their interest in intercultural interactions and friendships, and exalted their own prior experiences and openness to new things, were the very students who failed to forge any sort of friendship with their international roommates. Many are also the same students who described international students as not wanting to interact with domestic students. The two sets of quotes below are from two different participants:

Haley

I kind of knew I wanted to be with someone who had a different background than me just because I'm from [Northern California] and so by coming to UCLA I'm already staying in the same state, I mean [Northern California] is different from Southern California, but I wanted someone from outside of California or outside the country just to build friendships outside of that.

I really liked [the diversity at UCLA]. I went to a small school so I wanted something bigger. At the same time, my high school got voted second most diverse high school in the nation last year. Something that it really prides itself on is inclusivity... I experienced diversity, in all sense of the word, through high school and through middle school.

I feel that in a lot of ways, international students stick together and they continue to speak their native language. I don't speak that language. That's an automatic isolation from other students. Even in classes, if I was in a section and I wanted to speak to those students in the rest of the group but I feel they don't really want to interact with American students... In a lot of ways, I know that I am a shy and nervous person. I would want to talk to them but for one thing, they are not speaking English. Two, I don't feel that it's an interaction that's necessarily desired by them.

Melissa

My hometown is pretty homogeneous so we don't have the different needs like here. I like seeing all the different ... I like when people really embrace different cultures.

[on why international students seem to stick together] They're more comfortable, I think, because they have more in common. I can't relate to someone who's not from America. If they're having a hard day I can't really empathize with them because I don't understand what they're going through. Whereas, another international student can.

Both participants were excited about the intercultural opportunities that a diverse campus such as UCLA offered them, and both attributed international students' avoidance of interaction to "lack of interest." Other participants whose experiences included anxiety-driven inhibitors (e.g., fear of

offending), also expressed similar sentiments regarding lack of interest from international students. Shelton and Richeson (2005) went on to say:

It seems that the separation of races is perpetuated by basic misunderstandings of the relevant parties. According to our work, even when members of different racial groups would like to have more contact with members of other groups, they are often inhibited from doing so because they think out-group members do not want to have contact with them. (p. 105)

According to Shelton and Richeson (2005), attributional bias works in both directions. Previous research from the perspectives of international students has shown that they, too, assume that domestic students do not wish to interact with them (Brown, 2009a; Ward, 2001), and evidence in this study points to similar findings. Thus, if both international students and domestic student think that the other does not wish to interact, then pluralistic ignorance and attributional bias could be playing a role in these perceptions. Although no previous research has been conducted to connect pluralistic ignorance and attributional bias to the barriers between international/domestic student interactions, the evidence presented here seems to be a strong argument for seeking to extend Shelton's work to explore this context.

The Role of Prior Intercultural Experience and Cultural Distance

One of the more striking findings in this chapter came from the comparison of demographics and learning that all of the participants who considered their East Asian international student roommates as friends had two parents who had immigrated to the United States as teenagers or later, while all of the participants who ended the year with no relationship with their East Asian international student roommates were White with two U.S.-born parents. Two studies in particular are relevant in this case. First, Sias et al. (2008) found that prior intercultural experience was important in the initial and development stages of intercultural friendships, stating, "experience tended to increase the respondents' willingness, in some cases

eagerness, to develop a friendship with someone from another culture” (p. 9). In this qualitative study, *prior intercultural experience* was operationalized to include travel abroad and previous intercultural friendships. Summers and Volet (2008), in their study of culturally mixed group work at an Australian university, found that prior intercultural experience, operationalized as multilingualism, was positively associated with positive attitudes towards culturally mixed group work and future intercultural cooperation. In the current study, parental immigration, multilingualism in the home, travel abroad, and prior friendships were all considered when looking at participants’ prior intercultural experience. In this study, the factors that seemed to be most important were having immigrant parents and having a multilingual family environment.

Although some of the other participants had traveled abroad, some even extensively, there was no strong personal affiliation with another culture tied to these experiences, perhaps increasing the feelings of cultural distance from their international roommates. As noted previously, *cultural distance* can be defined as “the perceived similarity/dissimilarity between two cultures” (Ward et al., 2001). For those participants with immigrant parents, they lived what they considered to be an intercultural experience on a daily basis—their own cultural identity was tied to the languages spoken at home, to the immigration experiences of their families, to the extended families living abroad. In addition, the four participants who ended the year as friends with their international student roommates all shared a cultural orientation with their roommates—all were from South or East Asian backgrounds. Thus, when the participants encountered their international student roommates, while they still considered them to be “foreign,” most assumed that there was some shared cultural identity and values because of their similar heritage. This immediate cultural identification eased the initial stages of relational development for these students and relaxing one of the stronger inhibitors of intercultural

interaction. For the White students, on the other hand, this barrier seemed insurmountable. While their relationships with their European international student roommates developed into something akin to “friendly, but not close,” all of their relationships with their East Asian roommates faltered to the point of little to no communication. This offers support to Harrison and Peacock (2009), who found that domestic students had “a strong sense of international students as ‘other’; an outgroup” (p. 889). I argue that the four students who became friends with their international student roommate quickly integrated their roommates into a category of “like me,” whereas those who did not were unable to find the similarities to move past the “not-like-me” categorization of their international student roommates.

Chapter Summary and Preview of the Next Chapter

This chapter sought to answer the question of how participants experienced intercultural interaction and friendship, and what they perceived to be the barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship. This was answered through the explication of five factors that facilitated and five that inhibited the growth of their intercultural relationships on campus. The second part of this chapter explored the outcomes of the participants’ relationships with their international student roommates. In the friendships that developed, all five of the facilitating factors were present. In those that did not, few, if any, of the facilitating factors were present and one or more of the inhibiting factors were present. Inhibitors seemed to have a particularly strong effect in the initial stages of friendship formation. In addition to these factors, demographic commonalities were also found. Those who became friends with their roommates all were first generation children of immigrants, all but one spoke a language other than English at home, and all were ethnically or culturally similar to their international roommates. Of the participants who did not

have any relationship with their international student roommates at the end of the year, all were White, all were children of two parents born in the United States, all but one were members of a sorority or fraternity, and all had East Asian roommates. This suggests that cultural distance played a role in impeding development of these relationships.

Despite the challenges that many participants found while interacting across cultures, they all found benefits to the experience as well. These benefits and the other intercultural learning the participants exhibited will be examined in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

THE BENEFITS OF INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

In Chapter 4, I examined how participants defined intercultural and what they looked for in a friendship. In Chapter 5, I explicated the factors that facilitated and inhibited the development of their intercultural relationships and discussed the outcomes of their roommate relationships. In this final findings chapter, I discuss the participants' perceived benefits to intercultural interaction and other intercultural learning. In the descriptions of these findings, I complete the answer to my fourth research question and its final two sub-questions:

- RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates' experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction?
- b) What do domestic students perceive to be the benefits of intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - c) At the end of this year, what have they learned about intercultural interaction and friendship?

Perceived Benefits of Intercultural Interaction and Friendship

The domestic student participants in this study perceived four main benefits to intercultural interaction: 1) it gives them an opportunity for cultural exchange, 2) it exposes them to new perspectives and ideas, 3) it makes them more aware of and empathetic to the experiences of others, and 4) it helps them learn how to interact across cultures more effectively. The coding framework for these categories are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Benefits of intercultural interaction coding framework

Category/Code	Description	Example
Cultural exchange	Participants sharing information about their own culture with another while receiving information about their interactant's culture.	She wanted to watch that film [Forrest Gump] with us. We were talking, but she goes, "Oh, I hear that's a great film. I haven't seen it. Can I watch it with you guys?" "Absolutely, I love that movie. We all love that movie." Now I think we're planning on watching a movie from Thailand, where she's from, so we can understand, see both how similar we are, but also how different we are.
New perspectives/ ideas	Participants becoming aware of different points of view on events, people, and artefacts based in cultural differences.	Well, I had an English student in my ethics class this quarter... He had a lot of comments ... about how the pharmaceutical industry, he can't grasp the way we do pharmaceuticals here... how they can charge whatever they want no matter what the cost so then people can't afford them. That's made me ... I don't want to say skeptical of my own country but it's been cool to see the way they experience this for the first time whereas I'm used to it. I had never thought about that but he was like, "How is everyone okay with this?" Like, wow, that's so true. How are we okay with this?
Awareness of others' experiences/ empathy	Participants gaining awareness of others' experiences, acknowledging that these may be different from their own, and trying to understand what that must be like.	I think having more, I don't want to say sympathy because I think that's the wrong word, but just having more knowledge and more appreciation for how others that are different from you, either racially, religiously, et cetera. Gender-wise, even, just how they perceive the world differently than how you perceive it. You don't have to necessarily change what you believe, but it should allow you to change how you believe it in a certain way.
Improved interaction with others	Participants gaining skills for approaching intercultural interaction outside of their roommate context.	It'll just help me interact with other people better... I don't like to offend people when it comes to something that I feel like is something important to them. Something as important as their culture, I don't want to ever make someone feel like I'm totally disrespecting them.

Cultural Exchange

At the heart of the intercultural interactions that participants noted as significant was some sort of cultural exchange, where each participant in the interaction shared something about

themselves and their culture. These experiences were more eye-opening for some than others, but overall, these experiences were some of the most transformative for the participants.

When asked about the benefits of intercultural contact in general, and having an international student as a roommate in particular, Patricia stated:

My roommate is very receptive to all the inane questions I have and to learning things about American culture. I know now that I can share it and they will probably not mind talking about their culture. Perhaps even enjoy it. I wasn't even sure that people liked talking about their culture, but now I think that, in general, people enjoy it or don't mind.

Patricia saw her Indian roommate as a source of information about that culture, to which she had never been exposed before. She also found it satisfying to be able to explain aspects of American culture to her roommate. As a result of these exchanges, she found herself more open and at ease with learning about other cultures and sharing bits of her own.

One of the key barriers to interaction with international students identified in the literature is a lack of shared pop culture interests (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). Jason and his friends made an effort to share a piece of pop culture with one of their international friends and discuss the cultural references hidden within:

She wanted to watch that film [*Forrest Gump*] with us. We were talking and she goes, "Oh, I hear that's a great film. I haven't seen it. Can I watch it with you guys?" "Absolutely, I love that movie. We all love that movie." Now I think we're planning on watching a movie from Thailand, where she's from, so we can understand, see both how similar we are, but also how different we are.

During the film, Jason and his friends explained the historical significance of some of the events depicted that the Thai student was less familiar with to help her contextualize the film. After, she asked them to watch a popular Thai movie with her so that they could get a better understanding of her culture through film. For Jason, the importance of the exchange was finding the similarities and differences and understanding the cultural background of different behaviors and

beliefs. Through this pop culture exchange, both groups were better equipped to understand each other's perspectives.

Melissa appreciated the times that she and her Korean roommate were able to share elements of their culture with each other. She told of their experience at Christmas-time:

For Christmas, she got us these matcha covered sticks...That was fun... she had never celebrated Christmas before. We made a tree on our wall and Jenna bought stockings for everyone. I got the little Christmas crackers that are so funny and weird. I got those for her. She didn't get it...She'd never seen them before and we did those and played the dumb little games...We all sat down. Jenna, Soo, and I spent time to be in the room and to exchange gifts. We played with the little trinkets. That was a really good time for us, that night we had together.

Melissa and Jenna recreated how their families celebrated Christmas with a paper Christmas “tree,” stockings, and a small gift exchange between the girls. This event was especially significant for Melissa, as it was of the few times that she recalled she and her international roommate having more than surface-level interactions. Melissa lamented that she had not been closer with her Korean roommate, and that there had been so little cultural exchange with her:

I think it would have been neat if we were closer and I could go home with her for a break or something. I've never been to that part of the world especially with someone who is from there to see the things she does. We have her on Snapchat so she went home over winter break and I was watching what she was doing. The funny food she was eating and stuff. That was interesting to see from super far away. I never have really exposed to anyone from Korea before. She makes Korean foods in our room that I've never seen before like these funny Ramen.

Melissa seems to recognize a lost opportunity to learn more about Korean culture by not being closer to Soo. Melissa was curious enough to observe her roommates “funny” cultural behaviors from afar via social media (Snapchat), but self-admittedly was too “shy” to ask many questions.

Other participants delighted in the unexpected nature of being exposed to something new, as in Hannah's experience with joining a Filipino cultural group (she is ethnically Chinese/Vietnamese) just to see what it was like:

More than anything else it's just been ... I don't want to use the word entertaining because culture isn't something to be entertained by but it's been fun for me to see everything because I never experienced it before.

Although Hannah declares herself as one who doesn't reach out to others in terms of building new relationships, she does not shy away from stepping outside her comfort zone to try new things, especially if she sees them as unique opportunities or learning experiences. She is a science major, but found a love of literary analysis and Greek mythology through her coursework. Joining the Filipino club for the year was a way for her to explore and experience a new culture without leaving home.

Exposure to New Perspectives

Another main benefit of intercultural interaction that participants frequently noted was the exposure to new perspectives on familiar topics. It helped them to examine their own cultural assumptions from an outside perspective. Things that they had always taken for granted were seen through 'fresh eyes.' Melissa talked about her experience in a discussion-based ethics class:

I had an English student in my ethics class this quarter and it's a seminar so...we just talk the whole time. He had a lot of comments ... about how the pharmaceutical industry, he can't grasp the way we do pharmaceuticals here [advertise them on television] and how they can charge whatever they want no matter what the cost so then people can't afford them. It's made me ... I don't want to say skeptical of my own country but it's been cool to see the way they [international students] experience this for the first time; whereas, I'm used to it. I had never thought about that but he was like, "How is everyone okay with this?" Like, wow, that's so true. How are we okay with this? It's been cool seeing the way they [international students] ... how they view American things for the first time that we've always had or we've always experienced. I've liked hearing his perspective...

Melissa's experience in her bioethics class was improved by the presence of an international student from a country whose healthcare system is vastly different from that of the United States. Seeing U.S. institutions from an outside perspective for the first time made her aware of some of the more controversial aspects of the U.S. pharmaceutical industry that had previously seemed

perfectly normal to her because she was “used to it.” Other participants, like Aparna, also commented on the benefits of seeing things through a new lens:

[Having international students in class] brings a new perspective to the table, because I took a Civic Engagement in Los Angeles class, and we were focusing on Los Angeles, so it was nice to see their view of Los Angeles compared with the people that lived in California or in the U.S. their entire life. We were discussing stereotypical Los Angeles compared to what it really is. We were asking everyone's—we asked what international, from California, from LA, and we each put in our input. They [international students] had a lot to say about the stereotypes because that's what they came for...

Aparna's class on Civic Engagement in Los Angeles afforded her an opportunity to both catch a glimpse of Los Angeles from an outside perspective and confront her own stereotypes of the city.

As Hannah noted, sometimes an outside perspective is necessary to see something familiar without your own cultural lens:

Even within the same culture, people do have different views but especially when you bring in someone from different culture they can put a very different spin on I guess things we just take for granted. Even stories like in our myth cluster we were analyzing Homer and some people who I guess didn't learn about it in school, because in high school we kind of get familiar with Homer so we have set ideas about it, and people who don't learn about it who come from different backgrounds say something completely new that is valid, that people just never thought of before. It's very cool. It's cool. It's very interesting.

Hannah makes an astute observation on the way that schooling in a particular environment informs students' interpretations of everything, from the literature they study to the world around them. She was appreciative of the outside voice that caused her to recognize that she was seeing things through a culturally normative lens, and that there are other just as valid interpretations of the same object from a completely different cultural lens.

Amy also found international students' perspectives added a great deal to her classroom environment in her film class:

[For example,] the French New Wave. I feel like in America we have kind of a certain way of studying it and thinking about it. This guy, who was maybe from an Asian country, I just remember he had a lot to say about it and stuff that we hadn't really discussed before and it was just interesting.

The perspective from an international student helped Amy to begin to see that her own interpretations of a genre of film had been influenced by her own cultural upbringing and film isn't studied or interpreted the same way by all cultures. Melissa learned something similar from her friend's experience as an exchange student:

My friend went to Spain junior year of high school and that's when they're supposed to teach American history. She learned American history in Spain but then also had to retake it to get her American diploma in America. She learned the exact same time period and the exact same relationships in Spain and America, and she said they were vastly different. That it was like the Spanish blaming Americans and Americans blaming the Spanish. That must have been ... I don't want to say cool but interesting.

The reframing of something familiar from an outside perspective helped participants acknowledge that their own viewpoint may not be the full picture and that interacting across cultures could help them to gain a broader understanding of the world around them, as will be discussed in the following section.

Awareness of and Empathy for Others' Experiences

Closely related to the exposure of new perspectives, participants also spoke of an improved ability to empathize with others' experiences as a direct result of intercultural interaction. Jason spoke at length of this particular benefit:

I think having more, I don't want to say sympathy because I think that's the wrong word, but just having more knowledge and more appreciation for how others that are different from you, either racially, religiously, et cetera. Gender-wise, even, just how they perceive the world differently than how you perceive it. You don't have to necessarily change what you believe, but it should allow you to change how you believe it in a certain way.

Jason speaks to the need for considering how someone else's experiences might have shaped their views. In addition, he also raises the question of whether your own beliefs need to change when encountering someone who thinks about or experiences the world in a way that is incongruent with your own worldview. He makes an argument not for assimilating one way or the other, but for creating space for differing viewpoints, especially in intercultural relationships.

Many of the discussions of empathy occurred over the backdrop of conversations surrounding an active shooter event on campus that happened just as the second round of interviews for this project were starting. Participants spoke of “how we’re used to this kind of thing” but that their international roommates were not, and that they were concerned for their roommates’ emotional well-being. Amy noted that her Turkish roommate was quite shaken by the whole experience:

Something interesting Zeynep said was her trauma, the thing that was causing her panic attacks was her having unresolved trauma about the shooting because she was connecting it to there being a lot of bombings in Turkey and she felt very distanced from that and separated from that.

Through the experience of this event, Amy tried to put herself in her roommate’s place and understand where that fear was coming from. She acknowledged that there had been many bombings in Turkey over the course of the school year and that her roommate felt disconnected from her family. Amy noted that the entire experience must be difficult, especially for international students being so far away from their support systems. Other participants echoed similar sentiments. Melissa stated:

I’m super impressed by [international students]. Not only the academic stuff that they have to handle, because they have to know so much more than I do just to exist here, but the emotional strain. For example, last week when that shooting happened, my mom was terrified and we live in the same state. To be on a different continent as my mother when that happened would have been terrifying not only for her but for me too.

Not only did participants recognize the challenges that international students’ face working in a foreign language all day, every day, but they also recognized the heavy emotional toll it must take to be alone in a foreign country for an extended period of time, especially during a time of crisis.

Improved Interactions with Others

A final benefit that emerged from the data was increased confidence in interacting with a wide range of people. Many participants felt that having had an international student as a roommate gave them an opportunity to find commonalities across differences in a way they might not have experienced had they not had an international student as a roommate and actively engaged in intercultural interaction across campus. Aparna spoke of her experience:

Before, I would be a little more open with people who I could relate to, like minority groups, or females, especially. But now I see myself approaching people the same way no matter who it is. I remember I went to this interview for a diversity leader position, and there were only three males there...I was like, "Whoa!" because I'd seen their faces all over campus before. I saw myself being pretty comfortable, whereas before, I would have been like, "Whoa!" I would have totally froze (sic). I felt like I could be myself with them, having talked to so many other people on campus.

Having positive intercultural experiences with her roommates, in her classes, and in her volunteer job opened Aparna up to the possibility of interacting more frequently with those that she finds different from herself. When she first arrived on campus, she thought she would only be comfortable with other women of color, but throughout this year she has learned that interacting across cultural boundaries does not need to be uncomfortable or difficult, though it might take a little practice. Marisela spoke of feeling similarly when she first arrived on campus, and how that slowly changed for her:

I like it now, you know whereas before, in the beginning, it was more intimidating, being like, "Oh my God, what are they going to think of me," or you know, now it's just more of an open thing like, "Oh let me find out, let me learn some things." ... I love finding out things from different people, what's going on, how certain cultures were formed and shaped, so I think [this experience] has just made me more open to it. [Knowing someone is an international student] is not going to hold me back or prevent me from talking to them, and when I hear an accent now it's more like, "Oh my God I wonder where she is from, it's going to be cool to talk to her or something," I'm just more open to it now.

Marisela, like many first-year university students, was initially anxious about what new people, especially those from cultures different from hers, would think of her. Getting to know people

from other cultures has given her more confidence in approaching others. Marisela's intercultural interaction experiences have increased her desire to seek out other intercultural interactions and learn more about other cultures.

Other Intercultural Learning

The first part of this chapter examined the benefits that participants in this study overtly identified as something that they considered a benefit to themselves. In addition to those that participants self-identified, two other themes emerged from the data that demonstrated intercultural learning: 1) participants challenging their own stereotypes of international students and 2) participants' attitudes towards intercultural interaction changed (positively). This section will close with evidence of a third type of intercultural learning that did not evolve from participants' intercultural interactions, but from their studies: 3) learning the language of diversity.

Challenging Stereotypes of International Students

Through intercultural interaction, participants in this study challenged some of the preconceptions they had about international students, from issues with fluency to feeling threatened by their admission to the university. A common preconception among domestic undergraduate students is that because international students are not fully fluent in English yet, they are somehow less intelligent, or that they don't understand course content, or are somehow less deserving to be here (Spencer-Rodgers, 2001). However, sustained contact with their international student roommates and experience interacting in their classes with international students helped many participants in this study realize that these preconceptions may be undeserved.

Several participants expected that their roommates wouldn't be fluent and that they wouldn't be able to communicate well. Many participants assumed that because students spoke accented English, that they were not fluent or that they didn't understand what was happening around them. Jason stated:

I think we automatically assume an accent means they are not fluent. I feel that maybe because of that I have to talk slowly... I think the accent is just like the one thing to just automatically assume that they just don't know the language as well. Not to say that I wouldn't speak to someone that had an accent—I would, but in my mind I'm thinking how much does he actually know...

Many participants were surprised when they learned differently—some of their roommates spoke and wrote flawless English, despite their accents (see the section on communication issues under inhibiting factors in Chapter 5 for examples). Others confronted their own tendencies to conflate language fluency with intelligence. Marisela spoke of a discussion with a Filipino friend:

I have noticed that people from who have accents or something ... I see that sometimes they use some words that I didn't even know the meaning of, and I learned from them. That's when I realized now that sometimes they even know more than you and you've been here your entire life.... I know that these kids know their stuff and even when I talk to them, like I said my friend from the Philippines, he is an English major, too. So some of the things he says...sometimes we share different words that he doesn't know, or that I know and he doesn't... Your language ability doesn't determine your intelligence.

Prior to her experience with international students at UCLA, Marisela had conflated fluency in English with overall intelligence. Interacting frequently with multi-lingual students across campus, both domestic and international, demonstrated that her preconception was unwarranted and that frequently, non-native English speakers were more familiar with aspects of the language than she was. She enjoyed trading cultural and linguistic knowledge with her Filipino friend. This experience allowed Marisela to shift her thinking about all students for whom English may not be their first language—that just because someone is struggling linguistically to express themselves does not make them less intelligent.

Similarly, many participants held the belief that international students are shy and do not want to speak in class. Patricia noted:

I thought maybe they'd be more shy about speaking in front of a bunch of people, but I guess not. Just because I know American students in general, like myself, are nervous to do that. In our culture, I think it's pretty common that people are encouraged to be loud. What's the word? Extroverted, yet still a lot of Americans have trouble doing that, so I was surprised that international students were just as vocal, if not more so.

Patricia learned quickly that her image of the “shy, quiet, and meek” international student did not fit her experience in her classes or with her friendships. She learned that not only were international student willing to participate in classes, they had quite a lot to offer in terms of new perspectives and casting common topics in a different light. Her experiences with international students in her classes helped her overcome some of her fear of initiating interaction with other international students. This stereotype was similarly broken for many of the participants who had international students in the classes and discussion sections.

Confronting stereotypes was only one way that the participants in this study were able to grow their intercultural knowledge. From the data in this study, it seems that their experiences had direct impact on and was generalized to the way they felt about intercultural interaction all together, as will be explained in the next section.

Changes in Attitudes Towards Intercultural Interaction

Most of the participants in this study explicitly expressed changes in their attitudes towards interacting with those that they saw as culturally different from themselves. For some, it was only a slight shift, but for others, the change was more dramatic. For example, Patricia was one of several participants who, in her first interview, described her reluctance to approach international students or to ask them anything personal out of fear of offending them. By the second interview at the end of the year, she felt much differently:

It's taught me that I can definitely talk to [international students] about more things. My roommate is very receptive to all the inane questions I have and to learn things about American culture. I know now that I can share it and they will probably not mind talking about their culture. Perhaps even enjoy it. I wasn't even sure that people liked talking about their culture, but now I think that, in general, people enjoy it or don't mind.

Living with an international student gave Patricia an opportunity to slowly explore her relationship with her international student roommates and develop a level of intimacy over time. It allowed her to gain confidence in asking questions and disclosing more personal information about herself and her culture in return.

Similarly, Katie's experiences with her international student roommates taught her that by reaching out of her comfort zone, she was able to find deeper and more satisfying relationships:

I think that through these experiences it's kind of taught me not to have any expectations. Just because I had an expectation coming here that I was going to make the same friends I made in high school, that I was going to be static and doing volleyball again, which I did, like I had a plan, like I wanted to go to law school and stuff like that, but just I think from meeting so many people it's kind of humbled me in a way that I can meet people that I can connect with that I wouldn't expect myself to so, and the people I thought I would connect with, I actually didn't really.

Katie came to UCLA with a preconceived notion of the type of people she would be friends with, and as she sought out those relationships, she learned that they did not quite "fit" as well as she had hoped. Of the five friends she listed as most important to her at the end of the year, four were international students.

Even those participants who did not have entirely positive experiences with their international student roommates came away from the experience with some intercultural learning, like Amy, who realized that even though there may be cultural differences, international students are still experiencing many of the same life and adjustment-to-college issues as everyone else:

[I]t's changed how I think about people who are from other cultures. They're really the same and yeah, just living with a girl who's from Turkey who has all the same ... going through all the same stuff that I'm going through like guys and stress and friends. It's just ...you really can't make assumptions. This sounds so wrong ... I do still. I haven't changed it, it's still inherent, kind of, I think consciously I'm going to remember that more when I meet people: “[Y]ou're a student here. You're probably going through the same shit as me.”

Amy's recognition of the common struggle of all first-year students demonstrates an achievement of some intercultural growth. The type of relational development seen in these examples is not something that can be achieved in artificial single-encounter experiences (cultural fairs, food festivals, etc.), but only through long-term sustained contact, providing a strong argument for promoting more intentionality in housing assignments and university programming intended to bring international and domestic students together in a more meaningful way.

Learning the Language of Diversity

The focus on this study has been the intercultural interactions of domestic and international students, and though it was not deliberately designed to study other types of intercultural learning that the participants' experienced, evidence of other types of intercultural learning appeared in the data frequently enough to warrant a short explanation here.

Throughout the interviews, I asked questions around *cultural diversity* frequently as a key topic. This was deliberately left as a vague term so that participants could explore it however they defined cultural diversity for themselves. However, in most cases, when the participants were discussing diversity at UCLA, this revolved around racial and ethnic diversity, even though a few mentioned sexuality, gender, and ability as other areas for exploration. Most of the participants demonstrated that they were just beginning to grapple with the vocabulary and

concepts related to social justice and diversity on campus. Concepts like *white privilege* and *social justice* were completely new to many of them, as Melissa's statement below emphasizes:

Coming from a predominantly white area, I was someone who thought that I was at a disadvantage being white and applying to university. That was my belief for a really long time... But then I took a class on American Racism. It was part of my GE cluster... I think that the biggest thing I learned this year has been about white privilege. Before I totally thought that I had to work harder to get into here and that wasn't fair... Since I had that class it opened my mind up right away all these other things that have happened since then, like the Kanye Western party,¹⁶ or comments by politicians or whatever, I can perceive those better, I feel like, and analyze them better too.

Other participants had never heard the term *blackface* prior to the Kanye Western party and had no frame of reference for understanding the severity of the hurt that these representations caused other students. The party was a defining moment of realization for many of the participants, and one of headshaking frustration for others who felt that they had struggled with social justice issues much of their life. In addition to this incident, many of the participants, including Melissa in her quote above, spoke of concepts that they had learned and adjustments that they had made to their own behaviors based on learnings from their diversity requirement course.¹⁷

Chapter Summary, Discussion, and Preview of the Next Chapter

The findings presented in this chapter have helped to answer the second and third parts of my fourth research question:

¹⁶ The Kanye Western party was a controversially themed fraternity and sorority party held on the second week of school in 2015. <http://dailybruin.com/2015/10/07/students-upset-after-sig-ep-hosts-kanye-western-themed-party/>

¹⁷ All undergraduates at UCLA are required to take a minimum of one course to satisfy this diversity requirement. According to the Registrar's Office website, the purpose of this requirement is to "provide students with the analytical skills needed to develop critical and reflective perspectives on difference within both domestic and global spheres, and to prepare them to function, thrive, and provide leadership in multicultural, multiethnic, transnational, and interconnected global societies." Specific courses that satisfy the requirement are described on the UCLA Registrar's Office website: <http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Academics/Diversity-Requirement/College-of-Letters-and-Science-Diversity-Requirement>

RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates' experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction?

- b) What do domestic students perceive to be the benefits of intercultural interaction and friendship?
- c) At the end of their first year, what have these domestic students learned about intercultural interaction and friendship?

In answering part (b) of RQ4, four key perceived benefits to intercultural interaction and friendship emerged from the data. First, participants particularly valued the opportunity to learn about other cultures and teach others about their own culture in a give and take exchange. Even those participants whose relationships with their international roommates was tense were able to appreciate the value of having these experiences. For many participants in this study, some of these key exchanges came in unexpected places, like the classroom or during volunteer experiences. This finding supports Lee (2006), who found that cultural learning was one of the most valued aspects of intercultural interactions and friendships, and Sias et al. (2008), who found that talking about cultural differences was an important factor in intercultural friendship development, especially in the early stages. It also provides further support to Bochner et al.'s (1977) functional model of friendship that states that in host-sojourner friendships, host nationals serve as a cultural informant for helping international students adjust to their new surroundings.

The second benefit that participants mentioned was an exposure to new ideas and perspectives on familiar topics. For the first time, they were able to look at literature, film, and global political policies and incidents through the interpretive lens of another culture. This brought about a third benefit, an acute awareness of and empathy for others' experiences, and a recognition that not everyone walks through the world in the same way that they do. They were able recognize and praise the accomplishments of their international student roommates of one,

getting accepted to an exclusive public university such as UCLA and of two, being able to maintain the same course load, if not a more challenging one, as themselves and in a language that is not their first. One participant compared the adjustment of international students to U.S. college life to the old joke about Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire—she did everything he did, but backwards and in heels. Others began to recognize some of the difficulties of being an international student on a U.S. university schedule, for example, having nowhere to go during holidays when the residence halls are closed, or having to move completely out of the residence halls the day after finals end and having nowhere to store their books and other belongings that they might need for the next school year. These findings support Geelhoed, Abe, and Talbot (2003), whose study of an intercultural peer-partnering program at a large Midwestern university found that domestic students who participated in the program developed a deeper level of empathy for some of the struggles and adjustment issues that international students might face. The fourth and final benefit mentioned by participants was improved interactions with others, a benefit also reported by the participants in the Geelhoed et al. (2003) study. The participants in this study reported understanding better how to communicate across differences and that they were more confident approaching new people as a result of their intercultural interactions over the course of the year.

In addition to these four self-reported benefits of intercultural interaction, the participants in this study also acknowledged that interacting with their international student roommates helped them to confront long-held stereotypes of international students and to be less averse to intercultural interaction in general. The interactions with their international roommates, as well as intercultural peers across campus, helped students to find commonalities across difference, reducing their anxiety regarding future intercultural interactions. These findings support the

basic tenets of the contact hypothesis, which states that repeated contact with those who are culturally different can reduce prejudice between groups (Allport, 1979; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2011).

The data presented in this chapter also demonstrates that participants are beginning to learn the vocabulary necessary to address issues of social justice and diversity. Many of the participants talked about being able to recognize and name privilege in ways they were unable to before. They are also learning that their life experiences are singular to them, and that not everyone walks through the world the same way that they do. The primary source of this learning seems to be through the courses that participants have taken that satisfy UCLA's diversity requirement (see footnote 17). Although the mission statement of these diversity courses is to equip students with the tools they need to function in multicultural environments, only one of the designated courses provides instruction in intercultural relationships and/or communication (Theory and Practice of Intergroup Dialogue: Building Facilitation Skills). In fact, the last course taught on intercultural communication at UCLA appears to have been in 2014. I argue that while these diversity requirement courses are teaching students about different types of diversity and cultural differences, and they are providing foundational knowledge in concepts of social justice, they are not teaching the skills necessary to interact across cultures, nor do they offer students the opportunity to practice and develop those skills. As a result, students can recognize cultural difference, but they still struggle to effectively interact with and within difference.

Long touted as the key benefits of internationalizing university campuses in the body of internationalization at home literature, exposure to diverse, global perspectives is meant to give domestic students the opportunity to develop intercultural competency without ever leaving their home campuses (Lambert & Usher, 2013; Leask, 2009; Otten, 2003). Similarly, much of the

literature on majority/minority populations in U.S. universities also speaks to the educational importance of seeking diverse perspectives for developing competence in interacting across groups. As Chang (2007) stated:

because racial differences are often associated with diverse viewpoints and opinions, an increase in the proportion of underrepresented students can bring to a university experiences, outlooks, and ideas that can potentially enhance the educational experiences of all students. (p. 27)

UCLA has a diversity requirement in place for all undergraduates that is helping to facilitate this type of learning. Knowing this has implications for institutions in policy and curriculum, for professors in course design and pedagogy, and for students in better preparing themselves for the intercultural world that we live in. These implications will be delineated in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation adds to the small, but growing, body of literature on international and domestic student relationship development at U.S. universities from the domestic student point of view. Ten first-year domestic students living with international students in the residential halls at UCLA were interviewed twice—once at the beginning of the winter quarter and once at the end of the spring quarter to gain insight into their intercultural relationships on campus, particularly the relationship(s) with their international roommate(s). Grounded in a conceptual framework consisting of Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, the more recent updates by Pettigrew et al. (2011), and principles of social identity theory (Brown, 2000; Tajfel, 1981) the study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do domestic students with international students as roommates define intercultural interaction?
- RQ2: What do domestic students with international students as roommates look for in a friend?
- RQ3: What are domestic students with international students as roommates' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship?
- RQ4: How do domestic students with international roommates' experiences shape how they perceive intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - a) What do domestic students perceive to be the barriers to intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - b) What do domestic students perceive to be the benefits of intercultural interaction and friendship?
 - c) At the end of their first year, what have these domestic students learned about intercultural interaction and friendship?

The findings in this study indicate that the domestic students perceive and experience intercultural interaction and friendship as a complex process with multiple layers of facilitating and inhibiting factors, and while the experience of living with an international student did offer them a direct opportunity for intercultural interaction and friendship, sharing a living space alone was not enough to guarantee meaningful interaction or the development of any type of relationship. In addition, while the participants exhibited signs of intercultural learning, they were still unsure how to practically apply their newly found knowledge. The following provides summary of the key findings in this study, a discussion of the institutional implications of these findings, the limitations of the study, and areas for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

Defining Intercultural

Although the primary focus of this study was the relationship development between the participants and their international student roommates, I did not want to limit participants' discussions of their intercultural interactions to just those with their roommates or with other international students. As Kim (2001) noted, unless two interactants are perfectly homogenous, then all interactions are inherently intercultural. Thus, following methodology set out by Dunne (2008) and Halualani (2008), participants were asked to define the term *intercultural* for themselves. Responses centered around the idea of "interactions between two people of different backgrounds," but five main characteristics of those backgrounds emerged from the data: race/ethnicity, nationality, customs/traditions/experiences, beliefs/values, and SES/social class. These descriptions are consistent with previous literature on intercultural friendship development. Many of these characteristics seemed only to apply to those of a nationality different from that of the participant. One surprising finding here was participants' concern with

social class—this seemed to be the one characteristic of “intercultural” that could be separated from nationality in defining intercultural. Another key finding in this section was that while participants found it relatively easy to define intercultural as someone whose culture was different from their own, many of the participants who were children of immigrants had an easier time of defining their own culture in order to make that comparison. The participants of two American-born parents seemed to struggle much more with this concept, and further, had difficulty identifying intercultural aspects of their own friend groups (see the section below on the common identity model).

Expectations of Friendship

My second research question asked participants how they defined friendship. Characteristics fell into two categories: *self-disclosure* and *reciprocation*. The characteristics comprising *self-disclosure* were *truth/honest*, *trust*, and *be myself*. *Reciprocation* comprised *loyalty* and *be there for each other*. These findings further support the well-acknowledged work in intercultural relationship development, intergroup interactions, and intercultural communication (e.g., see Abrams et al., 2002; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Chen, 2002; Gudykunst, 1985a; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Kim & Gudykunst, 2013). Participants did not define intercultural friendship any differently than they did intracultural friendship, nor did they have different expectations from their intercultural friendships than their intracultural friendships, consistent with findings in intercultural communication literature (Chen, 2002).

Intercultural Friendship Development

Five factors that facilitated and five that inhibited intercultural interaction emerged from the data. Facilitating factors were *motivation, opportunity, self-disclosure, perceived similarity, and time/time spent together*. The five inhibiting factors were *anxiety, expected communication issues, lack of motivation/opportunity, perceived lack of similarity, and apathy*. The data presented here demonstrated that these factors played a significant role in relationship development, especially in the beginning stages of relationship development.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model and Intercultural Friendship

One of the more surprising findings was that participants had a tendency to not recognize the “interculturalness” of their own friend groups. While they described the term *intercultural* in terms of differences in background, such as race/ethnicity, nationality, and SES, their descriptions of intercultural interactions only included those with students of nationalities different from their own. Despite the ethnic diversity of many of their friend groups, the participants in this study rarely, if ever, recognized their interactions with their friends as “intercultural,” irrespective of the various backgrounds that they ascribed to their friends’ identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, region, etc.). Similarly, once their relationships with their international student roommates moved past the initiation phase and into the development phase, the concepts of culture/intercultural became less salient features of the relationship. Through interaction, many of the participants began to lose the intercultural distinction, making statements like “she is just like me” and “they’re just people.”

Halualani (2008) also found that students at a multicultural university tended to not see their own friend groups as intercultural. She argued that the “stripping” of “culture” from their

friend groups was an overcorrection to a social environment of political correctness surrounding diversity:

If they were to frame their friends as culturally different examples of intercultural contact, it would suggest that they were overly conscious of culture and thus select and seek out individuals to befriend (and not) based on those individuals' culture, ethnicity, or race. (p. 12)

However, I argue that this approach neglects the underlying processes of social identity and ingroup/outgroup formation. Instead, I propose that the common ingroup identity model and the process of recategorization are more useful for examining what was happening between these groups of students (Gaertner et al., 1993; Gomez, Dovidio, Gaertner, Fernandez, & Vazquez, 2013; West et al., 2009). The common ingroup identity model posits that "incorporating members of different groups within a common, inclusive identity can extend the affective and cognitive benefits of ingroup categorization to those formerly seen as members of an outgroup" (West et al., 2009, p. 1266). According to Gaertner et al. (1993), recategorization happens as ingroup members and outgroup members interact, communicate, and self-disclose, thereby discovering commonalities. This process of discovery allows the ingroup member to "recategorize" the outgroup member and incorporate him/her into the ingroup. Participants who described members of their friend groups as "culturally similar" despite previously noting differences in nationality, race/ethnicity, religion, etc. could very well have "recategorized" these intercultural friends into their ingroup, thereby erasing the boundaries that once stood between them. Thus, the compartmentalizing or flattening of the intercultural characteristics, as exemplified by remarks like "we are all just people," suggests that participants' contact with their friends was not deemed as an intercultural interaction, although these friends had been identified as being from different race/ethnic/class backgrounds.

Cultural Distance and Intercultural Friendship

At the end of the year, only four participants categorized their relationship with their international student roommates as “friends.” Four said that they had no relationship with their international student roommate and two said that they were friendly, but not close with their international student roommate. Of those that said they were friends, all were children of East Asian or South Asian immigrants, all had East Asian or South Asian international students as roommates, and all but one spoke a language other than English at home. Of those who categorized their relationship with their international student roommate as “none” at the end of the year, all were white, all had two U.S. born parents, all but one belonged to a sorority or fraternity, and all had East Asian international student roommates. Thus, cultural distance seems to be a key factor in inhibiting intercultural friendships in this study, while perceived cultural similarity seems to have facilitated relationship building.

The four participants who ended the year as friends with their international student roommates all shared a cultural orientation with their roommates—all were from South or East Asian backgrounds. The White students, on the other hand, were quick to identify the cultural divide and the lack of commonality with their East Asian roommates, but the similarities with their “Western” roommates that they also considered White. This offers support to Harrison and Peacock (2009), who found that domestic students had “a strong sense of international students as ‘other’; an outgroup” (p. 889). I argue that the four students who became friends with their international student roommate quickly integrated their roommates into a category of “like me,” whereas those who did not were unable to find the similarities to move past the “not-like-me” categorization of their international student roommates.

Other Intercultural Learning

Participants in this study also exhibited signs of intercultural learning from their coursework and/or from intercultural friends. They had begun to talk about a new understanding of race relations, discussion concepts like *privilege* and acknowledging how these revelations have changed their understandings of their own life experience in relation to others'. However, in spite of demonstrating knowledge of concepts, it was also clear that they were unable to apply those concepts outside of the narrow context in which they were learned. This suggests that in order for students to become interculturally competent, the university will need to provide more than knowledge of diversity—specific training and practice for developing intercultural communication skills is needed.

Implications

Development of Structured Programs

While students are learning the language of diversity and interculturalism, they do not always have the opportunity to put that learning into practice, nor are they always willing to do so on their own. For example, some participants suggested that they would be more likely to participate in an intercultural interaction if the international students were the ones to approach them:

Once international students make the first steps in trying to befriend or talk to a domestic student, the domestic student more than likely is going to engage in talking to them about different things, about whatever, and so they're more likely to befriend them. A domestic student may not want to talk to an international student first. If international students take the first step, then it's a lot better of a chance of befriending them.

This supports other findings in the literature that domestic students are not likely to be the ones to initiate contact (Brebner, 2008; Ward, 2001; Ward et al., 2009). However, as was discussed in previous chapters, it is likely that both sides perceive the other as uninterested in interacting, and

thus these interactions are not likely to happen without intervention. This suggests that universities should create structured programs that give domestic and international students the motivation and opportunity to come together to work toward a common purpose. This is consistent with other findings in the literature; for example, a meta-analysis of 500 studies on the contact hypothesis conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that studies with structured programs showed stronger reduction in prejudice through intercultural contact than those without. Others have suggested that intervention is necessary to break students out of their social silos and interact across groups (Bennett, 2012; Brown, 2009a; Campbell, 2012).

The type and implementation of these interventions has varied. Interventions in recent studies have included intercultural group work (Burdett, 2014; Ledwith & Seymour, 2001; Summers & Volet, 2008), peer-partnering and mentorship (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Campbell, 2012; Mattahan, Ayers, Brand, & Brooks, 2010), and cross cultural communications education (Young & Schartner, 2014). Sakurai, McCall-Wolf, and Kashima (2010) found that participating in multicultural activities diminished the sense of difference between groups of international students, thus in turn creating a greater likelihood of further interaction. In addition, Sias et al. (2008) argue that targeted socialization, such as peer partnering programs and multicultural events, are vital for intercultural friendship development. As Chang (2007) stated:

The overall educational impact of racial diversity, however, seems to be largely determined by the levels of student engagement or involvement. Thus, the impact is likely to be strongest when campuses intervene by coordinating a set of mutually supportive and reinforcing experiences that promote engagement. (p. 27-28)

Beyond cultural food fairs, international and domestic students need programming to bring them together in a meaningful way. Programming needs to be specific, targeted, and well-structured in order to produce the educational and social benefits desired from this type of intergroup contact.

Cross-Cultural Communications Training

The inclusion of a diversity requirement in the undergraduate curriculum at UCLA is a strong beginning in giving undergraduates the opportunity to recognize and celebrate cultural differences. It also gives them a framework for describing their experiences when interacting with others, as was seen in the evidence provided in Chapter 6. However, many of these courses focus on the experiences of one particular group (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, etc.), highlighting a particular aspect of a given culture, or fostering understanding of the history and background of a particular group. Out of 342 recognized diversity-requirement courses, only one (Theory and Practice of Intergroup Dialog: Building Facilitation Skills) focuses on fostering communication strategies to improve intergroup relations.¹⁸ Explicit intercultural communication training is needed to foster intercultural interaction and develop the necessary practical communication and adaptation skills to function competently in a multicultural environment (Otten, 2003).

Housing and Residential Life

To provide the all-important factors of opportunity and motivation for intercultural interaction, UCLA Housing could make an explicit effort to pair international students with domestic students in residential facilities. Currently, UCLA's policy for assigning roommates is based solely on a 'roommate preferences' form that asks questions about temperature preferences, study habits, smoking/drinking habits, sleep habits, messiness/cleanliness, etc. There is no option to specifically request an international student roommate or to state that they would prefer to not have an international student roommate. Roommates who selected each other

¹⁸ Source: <https://sa.ucla.edu/ro/Public/SOC/Search/DiversityCoursesMasterList>

in their applications are paired first. Then the UCLA Housing Office uses a software system to randomly assign roommates based on the preferences indicated in their original survey. As the results of this study have shown, some participants would not have had the opportunity for, nor would they have sought out, intercultural interactions on their own. Most participants were grateful for the opportunity to have had international roommates, even though the friendships did not work out the way they had hoped:

If I hadn't chosen to have roommates that were from outside the U.S., I probably wouldn't have been interacting as much. People who haven't had it in their living situation aren't really searching for it, I don't think, because I can't remember the number, but it's like 70% California [at UCLA] or something like that, right? It's so much California, so if you're not looking for it, then you're just going to meet kids from California.

Haley's quote demonstrates a previously noted barrier to intercultural interaction: the lack of opportunity. While the pairing of international and domestic students in the residential communities is not intentionally guided at this time, perhaps it should be, as it affords one of the few opportunities for sustained contact between domestic and international students. The living situation was the impetus to initiate contact and to explore developing intercultural relationships. Having regular close contact alleviated some participants' fears about initiating contact with those that they saw as culturally different. This suggests that more targeted efforts through housing could help facilitate the initial interaction phase of relational development. One possibility would be the creation of an interculturally focused living/learning community (LLC). LLCs have been shown to improve retention and academic achievement among participants (McClanahan, 2014). While UCLA currently has LLCs centered around certain academic interests and some specific cultural backgrounds, it does not have a specific program for fostering intercultural interaction and developing intercultural competence. It is important to note that while these types of programs exist at many universities across the United States, the research on the impact on intercultural learning/competence development is virtually non-

existent at the public level. My guess is that most of this impact research is done at an institutional level, if at all, and is not published. However, a similar program launched in the 2017-2018 academic year at the University of Arkansas and will use the intercultural development inventory (Hammer et al., 2003), based on the developmental model of intercultural competence (Bennett, 1986), as a measure to investigate residents' development of intercultural competence over the course of the year.¹⁹

Limitations of the Study and Areas for Future Research

While the findings in this study have contributed significantly to the knowledge of domestic students' experiences with intercultural interaction and friendship, there are limitations in terms of generalizability and transferability. However, with a case study, creating a generalizable sample was never the intention. This small sample of ten students gave me the ability to give an in-depth look at the lived experiences of these students and their intercultural interactions. The participants in this study are indeed varied from each other, but they do not accurately represent the racial and ethnic variation on the UCLA campus—for example all but one of the participants identified as female. Future research could include a larger, more representative sample of students with a more varied background. This study focused only on the perspectives of the domestic students and did not include those of their international roommates. Future research could explore the dynamics of intercultural friendship development more deeply by including both members of an intercultural dyad.

¹⁹ <https://news.uark.edu/articles/39829/new-living-learning-community-fosters-understanding-between-international-and-domestic-students-on-campus>

Although it has been well established that there is a relationship between intergroup contact and the reduction of prejudice, the direction of this relationship has been less clear. One of the major criticisms of research in this area is lack of longitudinal data to support the development across time of the relationships (Van Laar et al., 2005). While this study examined relationships built across one academic year, the amount of time between interviews was only a few months. Students determined fairly early in the relationship whether it would continue into the coming year, supporting research by (Berg, 1984). It would be interesting to learn whether the friendships formed while rooming together in their first year continue beyond a summer apart, and whether they continue to develop into lasting relationships.

Despite the short duration of the study, there was some discussion of intercultural growth from a few of the participants. Several attributed this to the diversity requirement courses that they were taking while others attributed this growth to the experience of living with an international student. Further studies into long-term intercultural competency development could be useful for the university, in terms of policy, and for the students, in terms of their own development.

Conclusion

Consistent with the body of literature that states contact alone is not enough to ensure interaction and friendship (see e.g., Ward, 2001; Gudykunst, 1985), this study has shown that intercultural friendship development on university campuses is a complex process, indeed. While sharing a room in an on-campus residential facility offered participants their primary opportunity for intercultural interaction, multiple layers of facilitators and inhibitors played a significant role in the development of deeper relationships. Perceived cultural similarity seemed to be the most

salient of these facilitators, and perceived cultural distance the most potent of the inhibitors. Despite the lack of relationship development in some of the pairs, this study has also shown that despite participants demonstrating signs of intercultural learning and growth over the course of a year, many of them are still unsure how to apply the abstract concepts of diversity and interculturalism that they have learned in concrete ways. Although this is a case study at one institution, the findings presented here seem to suggest that in order to better facilitate intercultural interaction and friendship among a diverse student body, institutions may need to be more deliberate in their programming to offer students not only ways to increase their intercultural knowledge, but also opportunities to practice and develop their intercultural skills. Additional research is needed that includes both international and domestic student perspectives to better understand the relational development process from both sides.

APPENDIX A

Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture

Table 11

Hofstede's cultural dimensions defined

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Definition from Hofstede (2005)</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Power Distance	“the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (p. 46)	Hierarchical: <i>China, Japan, Russia</i> Egalitarian: <i>USA, Denmark, Ireland</i>
Individualism	“ <i>Individualism</i> pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. <i>Collectivism</i> as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (p. 76)	Collectivist: <i>China, Pakistan, Guatemala</i> Individualist: <i>USA, Australia, UK</i>
Masculinity	“A society is called <i>masculine</i> when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called <i>feminine</i> when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (p. 120)	Achievement oriented: <i>Japan, Venezuela, Austria</i> Nurture oriented: <i>Norway, Netherlands, Sweden</i>
Uncertainty Avoidance	“the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (p. 167)	High tolerance for ambiguity: <i>USA, China, UK, India</i> Low tolerance: <i>Mexico, Korea, Greece</i>
Time Orientation	“[L]ong-term orientation (LTO) stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift. It's opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present—in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face,’ and fulfilling societal obligations” (p. 210)	Long-term oriented: <i>China, Korea, Japan</i> Short-term oriented: <i>USA, UK, New Zealand</i>

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Materials

Initial Recruitment Email

Dear [*insert name*],

My name is Michelle Gaston and I am a Ph.D. candidate from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation research study about the intercultural experiences of domestic students at UCLA. If you are a freshman, if you live in one of the on-campus residential communities here at UCLA, and if you have an international student as a roommate, then you may be eligible to participate.

If you are interested, please click on the link below to answer a few more questions to determine your eligibility. You do not have to answer any of the questions and you may stop at any time. If you chose to end the survey, your answers will be erased and your data will not be collected.

From the questionnaire respondents, 18-24 students will be selected for participation in the study. If you are selected, you will be asked to be available for one 45 to 60-minute interview each quarter to talk about your experiences with intercultural interactions. I would like to audio-record your interviews for transcription and analysis. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts so that you can edit or remove your answers to any questions. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential. You will receive a \$10 Visa gift card after each interview to compensate you for your time.

Remember, your participation is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate, please click the link below to complete to preliminary questionnaire.

<[LINK TO QUALTRICS SURVEY HERE](#)>

If you have any questions about the study, please email me at michellegaston@ucla.edu.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gaston

Recruitment Questionnaire

Q2 First Name

First Name (1)

Last Name (2)

Hometown (3)

Email (4)

Cell number (5)

Q3 Gender

Male (1)

Female (2)

Other (please specify) (3) _____

Q4 Are you a freshman?

Yes (1)

No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q5 Do you live in one of the on-campus residential facilities?

Yes (1)

No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Answer If Do you live in one of the on-campus residential facilities? Yes Is Selected

Q6 Which one?

Q7 Do you have an international student as a roommate?

Yes (1)

No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q8 How many roommates do you have?

0 (1)

1 (2)

2 (3)

If 0 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey If 2 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q9 Did you choose your roommate(s) or was your roommate assigned randomly?

I chose my roommate. (1)

My roommate was assigned randomly. (2)

Answer If Did you choose your roommate(s) or was your roommate assigned randomly? I chose my roommate. Is Selected

Q10 Please tell me more about how you chose your roommate (e.g., We were friends in high school, We met on social media before school started, etc.)

Q11 Please describe your roommate's ethnic origins and nationality, if known. If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Q12 What is your roommate's primary language? If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Q13 Do you also speak this language?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q14 Please describe roommate 1's ethnic origins and nationality, if known. If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q15 What is roommate 1's primary language? If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q16 Do you also speak this language?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q17 Please describe roommate 2's ethnic origins and nationality, if known. If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q18 What is roommate 2's primary language? If you aren't sure, enter "I don't know."

Answer If How many roommates do you have? 2 Is Selected

Q19 Do you also speak this language?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q20 What year were you born?

- 2000 (1)
- 1999 (2)
- 1998 (3)
- 1997 (4)
- 1996 (5)
- 1995 (6)
- 1994 (7)
- 1993 (8)
- 1992 (9)
- 1991 (10)
- 1990 (11)
- 1989 (12)
- 1988 (13)
- 1987 (14)
- 1986 (15)
- 1985 (16)
- 1984 (17)
- 1983 (18)
- 1982 (19)
- 1981 (20)
- 1980 (21)

Q21 What is your Racial/Ethnic Group?

- American Indian or Alaskan Native (1)
- Asian or Pacific Islander (2)
- African/American (3)
- Caucasian (4)
- Hispanic/Latino (5)
- Biracial or Multiracial (6)
- I prefer not to respond (7)

Q22 Please indicate the highest level of education your Father and Mother completed.

	Middle School/Junior High (1)	High School (2)	College or Beyond (3)	Other/Unknown (4)
Father (0)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answer If Please indicate the highest level of edu Father - College or Beyond Is Selected Or Please indicate the highest level of edu Mother - College or Beyond Is Selected

Q23 Where did your parents go to college?

	College/University (1)	Country (2)	Degree Achieved (3)
Father (1)			
Mother (2)			
Click to write			
Statement 3 (3)			

Q24 What type of school did you attend just prior to entering UCLA?

- High School (1)
- Vocational/Technical School (2)
- 2-Year College (3)
- 4-Year College (4)
- Graduate/Professional College (5)
- Other (6)

Q25 Please enter the name and location of this school.

School Name (1)

City (2)

State (3)

Country (4)

Q26 What is your intended major?

Q27 Which of the following best describes your financial need to work while attending UCLA?

- Do Not Need To Work (1)
- Must Work Full-Time (2)
- Must Work Part-Time (3)
- Must Work Summers Only (4)

Answer If Which of the following best describes your financial need to work while attending UCLA? Do Not Need To Work Is Not Selected

Q28 What is the average number of hours per week you are working?

- 1-10 Hours per Week (1)
- 11-20 Hours per Week (2)
- 21-30 Hours per Week (3)
- 31-40 Hours per Week (4)
- Over 40 Hours per Week (5)

Q29 At my high school,

- most people were ethnically and racially similar to me. (1) _____
- most people were ethnically and racially different from me. (2) _____
- there were a wide variety of people of all different ethnic and racial backgrounds. (3)

Q30 Please tell us a little about the languages you speak. If you speak more than 5 languages, please enter the 5 you are most fluent in.

	Language (4)	Fluency (survival, conversational, fluent, native speaker) (5)	Years studied (6)
Language 1 (1)			
Language 2 (2)			
Language 3 (3)			
Language 4 (4)			
Language 5 (5)			

Q31 How would you describe your international travel experience?

- None (I have never traveled or lived outside of the United States). (1)
- Some (I have traveled outside of the United States for short vacations a few times in my life). Please explain. (2) _____
- Moderate (I travel frequently outside of the United States for short visits--less than 1 month.) Please explain. (3) _____
- Extensive (I have lived outside of the United States for an extended period of time--more than 6 months-- whether for study abroad or because my family lived abroad.) Please explain. (4) _____

Study Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES ONLINE CONSENT FORM

Domestic Student Experiences with Intercultural Roommates

Michelle Gaston, a doctoral candidate from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), under the guidance of her faculty advisor, Professor Val D. Rust, is conducting her dissertation research on the development of relationships between first-year students and their roommates in on-campus residential communities.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a first-year student at UCLA. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may quit the study at any time and the data collected about you will be destroyed.

Please note that answering this questionnaire **DOES NOT** guarantee your placement in the study. Participants will be selected to assure maximum variability in the sample.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being conducted to examine how intercultural relationships between college roommates develop over the course of a year.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Complete a preliminary questionnaire (approx. 15 minutes) to gather eligibility and demographic data.
- Be available for a 45-60 minute interview once each quarter.
 - The questions in each interview will revolve around your friendships, relationship development, and intercultural experiences on campus.
 - The researcher reserves the right to ask for an additional interview for clarification on certain points.
 - All interviews will be conducted on campus.
 - Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, but you have the right to review and edit these (see the confidentiality section below).

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 5 hours of your time over the course of the school year.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- None foreseeable.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. The results of the research may be used to direct development of programs for improved intercultural communication across campus.

Will I be paid for participating?

- You will receive a \$10 gift card to compensate you for your time after each interview. If you choose to end the interview at any time, you will still receive full payment.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Identifiable data collected will be separated from interview data as soon as the interviews have been conducted. Code names will be given to each of the participants. These codes will be kept in a separate file from the interview data, and only the PI will have access to these files.

As all interviews will be recorded and transcribed, you have the right to review the tapes made as part of the study and their written transcriptions to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Michelle Gaston, Principal Investigator
310-745-4070
michellegaston@ucla.edu

Prof. Val D. Rust, faculty advisor
rust@gseis.ucla.edu

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

YOU WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS FOR YOUR RECORDS.

____ **I consent to participate in this study.**

____ **I do not wish to participate in this study.**

APPENDIX C

Data Collection

Institutional Data Requested from Housing

Questions Regarding Housing Assignments

- How are roommates assigned if students don't specify who they want to room with?
- Is there any specific policy on how international students are assigned to rooms? Is there specific programming for helping domestic and international students interact?

Data for Housing Communities at UCLA: Overall/Humboldt Hall/Davis Hall

- total percentage of international and domestic students in residence
- percent of first year international/domestic students in residence on the hill
- percent of first year students who change roommates in second year (domestic vs international)
- percent domestic/international students who had random vs preselected roommates
- percent of international students who stay with same domestic roommate (is year over year trend data on this possible?)
- percent of domestic students who stay with same domestic roommate (is year over year trend data on this possible?)
- percent of international students who change roommates mid-year because of roommate conflict
- percent of domestic/international students (by race, gender) who change roommates mid-year because of conflict with roommate
- percent of domestic/international students who leave campus housing all together in second year (and where they go)
- number of conflict incidents reported to Resident Advisors/Resident Directors each year (Is the rate higher between domestic/international student pairs than between domestic/domestic student pairs?)

Interview #1 Protocol

The first interview is somewhat exploratory in nature; it will be quite informal and may prompt the participant to discuss some or all of the following (not listed in any particular order):

- the individual's definition of intercultural contact
- his/her current friends and their ethnicities/nationalities
- prior foreign language experience
- prior travel experience
- expectations for friendships in college
- expectations about their roommate before coming to college
- requested an international student roommate or randomly assigned
- sense of identity
- perceived challenges to intercultural interactions on/off campus
- perceived support to international interactions on/off campus
- perceptions of current roommate and challenges/benefits to an international student roommate

Follow Up Interview Protocols

Based on an analysis of the prior interview(s), topics for subsequent interviews were determined. The topics listed under the Interview #1 Protocol were explored in more depth during the second interview. The researcher considered the degree to which the interviews were addressing the central research questions and modified the interview topics accordingly. The topics were expanded to include experiences with intercultural interaction with their roommate and outside of the living experience.

APPENDIX D

Table 12

Factors that influence intercultural interaction and friendship development between students

Facilitators	Support in the literature	Inhibitors	Support in the literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lack of existing social structures on campus ○ genuine curiosity regarding other cultures ○ openness to trying new things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee (2008) • Ujitani (2006) • Volet & Ang (2012) • Bennett, Volet, and Fozdar (2013) • Dunne (2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ easier to interact with co-cultural peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward (2001) • Dunne (2008) • Brown (2009) • Burkhardt (2013)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ living situation ○ shared class/academic activities ○ social activities ○ shared social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareis (1995, 2000) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Dunne (2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of motivation/opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ previous social obligations (on both sides) ○ no shared activities ○ no shared social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan (2005) • Summers & Volet (2008) • Volet & Ang (2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived similarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ shared pop culture interests (books, sports, movies, TV, etc.) ○ shared cultural identity (ethnicity, values, beliefs, traditions, customs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gudykunst (1985) • Gareis (1995, 2000) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Sias et al. (2008) • Dunne (2008, 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of perceived similarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no common interests ○ no sense of common identity ○ perceived cultural distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gudykunst (1985a) • Gareis (2000) • Sias et al. (2008) • Dovidio et al. (2016)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sharing personal details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareis (2000) • Chen (2002) • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Lee (2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of communication difficulty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ concern about international student fluency ○ concern of embarrassment if communication fails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kudo & Simkin (2003) • Ujitani (2006) • Volet & Ang (2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time/Time Spent Together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Passage of time ○ Amount of time spent together doing things/talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berg (1984) • Pettigrew (1997, 1998) • Peng (2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fear of rejection ○ perceived lack of international student interest in interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ international students speaking a language other than English ▪ intl students do not respond in a culturally appropriate way to interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nesdale & Todd (2000) • Spencer-Rodgers (2001) • Gudykunst & Mody (2002) • Peacock & Harrison (2008) • Harrison & Peacock (2009)

Table 13

Comparison of taxonomies of factors that influence intercultural friendship development

Gareis (2000)	Kudo & Simkin (2003)	Ujitani (2006)*	Sias et al. (2008)
1) Culture 2) Personality 3) Homophily (similarity) 4) Adjustment stage (see Hammer et al., 2003) 5) Communicative competence 6) Proximity	1) Frequent contact a) propinquity b) shared networks 2) Similarity a) age b) individual similarity 3) Self-disclosure a) spoken English skills b) openness of communication 4) Receptivity of other nationals a) empathy b) cross-cultural orientation	1) Facilitating factors a) interest in language and culture of the other b) group activities c) similarity in interests and hobbies d) shared accommodation e) organizing events 2) Inhibiting factors a) dorm rules b) language barriers c) financial matters d) Japanese visitors breaking rules e) communication styles	1) Personal a) cultural similarity b) cultural differences c) prior intercultural experience 2) Contextual a) targeted socializing

* Only Ujitani (2006) took into account both international and host student perspectives; other studies were from the perspective of international students only.

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