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## Abstract

The current intensifying climate of internationalized higher education has led to feverishly increased recruitment of international students in and beyond the United States. Amidst competition for this student population, the complexity of the international student experience, the voices of internationals, and the focus on individuals' lives are of lesser consequence than mapping global flows and tracking aggregate trends through statistical measures and meta-level reporting. As a result, international students in the twenty-first century are often commodified, homogenized, and Othered in the scholarships to which they are a subject and on the campuses in which they are enrolled. However, I contend – and show in this dissertation – that these students are also powerful commentators on their own lives who share invaluable insights about international study, the situatedness of globally mobile persons navigating transnational social fields, and the ways in which international students are agential actors within the globalized system of higher education.

In this qualitative case study dissertation, I investigate salient dimensions of internationals' lives at Horace College, a Midwestern liberal arts college, by mapping and analyzing the self-reported stories and the perceptions of my informants. Based on nine months of fieldwork, I explore the particular contours of internationalization, international student inclusion, and diversity within the social justice legacy of and liberal arts mission at Horace College. I also give attention to how international students and other participants perceive the moniker “Horacian” and the ways in which this label has implications for expectations regarding international student “adjustment” and relationships between domestic and international peers on campus. Finally, I investigate meanings internationals ascribe to the term “international student” as well as the transnational ties to family, friends, and home countries most salient to these students' experience at and beyond Horace.

“WE’RE ALL HORACIANS”: LISTENING TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT  
AN AMERICAN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Foundations of Education  
in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

May 2015

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I miss you.

I love you.

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## Abbreviations

ACE	American Council on Education
ACM	Associated Colleges of the Midwest
CPT	Curricular Practical Training
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IIE	Institute for International Education
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ISF	International Student Friendliness
ISM	International Student Mobility
ISAO	International Student Affairs Office
ISO	International Student Organization
ISC	International Studies Center
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning
NAFSA	NAFSA: Association for International Educators
NCUBO	National Association of College and University Business Officers
NSO	New Student Orientation
OPT	Optional Practical Training
POFIS	Pre-Orientation for International Students
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TCK	Third Culture Kid(s)
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

International student voices and the complexity of their experiences are strikingly absent from the discourse.  
- Terra Gargano (2009, p. 341)

### **The Broader Context and Purpose of the Dissertation**

As the demands of the global knowledge economy spread to and through all sectors of societies in all corners of the globe, the value and necessity of “being international” cannot be underestimated. Because higher education plays such an important role in the development of peoples, communities, institutions, and nations, internationalization and “being international” is increasingly becoming a priority for colleges and universities around the world (Dolby and Rahman, 2008). Among the features of this rapidly globalizing field of higher education is mobility, or the movement of, among many others, students, scholars, technologies, and institutions. Other dimensions of globalization and internationalization of higher education are the abundance to and proliferation of the dictates of a market-driven global economy. The need to keep up with and compete in this economically driven climate is pervasive in and often dictatorial for higher education institutions, and, as a result, a welcoming and supporting campus infrastructure for international students is often not feasible or is not seen as a priority when compared to other institutional needs and initiatives. Globally mobile students, or international students, then, pursue their studies at higher education institutions (HEIs) abroad amidst a highly complex and structurally uneven climate of internationalization.

Scholarship on international students in the United States and in countries around the world has addressed multitude dimensions of these students’ experience. Generally, scholarly discussion of international students is situated within a campus internationalization framework, where the “presence” of these students and/or the maintenance of international

student programs as a component of internationalization are noted. How these students can be best utilized for the benefit of U.S. institutions, students, staff, and faculty predominate. Scholarly work on international students in higher education settings is quite often quantitative and located within a positivist international student mobility (ISM) framework, which emphasizes statistics, trends, and/or flows (Gargano, 2009; Kell and Vogel, 2008). The academic and non-academic challenges experienced by international students have also received considerable attention, particularly in fields of scholarship such as counseling and higher education (Coate, 2009; Marginson, 2014). Research tends to cast these students in a deficit capacity, focusing on international students as a problem or a population about which to be concerned (Coate, 2009; Eland and Thomas, 2013). Challenges adapting to life in the U.S., learning the English language, relating to domestic students, being comfortable with U.S. classroom culture, and the challenges professors have incorporating them into classes are common. There is, of course, much more to international students' stories than this.

While the international student experience is a growing area of interest among scholars, there still remains very little discussion, on the one hand, of undergraduates at liberal arts colleges (Maciel, 1996), and on the other, research which confronts pervasive themes throughout the literature that cast international students as a problem and/or commodified population (Coate, 2009; Kell and Vogel, 2008). Studies on these students using qualitative research methods are becoming more prevalent; however, even in this literature international students are still generally spoken for or about by scholars. Little focus has been given to how students perceive their realities as international students and what being an "international student" means to them. As Gargano (2009) explains, "[i]nternational student voices and the complexity of their experiences are strikingly absent from the discourse" (p. 341). In this qualitative dissertation, I address these gaps,

contributing an in-depth study of, in a primary way, international students, as they perceive themselves and their experience in the U.S., and, in a secondary role, others in these students' social fields whose perceptions about this context matter most.

The purpose of this case study, then, is to explore how undergraduate international student participants make meaning of their experiences at and beyond Horace College (a pseudonym), a nationally renowned liberal arts college in the Midwest United States. Long known for its social justice tenets, its rigorous academics, and promotion of student self-governance and personal responsibility, Horace's student body in the last decade has diversified greatly, resulting in implications for all campus actors. Rapid growth of the international student population over this time offers a unique opportunity to investigate how this self-purported egalitarian and "international student friendly" institution has responded to the intensification of internationalization priorities and the often problematic usage of international students to help facilitate these market-driven priorities. To gain a fuller picture of what life is like for these globally mobile individuals, the dissertation also includes perspectives of those on campus who take classes with, befriend, support and/or guide internationals. Understanding what relational, daily life is like on the Horace campus, giving full consideration to the current climate of internationalized higher education, will expand the research about international students in necessary and important ways. That is, in this dissertation, internationals are presumed to be the experts of their own lives and are presumed to be capable and effectual navigators of their individual, particular transnational contexts. The students themselves define the complex contours of international study.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question of the dissertation is: How do international student informants make meaning of their experience at and beyond Horace College? Additional

questions include: What are the historical and contemporary contexts of international student inclusion at Horace College, and how do participants perceive the inclusion of internationals on campus today? How do international participants identify and disidentify with Horace College, namely its moniker “Horacian”? What are relationships like between international and domestic students, and how do expectations about “adjustment” affect these relationships? How, if at all, do international student participants identify with the term “international student” and what does it mean to these individuals to be an international student navigating personal, transnational social fields?

### **Theoretically Framing the Study**

#### *Introduction to Theories*

Theory is instructive in, and vital to, this dissertation. To frame the dissertation, I have carefully selected a set of four theories that, in important ways, intersect with one another and help give shape to the conceptual situatedness of the study. I included the first three – transnational social fields; responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism; and global intercultural capital – in my original proposal and each helped to guide the collection and analysis of data. I discovered the final concept, international student self-formation, as I began writing the dissertation, and it proved to be, not only a profound complement to how the other theories frame the study, but also an echo of many of the ways in which internationals talk about themselves. Below, I describe each theory in turn and why they have been selected for this study. I then summarize the framework by discussing the intersections of the theories and the alternative, critical viewpoint on international students they have the power to engender.

#### *Transnational Social Fields*

The first conceptual framework that informs this dissertation is transnational social



fields (TSFs), born from the larger field of migration studies. Gargano (2009) argues that transnationalism is a necessary critique to international student mobility literatures grounded in the discourses of internationalization and globalization, which are generally limited to meta-level analyses that employ statistical data collection and presentations and that privilege nation-centric trends, both which homogenize and generalize international students and their experiences. TSFs, on the other hand, “illuminates student voices and the impact of cultural flows and processes on student-inhabited transnational spaces, identity negotiations, and networks of association” (p. 332). As a theoretical lens, transnational social fields explores notions of “simultaneity,” “ways of being,” and “ways of belonging,” and it accounts for the myriad forms of communication and association across borders, the relations of power individuals experience in social fields, and the complexities people encounter while moving and living in and between multiple locations.

A “social field,” explain Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), is “a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed,” and where, in transnational contexts, people are at once local, national, transnational, and global actors without necessarily being mobile themselves. Moreover, because individuals are within “transnational” social fields in which boundaries of nation-states are transcended, everyday activities and relationships are influenced by multiple sets of laws and also institutions (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1010). Within these social fields, people experience “simultaneity,” which involves, “living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1003). That is, an individual’s incorporation into a new, even temporary, society is not in contradiction with his/her transnational connections to home or wherever else these connections might extend.

The two occur simultaneously and reinforce each other. Moreover, the authors note, over time, and depending on the individual and his/her context, simultaneity may even encourage a greater likelihood that connections within the transnational social field will endure.

Within TSFs, people exhibit various “ways of being” and “ways of belonging” where specific personalities and contexts matter (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1010). Ways of being, the authors reveal, are a person’s actual social practices and relations (instead of the identities associated with their actions). Individuals may not necessarily identify with any of the cultural politics associated with particulars in their field. For example, an international student might often contact people in their home country but may not identify as belonging to it. Or she may engage in certain dietary habits or religious practices because these were commonplace growing up. On the other hand, ways of belonging refers to those practices which endorse identity and that encompass a conscious connection with a particular group. There is action, as well as awareness of the sort of identity the action entails. People might have “few or no actual social relations with people in the sending country or transnationally but [may] behave in such a way as to assert their identification with a particular group” as “through memory, nostalgia, or imagination” and therefore are able to “enter the social field when and if they choose to do so” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1011). It is worth noting that ways of being and ways of belonging “do not always go hand in hand,” (p. 1011) as people’s identities and their actions are equally prone to cohesiveness and contradiction.

Additionally, transnational social fields “recognizes various power dynamics and outcomes that manifest when individuals with a range of cultural identities encounter each other; however, it does not limit or predict how spaces, identities, or networks of association are created or negotiated” (Gargano, 2009, p. 335). As noted above, because social fields are transnational, individuals are influenced by multiple sets of laws and also institutions such

that “[w]hen people belong to multiple settings, they come into contact with the regulatory powers and the hegemonic culture of more than one state” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1013). However, this does not mean that these individuals are powerless. Amidst constraints, people can “act back upon them” in various ways (p. 1013). Opportunities exist to make change – both positive and negative – at the global level as well as within the countries to which they have moved and from a distance to the internal functions of their home countries. Furthermore, in the way of discussions of power, TSFs as a theoretical lens also enables a systematic investigation of class, gender, race, family dynamics, the nation-state, citizenship, and religion, all of which are social processes and institutions that have traditionally been obscured within scholarship. As I discovered in this study, “individuals occupy different gender, racial, and class positions within different states at the same time” (p. 1015). For example, a few students would remark how their skin color, while typical back home, marked them as Other at Horace.

Also, the employment of transnational social fields by researchers accounts for the multiplicities of international students’ identities and refutes the ways in which internationals have been generalized and homogenized in the scholarship. Moving beyond statistics – which do help to contextualize the global movement of students but “do not tell the entire story” (Gargano, 2009, p. 336), or, for that matter, any single student’s story – TSFs not only acknowledges, “[t]here are many ways to be and not to be an international student,” (a fact, I argue, international students know well), but also makes possible the exploration of identities and experiences that *international students themselves* believe are important to their processes of meaning making (p. 339). By asking internationals to speak for themselves about how they simultaneously negotiate contexts before their arrival on campus and the new features of the lived realities in the country of their chosen institution, scholars operate with an

intersectional approach that contests the oversimplification of internationals' experiences and offers opportunities to discuss the ways in which these students "recreate or contest cultural or alien ideologies" (p. 340) long assigned to them. Because it fundamentally opposes the homogenizing nation-centered positivist approach that predominates in the literature, "transnational social fields" offers new ways of exploring the too-little-understood intricate, uneven, and varied self-reported perceptions of individuals immersed in cross-border educational social fields.

Finally, it bears noting that employment of transnational social fields in the framework of the dissertation also uses an *embodied* approach, which accounts for "the very everyday enactment of transnationality" and the ways that international students are connected to the places they move through (Collins, 2009, p. 52; Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012). This approach helps me complicate the notion of "simultaneity" in important ways because it "recognize[s] the often overlapping experience of friction and freedom in [international students'] lives, the pleasure and pain of living between places, and the mundane ways that [they] negotiate life in transnational spaces" (p. 52). That is, though the lives my participants lead in multiple locations simultaneously may not always be contradictory, they are never seamless or uncomplicated. As a conceptual tool, embodiment raises important questions about how international students negotiate transnational social fields, as well as the national borders that exist within them, and why this negotiation is easier for some. It identifies the powerful global forces these students navigate and it acknowledges the "active role individuals can have in shaping such spaces" (p. 52).

### *Responsibility, Care, and Cosmopolitanism*

The second conceptual framework important for this study is the philosophical approach of "responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism" espoused by Coate and Rathnayake

(2012). These authors find that the internationalization of higher education has left behind its scholarly legacy of cross-border mobility in favor of almost entirely economic interests. This has led to a “consumerist model of higher education” (p. 39). These authors are critical of this shift, explaining that market-based priorities have come to impact educators in the classroom. However, Coate and Rathnayake are hopeful that these circumstances can change; they offer a philosophical approach: the combination of responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism.

Coate and Rathnayake argue that everyone in the field of international higher education must accept “some level of complicity” in the economically driven business of education, or “edubusiness,” and must rethink “what we are doing as educators” (p. 46). That we do and how we care about and for one another, Coate and Rathnayake contend, matters; too often in the high-pressure world of success achievement and market priorities do we sacrifice our relationships and our obligations to those with whom we work, teach, and educate. Whether recruiters abroad or professors in the classrooms, all need to reassess their own responsibilities to international students, for we cannot expect that the university will have all of the answers or the support structures for these students. Nor should we seek to only identify their “needs” or to define the ways in which they might “lack” in capabilities; that is, “[i]f we reduce ‘care’ to fulfilling others’ needs, we refuse to address the lack within ourselves: our lack of willingness to discover what others will offer to us and what we will offer in return” (p. 48). Therefore, the lack of openness to others – and perhaps those others most unlike ourselves – must be redressed by re/instituting a level of responsibility to and care for one another. In doing so, we may not erase the ubiquity of unevenness in the global higher education domain, but certainly it will be diminished between individuals who practice it.

Cosmopolitanism, they suggest, can be understood as ethical relationships that traverse national boundaries. And global humanity can take primacy as an educational agenda, where all people share an interconnectedness and students are seen to be situated within a globalized world (Rizvi, 2009; see also Gargano, 2012). Moreover, this commitment to each other means that we acknowledge, as philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (2006) does, that we are all Others to one another, and that we are okay with never knowing each other fully. This has particular salience for relationships between educators, “home<sup>1</sup>” students and international students. If what matters most is that we are all citizens of the world, and we see and treat each other as interconnected, then international education is not simply an economic enterprise stripped of its humanity, devoid of its grounded and human character. Coate and Rathnayake advocate for a cosmopolitan orientation that is not comprised only of an openness to new experiences, places, and people; a cosmopolitan orientation is also one that is shaped by the participation in and experience of international education today. Though not a certainty of studying abroad nor necessarily begun only after becoming an international student (Oikonomidou and Williams (2012), a cosmopolitan orientation in which individuals recognize their situatedness within a globalized world and their interconnectedness with other people on a global level, Rizvi (2009) argues, must be a goal of education today. This conception of cosmopolitanism enables agency within individuals as well as a critical disposition to make meaning of the complicated, contradictory, and interlinked circumstances of their transnational lives.

I do not accept uncritically what might seem at first glance a seemingly idealistic and simplistic orientation to human interaction. This framework of care, responsibility, and

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “host” and “home” are used regularly in the literature to differentiate between the places (and the various other associations to these places, such as “culture”) where international students come *from* and where they go *to* study. While I believe that these terms are quite often essentialist and limiting, I recognize that they are useful for their brevity.

cosmopolitanism provides a lens through which to see, on the Horace campus, how, if at all, rhetoric about and relationships with international students are about more than just the economic, and other, emptier, benefits of campus internationalization they provide. In the study of international students, this conceptualization also usefully informed the kinds of questions I asked international students embedded in transnational social fields and provided insights into the extent to which, if at all, they have or seek to have this kind of orientation. Finally, re/instituting a level of responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism, I argue, is a necessary first step in moving past the current problematic view and treatment of international students. It possesses the potential to highlight not only the responsibilities that higher education institutions owe to these students, but also provides a possible outlook through which individuals on campuses might consider their own role within the larger system of globalized higher education – at Horace College and beyond.

### *Global Intercultural Capital*

The third concept to frame this dissertation is “global intercultural capital,” which is a merger of Kim’s (2011) “global cultural capital” and Pollman’s (2009) “intercultural capital.” As I will discuss further below, I take to heart a point that Kim relays regarding the need to conceptualize and represent international students and their experiences from more nuanced, multi-focal, and poli-centered perspectives, which I see as partly lacking in his own work. That is, it is true that international students today travel and study in a market-based globalized world, but as the discussions of transnational social fields and responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism above reveal, the international student experience is also inherently social and interconnected. It is my contention, then, that the qualification of ‘intercultural’ (as understood by Pollman, 2009) opens up possibilities beyond those to “interpret Korean students’ aspirations to a US degree as the pursuit of global cultural capital to outsmart

others in the stratified domain of global higher education” (Kim, 2011, p. 113). The experience of studying abroad has the potential to be about much more than individual pursuit or unilinear flow of cultural capital in one direction only.

Kim (2011), who studies Korean students in the United States, defines global cultural capital as “degree attainment, knowledge, taste, and cosmopolitan attitude and lifestyle, understood as exclusive resources that designate one’s class and status, globally operate, circulate, and exchange. The production and consumption of global cultural capital is stratified, but it is also diverse as it responds to various contexts” (p. 113; see also Rizvi, 2005). Kim (2011) finds that while Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital” is relevant for understanding the international student experience, a more complex and dynamic lens through which class, gender, nationality, and national education systems are considered is necessary. For cultural capital to be useful as a theoretical construct in relation to the study of these students, it must itself be recast as *global* cultural capital, which takes globalization and transnational processes into account. Multiple power relations, Kim contends, operate and interact simultaneously to produce new possibilities and also ironic results. This is not possible with Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital which focuses only on class reproduction through the educational system. Kim sees that competition within and beyond national contexts impact international students and that these dynamics reinforce each other and are based on systems of hierarchy and power (Marginson, 2006).

Conversely, Pollman (2009) explains that her interest is intercultural capital, which, following Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital in the embodied state, is “a personal reservoir of intercultural experiences and skills (e.g. experience living abroad, intercultural friendships, and language skills) that enable the respective individual to competently engage in intercultural encounters” (p. 540). Her viewpoint is based on her belief that formal education



“has the potential to ameliorate social injustices – not to make everybody equal but to guarantee more equal opportunities” (p. 541). She goes on to say, “[t]he particular value of intercultural capital lies in a mixture of experience, reflexivity, knowledge and skill – with an inclusive perspective that reaches beyond purely instrumental economic purposes” (p. 541). Pollman concedes that access to intercultural capital is unequally distributed and that it takes considerable focused time and effort to develop. Based also on Pollman’s belief, following Bourdieu, that as one’s habitus is “complex, situational and relative to the realm of individual agency” (Pollman, 2009, p. 583), it is incumbent upon us to recognize the backgrounds, dispositions, and potential of every person, as well as the fact that habitus is not necessarily fixed and can change over time and with experience. This is a fundamentally different expansion of Bourdieu than that of Kim (2011). Intercultural capital advances the idea that education is about more than the pursuits of the individual. Furthermore, Pollman seems to suggest, a proliferation of intercultural capital, through formal education, could aid in the disruption of globalized higher education’s neoliberal-driven character.<sup>2</sup>

As noted, then, I conceive “global intercultural capital” as being the confluence of the two concepts. While, on the one hand, international students do strategically navigate a realm of globalized higher education that is highly stratified and uneven, they do so while also accessing their own personal reservoirs of intercultural experiences and skills, with, admittedly, varying degrees of personal satisfaction and levels of agency. Global intercultural capital, I argue, is simultaneously unfixed and unbalanced, and is dependent on the talents and skills, knowledge, tastes, beliefs, and backgrounds of mobile individuals who each have

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<sup>2</sup> A fuller discussion of neoliberalism is beyond on the scope of this dissertation; however, here I am referring to a vision of higher education that, via globalization, is “integrated into the system of production and accumulation in which knowledge is reduced to its economic functions and contributes to the realization of individual economic utilities (Morrow, 2006, p. xxxi in Kandiko, 2010, p. 157; see also Olssen and Peters, 2005). As Giroux (2002, p. 427) states, “As society is defined through the culture and values of neoliberalism, the relationship between critical education, public morality, and civic responsibility as conditions for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens are sacrificed all too willingly to the interest of financial capital and the logic of profit-making.”

varying motivations for educational pursuit and designs for its meanings, values, and purposes in their lives. Additionally, a global intercultural outlook recognizes in higher education the potential for strategic personal gain as well as global and intercultural interconnectedness in and beyond the context of higher education.

Yet as this conceptualization *is* situated, as Kim (2011) contends, within the uneven domain of globalized higher education, individual agency is exerted variously and with varying results. Some international students will accumulate more global intercultural capital than others, a fact dependent both on their individual circumstances before study abroad and their negotiation of this global domain during their studies. Accumulation of such capital may, in some situations, come at the expense of others. In others, though, global intercultural capital may be shared between international students, and, for that matter, with domestic students and other individuals. In the case of the latter – a crucial element for Pollman (2009), and also Coate and Rathnayake (2012) – international students possess capital that can be exchanged or given to others such that it becomes mutually beneficial and so that through or because of these students, more people are able to accumulate global intercultural capital. After all, following Pollman, a proliferation of global intercultural capital, through formal – and I would add informal – education, has the potential to disrupt globalized higher education’s market-driven character. It also has the potential to disturb the narrative that students in the U.S. from countries abroad are a “problem” by highlighting that each possesses individual agency, and that each has much to contribute and much from which we can all reap.

### *International Student Self-Formation*

The fourth and final frame for this dissertation study is Simon Marginson’s (2014) “summative theorization” “Student Self-Formation in International Education,” a

multifaceted and complex conceptualization of how the self is constructed, primarily through the employment of “agency,” in individuals who pursue higher education abroad. While the theory may tangentially apply to all students in higher education, international students are the focus here because they proactively enlist particularly strong agency amidst both “significant transformations and disequilibrium with the host society” (p. 8). With self-formation, Marginson calls into question the dominant paradigm within social science research that posits international education as being a process of “adjustment” in which internationals must “adjust”/“adapt”/“assimilate” to local conditions and requirements. Shifting the paradigm, self-formation allows new ways of understanding complex and varying self-making within the uneven realities and influences of border crossings, global higher education systems, and local campus contexts (see also Rizvi, 2005). This theory also re-positions international students in scholarship more in line with how many individuals (including Marginson’s students and a good number of my participants) see themselves: as “a strong agent piloting the course of her/his life,” not someone who is “habitually weak or deficient” (p. 12).

Marginson begins by confronting the “adjustment” paradigm, a belief in which in order to fit in international students must abandon or suppress parts of their home culture to become more like those in the host culture. Essentialist notions of “cultural fit” predominate, suggesting that the closer an individuals’ cultural background is to that of the host institution/culture the more easily an international student will be able to “adjust” and succeed academically. In addition, host scholars and educators can (and often do) play a pervasive role in adjustment ideology because they believe they know international students better than these individuals know themselves and they know “what [internationals] must become” (p. 8). Particularly in English-speaking countries, the goal is to “empty out” all of

the ways of being, that is, the habits and the values that internationals bring with them, in order to replace them with “an imagined ‘Western’ autonomous learner” (pp. 8-9). As one might imagine, Marginson writes,

[t]his is galling for international students, many of whom state that they want to acquire those local attributes necessary for success, are open to advice, and often impressed by what they see in the country of education – without seeing the need to abandon their home country selves and hand over their identities for re-acculturation (p. 9).

Marginson insists, however, that the cultural fit model (see Ward and Chang, 1997; Ward, Leong, and Low, 2004; and Ward and Rana-Deuba, 1999) fails because students’ identities change while they are abroad, in variable, complex, and even deliberate ways (Kashima and Loh, 2006) and because it is not necessarily the case that one’s cultural identity is tied to success in academics (Li and Gasser, 2005). Moreover, and crucially, what the cultural fit model and adjustment paradigm, and the research<sup>3</sup> that supports them, downplays is the “active agency” of internationals (Marginson, 2014, p. 9).

“Agency,” or the “sum of a person’s capacity to act on his/her own behalf” is the crux of self-formation because, Marginson explains, it is “irreducible” and because it is the catalyst through which identity, and more importantly, self is explored, negotiated, and evolved (p. 10). Central to this view of international students as “agents” of their own lives is the idea that these individuals are “self-responsible adults” and not “akin to dependent children” (p. 11; Sen 1985, 1992, 2000). Propelled by Sen’s notion of human freedom, Marginson explains that individuals as agents have three interdependent freedoms: “control freedom” (being free of external threat, coercion, or constraint); “effective freedom” (being

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<sup>3</sup> Marginson (2014) argues that this is not only a problem of ethnocentrism but also one of methodology. That is, the statistical research approach predominant in cross-cultural psychology cannot as effectively “apprehend changing human identities, imagining, agency, reflexivity, and self-creation”, nor are “subjects of research [easily able] to influence its content” (p. 9). Marginson advocates for qualitative, especially semi-structured interview, research, which he says “allow[s] student subjects to contribute to conceptual development, for example, by introducing insights and ideas new to the research field” (p. 9).

free to act – depending on one’s resources, capacities, and social arrangements – and to put into practice one’s own choices); and “agency freedom” (the most pivotal of the three, which is human will in action, guides reflexivity in self-formation as well as negotiation of identity). Together, these freedoms enable both “well-being,” in which people are choice makers and beneficiaries of their interests and advantages, and agency, in which individuals enact “an intrinsically proactive human will” (p. 11) where they are able to do and to judge for themselves the various circumstances and implications in their lives (Sen, 1985, p. 169).

Self-formation among international students is also a distinctive point of theorization because it accounts for openness, complexity, and reflexivity, as well as being historically grounded and subject to power relations. Self-formation is *open* because new conditions breed new ways of doing things that cannot be realized or are unable to be enacted until they are faced. International education offers novelty and personal growth, as well as barriers and problems, opportunities to re-learn and to experience differently or anew one’s living environments, relationships, values, and the contours of un/blended culture/s. Self-formation is *complex* as international education is always about the shifting priorities of education, economics, future occupation, family, culture, social engagement, language, etc. As such, the process requires complex judgment and is highly *reflexive* because individuals are constantly thinking and re-evaluating: “[i]n self-formation people learn to fashion themselves as they go, often conscious of their own changing subjectivities, working critically using feedback from themselves (and others)” (p. 14). Certainly, how this is enacted varies among internationals, but over the course of time each shapes and re-shapes her/himself along with their potentials and their limits. In addition, Marginson explains via Appadurai (1996), globally mobile and interconnected selves are *historically grounded* because they are affected by technologies and realities that traverse time and place. Indeed, these technologies and

realities, as well as the many institutions, regulations, public and private spaces, and so on, are subject to *relations of power*. As Marginson (and Lee and Rice, 2007) points out, power relations are context specific and tend to disproportionately impact non-white internationals in English-speaking nations. The potential for self-formation, for some, is limited due to discrimination and abuse from the host society. These five factors are clearly mutually related and impactful.

Additional features, gained over time, for many international students, including a good many of my participants, are the “heightened awareness of plural selves and the many possibilities this offers” (p. 14) and a “*centering self* that sustains changing identity while managing cultural plurality” (p. 16, author’s emphasis). Employing Sen’s agency-centered understanding of self-formation, Marginson names “multiplicity” (in which students have multiple selves from multiple times and places living multiple lives) and “hybridity” (in which students synthesize these multiple selves accounting for the fact that none is authentic, pristine, or holistic) as being largely inherent to and unexceptional aspects of a global self that is variously reflexive and open. Hybridity can even be “a useful antidote to cultural essentialism” when a person investigates how it takes place, its form in particular contexts, and its consequences (Rizvi, 2005, p. 338). And while multiplicity and hybridity work together, “expanding the reach and flexibility” of agential individuals, they require – often amidst regular impositions by others prescribing to the adjustment paradigm – a “centering self” that helps students actively navigate the social encounters and guides them through the challenges of change and decision making (Marginson, 2014, p. 16). This centralizing function of agency facilitates personal qualities such as greater empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, critical thinking, and interactivity with others, particularly host country students.

There are ways in which Marginson's conceptualization of self-formation can be read as an idealistic and potentially overstated approach to understanding how the self is created, managed, and grown among international students. The author insists that these students possess agency and that they are "robust persons, not fragile persons trapped by cultural conflict" (p. 18). He argues for a paradigm shift in how we view internationals. For example, "[e]ven where students are subordinated by ethnocentric practices that place them in deficit, their sense of self is strong enough to adapt to those practices" and to manage their reactions accordingly (p. 18). This is a significant departure from other literatures that tell us that international students have little to no choice in the matter of adjusting to the host culture and that internationals' well-being is dependent on them doing so. So while many internationals do choose, and prefer, to assimilate to the host culture, we should not assume this nor should we expect or advocate for it. I have heard first-hand in interviews and focus groups, for example, how international student participants at Horace College reject the idea that they should adjust to American culture. Some passionately demand a decisive break from this kind of ethnocentrism while explaining that to adapt is to lose one's self. Others relish in the opportunity to mix and match and to center their selves through multiple and hybrid identities. To orient this study, then, I choose to champion self-formation and the agential character of complex and varying self-making that prevails within the uneven realities and influences of international education.

### *Theoretically Orienting the Dissertation, the Literature*

In concert, transnational social fields; responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism; global intercultural capital; and international student self-formation form the foundation of how I approach this study theoretically. These theories provide lenses through which to understand the experience of my Horace College informants, in particular the international

students in the study. I believe that this theoretical map possesses the power to engender an important shift in how these, and possibly all, internationals are viewed: as “strong agent[s] piloting the course” (Marginson, 2014, p. 12) of their own lives (and the direction of this dissertation). In other words, I am making a claim – albeit a blanketing and therefore potentially problematic one – that, until told otherwise, my informants are the authors of their own lives. Furthermore, I contend that these students are embedded and make meaning of self and international study in social fields saturated with power relations in which, while often marginalized and subordinated, they possess various and significant forms of agency. These students’ identities, interactions, and experiences vary greatly, are complex, and subject to personal, contextual, and intersectional particulars (see Gargano, 2012) wherein individuals’ educational, professional, and personal goals may be both self-serving (Kim, 2011) and “interculturally” (Pollman, 2009) beneficial.

Shaped by this theoretical framework, I advocate for greater complexity and diversity in how we understand international students and for considerably more researchers to presume that internationals’ first-hand voices and stories are integral to the study of these students’ perceptions, experiences, and meaning making about self and international study (see also Gargano, 2012). I believe this approach can begin to change the fact that international students are so regularly treated as a homogenized and commodified problem population that are expected and persuaded to conform to host peoples and cultures on campuses and in scholarship.

Finally, it is important to outline the rationale behind the inclusion and exclusion of theoretical frames for the dissertation. Marginson’s (2014) critique of social psychology theories (and thereby its cousins in higher education) of student identity, development, and transition provide insights into the limitations of extant theories from these disciplines in



application to studies about international students. The burgeoning bodies of literature on and theorizations about internationals, on the other hand, provide new and unique opportunities through which to conceptualize globally mobile persons in tertiary education. Publications in the broad field of international education demonstrate the salience, nay invaluable, of theorizations that have been designed, sometimes through decades of empirical research, to provide ways of conceptually exploring the inherent and unique complexities and contradictions of this very particular, transnational population. Marginson's (2014) international student self-formation is a prime example. As such frames become more common among scholars (consider that Marginson's "summative theorization" was published quite recently), they will be employed more regularly – alongside or in place of well-known theories such as the Cultural Fit paradigm of Ward and colleagues, Astin's I-E-O Model and Theory of Development, and Chickering's Seven Vectors of Psychosocial Development – and to the credit of these pioneering authors. In this dissertation, I seize the opportunity to capitalize on newer theories in international education and apply them to the Horace College context because of the possibilities they offer.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter has introduced readers to the framing context of the study, its purpose and significance, and the research questions that guide it. In addition, I have outlined in detail the four theories that frame the dissertation and their importance for the study I have conducted.

In Chapter II, I review the literatures on international students, internationalization, and liberal arts colleges that inform the dissertation. Special attention is given to the pervasive themes in the literatures on international students and the internationalization of higher education that represent internationals as commodities, homogenous, Others,

deficient, subject to the adjustment paradigm, and as temporary.

In the third chapter, I discuss the qualitative methods and procedures used to conduct the study. The primary method used was two rounds of individual interviewing with 16 international student participants. Additional methods were focus groups, document analysis, and participant observation. I also discuss the usefulness and significance of the Cross-Cultural Research approach and the importance of positionality and reflexivity.

The three data chapters, chapters IV, V, and VI, are next. In Chapter IV, I explore the origins, foundations, and current contexts of internationalization, diversity, and inclusion of international students at Horace College. I begin by mapping the supposed distinctive brand of internationalism at Horace, particularly how the College intentionally grew the size of the international student population while ascribing to tenets of social justice and a commitment to the importance of maintaining a geographically and socioeconomically diverse study body. Internationalization and “international student friendliness,” as I show, have greatly shaped this context. I then focus on the ways in which the larger campus conversation about diversity impacts both the international students at Horace as well as the wider campus community. Together, internationalization, international student friendliness, and diversity shape, in many ways, the contours of present day life on campus for students, staff, and faculty. For internationals, how these elements do and do not coalesce inform their perceptions about whether or not they feel welcome, included, and supported at Horace College.

In the fifth chapter, I investigate meanings associated with the well-used moniker “Horacian,” an often taken-for-granted label used to describe people affiliated with the College, and the ways in which the adjustment paradigm complicates relationships between international and domestic students. Differences in informants’ vantage points pertaining to

whether and why they do or do not identify with prominent perceptions about Horace College illuminate tensions and possibilities that exist between the two student groups. Despite some pronounced disparities in viewpoints in how student participants feel about expectations regarding international students' need to adjust to life at Horace and in the U.S., I contend that the moniker is perhaps the best place to bridge divisions on campus and to enable greater understanding and friendships between internationals and domestics.

Chapter VI focuses on international students' perceptions of the term "international student" and how, if at all, these individuals personally identify with it. I ask "who is an international student?" and "what is an international student?" In addition, I explore in this chapter the salience of students' relationships with family and friends back home as well as their relationships with their home countries. Employing the Transnational Social Fields theoretical frame in focused ways to orient the chapter, investigation into the term "international student," which, like "Horacian" is often taken for granted, reveals that international study is a highly subjective experience marked by navigation of simultaneous localities and identities, an experience that cannot be homogenized or generalized. Internationals express multiple and differing ways of being and ways of belonging both at and beyond Horace College, speaking as the experts of their own transnational lives and the varied, complex contours of globally mobile higher education.

Finally, in Chapter VII, I conclude the dissertation with a summary of my findings in this study as well as a discussion of implications for higher education. I then offer a few final words to wrap up the study.

Appendices include: Horace College student demographics as compared to study participant demographics; a visual display of the qualitative methods and procedures used in the dissertation; the ISAO's Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching handout; the ISAO's

Advising International Students handout; a brief discussion of international participants' perceptions of their faculty academic advisers using data from interviews and focus groups; Crane MetaMarketing Ltd.'s Trial Promise Statement framing a proposed "institutional identity" for Horace College; and the seven recommendations for Horace College shared by my international student participants and non-student participants to improve the experience for/of internationals at the College.

This case study, then, provides important insights into the lives of international student participants in the Horace College context and it has implications for the wider conversations about international students nationally and globally. In many ways, the broader context discussed above has shaped the climate and circumstances present at Horace; however, internationals in this study very much also shape how globalized higher education unfolds on the Horace campus as well as the transnational social fields they navigate. Being experts of this domain, informants discuss how they accept, reject, and redefine the contours of the growing and highly complex phenomenon that is international student mobility. Listening to and making sense of the ways in which my participants talk about themselves and how they frame international study usefully entangles us in their lives, challenging us to reconsider not only how we research, write and create policies about internationalization but also how we represent and treat each international student as, all at once, a unique, insightful, engaging, complicated, contradictory, fortunate, and one-of-many-among-the study-body contributor to and beneficiary of internationalization.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

The experiences and satisfaction of international students already enrolled should be considered first if internationalization is truly the goal.

- Jenny J. Lee and Charles Rice, 2007, p. 405

### Introduction

The literatures that inform this dissertation are multiple and require review. In this chapter, I overlap and intersect the three major topics explored in the study – international students, internationalization of higher education, and liberal arts colleges. First, I trace the history of globally mobile students from antiquity through to the present, demonstrating how this phenomenon has changed and stayed the same, as well as how it has been affected by world events and the priorities of powerful cultural, political, and economic forces. Next, I review scholarship on the internationalization of higher education and how its realities are increasingly saturating tertiary education today. The third section in this chapter explores how international students are framed within the internationalization conversation. I focus on six pervasive themes I believe are either generally taken for granted, subordinated, or ignored in the broader scholarship and also in practice on campuses in the United States and around the world. I then turn to a three-part discussion of liberal arts colleges. First, I familiarize the reader with the history and context of this unique academic model. Next, I return to the topic of internationalization and explore how scholars of liberal arts higher education frame the international/izing character of their institutions. Briefly, I then explain the lack of scholarly coverage of international students at these colleges. Lastly, I situate the dissertation in the literatures discussed throughout this chapter by commenting on how a critical stance lends purpose and promise to gaps in the scholarship and informs the Horace College context in this study.

### International Students: A Condensed History

Mobility for the purpose of higher education is not a new phenomenon. In fact, as Bevis and Lucas (2007) cite, students traveled from long distances as early as the fifth century BCE to study with the great teachers of the Greek and Roman civilizations. According to Socrates, “Most of Protagoras’ followers seem to be foreigners; for these the Sophist brings with him from the various cities...charming them...with his voice, and they, charmed, follow where the voice leads” (Walden, 1909, pp. 16-17, in Bevis and Lucas). De Wit and Merckx (2012) explain that a kind of “academic pilgrimage” of university students and professors throughout Europe was commonplace by the twelfth century.<sup>4</sup> These early pilgrims sought “learning, friends, and leisure,” explains de Ridder-Symoens, 1992, p. 280), and

[t]he use of Latin as a common language, and of a uniform programme of study and system of examinations, enabled itinerant students to continue their studies in one ‘studium’ after another, and ensured recognition of their degrees throughout Christendom. Besides their academic knowledge they took home with them a host of new experiences, ideas, opinions, and political principles and views (pp. 302-303).

For individuals today who travel long distances for academic pursuit, then, the motivations and the benefits of language, learning, and personal growth are quite similar. In fact, the importance and the merits of the internationalization of higher education might very well find some of its precedents in the university models of bygone centuries.

Early Indian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern universities were also prominent locations for students traveling for education (Rizvi, 2011). Rizvi states that the Indian universities of Nalanda, Takshila, and Sarnath were well attended in the seventh and eighth centuries and important educational centers for studies in religion, art, architecture, the sciences, and mathematics. In addition, great cities such as Alexandria, Fez, and Baghdad were host to

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that a common misconception in the literature, note de Wit and Merckx (2012), is the terming of these traveler-academicians as “international students” or the characterizing of this phenomenon as having an “international” flavor because the nation-state did not yet exist (see also Neave, 1997).

students and scholars from both Rome and Greece just as Bologna and Padua were popular for individuals from the Middle East and Asia (Rizvi, 2011).

The journey to these centers of learning was often long, arduous, and rife with all kinds of risks and dangers. Bevis and Lucas (2007) share, “[a]ttacks on itinerants by wild animals – wolves, wild boars, and bears in particular – were not unheard of in many parts of rural Europe as late as the seventeenth century” (p. 13). Moreover, would-be travelling students – generally moving in groups with merchants, artisans, and other mobile persons – had to guard themselves against highway robbers, unpredictable weather, and wearisome extended periods outdoors between inns and taverns. The same was true for those travelling by sea, where individuals were subject to, among other possibilities, long durations away from ports and “capsizing in one of the sudden storms for which the Mediterranean, as a case in point, has always been notorious” (p. 13). Despite the rigors of the journey, Bevis and Lucas (2007) explain that most arrived to their destinations safely.

By the end of the fifteenth century, universities in the “European space” (Neave, 1997, p. 6) were now recruiting more regionally and the numbers of attendees from foreign locales dipped to one quarter of student populations (de Wit and Merckx, 2012, p. 44), excepting those individuals desiring “to continue their studies in an internationally renowned university in disciplines not taught in their own schools” (de Ridder-Symoens, 1992, p. 287). Again, these realities beckon comparisons to today’s systems of higher education. It is for similar reasons that people in the modern era choose to go abroad: to attend institutions of repute, often in English speaking countries, for the purpose of gaining knowledge and skills that are understood as valuable at home and worth moving abroad to attain.

Amidst significant changes around the world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (though beginning in the late seventeenth century) when nations took and

established political and cultural form and primacy, European countries continued to be the most desirable places to pursue advanced studies. However, there were changes to the character of international student mobility. Unlike the draws of the “cultural and intellectual advantages of educational travel” that marked students in earlier centuries (de Wit and Merckx, 2012, p. 46), de Ridder-Symoens (1996, p. 417) explains, “[r]enaissance teachers looked upon study abroad as the culmination of the humanist education of young members of the elite. In Renaissance times, wandering students were strongly attracted by the renown of teachers.” Parallels to this kind of education, I will later discuss, can be made to the early centuries of liberal arts education in the United States.

Though in many countries studying abroad was prohibited or discouraged for a time because foreign institutions were seen as religious, political, and economic “threat[s] to the development of their own universities” and the development of individual nations (de Wit and Merckx, 2012, p. 46), the “grand tour,” from the seventeenth until the twentieth century, restored the mobility of students. In the U.S. context, for example, it was not until academically attractive graduate programs emerged at the turn of the new century that Americans considered advanced degrees at home. The grand tour, in which “the pursuit of study in Europe was considered the final step in their cultural integration into American society,” predominated for many education-seeking Americans (parallels also existed in both Canada and Australia) (p. 46). Explains Cieslak (1955), “[t]he grand tour was designed for young men who had already completed their formal education at home but who wished to smooth their rough edges and acquire a veneer of cosmopolitanism” by studying at length in places like France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland (Bevis and Lucas, 2007, p. 28).

International education in this period in history, though, was also significantly marked by “colonial arrangements designed to develop a local elite that was sympathetic to



the economic and political interests of the colonial powers” (Rizvi, 2011, p. 694).

Unidirectional and asymmetrical channels were designed to promote “the civilizing mission of education” (p. 694). More importantly perhaps, these academic structures produced a Western-educated and Western-minded class of individuals capable of managing local populations upon their return home as well as individuals who were “indebted to their colonial masters” (p. 694). A European education served as a “finishing school” of sorts that enabled newly returned locals to “mimic” their colonizers (Bhaba, 1994, as cited in Rizvi, 2011), differentiating these individuals from their countrymen and ensuring the continued control of regional colonial powers.

The twentieth century began a marked, though slow, shift in the primary destination of students from the universities of Europe to those in the United States. This trend would intensify after the Second World War. While many continued to choose Europe’s finest institutions, U.S. universities and colleges, despite a period of national isolationism, began to enroll increasing numbers of students from around the world as early as the mid-1800s.<sup>5</sup> Between 1900 and 1930, enrollments grew steadily and in 1919 the Institute of International Education (IIE) was created to keep up with growing trends in international cooperation and exchange. After World War I, the focus of the IIE and its counterparts in Germany and Britain, and in the League of Nations, was on “political rationales of peace and mutual understanding” (de Wit and Merckx, 2012, p. 47). After World War II, however, it was clear that Europe had to recover from the heavy wounds of two world wars and needed to focus on reconstruction efforts rather than invest in international education. This brought in a new

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<sup>5</sup> Horace College was even among this early cadre of institutions matriculating students from abroad. Archival work reveals that David Hitchcock from The Sandwich Islands (1850-51) was the first student to attend the college from beyond U.S. borders (Hawaii, formerly The Sandwich Islands, did not become a state until 1959). Before 1900, one student from Holland, two from Belgium, one from Canada, eight from Japan, and one student from Turkey would also join Horace College’s ranks. The lone Canadian in this group, Emma Amelia Bates (1880-83) became the first woman to attend Horace College. Among those from Japan was Sen Joseph Katayama (BA 1892, MA 1896) one of the college’s more famous alums, a man who became a noted Communist leader in Japan and who drew the admiration and friendship of Joseph Stalin.

era of global higher education. “Views of the world in U.S. higher education were transformed almost overnight by World War II. From a cultural colony the nation was changed, at least in its own eyes, into the metropolis: from the periphery it moved triumphantly to the center” (Goodwin and Nacht, 1991, pp. 4-5). This notion of U.S. higher education as the new metropolis (which for many people it remains to this day) translated into a belief among would-be international students around the world that America was the most desirable place to be educated.

The post-war period saw initiatives such as the Fulbright Program (1946) and the Colombo Plan (1949) become new instruments for nationalism and national development. These programs enabled bright and talented students from around the world in developing countries to acquire aid from and study in wealthier countries to learn the skills “considered necessary for the development of the new nations” (Rizvi, 2011, p. 694). Moreover, these arrangements proved useful as a mechanism for “soft power,” or the idea that living and studying in another country will develop in people not only an appreciation for the host country’s culture and values but a greater inclination of (political, economic, and cultural) sympathy towards and cooperation with that nation upon their return home and into positions of leadership and influence. These efforts were also part of a larger Cold War strategy to block Soviet advances to draw in newly independent nations (Rizvi, 2011). (It is also important to note that since its inception, the Fulbright Program has also offered countless and fruitful opportunities for scholars from the U.S. to conduct research, to lecture, and/or to consult with scholars and institutions abroad.)

In the USSR and Europe international educational exchange and mobility took differing forms in the twentieth century. With its own aid programs, the Soviet Union developed its sphere of influence over Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The

Communist regime was repressive; higher education was “subservient to the political and economic interests...of the Party” (Kallen, 1991, p. 17) and academic mobility was restricted, “[w]ith large numbers of students with scholarships attend[ing] higher education in the USSR and in other socialist countries” (p. 27-28). Europe, on the other hand, was limited in its international exchange programs in a different way, the focus being on “elite degree-seeking students in developing countries [travelling] to the colonial and imperialist powers with which they were linked” (de Wit and Merckx, 2012, p. 51). Institutions in Europe passively received few international students and small numbers of Europeans went abroad, generally to the United States. Neave (1997, p. 15) suggests that this period in Europe can be best described as “overwhelmingly voluntarist, unorganized and individual.” Furthermore, until the end of the Cold War, there was a “massive movement from South to North” of students to the United States and the Soviet Union (as well as Germany, France, and the UK); however, after the Cold War, the Soviet Union lost its standing and Australia became an important receiving country for students from, particularly, the Asia-Pacific region.

In the 1990s, global competition for internationals intensified (Pandit, 2013). During this time universities also began quickly transforming from being institutions of “public good” to more market-driven trade commodities (Altbach, 2006). Australia is a notable example. The country became a particularly active participant in internationalized higher education and the recruitment of educationally mobile students, prompting a policy shift from “aid” to “trade” (Harman, 2004; Rizvi, 2011). Encompassing neoliberal imperatives and national development rationales together, Australia, as well as the United States and others, began feverishly promoting and drawing in benefits from the internationalization of higher education: the generation of revenue, the development of institutional profiles and reputations for global rankings, the diversification of campuses, as well as the nurturing of

human resources in a speedily globalizing economy (Rizvi, 2011).

In the twenty-first century, then, the character and form of international education broadly has been shaped by globalization and the demands of the global “knowledge economy” that has prioritized the internationalization of higher education, which, perhaps most strikingly, has contributed to the increase in the number of internationals around the world. Globally, this population has grown from approximately 250,000 in 1965 to 2.5 million in 2005 and over 4 million in 2012. The United States is the world’s largest receiving country of international students, and according to the IIE’s *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, the population of international students for the 2013-2014 school year stood at a record 886,052 students.

To be sure, in the U.S. and around the world, international students play an important and complex role in the internationalization of higher education.<sup>6</sup> In the abstract and on the aggregate, international student mobility has significant economic and foreign policy implications for nations. It is an ever-increasing source of financial and political interest and development for institutions that view these students as key contributors to campus diversity, cross-cultural engagement, and global citizenry efforts, as well as to their local economies. Moreover, government officials and university and college administrators must contend with how best to balance present-day priorities such as national security, immigration, and competition for talent with day-to-day and long-term realities like student satisfaction, welcoming campus cultures, and collaborative programs to further personal growth and innovation in research. Indeed, the picture of globally mobile education has evolved greatly from its antique origins. For individual persons, though, the experience is

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<sup>6</sup> As this review of literature demonstrates, scholarly attention to globally mobile or “international” students is concentrated from a (mostly) Western perspective and literature (mostly) privilege discussion of students in or moving to institutions and nations in North America, (Western) Europe, and Australia. These trends, while constantly diversifying, are consistent with the majority of the international education literatures more broadly.

likely similarly impactful, even life defining and life changing.

### **Internationalization of Higher Internationalization**

Before I continue discussion of international students in the present day and expand on the particulars of how scholars situate these individuals within the context of the internationalization of higher education, I first shift here to explore, more broadly, the much wider context of internationalization. Orientation to how the concept, its foundations, and its realities are discussed in the literature is necessary for understanding its far-reaching implications for international students.

“Internationalization” as a term, a concept, and as a reality cannot be taken for granted. To begin, scholars explain that internationalization is often confused with “globalization” (Altbach, 2004), that it has only been common in the higher education lexicon since the 1980s (Knight, 2008), and that for it to be truly understood and to be treated with the appropriate level of importance it deserves it cannot be “a catchall phrase for everything and anything international” (de Wit, 2002, p. 114). For some people, internationalization is a highly complex but systematized way of internationalizing (preferably all) aspects of campus operations and life. It is a process, a “cycle,” it is dimensional and assessable, it is implementable, and most effective when it is comprehensive. For other scholars, the complexity of internationalization reaches beyond the process, its implementation, or the ways its elements can be assessed. Ninnes and Hellsten (2010), for example, suggest that it is necessary to “trouble...unproblematized notions [about internationalization] and to provide more critical readings and explorations of the process” (p. 1), into where, how, why (and for whom) higher education has been, and continues to be, impacted and contested. For all of these scholars, though, there is a consensus that internationalization is a rapidly developing phenomenon increasingly and

necessarily drawing the attention and action of all associated with the field of higher education.

Jane Knight (2004), perhaps the most noted scholar of internationalization, explains that the meaning of internationalization is not so straightforward because of its increased attention and various uses around the world. She explains that it could mean the mobility of students and scholars, partnerships, linkages, and projects across borders, or possibly the implementation of new academic programs and research efforts. Internationalization may also mean branch campuses, dual degrees, and distance technologies programs. Yet others may see it as “the inclusion of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process” or international development projects or even “the increasing emphasis on trade in higher education as internationalization” (p. 6).

Consequently, the concept requires regular updating. Confusion over the definition of internationalization, Knight explains, is also due to its relationship with globalization, which is understood as “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, [and] ideas...across borders,” which affects every nation differently according to their history, traditions, culture, and priorities (Knight and De Wit, 1997, p. 6). Globalization is one among many forces that impacts the international dimension of higher education. In view of these considerations, Knight defines internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2004, p. 11; see also Ellingboe, 1998, p. 199).

Knight (2004) purposefully transcends any specific locality or target audience with the definition because the dimensions of the internationalization of higher education vary depending on national and institutional contexts. At the national level, human resources development, strategic alliances between countries, commercial trade, nation building, and

social and cultural development are all of concern, whereas international profiles and reputations, student and staff development, income generation, strategic alliances between institutions, as well as research and knowledge production are concerns at the level of institutions. Because of these dual level complexities, Knight explains the very particular wording of her definition. “Process,” she explains, is used to make clear that internationalization evolves and develops wherever it exists. “International,” “intercultural,” and “global” are also deliberate choices. “International” acknowledges the “relationships between and among nations, cultures, or countries” (p. 8). “Intercultural” signifies that the diversity of cultures is inherent to internationalization broadly and also to internationalization at home. “Global” gives the definition “the sense of worldwide scope,” recognizing all of the complexity therein (p. 8). “Integration” is also important and draws attention to the fact that international and intercultural dimensions are embedded and are central, not marginal, to internationalization.

Situated within historical and other conceptual perspectives, Knight and de Wit (1995) describe Knight’s model of campus internationalization as a continuous cycle. The authors explain that the proposed six phases of the cycle are a guide for individual institutions to move at their own pace. Notably, there is a two-way flow between each of the steps. In the first phase, “awareness,” proponents will initiate campus-wide discussions to contemplate the merits of and possibilities for internationalization. “Commitment” is the second phase, wherein with the leadership of senior administrators, a broad base of faculty, staff, and students show support. In the third phase, “planning,” a realistic comprehensive plan or strategy is put into place recognizing and building on the unique context, needs, and objectives of the campus community. “Internationalization,” the fourth phase, begins the implementation of the various aspects outlined in the plan, while also creating a campus-

wide culture of support. This includes academic activities and services, organizational factors, and guiding principles. “Review” is the next phase, where assessing individual activities and continual enhancement (including reviewing budgets) of the quality and impact of the campus process thus far are prioritized. The sixth phase is “reinforcement,” in which faculty and staff participation are rewarded and recognized, and in which internationalization leaders reach out to the campus for ideas for the future. As the program of campus internationalization develops, Knight and de Wit (1995) explain, a culture of greater awareness and commitment is renewed and the cycle continues in order to continually grow and enhance the institution’s various goals.

Another interpretation of internationalization, explained by Paige (2005), provides a conceptual overview of performance and assessment indicators, outlining what he describes as “the most important dimensions” of campus internationalization (p. 100). Paige, too, notes that internationalization and globalization are often conflated and that they must be differentiated. The difference is that globalization is “about the world order” whereas internationalization is “about creating an [institutional] environment that is international in character” (p. 101). The ten performance categories used to assess university processes, then, include leadership; strategic planning; curriculum development; an infrastructure of centers for international students and scholars and study abroad; internationalized curriculum; international students and scholars; study abroad; faculty involvement in international activities; campus-wide co-curricular programming; and monitoring systems to track the progress of internationalization. In the case of the sixth category, “international students and scholars,” Paige explains, that these individuals, especially students,

can play a very important role in internationalization, in particular, through their interactions with host country students inside and outside the classroom. If they are properly supported by professional staff and given assistance in being integrated into campus life, their impact can be even greater (p. 109).



While Paige's list is seemingly comprehensive, he does not elaborate on the relationship between the categories nor does he provide a method to assess, for instance, how well an international student office serves international students on campus (Mullen, 2011).

Moreover, the highlighted example demonstrates the ways in which internationalization commodifies internationals and positions them as resources for host students/institutions.

Johnston and Edelstein (1993) and Kelleher (1996) each offer case studies of the various ways in which campuses across the country have implemented internationalization. Johnston and Edelstein (1993) bring together examples from 15 business and liberal arts institutions. Once again, a single ideal model of internationalization does not exist; knowing one's institution through and through is the key to developing an international-focused program on campus. Internationalization, Johnston and Edelstein (1993) explain, requires interdisciplinarity of the curriculum, active leadership of senior administrators, a campus ethos of internationality, and internationally engaged and experienced faculty. Funding is also necessary, but money without more comprehensive financial planning and preparedness will not achieve desired outcomes. Institutionalized, multi-dimensional, integrated, and strategically planned programs are those most likely to succeed. Kelleher's (1996) study profiles successful internationalization programs at 25 higher education institutions of various types. Of the 18 factors that most impact internationalization, the most important, Kelleher explains, is the support and leadership of faculty (see also Childress, 2010) and administrators. Kelleher's (1996) and Johnston and Edelstein's (1993), accounts are valuable resources because they mark, respectively, one of the most complete studies of campus internationalization using case studies and one of the earliest studies focusing on the factors that influence campus internationalization (Mullen, 2011, p. 63-65).

One final example among institutional and systematized internationalization is the notion of “comprehensive internationalization” (CI), which draws attention to the ways in which internationalization can reach full breadth and scope on a campus. Representing *NAFSA: Association of International Educators*, Hudzik (2011) defines CI as “a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise” (p. 6). Crucially, Hudzik explains, everyone on campus, from institutional leadership to staff to students, must collectively embrace CI for it to be successful. The author also stresses that it is impossible for any single institution to “engage in all ways of internationalizing” because a “uniform path” does not exist; he notes that common features to a commitment to comprehensive internationalization do exist, namely that “it must involve active and responsible engagement of the academic community in global networks and partnerships” (p. 10). And though it is not assumed or expected that all aspects of every institution’s context can be internationalized, Hudzik explains that when implemented “effectively” all of campus life – on and beyond its physical domain – is impacted. Though the report encapsulates the growing importance and widespread recognition of the need to internationalize, Hudzik admits that, in reality, internationalization is a significant undertaking for almost all universities and colleges and that it is also not necessarily seen as integral to most institutions’ identities or strategies.

### **International Students and Internationalization: Pervasive Themes**

As discussed above, international students are recognized as an important component of the internationalization of higher education. This student population has also garnered considerable attention from scholars interested in the various aspects of their

experience on and beyond campus contexts. In this section, I not only expand on how internationals are framed within the wider internationalization of higher education conversation, but I also explore at length the various ways international students are represented in the wider literatures of which they are subject. In doing so, additional shades of the internationalization of higher education unaddressed by the authors above are revealed and explored. I investigate six narratives about international students, those that shed light on the idea that the seeming ubiquity and fervency of internationalization is not without its consequences for globally mobile persons: today, more than ever, internationals are *commodified*; they are *homogenized*; they are *Othered*; international students are believed to be academically and non-academically *deficient*; to survive and succeed abroad, internationals are told they must *adjust*; these individuals are branded *temporary*. In this dissertation, I survey these themes together because, while some critical authors do discuss them either in brief or more fully, generally these narratives are absent – and certainly not reviewed in concert – in the literature and therefore are usually taken to be unproblematic and/or self-evident realities applicable to the experience of all international students. I argue that this scholarly trend needs to be redressed; in doing so, a fuller and more nuanced understanding of international study and globally mobile students is possible. I begin, though, with some explanation of the internationalization-international student context.

It is fair to say that international students are on campuses abroad because of the internationalization of higher education. On the one hand, universities and colleges are increasingly looking to fill their seats in their classrooms with the world's brightest students. However, as Pandit (2013, p. 131) explains, a truly “comprehensive internationalization” is about much more than “just a set of discrete activities” such as recruitment, because internationalization is intimately intertwined with an institutions’ teaching, research, and

outreach imperatives; of vital importance to the mission of an institution, is “to prepare students to live and work in a diverse and intercultural environment” (p. 131). Everyone on campus benefits from this diversity (Mestenhauser, 2002; Peterson et al, 1999), particularly, we are told, domestic students who learn from their international counterparts about other peoples and cultures (or “global citizenry”) and how to best become prepared to compete upon graduation in a global economy (or “global competency”) (Pandit, 2013).

On the other hand, internationals actively seek to participate in and reap from the opportunities that await them in the ever-globalizing landscape of higher education, especially, we are told, in the reputed universities of the West (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Habu, 2000). Where shortages of enrollment and questions of quality exist at home, institutions in the U.S., UK, and Australia (among others) welcome the educational talents and contributions of international students.

At the same time, though, institutional leaders are increasingly in agreement that the future of higher education, and their university’s success in it, is a global project and that their active participation is necessary (Deschamps and Lee, 2014). “Internationalization can be likened to an arms race of international students, scholars, programs, and linking an institution to individuals and activities outside its national borders” (Lee, 2013, p. 5; see also Coate and Rathnayake, 2012). So while opportunities exist aplenty for international students and as diversity and intercultural rationales are important reasons for increases in campuses’ international student populations, it is also true that there have been significant decreases in public funding for higher education and in-state populations at many colleges in the West over the last several decades (Rizvi 2011). These factors not only impact how administrators and decision-makers (as well as faculty, staff, and domestic students) view and treat internationals, but they have also implications for the realities of internationalization in the

lives of globally mobile students, as will be discussed below.

There are additional motivations for, and consequences of, the internationalization of higher education that predominate today. Governments are very interested in the trends of global student mobility, as these students and their families contribute significantly – to the tune of \$26.8 billion during the 2013-14 academic year in the U.S. – to local and national economies (IIE, 2014). International student mobility also has important implications for U.S. foreign policy. The experience of living, studying, and/or working in the United States often increases appreciation for American political, social, and culture values, and preferences for American goods and services. Graduates may speak highly of their experience to family, friends and co-workers, thereby laying a foundation for positive relations and cooperation between nations (Andrade and Evans, 2009; Pandit, 2007) (though certainly, the opposite is possible, wherein students are or become critical of or even hostile to American culture as a result of their negative experiences). From a foreign policy perspective, this is particularly important if these students become leaders in their home countries.

The realities of the internationalization of higher education are complex and contradictory, to be sure, but perhaps it is also true that “[t]he experiences and satisfaction of international students already enrolled should be considered first if internationalization is truly the goal” (Lee and Rice, 2007, p. 405). If for no other reason, if certain correctives are not made, countries that have long benefited from international student migration will no longer be able to assume that the good fortune of enrolling so many international students will continue (Lee, 2010). I will now explore the six pervasive themes in greater detail. I begin with what for many scholars seems to be the primary motivator of internationalization and international student recruitment: the bottom line.

### *Internationals are Commodities*

As Pandit (2007) aptly puts it, “[i]nternational students have become a hot global commodity” (p. 156). Competition among institutions and nations around the world for shares in the benefits of internationalization have intensified greatly and “the ultimate reward [is] the recruitment of and revenue from international students” (Enslin and Hedge, 2008, p. 108; see also Rizvi, 2011, p. 696). Indeed, internationalization is subject to the dictates of the global market-based economy, which, in turn, results in the commodification of individuals who participate in global educational exchange, particularly those who are required to pay full tuition and fees and who can therefore offer relief to institutions responding to concerns about national and local higher education funding changes (Rizvi, 2011). As the global higher education market’s primary participants, internationals are no longer simply students but they are now also commodities, customers/consumers, recruits, and resources.

Coate (2009, p. 273) explains that “[i]n the contemporary higher education landscape, it is possible to discuss the economic value of international students in...stark terms of commodification (students, wool, beer...it’s just business).” Enslin and Hedge (2008) tell us that this is indicative of the growing international knowledge economy and that “[c]orporate management styles have taken hold in universities and financial incentives, including fee income from internationalisation of the student body, [which] have come to exert far-reaching effects on their character as educational institutions” (p. 107). Deschamps and Lee (2014) refer to the commoditizing of services and goods and the influences of the private sector on higher education as “academic capitalism” (p. 7). Competition for student dollars, global rankings and prestige, and institutional sustainability through uncertain economic times drive colleges and universities to recruit internationals in ever-increasing numbers, or what Waters and Brooks (2011) call “a highly mercenary approach to

internationalisation” (p. 568). To some degree, the arms race for internationals – most especially today Chinese students whose families can afford high education costs thanks to a burgeoning Chinese middle class (Abelmann and Kang, 2014) – in the United States is guided by recognition of the impermanence and shifting nature of mobility trends (Lambert, 1995). Higher education institutions (HEIs), then, are quite similar to investors that must predict and respond to the volatility of various factors that influence stock markets. World events, the capacity building of higher education systems abroad, funding availability from foreign governments, political alliances between nations, and recruitment efforts all matter greatly. The consequence for internationals on campuses around the world is that they are often viewed now as “cash cows” (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Luke, 2003; Marginson, 2013; Peterson et al, 1999; Waters and Brooks, 2011), which, for these students, may mean that they “experience problems and disappointment when they find that they are valued primarily in terms of their financial contribution to an institution” and not their study and research skills, their extracurricular engagement, or their educational potential (Habu, 2000, p. 45).

This global “edubusiness” (Luke, 2010) often frames internationals as customers and/or consumers of higher education (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Barrett, 1996; Coate and Rathnayake, 2012; Habu, 2000; Lee and Rice, 2007). For their part, Enslin and Hedge (2008) find “a serious ethical tension” between institutions’ social justice commitments and “regarding [international] students as paying customers to whom we can sell our education as a traded high premium commodity” (p. 108). Furthermore, because internationals pay at a premium, notably in systems in wealthy countries, higher education “amplifies the excludability of the knowledge” and, when these individuals are not able to pay high rates, it also “increases the rivalrous nature of the knowledge,” which ultimately reifies the economic global order in favor of the powerful (p. 115, see also Lee, 2008). Rizvi (2005, p. 9) and

Marginson (2013, pp. 14-15) find that the consumerist model of international higher education both strips agency from students and also empowers them to enter the global market. Navigating an uneven terrain dominated by national agendas is the challenge (2013, p. 14). Koehne (2005) shares that students in her study about international student identity concede that they appreciate the option to “go into the marketplace and access university places or specialised courses that are not available to them in their home country, or of buying an overseas education that gives them English language competence, and so better job prospects,” but being positioned as a “customer” pejoratively frames this right to education and is dehumanizing (p. 117). It is the belief of critical authors, then, that while internationals are subject to market dictates, they are neither university administered enrollment units, merely customers in “a large-scale services export industry,” or members of a classroom; “they are also human beings” (Sawir et al., 2008, p. 149).

Another form of international student commodification concerns the mismatch between institutions’ heavy emphasis on recruitment and how HEIs “appear to pay little attention to supporting these students once they arrive” (Lee, 2010, p. 66). Yet, there is an irony here. Lee registers that the satisfaction of current students (who can call or Skype home or post to a forum or Facebook) often directly affects whether future classes choose to attend a particular university or college or not. Focused on recruiting more internationals, all too often institutions cannot support or provide a welcoming campus for the (increasingly) large classes of internationals currently enrolled (Peterson et al, 1999; Ozturgut and Murphy, 2009). Not only is this an institution-wide failure, but it also demonstrates to those who travel beyond their home country for education that their role on campus is not as a learner or a cosmopolitan agent of personal growth, but simply a cheated and dissatisfied customer (Habu, 2000). Beyond that, international students are more inclined to



experience pains and challenges of, among other things, friendship making and academic success (Sawir et al, 2008). Attention to racial tensions and conflicts, making sure that resources and funding are allocated to curricular and non-curricular programs, ensuring a “critical mass” (or having a reasonable number of students like oneself), (Altbach, et al., 2002), developing buy-in across campus (not simply through the campus international office) for internationalism (Peterson et al, 1999), and academic and non-academic advising are all necessary for a welcoming atmosphere and the retention of enrolled students.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, international students are commodified on campuses through the ways in which they are seen and treated as resources for domestics (the institution and its domestic faculty, staff, and especially its domestic students) and for creating diversity. Andrade and Evans (2009) explain that the purpose of their book, *International Students: Strengthening a Critical Resource*, is to provide information to institutions about international students, a “largely undiscovered educational resource” and how they can “rethink the role” of these students on campus as well as implement “effective strategic planning” for international student programs into the future (p. 2; see also Urban and Palmer, 2013). Johnston and Edelstein (1993) note “there are many good sources of information on strategies and mechanisms for recruiting, mainstreaming, and making good use of international students,” whose “presence...is an uncommon resource” (p. 14). At the national level, internationals play an important part in furthering robust research interests in the STEM fields and in serving as “excellent cultural ambassadors of American culture” upon return home (Pandit, 2007, p. 156). Many universities have come to depend on internationals as low-wage teaching

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<sup>7</sup> According to the National Center for Education Statistics’ College Navigator report for College, 93% of Horace students who began their undergraduate studies in the fall of 2011 for their second year. The Horace College Navigator also reports that 95% of ‘non-resident alien’ full-time, first-time students who began their studies in fall 2005 received their degree or award within the standard 6-year time to completion rate, as compared to their Asian (83%), Black or African American (91%), Hispanic/Latino (59%), White (89%), and Race/ethnicity unknown (100%) counterparts.

assistants (Peterson et al., 1999), particularly in the sciences (Andrade and Evans, 2009).

They are also useful upon graduation as they can be resources for alumni giving programs, a phenomenon not typical outside of the U.S. (Deschamps and Lee, 2014). But most importantly, internationals provide opportunities for domestic students (especially those with little international experience) and faculty and staff (Mestenhauser, 2002) to experience intercultural learning and cultural exchange (Andrade and Evans, 2009). As Pandit explains,

[i]nternational students provide a mirror through which US-born students can view the world, the United States, and themselves from a very different perspective. Thus, instead of being a liability to be overcome, the diversity of international students can be an asset to advance learning opportunities for all students. Herein lies the true value of an internationally diverse campus (p. 134).

Interactions inside and outside of the classroom can break down stereotypes and assumptions (Pandit, 2007) and even long-standing “foreign”/“home” and “them”/“us” binaries and post-colonial attitudes towards the Other (Coate, 2009) (though, the opposite may also be true, and stereotypes, assumptions and problematic binaries may persist or even be created). Higher education around the world is most certainly diversifying; however, often a narrative of “creating a more multicultural learning environment” is employed in the guise of “increasing seats for international students who pay higher tuition rates” (Deschamps and Lee, 2014, p. 7; see also Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003, for the liberal arts context).

### *Internationals are Homogenous*

One of the more prevalent consequences of the commodification of international students is the erasure of individual differences. It is important to note up front that while there are times when it is appropriate to view internationals as a group (as Elizabeth often reminded me international offices do regularly and ethically), the fact is

[i]nternational students are a diverse group, but they have often been spoken about in academic literature and in academic conversations as an entity, rather than as individuals with a range of personal histories and experiences, and a range of

personal motivations and desires which have constructed the desire to become an international student” (Koehne, 2005, p. 104).

Yet, what is an “international student?” As I discuss next, to many they are a diverse group that is easily associable with and explained by their national citizenship as “Chinese,” “Indian,” or “South Korean” (Gargano, 2012). Internationals are also often perceived as being wealthy (Marginson, 2012). In addition, these students are easily categorizable because scholarly, institutional, and online discussion of these individuals most often takes the form of positivist statistical presentations of flows, trends, and percentages (Kell and Vogel, 2008).

Noting that the privileging of home nations often overshadows student voices, Gargano (2012, p. 145) argues that there is an assumption that students from the same country “will have similar needs, experiences, and understandings of an educational sojourn, sidelining both individual histories and identities, and the broader historical, political, cultural, and social contexts associated with the inherent mobility of crossing borders.” While this singular, very durable descriptor is satisfactory to scholars seeking to generalize international students, it dismisses the salience of an intersectional approach focused on understanding an individual’s perceptions and experiences. Moreover, this preoccupation with nationality “neglects to acknowledge the fluidity of contexts that students find themselves in and the daily identity negotiations that students engage in on campus and across transnational social fields” (p. 146). These transnational social fields, as discussed in the previous chapter, account for students’ associations to multiple places, as well as people, institutions, and identities, in the home country and beyond (Gargano, 2009; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). Though it is important to note that homeland ties are, in many cases (certainly in this dissertation study), very important and even defining for internationals, the crucial point is that dependency on national membership alone tends to confine and conflate individual international students’ identities, perceptions, experiences, and their needs.

The perception that all internationals are rich also unfairly homogenizes these students. In most cases, particularly with undergraduate education, international students' families pay much or all of the full-tuition costs out of pocket (IIE, 2011). From such findings, Waters and Leung (2013) conclude, despite some exceptions, that international students are generally wealthy, and that they have resources and connections that enable them to capitalize on educational opportunities in other countries (p. 617; see also Deschamps and Lee, 2014, p. 14). So while increasingly "international student mobility in higher education has largely become a private good, available mostly to the transnational elite" (Rizvi, 2011, p. 699), a significant number of students do struggle, especially in cases where, in order to acquire a student visa, these students are required by host governments to demonstrate access to a specified level of financial assets (Marginson, 2012a). Marginson also reports, "most international students work at some stage during their studies, and many are dependent on this" (p. 212). Conditional to their visa status, however, international students may be restricted with regard to working, may be required to also possess a work visa, or may be limited to a certain number of hours of work, resulting for some in a "special vulnerability" of exploitation at work (p. 212). Perceptions that all international students are from wealthy families, particularly today Chinese students, still persist. As discussed above, while it is possible to quantify the collective income generated annually from international students (\$26.8 billion in 2013-14 in the U.S.), such statistics misleadingly imply broad wealth and distract from the fact that not all students are rich.

The above example demonstrates the potency of statistical measurements of internationals, as well as one of the most familiar methods for representing these students: the "global (or international) student mobility" (ISM) lens (see, for example, IIE's annual *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, *Project Atlas*, a partner project lead by

the U.S. Department of State and other governments and organizations; Andrade, 2009; Lambert, 1995; Woodfield, 2011). ISM privileges positivist and functionalist analyses, often with a focus on national flows and trends. Some authors contend that while statistics are useful for a broad understanding of the global context “more attention should be paid to the experiences of international students” (Lee and Rice, 2007, p. 405) and to student voices (Gargano, 2009). Kim (2012) also notes that such quantitative research leaves out any “serious attention to power relations in higher education” (p. 456). According to Marginson (2014), positivist research leaves individuals mostly voiceless, removes much of the human element of student mobility, and gives these students “little space to...influence [research] content” (p. 9). Also critical of these approaches, Kell and Vogel suggest this “statistical material reinforces an instrumental and positivist approach that objectifies human behavior and commodifies this behavior” (p. 22).

Most notably, though, as a group these individuals are homogenized and marked as “international students” in more disturbing ways, ways that layer on top of each other. The logic, in part or in full, often goes as follows: International students are *Others*. They are “foreign” (the “them” to our “us”), subject to (or deserving of?) racism and other discriminations, and they are a homeland security threat. As such, they are also *deficient*, say, in their English skills, in their ability to make friends with domestic students, and/or in their familiarity with and success in a new educational system. Consequently, in order to fit in and succeed academically and socially, internationals must *adjust*, and along the way bear the sufferings of “culture shock.” Thankfully, international students are *temporary*, that is, they are “guests”/“sojourners”/“visitors” who are for a short time “present” on our campuses. It is important to note that many international students do not identify with this logic; each person’s journey is different and may very well, and hopefully, be joyous, fruitful, and

fulfilling. Unfortunately, a majority of internationals documented in the scholarship – particularly internationals of color, Muslims (and those of other minority and/or Othered religious faiths), and today more than ever, Chinese students – can relate with some or all of the outlined logic (Lee and Rice, 2007; Marginson, 2013).

### *Internationals are Others*

International students are Othered in many ways. First and foremost, the distinctions made between and labeling of students as “international” and “home” (or “host”/“local”) generally only serve to create opposition between students who are class/dorm/room/campusmates (Coate, 2009; Kumar, 2003). On the one hand, this labeling is practical and necessary (legally, these students have different classifications and responsibilities), but, on the other, it is divisive, imposing social, cultural, and academic barriers that begin even before students arrive on campus (and which often stem from colonial legacies and post-colonial realities; see Coate, 2009). It is possible to see, then, how employing the term “international student/s” (or “home” or “domestic” student/s, for that matter) can (and does) homogenize a very diverse group of individuals. The term itself, “international student,” is not always taken for granted in the literature (Coate, 2009; Gargano, 2012; Koehne, 2005; Kumar, 2003; Matthews and Sidhu, 2005). These authors generally focus on how individuals are affected by their marked differences and their responses to the ways in which they are perceived and treated by their domestic peers. As Gargano (2012) contends, the label international student “require[s] some sorting out” for internationals who are “actively constructing a space of acceptance” (p. 154). Because their experience does not always match up with their (for example) American counterparts, students must constantly negotiate “when, where, and how [they do] or [do] not enact an international student identity” (p. 154).

Scholars also explore the ways in which international students experience racism and other forms of discrimination on and off campus (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Brender, 2004; Lane, 2002; Lee, 2005; Lee and Rice, 2007; MacWilliams, 2004; Marginson, 2013; Marginson et al, 2010; McMurtie, 2001). Utilizing “neo-racism,” a conceptual framework that “emphasizes cultural differences as a basis of discrimination that appeals to popular notions of cultural preservation” (p. 383), Lee and Rice (2007) find that discrimination and dissatisfaction contribute to enrollment declines in the U.S. and that students of color are significantly more inclined to experience difficulties than White internationals. The authors find that cultural discrimination, feelings of discomfort, verbal discrimination, and direct confrontation are the most prevalent injustices, and that these students are subject to these injustices inside and outside of the classroom by students, professors, and local community members. For example, an Indian student reported in Lee and Rice’s study:

[t]here have been a couple of occasions when walking back home from campus with my friends, but I don’t know if those were students that bothered us ... we generally walk back home from campus and it was not a big deal but people threw bottles at us. Being international students, you get used to it (p. 404).

Lee and Rice note that interviewees “appeared more calloused than angered” by such incidents and often preferred not to speak further about them. Such abuse and violence stems from the Othering of international students as foreigners (“go home”), “minorities” (which for many brings new negotiations of race and status), “terrorists” (notably after 9/11 and again the 2013 Boston Bombings for students from Middle Eastern and South Asian nations), “exotic,” “ethnic,” and international (as opposed to American).

Lee and Rice (2007) further suggest that one of the primary reasons internationals are Othered in these ways and suffer abuses inwardly or with other international students only is because of their citizenship status, a point taken up by Marginson (2013), who terms the globally mobile, dubiously-positioned status of these students as “the master Othering.”

“The duality of citizen/non-citizen shelters,” he writes, “legitimizes, and amplifies all the other subordinations that international students experience, including the racist Othering, the exclusions, and the abuse and violence” (p. 10). This tension between being politically, legally, and culturally secure in one country but not in the country of education leads Marginson to ask whether these individuals are “included equals or subordinated Others.” Despite the fact that they pay the same taxes, are subject to the same laws and institutions – even as universities and countries reap significant economic benefits from them – internationals are bereft of the same rights, entitlements and protections (p. 10). This master Othering is furthered in English-speaking countries by stereotypes (internationals must adjust and are in deficit academically, in need of paternalistic care, are educational consumers, foreigners, and terrorists) that are premised on the superiority of the country of education and that reify the subjugation of international students. Both Marginson (2013) and Lee and Rice (2007) advise intervention at the level of the nation and the institution in order to address these various forms of Othering and to re-educate home populations.

Finally, international students are othered as “terrorists.” In the aftermath of 9/11, Marginson (2012) explains, “...the government did not protect the security of international students from American hostility. It acted to protect the security of the United States from international students” by implementing SEVIS (developed before the attacks), which “positioned all international students as potentially dangerous, infringed on their liberties, and imposed a regulatory burden on universities and their staff” (p. 214). On campuses, students who are or are perceived to be Muslim are especially at risk. For example, a female interviewee from Indonesia explains a verbal attack (Marginson, 2013, p. 21): “[i]t happened just two days after September 11 ... He just yelled at me with very rude words, and said ‘fucking Muslims,’ and ‘go back to your country’”. Fischer (2013a) explains that after 9/11



international enrollments in the U.S. took a sharp decline because families were concerned about the safety of their children in the U.S. and so “opted for destinations perceived to be less risky.” The Patriot Act (H.R. 3162) also placed greater restrictions on travel into the United States and limitations on individuals applying for visas, as well as imposed greater surveillance on those in the country. Immigration, security, and safety concerns, though not to the same degree as in 2001, resurfaced after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings (Fischer, 2013b). (See also Altbach, 2004; Fischer 2013b, 2013c; Marginson, 2010; as well as *Know your Rights on Campus: A guide to racial profiling and hate crime for international students in the United States* (2003) by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University).

### *Internationals are in Deficit*

Yet another theme in the scholarship accounts for the ways in which international students are in deficit academically, socially, and culturally.<sup>8</sup> The coverage of these deficits is one of the more robust areas of scholarly concentration about internationals. The deficit model, as will become clear, is also intertwined with another theme: the need for internationals to adjust (a theme I expand on in next subsection). What follows is a brief example from the literature, a chapter by Eland and Thomas (2013) entitled “Succeeding Abroad,” which usefully serves to demonstrate the navigation of the variegated landscape of deficit narratives about internationals. The work of authors focusing on international student deficits, though, is not without its critics, and I document these critiques as well.

Eland and Thomas (2013) explain that international students experience particular academic (as well as non-academic) “adjustment challenges.” Academically, these students are, generally speaking, unfamiliar with the U.S. context, and therefore they struggle with

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that academic deficit discourses have also long been used similarly to describe minority groups in the United States (see Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Valencia, 1997, 2010; Yosso, 2005).

“classroom dynamics, academic writing style, the role of the instructor, and course content” (p. 147). Additionally, international students are thought to have problems with English and “the level and amount of required reading, writing, and speaking in class” (p. 147). These authors suggest individuals also have trouble focusing on several different tasks at once and are advised to “have strong motivation to do the hard work it takes to succeed” and not dwell on internal pressures or those from home (p. 147). “Consequences,” they suggest, follow students who do not heed this advice: class failure, academic suspension, and academic dishonesty accusations are all possibilities (p. 147).

Furthermore, as the United States higher education system has some distinctive features that are particularly challenging for international students, the authors next turn to the “culturally based rules and expectations” that dictate in American institutions. Eland and Thomas prescribe, “[i]t is important for international students to understand what is expected of them...as they must be able to adjust their expectations and behaviors to be successful in the US context” (p. 150). There are significant differences, the authors explain, between “collectivist” and “individualist” cultures. As well, the salience of “power distance” versus more “learner-centered” approaches, which are “profound differences” requiring “major adjustment” and awareness of the “danger of violating academic conventions” cannot be understated (pp. 150-151). The U.S. is “a strongly individualistic culture” (p. 151), which means there are new standards and consequences for internationals. These students, used to “rote memorization and the repeating of a senior scholar’s work,” must be wary of committing plagiarism (p. 152). Additionally, internationals are expected to actively participate in class, engage in debate, and ask questions in the U.S., all of which is in “stark contrast” to the more collectivist nature of many internationals’ cultures in which students learn to “fit in” (p. 153). To be successful, internationals from these collectivist cultures

“have to learn to be more like” American students regardless of whether they are “uncomfortable” or “shocked” by this new classroom etiquette (p. 153). In addition, Eland and Thomas note that international students must be more flexible in academic planning, more open to informal and casual relationships with professors, as well as learn to plan ahead and be better adherents to schedules.

Outside of the classroom, Eland and Thomas describe international students who have cultural, personal, legal, and social “challenges.” Students may think they know a lot about American culture, but this “does not necessarily mean that these students fully understand and are prepared for the realities of US campus life” (p. 147). Internationals have difficulties with English, making friends, climate changes, transportation, roommates, new foods and eating healthily, finances, sleeping enough, and time management, all of which may result in “loneliness, isolation, and uncertainty about how to make friends because they are away from family and friends at home and they are not sure how to connect with US students” (p. 147). There are problems with medical insurance, treatment, and mistrust of “Western medicine,” which can lead to even more serious problems (p. 149). Some internationals, Eland and Thomas explain, will succumb to being victims of crime, addiction, suicidal thoughts, and possibly life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

Scholarship like that of Eland and Thomas (2013) and others is met with strong criticism by authors who find the varying levels of implicit and explicit Othering as reductive and offensive. The label of international student, argues Coate (2009), “is often used to implicitly suggest a group of students who are non-native English speakers largely unfamiliar with Western academic conventions” (p. 277). This concerns her because of “the extent to which international students are deemed to be an easily-identifiable, non-English speaking group who have particular needs, whereas the ‘home’ students – particularly those we tend

to think of as ‘traditional’ students – are not perceived as problematic in the same ways” (p. 278). Coate continues by explaining that the deficit model used to describe internationals has not only been pervasive for quite a long time but that it is “probably one of the most dubious discourses” in the scholarship because it focuses on how the experiences of and working with international students is *challenging* and riddled with *problems* rather than being advantageous and filled with joys and with hope (p. 278). Coate’s (2009) position, then, does not suggest that internationals do not have their struggles (even significant ones) or that it is not at times frustrating to work with and teach students who are quite different from oneself. Rather, the heavy-handed, one-sided preoccupation with these students’ purported (largely culturally-based and ignorance-filled) failings, inadequacies, and problems only serves to “paint a picture of [the] diminishment of humanity: academically, socially, and culturally” (p. 279, from Ecclestone, 2007, p. 457). Eland and Thomas’s (2013) description of these students as inexperienced, vulnerable, and easily overwhelmed exemplifies this.

Sidhu and Dall’Alba (2012) also problematize deficit discourses about international students. These authors explain that though these discourses are not as prevalent as they once were, they are still evident today in both education scholarship and in the everyday perceptions of people on campuses. They note that this deficit model is most often used in discussions of students from Asian countries, questioning “the ‘fit’ of their learning styles, capacity for critical thinking, and preparedness in class discussions and group projects” (p. 419). Moreover, deficit discourses “are a useful rationalising instrument to shift responsibility for ethnocentrism, including a reluctance to cater for students with diverse experience and lack of preparation for addressing the challenges of teaching international students” (p. 419). Doherty and Singh (2005) concur and suggest that the consequences lay primarily with international students, who are socially constructed as Other to the Western student. These

students' social and cultural differences are “constructed in negative or deficit terms and as potentially risky to the Western traditions of the university” (p. 54). In addition to being blamed for poor academic performance, then, students are believed, among others, to desire harmony within group settings and so (are expected to) assimilate to dominant, Western academic and campus cultures (Coate, 2009; Doherty and Singh, 2005).

The deficit model is pervasive in the scholarship and focuses on academic as well as non-academic aspects of international study such adjustment challenges (Gu et al, 2009; Gebhard, 2010), English language acquisition, relationship building (particularly with host students and professors; see Campbell, 2012), classroom expectations and etiquette, mental health concerns, and academic honesty. See Ozturgut and Murphy (2009) for a comprehensive discussion of these challenges and others. Additionally, as noted above, much of the deficit literature is focused on students from Asian countries (Heggins and Jackson, 2003) and is housed within academic fields of study such as psychology (as discussed in Marginson, 2014) and higher education.

### *Internationals are to Adjust*

Among the themes examined in this review, none garners among scholars and practitioners – and a good many internationals themselves as well – a perceived inherency to global study more ubiquitously than the idea that international students must “adjust” or “adapt” to “host” cultures/institutions. As Eland and Thomas (2013) make clear above, students' very survival abroad and any hopes they have to succeed academically depend on their doing so. The literature tends to focus on students who come from collectivist cultures and non-Western countries studying in North America, Western Europe, and Australia. Having already explored the ways in which adjustment narratives and the attendant perceived academic and non-academic deficits take shape in practice, then, I turn next to the

(mostly unrealized) consequences of this pervasive model of student inclusion.

Marginson (2013) aptly describes a prevailing dimension of the current state of internationalized higher education in the West. Noting that while both internationals and the country of education gain from the global exchange of students, he explains,

for international students in general, and more so for non-white students from emerging nations, the exchange is premised on less than equal respect and treatment. Most people in the country of education give this little thought. If it is difficult for international students, the thinking runs, why do ‘they’ come? Clearly ‘our education’ is superior to what ‘they’ have at home. And being supplicants, as it were, ‘they’ ought to ‘adjust’ to the country of education to the degree necessary to absorb its bounty (p. 9).

As they attempt to make the most, presumably optimistically and with greater effort, of the experience abroad, which includes developing relationships with “host” persons, international students are seen in this logic as being innately inferior and not worthy of “equal respect and treatment.” For their part, individuals in the country of education who view internationals pejoratively and themselves as superior miss out on the chance to connect with and learn from internationals. Fundamentally, then, adjustment discourses impose great, often unfounded and unjust, expectations and responsibilities onto internationals and also great barriers for intercultural relations between these individuals and host persons. This kind of international/home binary – coupled with the racist and discriminatory treatment of internationals documented by Lee and Rice (2007) and Marginson (2013) – harkens to long-standing and troubled legacies of colonialism and anti-immigration in which ethnocentrism, parochialism, and xenophobia predominate (see, for example, Abelmann and Kang, 2014, pp. 385-86).

At its core, the adjustment paradigm is an unequal practice. As Lee (2010) argues, it “places the responsibility to adjust and integrate squarely on the [international student] and inordinately blames him or her for having difficulty making the necessary adjustments;” the

“underlying assumption is that host campuses are blamelessly ignorant and play no role in the negative experiences of international students” (p. 69). The implication is that adaption is unidirectional: “[t]he international student ‘adjusts’ to the host nation but not vice versa” (Marginson, 2013, p. 12). Moreover, this prescriptive and functionalist account of adaption “fails to describe the dynamics of the multidimensional tension and conflict students experience in a transnational situation” (Kim, 2012, p. 457). The global hegemony of American higher education and the power relations experienced by individuals, Kim explains, are ignored. This implied one-directionality, the idea that these students alone must adapt, also connotes that host persons and cultures are static and that they are unaffected by cosmopolitan possibilities of internationalism and intercultural exchange. As Coate (2009) and Coate and Rathnayake (2012) attest, working with and teaching international students should and can be a mutually beneficial relationship. Breaking with ethnocentrism, international study as “a journey of conversion” becomes a “never finished cultural negotiation” (Marginson, 2014).

### *Internationals are Temporary*

The final theme explored here involves the regularity with which internationals are deemed temporary in the scholarship. Regardless of critical orientation, commentators label international students in ways that liken them to tourists and passersby rather than people who live, often for four or more years, in the campus housing or in the neighborhoods of the institutions in which they are enrolled as students. Arguably, these students are not “permanent” just as they are generally not “citizens” (until they decide to change their citizenship status after concluding their studies). However, to deem internationals as “visitors” (Alberts and Hazen, 2005; Lee, 2010; Lee and Rice, 2007), “guests” (Coate and Rathnayake, 2012; Lee and Rice, 2007), and “sojourners” (Coles and Swami, 2012; Lee and

Rice, 2007) reifies international students as transient Others. Additionally, the prevalence of the expression “*presence* of international students on campus” (Coate, 2009; Coate and Rathnayake, 2012; Coles and Swami, 2012; Habu, 2000; Lee and Rice, 2007; Matthews and Sidhu, 2005; Mestenhauser, 2002; Pandit, 2007, 2013; Urban and Palmer, 2014) implies that these individuals are accounted for, that they are in attendance on campus and leaves out that they might also be active and engaged members of the campus community.

Internationalization narratives claim that *the presence of international students* is prized. If it is enough, as the logic seems to go, that these students are on campus, then one can conclude that these students have served their purpose as a commodity, a resource (Habu, 2000).

What internationals do, if anything, after they arrive appears to be of lesser consequence.

At first glance, this critique may appear to be but semantics; however, to label internationals as visitors, guests, and sojourners who are present on campus has the linguistic power to frame these students as being temporary in ways that their domestic classmates, who are on campus for comparative periods of time, are not. As Marginson explains, whether or not campuses are welcoming to internationals, these students are often seen as “aliens” and “foreigners” who culturally are “exotic outsiders” (p. 501):

This Othering might seem unexceptional in the case of short-term visitors such as tourists (and for them the sojourn often brings with it compensating commercial courtesies). It is more anomalous for persons *resident* for several years while they complete degree programs. Classified as aliens, [international students] nevertheless must deal with the housing and employment markets. Like local citizens they are subject to the authority of police, the legal system and public bureaucracies. They pay the same taxes (Marginson, 2012b, p. 501, emphasis added).

Because international students live for years at a time in campus and/or local communities alongside their domestic resident counterparts, terms such as visitor, sojourner, guest, and presence are inaccurate. They take for granted the narratives and practices that exoticize and Other international students. Should a term be necessary to qualify the status of any



impermanent student, “temporary resident” (Coate and Rathnayake, 2012, p. 43) is perhaps a suitable alternative, and typically applies to both domestic and international students.

### *Unpacking and Unsettling the Themes*

There is a pervasive metanarrative about international students rooted in a complex set of stereotypes and assumptions that casts these students as a problem population. Lakshmana (1979, p. 85, cited in Koehne, 2005) explains, “there is a significant difference between the problems perceived as important and the difficulties actually experienced” by internationals. It is important, then, that these themes are addressed head on because “taken-for-granted assumptions about international students are misleading” (Koehne, 2005, p. 105). Furthermore, to complicate the perceived axioms so often attributed to international students, authors contend, for example, that greater attention needs to be paid to the ways in which these individuals possess agency as they navigate their way through the field of global higher education (Ghosh and Wang, 2003; Koehne, 2005, 2006; Lee, 2010; Marginson, 2014; Matthews and Sidhu, 2005); that the promise of internationalization as transformative education, especially for international and domestic students, is not necessarily a given by having students from differing countries and cultures share academic and social spaces with one another (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Habu, 2000; Turner and Robson, 2008); and that it is necessary for institutions to claim greater responsibility for international student concerns and to ensure their inclusion on campus is met with justice, and, as much as is possible, their satisfaction (Coate and Rathnayake, 2012; Enslin and Hedge, 2008; Lee, 2013; Marginson, 2013; Ozturgut and Murphy, 2009; Peterson et al, 1999; Sawir et al, 2008).

The particular themes in this section are selected and explored in concert because of the regularity and ardency with which they are discussed in the literature, as well as because of how they re/present a particular, limited, and mostly pejorative view of international

students and their experiences. In the introduction of their 14-chapter volume of internationals' self composed reflections on life before, while at, and looking beyond Dartmouth College, Garrod and Davis (1999) share with readers that

[i]ntertwined throughout this fundamentally complex mixture [of authors]...is a common thread of difference, of spaces occupied in their college lives that are an amalgam of cultures, memories, contradicting values. Using their own voices, these students write about discontinuities as they straddle cultures—about presents lived in environments extraordinarily different from pasts (p. xxiv).

Gargano (2009) argues that Garrod and Davis' (1999) anthology is relatively unique among publications about internationals because it privileges student voices and the freedom these authors have to define for themselves – and their readers – the complex contours of self and of reality amidst international study. Ultimately, until student voices and a greater diversity of re/presentation are included in the literature, a taken-for-granted and misleading understanding of international students is sure to continue.

### **Liberal Arts Colleges: History and Context**

In today's higher education landscape, liberal arts institutions are also often misunderstood, and they are believed, unfairly say their proponents, to be antiquated models of higher education. Especially compared to their university counterparts, liberal arts colleges are unique; they present a different kind of learning and campus environment. Yet, even within this institutional type colleges vary. International students who choose to attend such colleges can expect a smaller and more residential campus but will also find (should they compare them) that locales, missions, and quality matter greatly when considering where to pursue a liberal arts education. In this section, then, I will discuss the historical and contemporary contexts, philosophies, and purposes of liberal arts colleges.

Breneman (1994) defines liberal arts colleges as being, on the one hand, an educational type, and on the other, an economic type. As an educational institution, these

colleges primarily award bachelor of arts degrees, they are residentially located, and majors generally include those such as the arts, humanities, languages, social sciences, and physical sciences. Liberal arts colleges are small and most often do not have an enrollment higher than 2,500 (though most of these colleges enroll 800 to 1,800 students), and cater to students who seek a “preprofessional” education, that is, one which prepares students for graduate or professional programs but does not offer them an undergraduate professional education (Breneman, 1994, p. 12). In economic terms, because their programs and institutional purposes are for the most part quite comparable, liberal arts colleges across the United States have similar revenue and cost structures (Breneman, 1994). Crucially, though, Breneman contends, “[t]hese colleges are struggling to survive by offering a curriculum that does not cater to current student concerns with the job market” (p. 12). Liberal arts colleges, he explains, have to compete today with larger universities that not only offer more courses and majors, but also programs designed to prepare students professionally. The belief that there is a disconnect between liberal arts education (and the small, residential colleges which embody it) and the market demands for higher education today is registered throughout the literature.

Present day liberal arts colleges, scholars explain, have long histories founded on principles that are still evident today. The tradition of liberal arts education began in the United States over three centuries ago in New England (Lang, 2000). Much like its origins in medieval times, the liberal arts were an educational domain of wealthy and privileged young men (Cronon 1989). Though it was not a concern then, diversity on the contemporary liberal arts college campus has been a issue of contention for scholars more recently (Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003; Umbach and Kuh, 2006), a point to which I will later return. In its earliest years, the male students selected for study “were groomed in a tightly disciplined

Anglo-Saxon educational tradition that was presumed to instill qualifications for leadership of a theocratic community” (Lang, 2000, 134). The curriculum, Lang explains, was designed to impart knowledge but also to cultivate personal character and intellect. The greater goal, then, was the education of “the whole person” (p. 134). Graduates left their campuses well prepared to engage knowledgably and responsibly, first and foremost, as citizens (Lang, 2000). The rewards of a liberal education also included the development of a critical intelligence, a belief in the value of knowledge “for its own sake,” a genuine curiosity about the world, and the disposition and skills to enable truth seeking for the purpose of democratic consensus (Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003, pp. 564-565). Graduates possessed independent thinking skills, but also the belief that pluralistic agreement was valuable (Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003, p. 565). These traditions and values, Cronon (1989) contends, continue to this day, where a liberal education “aspires to nurture the growth of human talent in the service of human freedom” (Cronon, 1989, p. 75).

The landscape of higher education in the United States has changed quite drastically since the founding century of these colleges. The values of and purposes for a liberal arts education are no longer taken for granted. Astin (2000) explains that, in the post-WWII era, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, the system of higher education boomed in the U.S., and so too did the size and capacities of educational institutions. The priorities of education also changed. From this period forward, large universities sprang up all around the country fueled by government funding for research. Where before professors’ primary responsibility was teaching undergraduates, there were now new incentives to conduct research (Astin, 2000). Hiring and promotions increasingly became dependent on the “publish or perish” model of scholarly performance. Eventually, additional educational options such as community colleges and for-profit universities became options for students. Where the most prestigious

positions at the most prestigious universities now rest on low or no teaching loads and where a liberal arts education can be redefined in terms of course credits, Astin (2000) explains, the residential liberal arts college by comparison has become to many scholars and students alike “anachronistic” and/or “not cost-effective” (p. 96). Regardless of the quality of education a student might receive at a liberal arts college, the form of education and the institutions that embody its founding principles are simply not “modern” (Astin, 2000).

Authors such as Neeley (2000) and Breneman (1994) observe that these are trying economic times for liberal arts education and liberal arts colleges. Neeley (2000) describes the situation by suggesting, “[y]oung people do not go to college to become fuller persons, better citizens, or more lively intellects. In post-war America, college education is justified by the additional lifetime income it will produce” (pp. 36-37). Neeley contends that higher education today has become commodified and is marked by a “materialism” and “narcissism” that positions students as consumers of education whose self-interested personal and professional ambitions propel them through an increasingly market-prioritized world (p. 37). Breneman (1994) adds that there are further economic problems facing liberal arts colleges. First, private college tuitions continue to rise to unaffordable levels for most families. This requires colleges’ budgets for student aid to rise. Second, attracting and retaining high-quality faculty members who are willing to focus on teaching necessitates offering packages competitive with those of large universities, a budgetary challenge for many smaller colleges. Third, the growth in operating costs generally means that there is ever-greater need for robust fund-raising, which is every year a dubious concern. And finally, liberal arts colleges must compete for students, for donor support, and for backing from government and their communities, amidst a market-conscious climate in which they must continually validate their institutional purposes and educational worth. Despite these, and

many other problems, Ferrall (2011) contends that liberal arts colleges not only persist because they whole-heartedly believe in the very uniqueness of their histories and missions, but their very survival “has created the confidence...that one way or another, they will get through this rough patch, too” (p. 156).

Yet, in spite of their claims of individual specialness, liberal arts colleges continue to appear old-fashioned to many in U.S. higher education and mostly invisible to those outside it. But is the kind of education students receive at liberal arts colleges really so outdated and undesirable? Hersh (2000) describes the liberal arts experience as being potentially “transformative” (p. 181). He notes that the full attention of faculty is given to undergraduates, and because classes are small professors are able to form genuine relationships with their students. Liberal arts colleges, Hersh explains, are distinctive because of this primary focus on teaching, because of the small size and residential nature of their campuses, their quest for genuine community, the expectation of and engagement in active learning, the broad but coherent education they provide, and their emphasis that the “whole person” is to be developed (see also Edwards, 2007). Stanley (2000) adds that these colleges are especially good sites for the development of “global competence,” providing students the skills and dispositions to fit and succeed in an ever-globalizing world. A liberally educated person, Cronon (1989) explains, is one who can listen and hear; read and understand; talk with anyone; write clearly, persuasively, and movingly; solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems, respect rigor less for its own sake than as a way of seeking truth; practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism, understand how to get things done in the world, nurture and empower people around them; and be able to connect with the world and with people in creative ways (pp. 76-68). For these authors, then, a liberal education that offers so much for its graduates is far from outdated; it is precisely the kind of education more students need.

The many challenges individual liberal arts colleges face and the prospects for their futures often relate also to selectivity and to whether they possess a reputation for academic excellence. Authors agree that, while few and far between, top tier, or “selective”/“elite,” colleges – schools like Amherst, Swarthmore, Wellesley, and Williams (as well as Horace) – are largely buffered from the more serious and immediate concerns facing most liberal arts colleges (Astin, 2000; Greene and Greene, 2009; Lang, 2000; Ferrall, 2011; Neely, 2000). They can attract and choose from among the best and brightest students in the country, and even to some extent around the world. They have the resources to hire talented faculty who prize teaching but who can be given research opportunities also. Access to highly qualified faculty and new and modern facilities, intelligent and motivated classmates, and a curriculum that tends to be more rigorous, enabling greater ease of acceptance into and transition to graduate programs, ensure that selective liberal arts colleges, and some considered “second tier,” will continue to be providers of exceptional education and therefore a viable option for incoming students well into the future.

And yet, liberal arts colleges generally speaking must also contend with the belief that they are elitist and lack in diversity (Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003). Neely (2000) explains that socioeconomic status is one of the most distinguishing features of the student population at liberal arts colleges, particularly at the most selective schools. Many students come from quite wealthy families. An increasingly open-minded and diversity-conscious society is changing racial, gender and other diversity trends on campuses across the country, and so it is in the best interest of liberal arts colleges to follow suit (Neely, 2000). Umbach and Kuh (2006) agree, especially because liberal arts colleges are usually located in rural settings, where historically underrepresented students often choose not to attend (Rudolph, 1990). Contrary to what many might think, then, these authors find that, when compared to

other types of institutions, the total number of students of color at liberal arts colleges is less significant than the quality of interactions across differences these colleges encourage and nurture on campus (p. 184). Umbach and Kuh report that the institutional missions, the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and supportive school environments at liberal arts colleges produced more diversity-related activities of the kind that teach students “how to work effectively with others and how to participate actively and contribute to a democratic society” and an increasingly multicultural world in and beyond college (p. 170).

Martinez Aleman and Salkever (2003) contest these conclusions, and the premises that the virtues of liberal education and the missions of liberal arts colleges are compatible with and desirous of multicultural community. These authors find that even institutions explicitly espousing liberal education values and the importance of diversity fall short. Hanson College’s (a pseudonym) “efforts made to achieve multicultural community...will be stymied by actions and initiatives” that are guided by its mission, history, institutional outlook, curricular offerings, co-curricular opportunities, and even its involvement with diversity initiatives and projects. At its core, these authors argue, the “privileging of reason, the primacy of the individual, and an internalization of Enlightenment ideas about character and moral good” do not enable genuine multiculturalism (p. 577). Martinez Aleman and Salkever find that administrators, faculty, and students – with few exceptions – uncritically trust in the virtues of liberal learning. Most are not even aware, for example, that they do not recognize individual student differences; that they prescribe to a “be like us” attitude; and that classroom engagement with critical issues of race, gender, and ethnicity is mostly absent or is relegated to a few disciplinary minors and to visiting faculty of color. Indeed, these findings complicate those of Umbach and Kuh (2006), and suggest that when the virtues of



liberal education are trusted and practiced uncritically, liberal arts colleges, especially when their campuses continue to be mostly homogenous racially and ethnically,<sup>9</sup> will not be sites of meaningful diversity interaction and learning. The perception that these colleges are exclusive and enroll only white, or only wealthy, students is also likely to continue.

There are many challenges, then, facing liberal arts colleges today; however, as Lang (2000) explains, change has been a liberal arts constant. As society continues to change, liberal arts institutions adapt to both internal and external forces, he argues. Diversity priorities, course and major offerings, the additions of non-Western literatures and modifications to existing canon, and the increases in the sciences and professional majors have been ways that various institutions become or stay current (Lang, 2000, p. 138). Neeley (2000) agrees that the challenges of change are steep for liberal arts colleges so vulnerable to marketplace threats coming from within and without. However, he points to an irony he recognizes regarding liberal education in today's market-driven world: "[i]f one asks the chief executive officers of business corporations and nonprofit organizations what they prize most in an employee, the list resembles the mission statement of a liberal arts college – critical thinking, oral and written communication skills, a commitment to lifelong learning, and the like" (p. 43). Hersh (2000) contends, then, that it is the absence of these skills and dispositions across a diverse democratic society that will leave it vulnerable to the challenges of change and little able to compete in the global market.

Liberal arts colleges are at the brink, or so argues Ferrall (2011). Only if the collective American society, led by these colleges' leaders and the many notable graduates of the liberal tradition, is persuaded of the value of this kind of education will liberal arts colleges be saved (Ferrall, 2011). The enormity and unlikelihood of such a project, however, does not change

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<sup>9</sup> Notably, discussion of "international" diversity at liberal arts colleges is absent in both Umbach and Kuh (2006) and Aleman Martinez and Salkever (2003).

the fact that, as Hersh (2000) puts it, “[h]igher education can and ought to be pivotal in the revitalization of our society and preparing students for the complex and international dimensions of the twenty-first century” (p. 191). For the time being, then, the debate continues over the viability and vitality of liberal arts colleges, and the contributions they profess to make to U.S. higher education and to the wider world.

### **Liberal Arts Colleges and Internationalization**

The proclaimed salience of liberal arts colleges for graduates entering a globalizing world (Hersh, 2000; Neely, 2000) is premised, as noted, on the belief that the distinctive educational traditions of the liberal arts are inherently international (Marden and Engerman, 1992). Marden and Engerman explain that the so-called “International Fifty,” a consortium of selective liberal arts colleges, have long embodied and practiced internationalism. Through their curriculum, institutional environment, and use of resources, these “international liberal arts colleges” have a proven track record of international education. Students who attend these colleges are more likely to study abroad and to study and major in foreign languages. Faculties have extensive international experience (they are born overseas, conduct research abroad and have major international interests, and speak foreign languages). Though small in numbers relative to all nationwide, graduates of these liberal arts colleges are more likely to pursue international affairs in graduate schools and to earn PhDs in international fields and languages, they are well represented among U.S. ambassadors and foreign service officers, and they are more likely to have majored in a foreign language or area studies and to enter into the Peace Corps. The key to this success, Marden and Engerman argue, is that these 50 liberal arts colleges “have focused their attention on international studies...and [in their] mission, history, and form, they are dedicated to the liberal arts and sciences, which are especially supportive of international interests” (p. 44).

Stanley (2000) echoes these sentiments, asserting that liberal education is “inherently supranational” (p. 273). Stanley believes that the development of area studies and replacing the more parochial orientation of the Protestant curriculum that most liberal arts colleges were founded on have been central to the internationalizing of these colleges. Curricular offerings in the humanities and social sciences, and particularly the foreign languages and literatures, have been key investments in broadening the scope of liberal arts studies. Study abroad and the presence on campus of international students, faculty, and speakers also enable a global character. It is worth noting, though, that Stanley does not discuss the prevalence of study abroad as “academic tourism” or the ways in which viewing the “presence” of international students as useful for domestic students and staff might be problematic.

Stanley (2000) believes that the future for international studies at liberal arts colleges is bright. Programs focusing on diversity in the U.S., the rise of various transnational studies programs, and an ever-increasing focus on “global competence” not only gives greater substance to the liberal arts looking forward, but these areas of intercultural studies are well-suited for an educational tradition that “is grounded in a set of social commitments both to members of our campus commonwealths and to the society beyond the campus” (p. 289). And Stanley is confident that these colleges will continue to put in the financial investment that is necessary for students to receive the globally minded education they are owed by these globally minded institutions. Or as Marden and Engerman (1992) put it, the liberal arts cultivate in students “an openness to new ideas and experiences, a sense of personal and societal responsibility, and a capacity for self-reeducation – attributes that are eminently deployable in a changing world” (p. 45).

Using the International Fifty and Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota as models, Lewis (1995) outlines 13 ways in which campus internationalization is able to flourish at liberal arts colleges. He explains that national perspectives have long had a place in liberal education, but so too have international perspectives. And as far too many Americans lack global competencies and knowledge of the world, more is demanded of education. Because liberal arts colleges are designed to “encourage breadth and synthesis in scholarship and in teaching,” the curriculum and the experience of undergraduates can be uniquely internationalized (p. 101). Internationalization will flourish at liberal arts colleges with: the hiring of faculty with international specialties and interests; curricular interdisciplinarity; motivated and influential faculty and administrator leadership; active faculty advising of study abroad; language teaching respected and linked to other studies; support for study and teaching abroad; integration of study abroad with teaching and learning broadly; affordability of study abroad; financial support for faculty development; “venture capital” for/by faculty for development purposes; recognition and incentives for faculty internationalism; support for and valuing of interdisciplinary and globally-minded faculty scholarship; and recognition of the complexity of internationalization and its synergistic possibilities. It is no accident, Lewis believes, that the most successful faculty and students among liberal arts colleges come from those institutions whose campus internationalization programs are strongest.

Brewer (2010) contends that although liberal arts colleges, like Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, have a rich history of internationalization, namely with study abroad and international student inclusion, these colleges are not always the most likely sites for international partnerships with universities abroad. The reevaluation of internationalization across the United States and Europe in the 1990s, Brewer explains, helped Beloit College

further develop its interests abroad and on its campus. Following, more or less, Knight's model of "internationalization as a cycle" (Knight and de Wit, 1995), the college decided that more could be done for curriculum by integrating it with study abroad; that faculty needed more international opportunities, as tied to the experiences of students going abroad; and that international partnerships could create possibilities for each – for study abroad, faculty, and the curriculum. Along with the continued support for recruitment of international students to their campus, Beloit leaders came to find that its dedication to internationalization and its new and creative linkages with Henan University in China greatly enriched the liberal education it provides students. The two-way mobility of students and scholars between Beloit and Henan, Brewer claims, has led to a mutual ownership of the partnership. Not only has Beloit College been transformed by these internationalization efforts and the many that have followed, but also the commitment between the two institutions and their many successes "exemplifies putting a liberal education into practice" (p. 95).

Scholars such as Freysinger (1993), Gillespie (2002), and Burn (2002) share additional examples of the relationship between liberal arts colleges and internationalization. Freysinger (1993) describes the roadmap by which Bradford College,<sup>10</sup> in Haverhill, Massachusetts, comprehensively reformed its institution through "total internationalization" to meet the demands of the coming new century. Serving as the foundation for internationalization, Bradford's liberal arts mission and structure guided the changes. Freysinger's article demonstrates the powerful impact, while short lived, that buy-in from the entire college community possesses and the College's potential to systematically transform itself "as a way of providing a comprehensive education in global affairs" (p. 178).

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<sup>10</sup> Though circumstances were more promising in 1993, Bradford College, after 197 years, was forced to close in 2000 due to annual budget shortfalls, a declining enrollment and revenues, and competition from larger regional institutions.

Gillespie (2002) argues for a different kind of relationship between liberal arts colleges and internationalization, one in which liberal education serves as a guidepost for the instruction of international education that opposes or disrupts American hegemony in the post-9/11 world. Gillespie stresses that higher education institutions in the U.S., especially liberal arts colleges, “suffer not from an overly aggressive or self-interested approach to international education but rather from a kind of passivity and insularity” (p. 264). Citing the approach of Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, Gillespie explains that all joint programs and projects, like those of their International Human Rights Exchange course in Cape Town, South Africa and partnership with Smolny College in St. Petersburg, Russia’s first liberal arts college, are in line with the college’s embodiment of an inherent “commitment to mutuality and equality” (p. 265). Internationalization in liberal arts education, he stresses, can be a model for higher education in the U.S. because it negotiates rather than imposes norms on foreign countries, demonstrating its dedication to tolerance and equality.

Burn (2002) is concerned with the lack of development of the curricula in liberal arts colleges in favor of other internationalization priorities like study abroad, international student programs, and faculty development through opportunities abroad and conferences. Though the importance of these efforts is undeniable, Burn advocates for more attention to internationalization at home, specifically liberal arts in the classroom. Burn cites Scott (2000), who writes that liberal education “exposes students to a variety of human thought and achievement. [The] global aims for education are no different” (p. A31). Though she does not offer correctives, Burn, like Gillespie, believes that more must be done after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to reduce hatred and to teach mutual respect. This is the global “domain” of the liberal arts curriculum.

This relationship, then, between liberal arts colleges and their purported inherent global-mindedness and campus internationalization priorities is quite strong according to many scholars. Dissertations on these issues explore additional dimensions of internationalization at liberal arts colleges. Maciel (1996) explores the interactions between international and home students at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Ellingboe (1998) looks at how internationalization components, strategies, and recommendations compare across the campuses of five of the International Fifty colleges. And at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, Mullen (2011) studies the factors that influence successful internationalization and how the college's program of internationalization takes shapes on campus. Moreover, leaders at liberal arts colleges are continually working, and being recognized, for internationalization at many levels and in many different dimensions, such as the Global Partners Project to advance international education through collaboration, the regional conferences held by these senior international education officers (Elizabeth, personal communication, February, 21, 2013), and the many earned Senator Paul Simon Awards for Campus Internationalization (NAFSA, 2014; see also the ACE's *Measuring Internationalization at Liberal Arts Colleges* report by Green and Siaya, 2005). And yet, while these efforts and connections are compelling, one is still left wondering whether Mullen (2011) is right that "it seems simplistic to assume that liberal arts implies internationalization" (p. 25).

### **International Students and Liberal Arts Colleges**

Despite the linkages between internationalization and liberal arts colleges, there is a dearth of studies focusing on international students at such institutions. An exhaustive review of the literature reveals that Maciel's (1996) qualitative dissertation of international and home student interactions at Wellesley College and Garrod and Davis's (1999) anthology

of international student reflections on their own experiences and identity constructions before coming to, while at, and after leaving Dartmouth College are the only literature of substance pairing this student population and this higher education setting. Beyond these, explicit writing on international students at liberal arts colleges can be found in various sources such as the websites, publications, and internal documents of individual institutions, as well as articles in domains such as NAFSA's bi-monthly magazine *International Educator* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (however, these articles do not generally focus exclusively on international students at liberal arts colleges; the work of Karin Fischer is especially notable; see for example Fischer, 2011). It is also worth noting that scholarship on liberal arts colleges, as regards internationalization and international issues and programs, generally reserves only small sections or even just a paragraph or few lines to discuss international students.

### **Situating This Study in the Literature**

The literature review here addresses important scholarship that informs this dissertation – a study about the multiple, shifting, and complex contours of the college context for international students at Horace College. In consideration of the theoretical framework outlined in the first chapter, I have presented not an exhaustive review here but rather selections from the larger bodies of scholarship in several fields of study, those which engage literatures on international students, the internationalization of higher education, and liberal arts colleges, at both the macro and micro levels. International study (namely, for the purposes of this dissertation, as it is understood in the higher education system of the United States) should not be a taken-for-granted phenomenon. It is important to ask “what is an “international student”?” and “who considers her/himself an “international student,” and



why?” because the meanings of this term and the implications vary greatly for individuals who identify with and/or have been assigned the label (Gargano, 2009, p. 34).

How colleges implement campus internationalization and engage their local communities with the domestic scene and the wider world beyond it, amidst the powerful forces of twenty-first century globalization, matters. This literature review sets the stage for the subsequent chapters and critically orients the reader to explore with me how informants at Horace College perceive the self-making and transnational experience of international students as well as how internationalism, diversity, and student engagement take shape at Horace. Hopefully this literature review also inspires a more balanced and fair reorientation to conversations about international students and prompts other critical questions such as: How do institutions make business decisions about enrollment that enable fiscal sustainability but that does not reify the commodification of international students? What are appropriate responses to international students whose stereotypes, assumptions, and judgments about their domestic counterparts and American college culture make them unwilling to engage on campus? How do classrooms become sites for genuine, critical, and empathic intercultural exchange and knowledge creation between faculty and international and domestic students? What insights about college life in the U.S. and at Horace can best be learned by listening to international students?

In an ever-neoliberal globalizing internationalized higher education landscape on and beyond campuses, commodification, homogenization, and Othering affect how people prepare for, experience, and remember their time in the U.S. Casting students as deficient, expecting and forcing them to adapt, and deeming them as temporary are regular and problematic practices for international students that have real-life consequences, not only for internationals but for everyone in higher education. Being familiar with the historical

background and being critically conscious of the pervasive themes about international students enables a conceptual reorientation to how these individuals navigate the transnational social spaces that connect them to the liberal arts context at Horace College, as well as the role that all in tertiary education play today. At Horace, and many other institutions in the U.S. and around the world, internationalization narratives influence diversity, internationalism, and student engagement initiatives. A critical understanding of internationalization enables nuanced approaches to, for example, first semester adaption to campus life. This is a crucial time in an international student's life that involves a whole host of great challenges and exciting opportunities, in which both the student and the institution experience adaptive changes and growth. An agential student, open-minded domestic classmates, and responsible college professionals begin the negotiation of a new and ongoing, perhaps even lifelong, relationship of mutual respect, treatment, and benefit.

### **Chapter III: Qualitative Methods and Procedures**

As the researcher reading the accounts that the international students construct I need to remain aware of the fact that ‘many competing realities coexist’ (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 142) within the experiences told to me and it is important to include them in the text of the research and not attempt to develop unified and coherent themes which ignore these contradictions.

- Norma Koehne (2006, p. 243)

This chapter covers the research methods of the dissertation. I begin by discussing qualitative research and case study design. Next, I further introduce Horace College and some of the unique qualities that make it an exciting place to locate this study. Third, I outline the procedures I used to collect data. Following discussion of these procedures, I explain my process for analyzing my data. I turn then to the methodological framework, cross-cultural research approach, which guided my interactions with participants; I look at reflexivity and the ways in which critical reflection informs the entire research process; and finally, how my own social locations impact the research.

#### **Research Design**

To explore Horace College and the lives of international students, I conducted an interpretive case study approach, or “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27) that uses multiple forms of data collection. In this study, the “case” was international students at Horace College. This approach is well suited for my project because it is concerned with understanding how international students at one institution make sense of the college experience within the context of their lives. In all phases of this case study, I employed a cross-cultural approach in which my priorities were to be knowledgeable of my participants, to show them respect, and to be dedicated to the belief that the research must benefit them. As cross-cultural researchers do, I proceeded ethically, responsibly, and with attention to the nuanced social and cultural contexts of all participants. The 2013-2014 school year was an opportunity for

my participants and me to make meaning of the lives – past, present, future, here, and elsewhere – and the experiences – the grand and the mundane – of the international student experience at and beyond the campus context of a Midwestern liberal arts college.

### **Qualitative Research and Case Study**

Qualitative research “involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, these authors explain, researchers of qualitative inquiry employ various “interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” (p. 4). Such practices may include ethnography, participant observation, phenomenology, case study, interviewing, and/or focus groups, among others. Qualitative researchers work within and from a complex history in which they have long sought to differentiate themselves and to disrupt long-held beliefs by quantitative and positivist researchers that scientific research is primarily concerned with and dependent on validity, truth, and objectivity.

Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) believe “multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms” mark qualitative research today (p. 125). The contemporary period of research, they claim, is one of emancipation, wherein more voices are heard, silences of generations past are less frequent, and the world is seen in more than one color. And so while positivists seek to create “pure” and “valid” data that reflect the reality they perceive to exist in the social world, constructivists argue that “reality” is a social construction created between researcher(s) and participant(s) and that whatever degree of “truth” is produced is done so within the context of research (Miller and Glassner, 2004). An example of the difference in these two paradigms is the research on international

students, which is mostly positivist, where data and interpretations are drawn from large-sample statistical studies, discussing internationals in terms of global trends and flows, often lumping students together by nation (Gargano, 2009, 2012). Constructivists, on the other hand, believe that the students themselves are best equipped to explain their own experiences and that an interview space, for instance, is the best medium to capture these voices and stories. Qualitative researchers, then, increasingly recognize that truths are partial (Clifford, 1986), that “thick description” is necessary to capture the lived experiences of people and the phenomena they study (Geertz, 2000), and that greater attention must be paid to “what is, and is not, ‘happening between’, within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequence” (Fine, 1994, p. 72; Fine et al, 2000).

My own research orientation is situated within a qualitative constructivist paradigm that recognizes and is guided by this kind of methodological criticality, one of contextualized and multiple, even contradictory, meaning making. While conducting this dissertation, I have appreciated that “truths” and “values” are embedded in the local and global contexts of the participants in my study and that “objectivity” implying distanced impartiality or catch-all (or -most) realities was never desirable. I sought to understand and to document the various ways in which the international students and others in my study perceived their lives in and beyond Horace. As Feagen et al (1991) put it,

[r]ather than assuming a world of simplicity and uniformity, those who adopt the qualitative approach generally picture a world of complexity and plurality. It is the richness and subtle nuances of the social world that matter and the qualitative researcher wishes to uncover. Thus, instead of adopting a set of standardized questions and categories with which to characterize – indeed, one can even say, to construct – social action, the qualitative researcher wishes to permit as much flexibility into the judgments made about the world as possible (p. 23).

This dissertation asks informants, primarily Horace College international students, to speak on their own behalf and to speak from their own nationalized, racialized, gendered, socioeconomic, generational, lenses in interactional spaces of co-constructed meaning making. Together, my participants and I created in this dissertation a “picture [of] a world of complexity and plurality” that, for us all, begins to explain what it is like, within this particular higher education context, to be an international student today. One important way that I attempt to ensure informants’ meanings are “accurately” captured is by using longer data excerpts and by, at times, where appropriate, limiting my interpretive commentary. Participants’ voices, particularly international student voices, are what matter most to me.

To best capture the Horace picture, I have chosen to use case study methodology. Case study, as noted above, seeks to analyze in depth a particular social phenomenon in order to increase our understanding of that phenomenon. Or, as Merriam (1998) suggests, the most notable strength of case study is that it can investigate complex social units that consist of more than one variable rooted in real-life contexts, which results in a rich and holistic account of the phenomenon being studied. Yin (2009) shares this belief, and adds, that case studies are primarily used to answer “how” or “why” questions when the researcher has little control over that which is being studied. These guidelines are instructive in this dissertation, where the goal is to study, primarily, how internationals’ perceive their undergraduate experience at and beyond Horace College, focusing on, for example, their impressions of how Horace College does or does not engender an “international student friendly” campus for themselves and for others who study from abroad, as well as their perceptions of what it means to them to be an “international student” and a “Horacian.” Indeed, such emphases require a research approach suited to the inherent complexities of this population.

Case studies are purposefully bounded systems (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Ragin and Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009) in which multiple forms of data are collected and multiple actors' views are included to more holistically understand the phenomena being studied. Using this multi-perspective approach, I have found that data from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and participant observation were most appropriate and that also enlisting the voices of key staff, faculty, administrators, and domestic students was most necessary. Certainly, one can conduct a fine study including only international students; however, I contend that to most responsibly explore the complexity and plurality of what it is like to be an international student today, a more holistic methodological approach using several data collection procedures is necessary. So, too, is it necessary to include a whole host of individuals who can provide additional, unique perspectives on the issues and situations that matter most at the institution being explored.

### **Research Site**

The institution being explored in this case study is Horace College. Horace was founded in 1846 and was modeled after the independent liberal arts colleges of New England. Ferrall (2011) notes that Horace is a "Tier 1" institution, as listed by *U.S. News and World Report in America's Best Colleges, 2009 edition*. According to Greene and Greene (2009), the college is "of national intellectual reputation located in a small town deep within America's breadbasket" (p. 173). They explain that the college describes itself as

an undergraduate, four-year, coeducational residential college that seeks to develop in students analytical and imaginative thinking in the liberal arts. The college exists to serve students directly and society indirectly. The college's ultimate goal is to educate citizens and leaders for our republic and the world beyond our borders. To this end, Horace graduates should be equipped to pursue successful careers, satisfying personal lives, effective community service, and intellectually satisfying and physically active leisure (p. 174).

Consistent with the strong traditions of the liberal arts in the U.S., Horace College is deeply concerned with the education of “the whole person” (Lang, 2000). Moreover, the values and objectives at Horace reach far beyond its own campus. The principles and practices of social justice and democratic citizenship in the 21st century are taught in Horace’s classrooms and are fully expected to follow students after graduation, guiding them in the pursuit of their careers and in the contributions they make to society wherever they go.

Horace College, though, is unique among U.S. liberal arts colleges for many reasons. First, and perhaps foremost, the college is one of a small cadre of liberal arts institutions that have been well buffered from the threats of economic instability, enjoying great success and overall quality because of savvy investing beginning in the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> As of 2008, the endowment at Horace was \$1.47 billion (Ferrell, 2011). This endowment has allowed the college to remain need-blind in their domestic student admissions policy and to be able to give out 300 (or approximately 70% of each class) merit scholarships annually (Greene and Greene, 2009), the latter of which includes international students (Horace College, 2013, *Global Horace: Global Students*). According to one administrator, notes Greene and Greene, more generally the College’s wealth has “resulted in a very egalitarian community” (p. 175). It has also enabled the construction, in the last few years, of several new multi-million dollar academic and non-academic facilities. Second, Horace has purposefully kept fraternities and sororities from its campus, believing that the absence of the Greek system results in fewer “in” and “out” groups among students (Greene and Greene, 2009). Third, the campus prescribes to a policy of student “self-governance,” which is acknowledged by faculty, staff, and students to be a lauded dimension of the College’s culture. In relation to

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<sup>11</sup> Horace College’s endowment history is well known, and among other highlights includes the naming of Warren Buffett to the college’s board of directors and the board’s decision to put up of 10 percent (\$300,000) of the start-up money for Robert Noyce’s (a Horace graduate) new company, Intel (Ferrell, 2011, p. 24).



student-life, students govern themselves by making and agreeing to follow rules in residential halls and in the wider campus community (Greene and Greene, 2009). Finally, in terms of academics, Horace College is structured around its open curriculum (with the exception of the one first-year seminar course), which presumes that, with counsel from academic advisors, students create their own academic path, and in some cases self-designed majors.

A member of the International Fifty,<sup>12</sup> Horace College also has its eye to the world and takes a decentralized approach to campus internationalization (Elizabeth, personal communication, 21 February 2013), which includes a visible commitment to its international students, most notably through its International Student Affairs Office. According to its own literature, the campus takes pride in the international diversity of students on campus, citing that the percentage of international students amongst its student body of 12% (which is eleventh most among all liberal arts colleges, according to *U.S. News and World Report* in 2013) matches that of its in-state student population (Greene and Greene, 2009). The International Student Affairs Office (ISAO), led by its director Elizabeth Gardner, a national leader and advocate for international students at liberal arts colleges for over 20 years, “supports the educational experience of international and global nomad students and scholars, and collaborates with partners on campus and off to advance awareness of global perspectives.” The “Global Horace: Global Students” webpage also explains that “in addition to the financial aid awarded U.S. students, Horace annually awards roughly one million dollars in financial aid to each incoming class of international students. The average aid award for international students in the class of 2013 was \$33,342.” Additionally, the College sponsors an annual magazine publication created by international students; over 50

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<sup>12</sup> In 1990, Horace was identified by leaders at Beloit College in Wisconsin as one of 50 American liberal arts institutions that had made especially strong contributions in international studies and affairs, had strong commitments and accomplishments in international education, and produced graduates that, across the disciplines, entered into international graduate programs, career fields, activities, and public service. This group of colleges was referred to as the “International Fifty” (Marden and Engerman, 1992).

flags, representing the different nationalities of the current student body, hang in the Horace Flag Gallery above the campus grill; and almost 100 local Horace families participate in the ISAO's host family program, a particularly important program considering that many international students at Horace are first-generation college students who have never lived far from home (Edwards, 2012).

I knew from an initial search for a research site that the campus context at Horace College would be a unique and exciting place to conduct this dissertation study for several reasons. First, I sought out a liberal arts college (an institution type almost entirely absent in the literature) with a large population of internationals, and was thrilled to discover that Horace College fit this description. I was thrilled because Horace also has a national reputation for academic excellence and a commitment to social justice. This mix could prove to be quite significant, I thought, because endemic to the Horace educational atmosphere is the belief that students should practice informed and justice-oriented criticality of thought and action – of the aims of liberal arts education, of the administration and faculty, and of themselves as participating members of society. How would this criticality mix with the critical nature of my research framework? Second, as this study is an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of international students, and, of course, other individuals in their social fields, I was intrigued by the idea of conducting research at a college whose leading international student advocate purports it to be “international student friendly” (Edwards, 2012). What exactly is “international student friendliness? Do the internationals agree with this assessment?”, I wondered. Finally, its location was a draw because I was soon moving to the Midwest. Tucked away in a prairie, I discovered, was Horace College, which unlike many of its selective peer schools, is not on the East Coast. How would location influence things?

## Data Collection Procedures

Having explained the research site and how I came to choose it, in this section I will discuss the four procedures I used to carry out this dissertation: individual interview, focus groups, document analysis, and participant observation. However, I will first address how I gained access to Horace College, the IRB frustrations I experienced before data collection commenced, and the manner in which I recruited my participants.

### *Gaining Access and Early IRB Frustrations*

To gain access to Horace College, I first contacted Elizabeth Gardner, the Associate Dean of International Student Affairs and Director of the International Student Affairs Office, in the spring of 2013, who I see as Horace's "gatekeeper" to the international population, the person who "formally or informally control[s] access to settings of interest" (Hatch, 2002, p. 45). Having already sent a formal letter to Elizabeth explaining my research interests, a bit about the design of the study, and some information about myself, I nervously stumbled through our phone conversation, inquiring as to whether she and Horace College might be willing to allow me to conduct my dissertation research there. Much to my relief, Elizabeth was quite excited about the prospect of having an outsider researcher's perspective on the experience of her international students. The only hurdle I would first need to clear, she told me, would be to get approval from the Horace College Institutional Review Board (IRB) office.

At first, my interaction with the Horace IRB office was very straightforward, and I was surprised by how smoothly everything was going in the pursuit of research access to Horace. According to the IRB representative with whom I spoke immediately after hanging up the phone with Elizabeth, Horace is not generally in the habit of allowing outside researchers to conduct studies on the Horace campus; however, as Elizabeth was contacted

first and was supportive of and excited about the dissertation project, the Horace IRB office would not have any outstanding concerns. It was my understanding from this representative that Horace would undoubtedly approve the study, and with very little formality, provided that the Syracuse University IRB office approved.

A few months later, and just days after SU's approval of my IRB, I was on campus ready to begin laying the groundwork for my study. It was my plan to meet with interested potential participants and to get the lay of the Horace land. Much to my chagrin, and to Elizabeth's as well, there were further IRB hurdles to overcome. Elizabeth explained that the college had hired a new administrative chief to oversee the Horace IRB office just before the school year began and that because of the uniqueness of my request – being an outside PhD researcher asking to conduct research on Horace students – my study would be on hold for a further, yet undetermined period. Upon meeting with this new administrator, Elizabeth (who quickly felt in many ways to me like a partner, interested and involved) and I learned that I would need to wait until Horace College reviewed my IRB application and I passed a background check of sorts. He wanted to make sure, he explained, that I would have access only to what I should, that the college would be unified in what I could have access to, and that any private or important information about students (though, what this meant was never made clear) should not be disclosed to me. He noted this process could take several weeks; therefore, he informed me, I should stay patient in the interim. Knowing that I was a guest on their campus, I immediately submitted my IRB application to the Horace College IRB office. I waited.

Though frustrated by the IRB process and the small bump in the road in delaying my research plans, I was fortunate that it took only a week and half for Horace to grant approval of my study (at the time it seemed the delay could last upwards of a month or more). I did,

though, make the most of my time while I waited. I met with the head of the IRB review team, a professor of mathematics and statistics and the individual responsible for reviewing and approving my study, to introduce myself and to, hopefully, demystify my intentions on campus. I also reviewed scholarly articles about international students, wrote memos about what had happened thus far, and gave thought to how I might first engage with potential participants, particularly international students and the International Student Affairs Office (ISAO) staff.

Shortly thereafter, I became privy to the extent to which the College was interested in (even threatened by?) my research. I learned that the Dean of the College had required that my IRB be reviewed before I could begin my study and that the Communication Office and the President's Office had decided that the name of the college be kept confidential. Quite common in research, the requirement that I apply pseudonyms to all identifiable personnel, buildings, and office names still came as a surprise to me. A chorus of administrators, staff, and community members had already told me that "Horacians" stood for transparency and social justice, and that as an institution Horace College valued constructive (self) criticism in the name of progress. It is the prerogative of institutions to control their own image, but I wondered what I was missing. Could the dissertation possibly be disruptive to Horace's booming international student recruitment (which, as I discussed in the previous chapter, is a lucrative practice)? I was not sure. It would not be until my final months in the field that I learned of and more intensely investigated the College's new consultant-hired institutional identity project (discussed in Chapter IV) and the debated meanings associated with the moniker "Horacian" (discussed in Chapter V). For the time being, though, I was ready to get going.

### *Recruitment of Participants<sup>13</sup>*

I was very fortunate to have had such an amazing gatekeeper in Elizabeth, who made recruiting participants much easier than it would have been had I done so on my own. It was primarily through her efforts and the efforts of Lynn, the International Student and Scholar Advisor, particularly at the outset of data collection, that I was able to recruit so many students, and so quickly. The value of receiving ISAO's endorsement cannot be overstated, both because of how broadly their listserv messages and personal emails can reach across campus and, more importantly, because of how much seemingly every international student – and every staff, faculty, administrator, and community member, for that matter – I met appeared to trust, respect, and even admire Elizabeth and Lynn. To have their endorsement gave my study and me, as an outsider researcher, immediate and long lasting credibility and legitimacy.

By the time I finished data collection in April 2014, 29 current international students, 2 international alums, 5 current domestic students, and 18 non-student staff, faculty, administrators, and community members had participated in my study.

Five methods were used to recruit international students. The first medium was a lunch arranged by Elizabeth with the members of the International Student Organization (ISO) and members of the Pre-Orientation for International Students (POFIS) leadership group. I saw this as an incredible opportunity to introduce my study and myself to a cohort of actively involved internationals, students who might themselves be participants and/or who could recruit others. What I did not expect, but very much enjoyed, was that I would be put on the spot as much as I was. I thought it would be more interactive. In a memo shortly after the meeting, I wrote:

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix I on page 339 for Horace College international student demographic information from the fall 2013 semester (provided by the ISAO).

In some ways, this felt like a group interview. I remember answering questions about my research philosophy, how I designed the project, and how I came to choose Horace College. What dominated the conversation was why I was focused on some research questions and not others. I spent a fair bit of time talking about qualitative research as I was trained and why it was important for me to design the study the way I have (20Oct13).

I was very much impressed by the students and the ways in which they critically and effortlessly engaged with me with nuanced questions. In between her contributions, I also caught Elizabeth smiling quite a bit, seemingly very proud of the students. The conversation reminded me of those I had in my graduate seminars. The meeting was insightful and invigorating. If my interviews are going to be anything like this, I thought, the possibilities for this dissertation were limitless. And, for the most part, I think my responses to their questions met with approval. As the lunch ended, I asked the students whether they would either be willing participate themselves and/or to help me pass along word of my study to their friends, to their POFIS groups, and other ISO members. To my good fortune, there was general agreement that they would be happy to help.

A second method was the ISAO “FYI,” a weekly online flyer sent to school email addresses and posted to the ISAO’s Facebook page. Sandwiched between other notifications for internationals, an advertisement with my headshot (which I sent to Elizabeth) and the subject title “Dissertation Research about YOU!” was sent to students for several weeks at the beginning of data collection (September 2013), along with a blurb I had written:

My name is Peter Gerlach, and I am a PhD student at Syracuse University in New York State. This school year I am going to be on the Horace campus working on my dissertation, a research project about what Horace College is like for international students. So this semester, after you’ve had a chance to settle into the new school year, I will organize a couple of focus groups and some one-on-one interviews to learn more about your experience. **If you are interested in participating in this study, please let me know: [REDACTED]@syr.edu or [REDACTED]-[REDACTED]-[REDACTED].** (You can also contact the ISAO) (bolding and highlighting done by ISAO).

In response to this brief announcement, I received many emails of interest.

In addition to my introduction to the POFIS leadership group and the FYI notifications, Elizabeth also wrote personal emails to students who she believed would be a good fit for the study. Though I did not know how she chose these students or even exactly what she wrote to them, I knew that to one she relayed: "...have you considered participating in this? I think you would enjoy it, and have a lot to contribute to it," including the above photo, title, and blurb. A few students told me when we later met that they felt compelled to email me, beyond their own interest in the study, because of Elizabeth's personal endorsement.

My third method of participant recruitment was face-to-face meetings, which I arranged with each of the international students from whom I received an email. During these meetings, I would present as much information about the study and myself as I could and that I felt was appropriate for them to know at this early stage. My goals were to build some rapport and to gauge the degree to which they were interested in my study. I did not assume that meeting with me meant that students were going to be a participant; however, almost everyone I interacted with in this way did become a participant. Not only were these meetings generally a lot of fun, but also we learned a lot about each other and I quickly became convinced that I was going to have a hard time making decisions about whom I was going to leave out of my study because, as with the lunch meeting, I was so impressed with all of the students. These interactions also allowed for snowball sampling, as I asked each student to give my business card to a friend they thought might be interested in participating in the study.

Finally, I conducted two participant observations, one of an ISO member meeting and another of the ISO Ice Cream Social, the first big event on the organization's social calendar. In the case of the first, I was invited by Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), the president of the



ISO who was in attendance at the lunch described above. After discussing news of the design for the t-shirt of an upcoming ISO campus-wide party and before discussion of an advertisement for the recruitment of chefs and recipes for the group's Food Bazaar event later in the semester, I was given an opportunity to give a brief presentation about my study. Much like the lunch, I had a captive audience of international students. For 10 minutes, I detailed my biography and my dissertation research design. At the end of this meeting, two very interested freshmen from Eastern Europe approached me and together we enthusiastically arranged a follow-up face-to-face meeting where we could talk at greater length. On the other hand, the Ice Cream Social did not produce any new participants; however, it was a great opportunity for me to spread the word about my study and to observe the Horace social scene. Also, I saw and briefly spoke with three students (including Sara) who had all agreed already to participate.

What I learned from this early stage of participant recruitment is that, once again, I was extremely impressed with all of the approximately 30 international students with whom I met. Just like the first lunch meeting with Elizabeth and the student leaders, I had a lot of fun getting to know everyone and I was charmed by students' intellect and their willingness to engage with me about anything and everything. In many cases, I wished that was already recording conversations because the students were so forthcoming about their lives and their impressions of their time at Horace. I decided that if it were possible I would include them all in the study. The only hard part would be deciding who I wanted to sit for focus groups and interviews and who would be best for individual interviews only.

In terms of non-student professionals and community members, the process for selection was much simpler. I began with a short list of recommendations from Elizabeth and continually revised it, adding and removing names as time passed. Initially, I was

resolved that the fewer non-international students I had in the study the better because this was a dissertation about international students. Their voices and stories must be primary and privileged, I insisted, because this was sorely lacking in the scholarship on this student group. Over the course of the school year, though, I came to agree with Elizabeth who would regularly remind me that there is much about the international student context at Horace that students could not possibly have perspective about. Ultimately, I came to understand that to document a fuller and more engaging case study it would be necessary to interview people in offices and departments all around campus. I wrote personal emails to each of the 18 individuals I decided to include. I was able to meet with 17 of these staff, faculty, administrators, and community members.

This guiding principle – that I should include more voices – is also what led me to do interviews with two international alums still in the area (both of whom were recommended and originally contacted by Elizabeth) and one focus group with five American students. In the former, I had originally intended to interview both men together; however, one was unable to attend the originally scheduled time and so I rescheduled him for a later date. In the case of the latter, two of the American students were roommates of my international participants and the other four were students recruited by the Horace College Student Government Association (SGA), a group Elizabeth suggested could help me find a more diverse selection of Horace students. Indeed, the SGA did assist me in finding four students who were willing, on one week's notice, to participate. My goal to have a racially diverse group, though, was not successful; only one student was not White; she was Asian American. Three of the four students were able to attend the focus group session.

### *Individual Interviewing*

My primary method of data collection was two rounds of individual interviewing with 16 current international students. The first round of interviews was conducted during the fall 2013 semester and the second round in the spring 2014 semester. This approach was inspired by Maciel's (1996) dissertation study about relationships between internationals and domestic students at Wellesley College, and his belief that "a single, one-hour interview did not allow the kind of partnership to develop" that he could achieve with multiple sessions. A second, later interview gave his participants time to think about their first interaction and what they might want to contribute in the second (pp. 37-38). Moreover, Maciel writes, "participants came into the second interview exuding more confidence in a process with which they had prior experience" (p. 38).

From my vantage point, the interview is a flexible process in which "interviewees have substantial experience and insight," and I, the interviewer, only needs to "delineate the topics and draft the questions" since more "ideas and issues emerge during the interview for the interviewer to pursue" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 312). Another way of putting it is that the interview is a "negotiated conversational accomplishment" (Fontana and Frey, 2000), wherein, as Gubrium and Holstein (2000) explain,

[t]reating interviewing as a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed suggests the possibility that the interview is not merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion, but is instead a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge itself ... meaning is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. (p. 4)

Just as with other social encounters, then, my participants and I began with small talk, followed by my assuring the interviewee that what would be said would be kept confidential. Each interview was different, requiring various kinds of management of the circumstances and depended on how the respondent felt about being the focus of the interview.

Overall, I followed the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (2007) who suggest, “good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view” (p. 104). A good interview, the logic goes, provides the researcher data that enables her/him to understand how the participant sees the world. I was fortunate to have many good, even great, sessions. What this required of me was a high level of attentiveness, flexibility, and sensitivity, and an avoidance of, for example, close-ended questions, impatience, and premature judgment of the quality of data (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Crucially, I understood that I should approach the interviewee as being the expert on their own life and the topic(s) under discussion, as again, the goal of the interaction is to understand the interviewee’s perspectives and how they construct truths and realities in their lives.

Each of the interviews in the first wave lasted approximately one hour. I was interested in learning about each of the students. Who were they? What were their lives like before they came to Horace? Why did they come to Horace College? What was the transition like between their home country and the U.S.? What were their impressions of and experience with the U.S. before coming here? What were their initial impressions of the U.S. and of Horace? What has it been like for them to be so far from home and how do they stay connected to home?

What was discussed in the later wave of interviewing, of which each was between 60 and 90 minutes, depended somewhat on what was discussed in the first interview. Primarily, though, I was interested in how international students perceive the college’s small, residential setting; the liberal arts education they are receiving at Horace College; and the relationships they are forming with other Horace students, faculty, staff, and community members. How did their opinions/feelings change, if at all, since the first time we met? What are their lives

like at Horace College? What do they think of the education they are receiving? Who are their closest friends? How do they think their studying internationally (and at Horace) has affected their friends and family back home and how has this experience changed/shaped those relationships? How has their relationship with their home country changed by being away, and in what ways, if any, has Horace helped them learn/re-learn about home? How does/doesn't the term "international student" fit with how they see themselves and what does it mean to them to be an international student at Horace College? What do they plan to do after graduating? How do they think a Horace education will affect what they do after graduation?

The group of 16 chosen as my primary informants was selected carefully. From the outset, I knew that I wanted this group, as much as it was going to be possible, to be representative of the larger international student population at Horace College. I wanted to have freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors represented and students of both genders studying in a variety of majors. I also sought geographic diversity. That is, I wanted students from countries all around the world. But I was also aware that geographic representativeness meant that I should include as many Chinese international students as I could (though I was rather conflicted by the idea of "singling out" students from one nation), seeing as how these students made up one-quarter of the total international student body and seeing as how Chinese students are so prevalently discussed today in the scholarly literature, in popular news outlets, and on campuses around the U.S. Furthermore, as Elizabeth pointed out to me even before I arrived to campus for the first time, it would be important to have students from diverse high school backgrounds represented. Public and private school experience should be included and so too should experience at American and international schools. I was also quite sure that this group of 16 could be composed of many active and engaged

international students, but I was resolved that it should also include students who were not campus leaders and who were not members of the ISO. Finally, having conducted many face-to-face meetings and two focus groups with internationals, I felt that I was well positioned to make some deliberate decisions about who I wanted to hear more from in a one-on-one setting and who I would prefer to sit either again or for the first time for the second round of focus groups in the spring. Horace student participants include<sup>14</sup>:

Intl Student Interview Participants				International Focus Group Participants			
Name	Class	Gender	Home Region	Name	Class	Gender	Home Region
Alya*	Sr	F	Middle East	Laura+	Sr	F	Caribbean
Brenda	Sr	F	E Africa	Ndaba+	Sr	M	E Africa
Vincci	Sr	F	SE Asia	Rinchen*	Jr	F	SE Asia
Ban	Sr	F	Middle East	Zhenya+	So	F	E Europe
Mahdee	Sr	M	Middle East	Yating+	So	F	SE Asia
Anand	Sr	M	W Asia	Ashwini+	So	F	S Asia
Jose	Sr	M	S America	Kusturie*+	So	F	E Africa
Sara	Jr	F	E Europe	Hanh*	So	F	SE Asia
Zawadiye	So	F	E Africa	Joonsik+	So	M	E Asia
Xiaonan*	So	F	SE Asia	Danushka*+	So	M	SE Asia
Sabith	So	M	S Asia	Maurice*	So	M	E Africa
Yinan*	So	M	SE Asia	Soufien*+	So	M	N Africa
Anna	Fr	F	E Europe	Tim*	Fr	M	W Europe
Sun*	Fr	F	E Asia	<i>*Denotes Fall 2013 FG participant</i>			
Weiguang*	Fr	M	SE Asia	<i>+Denotes Spring 2014 FG participant</i>			
Mirza	Fr	M	E Europe				
<i>*Denotes also Fall 2013 FG participant</i>				Intl Alumni Interview Participants			
				Name	Class	Gender	Home Region
American Student FG Participants				Andrei*	Alum	M	W Europe
Name	Class	Gender	Home State	Dmitri+	Alum	M	S Europe
April+	Sr	F	WI/CA	<i>*Denotes Fall 2013 participant</i>			
Lucy+	Sr	F	NY	<i>+Denotes Spring 2014 participant</i>			
Mona+	Sr	F	CA				
Macy+	Jr	F	NY				
Ron+	So	F	MN				
<i>+Denotes Spring 2014 FG participant</i>							

As noted earlier, in addition to sessions with current and alumni international students, I also interviewed 18 staff, faculty, administrators, and community members. I

<sup>14</sup> See also page 100 below for discussion of focus groups and focus group participants.

interviewed two of the three potentially interested alums Elizabeth contacted. They were chosen because they were still in the area (one in the state capital an hour away and the other still in Horace) and because Elizabeth felt each had much to contribute to my study. In these sessions, I was interested in, as with current international students, learning about their experience before and while at Horace, but also what life after Horace has been like for them and what, if anything, they felt Horace College could or should be doing to better support internationals.

In selecting the 18 Horace faculty, staff, community members, and administrators, I sought out individuals who had especially strong ties with international students on campus. I was interested in, among other things, how each supports international students, how they perceive the international student experience at Horace, and what, if anything, they believe they as individuals and their institution, Horace College, can or should be doing to better support internationals. I determined, among other reasons, that each should be interviewed because international students mentioned them (sometimes quite often) in interviews, focus groups, and/or in other, less formal settings. This list includes, in no particular order:

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Office/Department</b>	<b>Title</b>
Elizabeth	ISAO	Assoc. Dean and Director of the ISAO
Lynn	ISAO	International Student and Scholar Advisor
Nik	Admissions	Assoc. Director and Coordinator of Intl Admission
Pat	Admissions	Former Coordinator of Intl Admission (1977-85)
Helen	Health Center	Director of Student Health and Counseling Services
Kanak	Health Center	Staff Psychologist
Judy	Writing Center	Director
Jill	Reading Center	Director
Tom	Career Center	Assoc. Dean and Director of Career Development
Mary	Career Center	Asst. Director of Employer Relations & Employment Counseling; also former Director of the ISAO (1987-95, 1996-97)
Darlene	Religious Life Center	Dean of Religious Life and Campus Chaplain
Jeri	Political Science	Assistant Professor
Amaro	French	Professor; also former Director of the ISC
Doug	Physics	Professor Emeritus

Harold	Computer Science	Professor
Donna	Host Family Program	Coordinator
Molly	Host Family Program	Coordinator
Jackie	Host Family Program	Coordinator

### *Focus Groups*

A second form of data collection was focus groups, a method that “help[s] researchers to explore topics of interest, validate findings, and clarify content domains” (Smith, 1995; Strickland, 1999) as well as “elicit stories and in-depth explanations of people’s thoughts and experiences,” prompted by researchers’ questions (Hollander, 2004, 607). Moreover, focus groups, in particular, are useful to observe the social aspects of meaning making and to provide the ability to explore taken-for-granted cultural assumptions in the ways people talk with one another (Hollander, 2004; Sieg, 2008; Warr, 2005). And importantly, as Madriz (2000) and Liamputtong (2010, p. 176) suggest, and as I discovered in this research, focus groups can be well suited for ethnic minority groups because these are spaces in which people who share backgrounds, views, and opinions can engage safely in research that is about them. I had to learn how to know when and just how to ask new questions, as well as how to encourage all participants to share and to redirect the conversation when one or more participant was speaking too much (Morgan, 2001, p. 153). I reminded myself often that the goal in focus groups, ultimately, is not to reach a consensus (Hennick, 2007, p. 6). Instead, a range in the responses of participants or the opportunity to ask questions in a group as opposed to individually is sought, either of which enables the researcher’s understanding of the group.

These group interviews functioned very well as bookends to the data collection process. I conducted two focus groups with international students in the fall semester before I began the first wave of individual interviews. Both sessions lasted for approximately 90



minutes and were semi-structured in format. As with the individual interviewing, I wanted to make sure that the make-up of participants in these first two focus groups was as diverse as possible; however, I knew that this might be a challenge because I was assembling a group of students based on their availability. I bcc'd (to ensure their confidentiality) the full list of students with whom I had made contact up to that point and gave them four options of dates and times to meet, two of which were at 4:15pm (when classes ended for the day) and two were at 7:15pm (when the dining hall closed for the day). Ultimately, both focus groups had 7 seven students (and in each, one student left early) and each was very satisfactorily diverse based on age (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior), gender, major, region of origin, country of origin, high school experience, and campus involvement. Also, I decided, based on my prior face-to-face interactions with them, that most of the students that signed up for a date and time that I did not select would be a good fit for one of the 16 one-on-one interviewing slots. I was quite pleased with the make up of each focus group.

I asked six questions in these fall sessions. How do you all describe Horace College and the town of Horace to your friends and family? What have been the best parts of your experience at Horace? What have been the most difficult parts of your experience? How would you all describe the support for international students at Horace? What does the term “international student” mean to you all and what does it mean to you to be an “international student?” Would you all recommend Horace College, or another liberal arts college, to your siblings or to your friends? Explain.

I conducted the second set of focus groups late in the spring semester just before final exams. At this time, I met with two separate groups of internationals and then once with a group of domestic students.

Both of the spring semester sessions with international students lasted for approximately 90 minutes and they were semi-structured in format. The selection process for this round of international focus groups, though, was different than the first. While the scheduling considerations and communication methods were similar, I decided to include only international students who had not been among the primary group of 16 that sat for one-on-one interviews. That is, the participants for these two group sessions could include: internationals who had participated in the first round of focus groups, those on my original list of potential participants who had not yet participated in the research, or international students contacted now for the first time. It was clear to me, however, that in order to have enough participants I would need to do some further recruiting. As I had by this time developed strong relationships with my participants, I decided to ask them for suggestions of friends they thought would be interested. I contacted approximately 10 international students and two were able to participate at the dates and times chosen for the two focus group sessions. The first session included three international students, one of whom arrived late. One student did not attend the session due to a schedule conflict and later apologized through email. The second focus group included six internationals and was much more diverse (based on age, gender, major, region of origin, country of origin, high school experience, and campus involvement) than the first.

In the two spring sessions with international students, I asked six questions, three of which had follow-up questions. If you were asked to communicate with an incoming first-year student from your home country, what kinds of things would you tell them about what life is like at Horace? Follow-up: How would you advise them to prepare for this experience? What is a “Horacian?” How would you each define this term? To what extent do you all think you, as international students, need to adapt and adjust to the culture/campus here in

the States? Follow-up: To what extent do you think that Americans on campus should adapt and adjust to you all, to international students and their cultures, needs, and ways of doing things? How have your lives, both here and at home, changed while you've been at Horace? What have you all heard about from the international student listening session on diversity with the president? What is/was your response to this session? What more, if anything, could the college be doing to better support internationals here? Follow-up: How, if at all, could your experience as international students at Horace College be improved?

In my single focus group with domestic students, I invited, through the help of the SGA, six participants. Five students attended, with one informing me through email afterwards that his schedule became too busy to attend. The group was quite diverse in terms of age, state of origin, major, high school backgrounds, and international exposure/travel. Racially, though, these informants were all White with the exception of one Latina student. As with the four previous focus groups, this session was 90 minutes in duration and was semi-structured in format.

I asked six questions, two of which had follow-up questions. How do you all describe Horace College and the town of Horace to your friends and family? What is your definition of "international student?" Why do you all believe international students are at Horace College? Follow up: What do you all see as the role of international students on campus? How would you all describe your own relationships with internationals on campus? Perhaps you're roommates or good friends or maybe just classmates. To what extent do you all think international students need to adapt and adjust to culture here in the States? Follow up: Now let's flip the question: to what extent do you all think that you and the other American students on campus should adapt and adjust to international students and their cultures and ways of doing things? Do you think that Horace College generally speaking is a,

let's say, international student friendly, place? How does and doesn't the college environment and the administration make this happen?

### *Document Analysis*

The third data collection strategy I employed was document analysis. Because international student inclusion/engagement initiatives unfold over the course of many decades, documents are a way to understand events that took place prior to participants' involvement as well as the confluence of factors that have contributed and continue to contribute to the wider contemporary context (Mullen, 2011). Moreover, together, the documents I was able to collect "serve as sources of rich descriptions of how the people who produced the materials think about their world" (Bogden and Biklen, 2007, p. 133), adding to my understanding of how, mostly, individuals at Horace College not directly involved in the study also construct the international student context there. Moreover, document analysis, a much different source of data, enriches the data collected through interviewing and focus groups.

To better design this project, I conducted an initial document analysis of artifacts related to Horace College's ISAO, which showed that Horace and the office itself sought to assess itself and to forecast how it could better serve and represent international students (and scholars). This document analysis included a 2011 ISAO assessment and review report, two articles written by Elizabeth (one about international students at Horace and the other about liberal arts colleges), Elizabeth's 2013 NAFSA conference presentation notes with two colleagues (entitled "Liberal Arts Institutions and the International Student Experience"), the 2011-2012 IES National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator report on Horace College, the Horace College website (particularly the "Global Horace" webpages), and the *U.S. News and World Report* website for most international at liberal arts colleges. The

Horace college community as a whole, then, appeared to me when I began this study, to believe very strongly in its internationally focused curriculum, faculty, students, and programs, and that international students at Horace were considered to be a very important aspect of campus internationalization. Moreover, I viewed Horace as a leader among liberal arts colleges across the country in the percentage of its student population that are international students and in the institutional commitment made to these students, evidenced in Elizabeth's local, regional and national advocacy of international student rights.

I added to this early document analysis by collecting hundreds more documents about the current context of international student inclusion and engagement on campus – whether linked to campus internationalization or not. These included the three main types of documents outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007): personal, official, and popular culture. I collected documents about how this context has changed over time and those that give indications about the future of the recruitment of and campus programming for internationals at Horace. Sources included official Horace College documents found in the college archives, on the college's website, and those given to me by Horace staff, faculty, and administrators (of which most were procured through the ISAO); the college's newspaper publications found either online or paper copies in the Student Center; the Horace College Magazine; national online publications about the college; and online videos about international students at Horace, particularly those found on YouTube.

### *Participant Observation*

The fourth and final data collection strategy was participant observation. As Emerson et al (1995) explain, participant observation involves a researcher being “committed to going out and getting close to the activities and everyday experiences of other people” (p. 1) in order to gain “a deeper *immersion* in others' worlds in order to grasp what

they experience as meaningful and important” (p. 2, author’s emphasis). Observations also enable “the hope of establishing open relationships with informants” because researchers are actively “getting to know the setting and the people” over a period of time (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 45). Both during the observation and afterwards when documenting it, investigators should be aware both how their presence impacts the scene being observed and that their perspective is “intertwined in with the phenomenon which does not have objective characteristics independent of the observer’s perspective and methods” (Mishler, 1979, p. 10, as cited in Emerson et al, 1995, p. 3). Observing in locations around campus also gave me a greater familiarity with the Horace campus. Finally, participant observation strengthened data collection because it allowed me to see firsthand and in their “natural environment” what international student and other participants did and did not discuss in interview and focus group spaces and what I could not witness through documents.

Over the course of the school year, I observed 11 separate public events. In the fall, I observed the ISO Ice Cream Social (the first event on the ISO’s calendar), an ISO barbeque (attended by mostly international and a few domestic students), a Horace College town hall meeting about diversity and student wellness, an ISAO “required” meeting about graduation and post-graduation options for senior international students, the ISO Food Bazaar (the largest event of the fall, an annual event with campus and town participants gathering to eat international dishes prepared by international students); and a campus event entitled “Raised in Conflict” featuring three international students from war-torn and post-war struggling nations (two of whom were participants in my study). In the spring semester, I observed the Host Family Potluck Dinner (where internationals and their host families<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The ISAO’s Host Family program is very successful at Horace. Approximately 100 families participate – some families “hosting” more than one international student – in the program. Students are paired with a family before they arrive. While at Horace, students and their families share meals, attend events together, and engage in other kinds of meaningful quality

came together to share a meal), two town hall meetings focusing on diversity at Horace, a postcard signing event (in which Elizabeth, Lynn, Nik [Elizabeth's husband<sup>16</sup> and Horace's Coordinator of International Admission], and international students gathered to sign postcards for newly admitted internationals), and the ISO Cultural Evening (the largest event of the spring, an annual event of cultural song, dance, and music featuring mostly international and some American students). Furthermore, I regularly and intentionally spent time working and hanging out in public spots inside and outside of the student center and the college library, places where I could see the Horace scene and be seen by my participants.

Together, interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and participant observation provided me with a multi-focal lens into everyday life for international students at Horace College.

### **Analysis of Data**

Data analysis was an ongoing process from the outset of data collection. I transcribed every interview and focus group, adding observer comments throughout these transcriptions, and I wrote memos on the course and complexities of the research process. Although transcribing 50 individual interviews, five focus groups, and one participant observation was a time-consuming and tedious process, I felt that doing this work myself allowed me to more intimately understand my data and to more thoroughly be able to

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time. Almost all of the internationals I spoke with laud the program and come to love and/or respect their families. I discuss host families and internationals' relationships with their host families in Chapter VI.

<sup>16</sup> Both Elizabeth and Nik shared that it is to their advantage professionally that they are married. Elizabeth explained that strong communication is necessary between the international admissions and international affairs offices. "Intentional" collaboration is "part of my responsibility" and it is "part of [his] responsibility because "retention and admissions go hand in-hand and have to be viewed that way" (28Apr14). They are not only sensitive to what each other's offices need to best recruit and support internationals, but their very close, and unique, relationship "breathes life into our ability to build relationships with student and families...because they might be willing to realize that...we actually care about them" (5Dec13). This was the case when a student was hit by a car when out for a run on a Saturday morning and "that evening Nik and I and our dog and our kid went over to their dorm room to bring them goodies." She insists, though, that this kind of collaboration is important beyond the scope of their marriage: "we happened to be married, but any office should be...communicating in this way" because our offices depend on each other to best recruit and support students (5Dec13).

constantly compare and critically evaluate patterns, themes, and contradictions. As Riessman (1993) writes, “Analysis cannot be easily distinguished from transcription.... Close and repeated listening, coupled with methodic transcribing, often leads to insights that in turn shape how we choose to represent an interview narrative in our text” (p. 60). It was important to me, then, to be as accurate as I possibly could be, meticulously capturing participants’ spoken words and also their pauses, facial expressions and body gestures, and intonations of speech. Moreover, I made sure to painstakingly capture the countless “like”s, “um”s, and “you know”s, recognizing that these, too, are patterns of speech exhibited in many of today’s college-aged students. I wanted to be sure that the transcriptions were “verbatim facsimiles of what was said in interviews” (Poland, 2003, p. 267).

During the 2013-14 winter break, pausing data collection for three weeks while the students were away, I took the opportunity to take a closer look at the focus groups and interviews I had conducted, the observations I had done, and the documents I had collected. First, I did a preliminary round of coding of these data, and attached notes to each. Later, I would add to, challenge, and refine this first list of codes. Also, I saw this as a chance to evaluate the questions I had been asking my informants and the responses I got from them. Reflecting on these interactions, I was a bit surprised sometimes by how I stumbled through interviews or how, in a few cases, I inadvertently asked leading questions. This self-reflection and writing notes about these issues not only led to better question guides for interviews and focus groups in the spring, but refining my approach helped me be a more confident interviewer and facilitator, which, in turn, produced even richer data in the spring semester.

When I finished with data collection in late April 2014, I began a two-month period dedicated to data analysis. While I had originally planned to code my data with the assistance of a qualitative research analysis program such as NVivo or Dedoose, I quickly discovered



that this was not going to work for me because I much preferred to have paper copies of all of my data in front of me and to be able to flip to the pages of a transcription or document with my own hands. I was reassured in the soundness of this approach having read several dissertations written by people in my program who also preferred this method.

With my preliminary winter break code list and notes at my side, I proceeded to read all of my data (interviews, focus groups, observation notes, documents, and memos) once through (and the data collected in the fall a second time), followed by another reading in which I used colored post-it strips to code my data line by line. I looked for themes and patterns, following the approach suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (2007), searching for “certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, subjects’ ways of thinking, and events that [stood] out” (p. 173). I used an open coding process, organizing my data without limiting possibilities for interpretation. Additionally, for interviews and focus groups, I used two highlighters, a blue one to highlight the questions from my interview guides that I asked participants and a yellow one to highlight particularly important details. This helped me greatly when referring back to data sets as I wrote the data chapters. Furthermore, as I coded and highlighted, I took notes in the margins (summarizing notes, notes to self, connections to theory, and connections to other data sets) and composed a separate notes sheet for each, a copy of which I then attached to the printed data set for later reference.

When coding, I paid particular attention to how participants made meaning of their experiences as international students. I created a list of numerous codes that were read from the data, and then narrowed that list down to more manageable themes. For example, I separated out and categorized recurring themes by students that talked about “adjustment” and the ways in which these were positive and/or negative experiences, if they were short-lived or lasted over time, and whether or not they were phenomena that American students

also experienced. Through several readings of my data and thematic analysis, I identified several aspects of adjustment such as language, academics, social life, and relationships. By comparison, a theme such as “cultural differences” was not as precise as or as easily presentable in data chapters both because (a bit to my surprise) the term was not used by internationals very often and because it has such loaded connotations that muddied its usefulness in the dissertation. Finally, the variance in students’ experiences in relation to adaptation lent further credence to the need to capture in the dissertation, as much as was possible, the nuances and contradictions between different aspects of the adjustment theme.

I also created a system of additional documents which helped me further interrogate data. I made a Microsoft Excel master list of codes for each interview and focus group data set type (individual interviews with international students [one for fall and one for spring data sets], focus groups with internationals, focus groups with American students, and finally interviews with non-student professionals). For the primary group of 16 international students chosen for the two rounds of individual interviews, I made a “Student Profile Comparisons” spreadsheet document in order to log additional and/or perceived significant data points. In addition, I composed several memos and a few journal entries on emerging themes to capture important data points across data sets<sup>17</sup>.

### **A Cross-Cultural Research Approach**

I began this dissertation with very particular ideas about what kind of researcher I did and did not want to be. Frustrated by much of the positivist literature on international students and feeling empowered by my training in my Cultural Foundations of Education program, I set out to conduct a study using critical theories (discussed in the previous chapter) and a methodological approach that would actively work to disrupt the problematic

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix II on page 340 for a categorized presentation of all dissertation methods and procedures.

representing of international students as commodities, problems, and statistics, as well as an othered population about which to speak and about which (mostly) Western researchers know best. As a white, male, American doctoral researcher opposed to these scholarly trends, I felt it prudent to take additional measures to ensure that my research approach would in no way reproduce the scholarship I have found so troubling. I also sought to conduct a study and compose a dissertation that might serve as one way to do this kind of research differently. My advisor suggested the body of literature on Cross-Cultural Research, a methodological approach that would help me accomplish these goals. As I explain below, I believe that a cross-cultural research approach is an important and instructive way to conduct research *with*, rather than *on*, international students.

Cross-cultural research is an approach with roots in the discipline of anthropology aimed at addressing and overcoming the oppressive history and often-problematic nature of contemporary research conducted with vulnerable and indigenous peoples around the world. Citing Smith (1999, p. 67), Liamputtong (2010) writes, “[t]hrough their ethnographic gaze, anthropologists have collected information from native peoples, classified people, and then represented them as the ‘Others’ to the extent that they are often seen by native people as ‘the epitome of all that is bad [about] academics’” (p. 2). Such a troubled legacy of research warranted attention to culturally sensitive and appropriate methodologies that scholars of this approach believe are too little discussed in qualitative and ethnographic literatures. Cross-cultural research, then, serves as a corrective for problematic and/or oppressive research agendas, and its orientation can guide all forms of research (Liamputtong, 2010).

Investigators are increasingly exploring projects in cross-cultural contexts and with subjects with whom they may or may not share cultural backgrounds. This is particularly the case in multicultural societies (Liamputting, 2010). The growth in research, however, is

accompanied by a lack of information about how to work with indigenous and local groups. This raises serious concerns for cross-cultural researchers because most investigators, whether they are experienced or are novices, do not practice nor even know about culturally sensitive or responsible methodologies (Ryen, 2003). Projects are all too often designed without considering fully the people who will become the subjects of one's research. As a result, one's research may do more harm than good. These and other such concerns lead scholars like Hennick (2007), Liamputtong (2008), and Madriz (2000) to contend that qualitative cross-cultural research methodologies which are sensitive and responsible to participants are necessary.

What is culturally sensitive research? According to Liamputtong (2008), it is "knowing the cultural context of the group with whom researchers wish to work" (p. 4). It is imperative that thorough cultural knowledge is acquired *before* entering the field. Without generalizing too much about international students, who are from diverse countries and cultures, "knowing" the cultural context of this population includes, for example, acquiring sensitivity to language issues and cultural distance. In terms of language issues, I know from my time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mongolia that being respectful and appreciative of spoken English differences is important in interactions with non-native speakers because these individuals' skill and comfort levels vary greatly. While I had few practical language concerns at Horace, I did approach each interaction knowing it was necessary for me to be patient, to listen carefully, and to respectfully ask students to repeat if I did not understand. I was mindful when I spoke to match the speed, tone, and level of spoken English with that of my participants. A second example concerns the regularity with which international students express feeling a distance between American culture and their own. "Knowing" involved not simply an awareness of this reality for some participants, but verbally

expressing an understanding of this reality and of their personal experiences with it. Again, listening patiently and carefully (and sympathetically) was important, as well as, where appropriate, explaining that I, too, had experienced similar feelings while living abroad in Mongolia, a country and culture in many ways dissimilar to my own.

There are particular characteristics and skills, then, which cross-cultural researchers need for this kind of work. Laverack and Brown (2003, p. 334, as cited in Liamputtong, 2008, p. 5) contend that individuals must have “tolerance for ambiguity, patience, adaptiveness, capacity for tacit learning and courtesy,” as well as a respect for the varying cultural beliefs and practices of their participants. In many ways, then, cross-cultural researchers are much like most other qualitative researchers, who must also demonstrate these qualities. However, the difference, generally speaking, is that cross-cultural researchers conduct research with local and indigenous populations whose ethnic and geographical origins are of particular salience to their lived experience, notably as it relates to how these groups might have been, or continue to be, treated as “cultural Others.” These “cultural Others” tend also to be disadvantaged, marginalized and/or oppressed groups. And, as noted, oftentimes research is conducted abroad and with populations that are culturally, racially, and socially dissimilar to the investigator.

Additionally, in terms of conducting research and knowing a particular population, in-depth and accurate understanding comes through immersion. This was true at Horace, where I needed to develop long-term relationships with my participants and I needed a lengthy period of time with them (and at the beginning, ensuring that I would be around for the full school year) to build rapport and to gain the kind of trust that led to open and fruitful interactions.

Matters are further complicated, Liamputtong (2008) argues, when the researcher is “from a group that has historically been an oppressor or coloniser of the potential participant group” (p. 6). Smith (2000) suggests that in such cases showing respect is crucial and can be done through a willingness “to listen, to be humble, to be cautious, to avoid flaunting knowledge, and to avoid trampling over the *mama* of people” (p. 242, author’s emphasis). In practice, this might involve, for example, following Liamputtong (2008, p. 6), accepting an invitation to share a meal with an international student in the Horace dining hall. Whether or not the more formal goals of the research are addressed would be of less importance in this instance than sharing a meal and talking with, as well as showing genuine interest in and learning from, the student in a space familiar and comfortable to them. Madriz (2000) stresses that it is especially important when using some methodologies, such as focus groups, for researchers and participants to be of the same ethnicity/race. When participants are of nonmainstream groups, Dunbar et al (2002) explain, they are all too often “not accorded their due respect as distinctly situated individuals” (p. 280), a point that all, especially mainstream and Western, researchers must take seriously. This fact complicates relationships between researchers and participants who do not share cultural backgrounds/realities, and particularly in cases where structural racism and/or oppression exist for the latter group. Participants’ lives, their outlooks, and their desire and/or ability to contribute to the study may be greatly affected by such circumstances within society. And, even a respectful, sensitive, cautious, and humble investigator will encounter roadblocks of the interpersonal and societal sort.

As far as procedures to collect data, there are many suitable methods in cross-cultural research. These include: interviewing (Burton, 2003; Dunbar, et al, 2002; Merriam, et al, 2001; Ryen, 2003), focus groups (Colucci, 2008; Liamputtong, 2010; Madriz, 2000),

oral/life history, participatory action research, or PAR (Liamputtong, 2010), participatory activities such as “visual exercises” (Llyod-Evans, 2006, cited in Liamputtong, 2010), “free listing” (Colucci, 2008), and picture sorting, workshops, vignettes, and the “photovoice method” (Liamputtong, 2010). In this dissertation, I have chosen interviewing and focus groups.

Interviews are an important space for cross-cultural research. Ryen (2003) argues that researchers must part ways with traditional naturalistic assumptions about insider/outsider challenges, the supposed relationship between culture and communication, and the view that this relationship serves as a nexus for interviewing. Social reality is not necessarily “transparent in people’s words and actions” (p. 430). Those who adopt a naturalistic approach, Ryen contends, believe in “overcoming the communicative hurdles put in place by cultural differences. [The] firm belief in a preexisting cultural reality is the epistemological basis for the demand that the researcher catch or grasp that reality as closely as possible to the way the interviewee does” (p. 430). Instead of interviewing from this kind of approach, Ryen (2003) advocates for cross-cultural interviews as an opportunity for “shared meaning as a locally collaborative accomplishment” (p. 439). In other words, interviews are co-constructed by the interviewer and the interviewee, and the construction of the narrative is dependent upon who and what these individuals represent to each other throughout the interview process (Ryen, 2003).

In this dissertation study, for instance, an interview in the fall semester with an Eastern European freshman female international student, abroad for the first time, was constructed very much through the dynamics of gender, socioeconomic, generational, and cultural differences that informed the conversation. Our interaction and the data we produced have as much to do with our personalities, life experiences, and our perceptions of

each other as the questions asked and topics discussed. Because this was a unique interaction in many ways – she had never discussed these topics before, her international experience was so new to her, and it was my first interview at Horace – it had tremendous potential for each of us personally and for the research. The focus of the cross-cultural interview, then, is on how different contexts are produced within it (Ryen, 2003). Within these different contexts, “questions are asked and answered and, most significantly, meaning is produced” (p. 441). From this epistemological standpoint, Ryen suggests, the problems associated with notions of insider-outsider relations are “transformed into something research participants themselves accomplish and resolve rather than merely cope with or suffer from” (p. 441).

Dunbar, Rodriguez, and Parker’s (2002) discussion of race, subjectivity and the interview process underscores Ryen’s insistence that the cross-cultural interview is a co-constructed space of meaning making. Dunbar and colleagues argue that interviews have been important for research that confronts issues of race, racism and racial discrimination in the lives of minority racial groups. Being an active interviewer by “[b]eing attuned to both the lived and procedural complexities of a radicalized subject can help an interviewer draw that subject out in the course of an interview” (p. 287). The proactive approach these authors advocate is rooted in empathy, attentiveness, and care, recognizing the subjectivity, the spoken nuances, and the body language of interviewees. These authors also share Liamputtong’s (2008) charge that it is incumbent on the researcher to know well the lives of their participants – and for the researcher to make themselves known to participants – so that meaningful connections (to the broader history and contexts of racism and race relations in U.S. society) can be made in discussions within the interview. When researchers employ a “procedural consciousness” and use reflexivity, Dunbar et al (2002) explain, the interview can be a site where racialized subjects are empowered.



Many scholars of cross-cultural research, however, prefer focus groups. Madriz (2000) contends that group interviews are an agent of social change. Practically, they allow access to research participants who are afraid of or intimidated by the one-on-one dynamic, and they represent a method of conversation long used by women of color to deal with oppression (Madriz, 2000). In addition, “[b]y creating multiple lines of communication, the group interview offers [fearful or intimidated] participants...a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds” (p. 835). Focus groups, Madriz (2000) argues, minimize “self-other distance” in important ways. The control of the moderator is limited by the presence of multivocality and by unstructured formats. “Horizontal interaction,” or interaction between participants, is also an advantage over one-on-one interaction. Yet, we must be aware of the fact that the dynamics of the group, and also, crucially, the kinds of data the interaction enables and produces, depend on the social locations of the researcher and participants and the likely uneven authority which exists among these individuals and their status within their own society and across regional and even national societies and cultures.

And like Madriz, Colucci contends that focus groups are appropriate because of their social nature; they can even be the “ideal” method for cross-cultural research, when it is tailored to the group being interviewed and when the goals of the research respect the participants (p. 234). Ultimately, this method allows the qualitative moderator to access the kinds of everyday communications and experiences, cultural norms and values, and the constructions of knowledge that produce rich and culturally appropriate data (Colucci, 2008; Liamputtong, 2010; Madriz, 2000). Certainly, the case for the value of focus groups in cross-cultural research was evident in this study, where on many occasions horizontal interaction

between international students generated lively and productive vigorous conversation and debate. Furthermore, I learned from my informants that many international students do not discuss among themselves the kinds of issues about which we dialogued in focus groups (or in one-on-one interviews). These sessions, then, were a space for internationals to speak amongst themselves in ways that educated and empowered them and brought them closer together as a Horace College international community.

Liamputtong (2008) charges that qualitative cross-cultural research methods should be “based on love, compassion, reciprocity, respect for culture and people’s dignity, and a call for collaborative efforts with local people” (p. 28). Though certainly not all researchers who work cross-culturally are sensitive, the goal, according to Liamputtong, is that sensitivity and appropriateness are vital to this kind of work. What is required of every researcher is a kind of procedural consciousness, such as Dunbar et al (2002) argue. In all phases of research, the knowledge of our participants, our respect for them, and our goals to benefit them must be priorities in our orientation to research and in the methods we choose. This kind of dedication is laborious, but as its progenitors contend, the cross-cultural approach is vital to redress the grave errors of past research and to ensure that in the future, qualitative inquiry with vulnerable groups is conducted ethically, responsibly, and with attention to the social and cultural contexts of all participants.

Cross-cultural research is an invaluable methodological (and theoretical) frame through which to approach my dissertation; though, this approach has not been used yet in studies of international students. Participants in cross-cultural research, Liamputtong (2010) explains, are “indigenous populations, ethnic minority groups in Western societies and those living in non-Western societies who are also poor and vulnerable socially, culturally, politically and economically,” as well as “immigrants, refugees, Aboriginals, and cultural

groups” (p. 4). It is necessary not to assume that international students will be like these groups (or, for that matter, that one student is like another): “[i]nternational student voices differ from other groups [such as immigrants and refugees] and a sense of their experiences cannot be assumed by analyzing the experiences of other border crossing communities” (Gargano 2009, p. 339). Nevertheless, as cross-cultural research seeks, on the one hand, to disrupt the colonial methodology present in contemporary scholarship, which is still very much the case in research on international students (as discussed in the previous chapter), and on the other, to enable greater recognition and practice of culturally sensitive and appropriate approaches in an ever-growing scholarly field, I argue that a cross-cultural framework is both ethical and practical.

The literature on cross-cultural research served as my guide for managing field relations. To build rapport and trust with the international students at Horace, I worked closely with the staff of the ISAO, who served as my “cultural mediators” and I took to heart the importance of “knowing and being known” (Liamputtong, 2008). To do this, I spent time on campus in the grill and at the library, at campus events, and took every opportunity to have informal conversations with my participants in order to get to know them and for them to get to know me. Also, I watched 26 foreign- (and U.S.-) produced films, documentaries, and specials. I spent countless hours conducting online research in order to learn more and gain differing perspective about my participants’ home countries. I was conscious of the potentially vulnerable position of my participants (Lee and Rice, 2007), in relation to being non-U.S. citizens (Marginson, 2012), and as students who might have either felt the need to represent their school positively or who wanted to please me, the researcher. Therefore, I always reminded students that what they said would remain confidential and anonymous. In focus groups, which presented different dynamics than

interviews, I did my best to include all participants, being sure to actively and equally affirm everyone. Because I valued everyone's contributions, I was also sure to keep each participant informed throughout the researcher process by sending emails when necessary. Where problems occurred, however, I addressed each situation contextually, and though I was lucky not to have needed it, if necessary and with the consent of participants, I would have responsively and responsibly included the ISAO. Again, I always remembered that "love, compassion, reciprocity, respect for culture and people's dignity, and a call for collaborative efforts" was guiding my research (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 28).

### **Positionality and Reflexivity Entanglements**

In adopting a cross-cultural approach in this dissertation, I am also saying that as a researcher I must continually situate myself in relation to my participants, and consider how my participants and I, and our relationships to and with one other, have impacted and shaped this research at every turn. In all phases of the research – from the design of the study, to the collection and analysis of data, and now in the composition of the dissertation – I have engaged in an on-going process of critical self-reflection. Though I knew it would happen before I arrived in Horace, I really came to understand how, as Denzin (1997) puts it, "our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others" (p. 27) when we cooperate together with informants in a research study. This dissertation is the result of my entanglement with my participants at Horace College.

It is necessary to remember, then, as England (1994) explains, "the biography of the researcher directly affects fieldwork" (p. 84) and that because of this, we must

recognize that our role in shaping the ethnographic encounter is huge; consciously or not, we listen and make sense of what we hear according to particular theoretical, ontological, personal and cultural frameworks and in the context of unequal power relations. The worry always exists that the voices and perspectives of those we study will be lost or subsumed to our own views and interests (Luttrell, 2000, p. 499).

So while the voices and perspectives of my participants, particularly the international students, must speak for themselves and they must be free to represent themselves, their lives, and their experiences, I know that the research narrative in the pages of this dissertation also prioritizes my own views and interests. Despite the countless hours I spent conducting interviews or focus groups, having informal conversations, and reflecting in written memos on predominant issues in the field, I knew all the while that I would be putting to page only the very limited collection of themes, details, and voices I felt would most aptly and appropriately serve my research agenda. Indeed, as the researcher, my perception of participants and my employment of methodological procedures greatly affected the collection of data. These are most definitely sources of unequal power that I, as the investigator, have been able to exert throughout this collaborative dissertation.

However, I am a reflexive researcher, and as Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) contend, “[r]eflexivity exposes the exercise of power throughout the *entire* research process. It questions the authority of knowledge and opens up the possibility for negotiating knowledge claims as well as holds researchers accountable to those with whom they research” (p. 495, author’s emphasis). Furthermore, they explain that investigators must

navigate the research process through both their own shifting positionalities as well as those of the participants to produce relationships that are less hierarchical and research that is more inclusive and less distorted. Working across difference depends not only on possessing common language and cultural knowledge, but also on establishing trust and engaging in dialogical relationships (500).

So while it is still certainly true that I might have the final word, so to speak, I have approached this study, my participants, and myself reflexively; therefore, the dissertation itself is a document of entangled subjectivities and methodologies. The truths and realities this dissertation explores and reports are multiple, they are partial, and they are constantly shifting because the identities and the knowledges of the co-constructors of this dissertation,

too, have always been multiple, partial, and shifting. What is captured within these pages, then, is the school year-long collaborative narrative that my participants and I shaped as we engaged in, primarily, dialogic meaning making.

To be accountable to participants I respect and admire and to be accountable to the integrity of a study that I came to realize mattered to more people than just myself, I employed various methods. First and foremost, I kept in mind that participants were the experts of their own lives and that I was in Horace because I sought to learn from and with them about their lives. I was regularly humbled by informants' willingness to be vulnerable in dialogic spaces and to share with me private, meaningful, and challenging memories and beliefs. Furthermore, to refine and complicate my thoughts about the study, I took to memoing, conversations with friends, family and colleagues, and the reading of both scholarship that reflected my critical viewpoint and that I sought to contest. Moreover, I spent additional time transcribing and re-reading my transcriptions, sifting through the documents I was collecting, and reflecting on the connections between my data and the theoretical frameworks that oriented this dissertation. Finally, I kept in mind that "being sensitive to...power relations does not remove them" (England, 1994, pp. 84), and that it is the responsibility of the reflexive researcher to practice mindfulness while being okay with the fact that research is an uneven, imperfect, and highly subjective practice. To this end, then, it is not only valuable but necessary to locate oneself in the research.

### **The Researcher Entangled With The Research**

As the researcher of this study, I am most certainly entangled with the research. As an international person, as an I-see-myself-in-this-study investigator, as a socially located White, middle class American male PhD Candidate researcher, as an international educator, and as a student of my own dissertation, I am entangled.

I think of myself as an “international person,<sup>18</sup>” and I would like to believe that I am able to easily connect with other international people, and of course, with international students. I am German on both sides of my family and my father, an immigrant from Germany in the 1950s, grew up during the Second World War a victim to the Hitler dictatorship and the bombs of the Allied air forces. I grew up in a bi-cultural and bilingual home (my mother is also fluent in German) where being both German and American was something of which to be very proud. And though I did not always identify with my German-ness growing up, I did feel that there was something very unique and mysterious about being an international person. Though I was too young to remember most of my family’s year-long sabbatical to Germany when I was five (my father was a professor at a local liberal arts college), I experienced for myself first-hand as an adult the great appeal of my more global roots when in college I studied abroad in London. I was hooked. While a senior, I applied for, was accepted to, and soon thereafter turned down a Peace Corps post that would have taken me for two years to an island in the South Pacific. While I changed my mind late in the game, not quite ready for this kind of commitment, I did not abandon the dream. Five years later, my wife and I became Peace Corps Volunteers in Mongolia. After a year’s transition back into life in the United States, my wife and I moved to Syracuse for graduate school where I gravitated almost naturally, it seemed to me, to the university international student center and an academic focus in international education. My closest friends in Syracuse were from Palestine and Afghanistan<sup>19</sup> and I felt (and still feel) most comfortable with folks from countries beyond U.S. borders. Inspired by my many

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<sup>18</sup> By “international person” I mean one who has lived, worked, or studied abroad but who is not necessarily doing so currently. Additionally, I believe this includes those persons who take great interest in and feel it important to see, to think, and to live life globally – which does not necessitate, in my view, living abroad.

<sup>19</sup> While the role of researcher limited my capacity for developing truly close relationships with Horace internationals, I constantly thought about my own friends and the value of genuine and deep cross-cultural connections because the pseudonyms I gave each of these students are in fact the names of international student friends I made while in Syracuse.

international friendships and experiences, I have taken every opportunity possible to go abroad, either for pleasure or for work, and I plan to do so for as long as I am able.

That I grew up in a German-American house; have been to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Central America, and the Caribbean; have lived and worked in Mongolia for two years; and have also worked in the Syracuse University international student center most often favorably affects how international students relate with me. In many cases, my background, interests, and aspirations highlight the fact that I desire and possess first-hand knowledge about the wider world beyond the U.S. (which is often seen as insular and ignorant of the rest of the world). My chosen field of studies of international education is also often received well among international people and students because my first-hand knowledge is supported by a familiarity with academic and scholarly knowledge about the world and its inherent complexities and contradictions. I feel very fortunate, then, that this biography complicates and generally adds positively to my American-ness and, in the case of this dissertation, my relationships with internationals at Horace College.

In very real ways, then, I have also had to be aware how I might, subconsciously, be searching for myself in this study, a reality in which, as Luttrell (2000) cautions, I run the risk of losing or subsuming the voices and perspectives of my participants. That is, I have heard other doctoral candidates talk about how they see themselves in their research and that their dissertations are an amalgamation of their personal histories and scholarly interests. I am no different. This is because I see a bit of myself in my international informants. Though I did not pursue four-year academic study abroad, I did live and learn in another country for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer. I know, for instance, then, what it is like to move abroad, to have to figure out how and who to be in a country and culture unlike my own, and how to deal with being distant from family and friends for an extended period of time. I have



experienced the trials and triumphs of using a new language, of making friends with people who look, think, and act in many ways differently from me, and of experiencing growth and learning about my self, my life, and my home country from being elsewhere. And yet, I know that I am very much not like my international informants.

My social location as a White, middle class American male PhD Candidate researcher variously distinguishes me from many of the Horace College international students in my study. I am privileged and I benefit from the privileges of this social location. I grew in a country that more than a few of these students dreamed of one day studying in because they view the U.S. as a “land of opportunity” or the country with “the world’s best universities.” I am a native English speaker, a form of currency at a premium today around the globe and my visa status does not inhibit or, in many cases, prohibit me from finding a job in the U.S. Additionally, the color of my skin does not mark me as Other in the U.S. as it does for many Horace internationals. Rather, it affords me the privilege of “looking like an American,” which is to say that, for some of my participants, being White is more desirable than being Black or Latino in the U.S. because it is the color of the “more dominant group.” I do not have to worry that the shade of my skin color suggests I am of an undesirable socioeconomic status. Being middle class, I do not have the same concerns that many of my international participants do making ends meet while they seek to complete their degrees at Horace. But conversely, international students of wealth might have concerns about making friends with other internationals who are not well off and who might see themselves or their rich counterparts not as “international students” but as “Americanized” students, a moniker applied with more than a tinge of resentment. Finally, I am among the world’s sliver of people studying at the highest level of tertiary education at one of those prestigious American universities, who, for a year, dropped in to conduct a study about other people,

seemingly, very much unlike myself in order to earn a PhD, a degree many of my participants aspire to attain one day. Indeed, all these social locations matter.

In addition, I am a professional seeking to do right by this work. I am an international educator and practitioner, and I firmly believe in, as Coate and Rathnayake (2012) advocate, the need for care, responsibility, and cosmopolitanism as a guiding ethic for all of higher education and for all of its students, faculty, and staff. And like the institution where I am conducting my study, the cornerstones of my ethical foundations are at the intersections of social justice, criticality, and the pursuit of knowledge for the purpose of making this world a better place for everyone, particularly those who are disadvantaged and marginalized. I am approaching this dissertation using important and critical theories, responsible and sensitive methodologies, and the guiding belief that a study of this kind matters not only to myself but to the international student population with whom I have collaborated and the millions unnamed as well as to the countless cadre of international educators and practitioners who support and advocate for internationals. Indeed, my research agenda to present a different kind of exploration of the international student experience is also entangled with this research.

Finally, an entanglement I must also certainly register is my capacity and my desire to learn, to think differently, and even to be proven wrong in what I think I know of myself as an international person and what I think I know of the international student experience. After all, this dissertation seeks the nuances, the contradictions, and all of the partial, shifting, and subjective truths that make up my participants' views of themselves and the realities of their experiences in the world of international study. I began this dissertation because I wanted to listen to and to share in these pages all of the many ways in which truth, reality, identity, and experience differ and I wanted to have the courage, the imagination, and

the willingness to be open to this world of difference, acknowledging, as Gargano (2009) argues, that we have not yet given space in scholarship for international students to share *their* voices and the complexity of *their* experiences.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I described the methods and procedures I used for the research I conducted for this dissertation. In addition, I explained the rationale for the use of qualitative research and case study, I gave background on the research site, Horace College, and I discussed how I collected and analyzed data. Finally, I explained my Cross-Cultural Research approach, the ways in which positionality and reflexivity shape this dissertation, and how my own social locations are entangled with the research.

Having introduced the dissertation in the first chapter (as well as outlined the theories that frame the study); discussed the literatures that put into critical perspective the scholarly contexts of international students, internationalization, and liberal arts colleges in the second chapter; and explained the methodological concerns in the third, I now shift to the exploration of my data and my interpretations of them in the following three chapters.

## Chapter IV: Internationalization, Diversity, and Inclusion at Horace College

One important constituency who should have a say in whether and how to pursue the initiatives proposed [about internationalization in relation to international students] is our international students themselves. In our workshop, we spent substantial time talking *about* them but no time talking *with* them.

- Horace College (2007, p. 15, author's emphasis)

### Introduction

In this first data chapter, I explore the relationships between Horace College's campus internationalization efforts, the campus-wide conversation about diversity, and the ways in which international students have and have not been included at the College. I begin by tracing the history of international student recruitment and campus inclusion. Next, I discuss how Horace College renewed its focus on international students in the mid-2000s through a campus internationalization campaign designed to enhance its already "distinctive" legacy and brand of internationalism. This emphasis on internationalization, I contend, laid the foundation for "international student friendliness" (ISF), the ISAO's holistic approach to welcoming and supporting internationals. ISF is, in many ways, concerned with ensuring that international diversity is recognized and appreciated, a fact that cannot be separated from Horace's ongoing conversations about diversity, more broadly understood, on campus. In the next section, then, I explore how the many diversity town hall meetings and "listening sessions" impacted campus culture – with particular focus on perceptions of international students – during the 2013-14 school year. This discussion necessarily leads me to contextualizing the broader terrain of diversity and inclusion, namely how internationals experience and perceive race, religion, sexuality, and socioeconomic status on the Horace College campus. Having considered diversity and inclusion from many vantage points, I return to the notion of international student friendliness by situating internationals' impressions of Horace College and the degree to which they feel the campus is "friendly"

and that people on campus adequately hear their concerns and recognize international diversity. Finally, I postulate, with the help of a professor's "thought experiment," a direction forward for Horace College.

### **Background on International Student Inclusion at Horace College**

Horace College has a long record of enrolling international students. The first international student to attend Horace was David Hitchcock, a young man from The Sandwich Islands with family ties to the region who was enrolled from 1850-51 (Hawaii, formerly The Sandwich Islands, did not become a state until 1959). In fact, before the turn of the twentieth century, Horace would have several students from abroad: one student from Holland, two from Belgium, one from Canada, eight from Japan, and one from Turkey. Two early notable attendees include Emma Amelia Bates (1880-83), a Canadian, who became the first woman to attend Horace College and Sen Joseph Katayama (BA 1892, MA 1896), from Japan, who drew worldwide attention as a Communist leader in his home country and drew the admiration and friendship of Joseph Stalin. Archival work, then, shows that from its earliest years as an institution Horace had international students in its ranks.

My work in the college's special collections also reveals that a college history project was conducted in 1985 in which data were gathered about international students and faculty at Horace.<sup>20</sup> According to the project's authors, there are certain trends regarding the individuals who came to Horace from around the world: "the Anatolia College in [Southern Europe<sup>21</sup>], Chinese students in the 1920's, the Japan exchange, and Japanese-American

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<sup>20</sup> The project documents international students and faculty who have been at Horace over the years. The professor and student team conducted a preliminary survey that included the collection of 5x8 index cards containing information for 555 international students and 40 international faculty members. The project includes, where available: name, country, years at Horace, major, post-Horace education, and other biographical information. Sources and directions for further research are also included.

<sup>21</sup> The tradition of students coming to Horace from Anatolia College continues to this day. In fact, one of the international alums in this study was the beneficiary of the annual scholarship given to one student to attend Horace. As Dmitri (Alum, M, S Europe) explained to me, "one of the Horace graduates was the President of my high school during World War II. So he was the person who, mm, kept the high school going even during the German occupation" (18Mar14). Dmitiri also

students from Hawaii. Quite a few of the students listed as foreign have parents listed as American embassy, military, or business people abroad.” While nothing else is noted, these trends suggest that Horace has long had a commitment and linkages to globally mobile persons. Among other notes, the authors disclose that the majority of international students attended the college for only one to two years and did not graduate, that a significant number went on to graduate school or transferred to another U.S. institution, and that a good number remained in the U.S. as permanent residents and acquired citizenship. Finally, the highest totals of internationals were enrolled in the 1980s, 1950s<sup>22</sup>, and 1960s, respectively (exact figures are not given).

It is perhaps no coincidence that in the 1980s there was a large number of international students at Horace College. In fact, this was a time of great change in the international character of the Horace student population. It was in 1977 that Pat, who at the time worked for the college in domestic admissions, agreed to take on the role of Horace’s first international student recruitment coordinator. Having read her proposal about the declining domestic student enrollment figures at Horace and nationwide and the potential posed by the burgeoning “foreign student market” that could “ensure that admissions needs are met,” the Horace President at the time decided that a new direction needed to be taken in student enrollment initiatives. Pat proposed increasing the international group on campus to “a minimum of 80 and a maximum of 120 (10%)” for the period of 1980-1990, to be followed by an institutional reassessment. Pat notes in the document to the President,

Horace College is particularly well-suited to supplementary enrollment of foreign students due to its history of success in having 20-40 foreign students on campus each year. Such a program will provide a means to enrich the opportunities for

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noted, “most of the [people from my country] that are here in Horace, they are from my high school. So we all kinda know each other. [*Laughs*]”

<sup>22</sup> However, a different document, a 1959 letter to the Coordinator of International Affairs Committee registering concern over the dwindling population and financial aid, puts the number of internationals at seven.

intercultural exchange for American students, faculty and the local community, and strengthening the standing of the College as an institution of international repute.

The foundations of Horace's program for greater international student inclusion are based, then, on the narratives discussed in Chapter II in which internationals are seen to be commodities as well as resources for Americans and for the institution.

Yet, the history – and, as I will show throughout this dissertation, the continuing story – of international student recruitment at Horace is more complicated. In her description of the kind of person needed for the international student recruitment coordinator, Pat includes that the individual not only be a quick and ongoing learner of global education within the complex and shifting dynamics of international politics, but, and crucially, also have “a marked degree of sensitivity to people whose cultures are different from our own and a genuine appreciation of those cultures.” Moreover, she explains,

[i]t is important to bear in mind that each foreign student is an individual presenting a unique combination of qualities and factors—family background, personality, goals—which must be taken into consideration along with his academic qualifications. The admissions officer should be aware of the fact that the admission of a particular foreign student is just the first in a series of events which will not only affect the personal life of the student but may later have significant implications for international relations; because the number of foreign students enrolled in American universities is constantly increasing, it is to be expected that many graduates of American universities will, after their return to their countries, assume roles of influence in the fields of education, politics, commerce and technology. It must, therefore, be remembered that the student's success, both academic and social, is of importance not only to the student himself but also to the college or university, and to the foreign country he represents.

The language used – and it is important that it is presented in full – shows just how Horace's approach has long been guided by a mixture of business, soft power, educational, and cosmopolitan goals (though, one could argue, in that order). Pat lays out in this early document a kind of roadmap by which she, and presumably those to follow her, should proceed when engaging in the recruitment of internationals.

In addition to an overseas recruiter, Pat also proposed that there be an on-campus advisor. As Pat put it in my interview with her, “I could bring kids in till the cows came home but if they weren’t well taken care of it would all be for naught” (Pat, 19Nov13). After taking a couple years to learn the ropes of international recruitment and searching for the right person to be its on-campus guide, the college hired in 1979 its first Foreign Student Advisor.<sup>23</sup> Before this time, it is worth noting, the responsibilities for unofficially advising the “international student group” (or “The Foreign Student Board,” within the Student Government Association, as documents in college archives reveal) on campus belonged to a faculty member (Doug, 4Dec13). Doug, who assumed this post in 1971 after his predecessor, the campus registrar, left the college, explained that he offered his services because “he was having a good time!” and because he “knew most of the international students anyway.” The job, he recalled, was not very difficult because the group consisted of only eight to 10 internationals<sup>24</sup> and five American students. One of his primary duties was to make sure that the group managed all of the soda machines on campus, the profits (\$2-3,000 per year) of which they were able to keep and use at their discretion. Doug explains that he was neither an immigration advisor nor an academic advisor to the international students but that from time to time, when it was necessary, he would seek out information for these students to ensure they were compliant with federal regulations. He would also assist with the planning and organizing of the annual food bazaar and the host family program.

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the individual chosen for this position came to Horace the year before from France as a Language Assistant in the French department. She was, according to Pat, married to a man in Horace’s admissions office. They stayed on at Horace until 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Doug recalled that during the 1970s there were “Indian students, African students, a few Europeans. Not many. Uuum, a few Iranian students. India, Pakistan. Um,...we didn’t have any Chinese students at that time [as they] couldn’t get out. ...We had Taiwanese students.” Claiming he couldn’t describe differences between internationals today, he told me that in the 70s “all but a few were well to do” and those “that were fairly well to do had certainly travelled a lot.” They also “spoke good English” and some had been “on exchange programs in high school in the States for a year. So they were acclimated.” In addition, most would “be the only person that spoke their native language” and academically there were “[g]ood students! Really good students!” – something he claimed he knows has not changed. “Once they’re here they’re really tops.”



While long organized under the auspices of The Foreign Student Board, according to Pat and agreed upon by administrators, the international student population was not supported in ways that were completely satisfactory to its planned growth. While they could feel good about proclamations (in undated documents found with others from the 1960s) from the group such as, “[c]ompared with the majority of colleges and universities in the United States, Horace’s program is an outstanding one. It attempts sincerely and honestly to respond to the needs and talents of students from foreign nations” or that “[t]he Horace College administration and student body cooperate to create the best possible conditions for the physical, emotional, and intellectual well being of those students from other countries,” the College felt the need to formalize its international student program in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In addition to the training of staff, standards for international admission were put into place: academic proficiency was to be equal with that of every other applicant; proficiency in English would be enforced through TOEFL and SAT scores; and financial support, if needed, would be allowed up to one-half of the tuition. Moreover, Pat’s proposal included considerations for thinking more broadly about “the special character of the Horace campus experience” and how this could be used in brochures to attract internationals. Pat suggests that the College “utiliz[e]” international students, who are a “campus resource,” for the benefit of all students as well as recognize that new programs could be created to showcase Horace’s “international character.” In addition, preemption of faculty’s “confusion and frustration” of having “to deal with special learning requirements” of international students, an increasingly growing group, could entail inclusion of faculty feedback as to how to best resolve “prospective problem areas.” Pat also proposed summer work opportunities with U.S. firms for students unable to travel home; the need to make decisions about admitting “controversial students” from communist countries; cooperation

with currently enrolled and soon-to-be alumni internationals to assist with recruitment; and thinking of faculty and students abroad as recruiting tools.

Among the priorities for Horace's new international student program, geographic diversity and special scholarships registered quite high for Pat and for the College, and, according to study participants, they continue to be distinguishing features of the institution's social justice mission. In her proposal, Pat argues for a policy "limiting the percent of the foreign student population to preserve heterogeneity of the student body." In our interview, Pat told me that to ensure that international diversity could be on par with that of the domestic student body, she knew they were "gonna have to provide some funding" because of the high cost of international study (Pat, 19Nov13). In addition to half-tuition scholarships for all eligible students, the College also instituted several full scholarships that covered tuition, room, board, and work opportunities. She recalled that there were a total of 13 full scholarships: three for students from Africa, three from China (at the time, Pat noted, almost no Chinese students could afford to study abroad), as well as those for individuals from Nepal, Asia more broadly, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Exchange programs with partial or full aid were also set up with Wasada University in Japan, Nanjing University in China, Costa Rica, and Russia. The goal, then, was to have full-pay students and students who needed aid from as many different countries as possible (Pat, 19Nov13).

Mary, one of Elizabeth's predecessors in the campus international office, also registered the importance of the relationship between geographic diversity and special scholarships. She explained that Horace has always "had a pretty much global focus" and that there are "no boundaries" or "favoritism" in recruitment of internationals (Mary, 5Dec13). She explained that Horace took some "risks" in the 1980s and 90s with special

scholarships, notably from South Africa and Afghanistan, by providing for “students who, because of politics or economic upheaval in their, in their home countries, couldn’t get the, um, the formal educational program that would prepare them for Horace, but we took a risk anyway.” She explained that during the Cold War period at a time when anti-Communist sentiments were at their highest, Horace also engaged in an exchange program to bring eight students from a school in Leningrad. Reaction on campus was telling: “they got *huge* attention. ...*Huge*. I was getting calls from every school saying, ‘We want them in our classrooms. We can wait to meet them.’” She explained further that she

thought that was pretty amazing, that we were so willing to embrace these, um, “Communists” that we had grown up to believe were our enemies. And we were so quick to make that leap to: “Wait a minute. They’re citizens of the world and so are we and we can learn from each other and isn’t it so great that they’re here? So they can come right into our classroom.”

While Horace has long had great relationships with its international students, and those who are already “prepared,” successful, and “promising,” she told me, the kind of “special attention” to students in need and from controversial countries “is amazing and, and something that, that Horace has made a commitment to as a part of its larger mission.”

Today, this commitment to geographic diversity and financial accessibility is a key component to Horace College’s philosophy for international student recruitment and admissions. In terms of financial aid, Nik, the current Coordinator of International Recruitment, told me that Horace is on a path to “meeting full-need” for internationals,<sup>25</sup> something the College’s peer schools have moved to over the last decade: “Uh, regardless of their need we’d like to try to be able to bring them and make it possible. Um, we haven’t gone all the way ever. We’ve always been more generous than most schools.” As it relates to

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<sup>25</sup> Horace College has a need-blind admissions policy for domestic students but a ‘need aware’ policy for internationals. The sustainability of need-blind admissions has been a source of great controversy and contention nationwide and at Horace in recent years (Edwards, 2012; Kiley, 2012; PRNewswire, 2013). For international students, the fact that Horace is not ‘need-blind’ in its international admissions is also a current tension. I discuss this further below.

diversity, Nik sees a diverse classroom as a staple of liberal arts education. In an international economics or U.S. foreign policy course, for example, an all White classroom “is gonna have sort of the same references and frameworks” about, say, U.S.-Libya relations. However,

[i]f you have a kid from Libya or from North Africa or a Muslim, [*Chuckles*] at least, in the class, uh, and, you know, more perspectives, then obviously the, it’s gonna be a better quality of education. So, any kind of diversity, even the international diversity of course, uh, contributes to, you know, people being able to learn at a higher level, and also to un-learn [*Chuckles*] things [*Chuckles*] about race and culture and politics that they thought they knew.

At Horace, the consensus about the international student population among the college’s professionals is that it is imperative to be able to continue the legacies of internationalism and diversity and to be able to provide an enriching and fulfilling undergraduate experience for all of its students. Setting aside the fact that Nik’s comments above make clear that internationals provide a useful resource for the domestic (and White) student body, my interviews revealed a passion and a commitment among the international recruiters and advisors with whom I spoke to ensure that the college be a robustly globally diverse educational space where students can benefit from international study opportunities where they otherwise might not have been able. Horace’s international foundations, like its people, then, are, on the one hand, purposeful, responsible, and caring, and are, on the other hand, susceptible to and reify troubling narratives about internationals. As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, this mixture has, and likely will continue to have, particular implications for international students.

### **A Renewed Emphasis on Campus Internationalization**

In addition to the historical underpinnings of international student inclusion on campus, more recent moves to make the most of Horace’s global character have helped to give shape to the present day context for internationals. Nearly a decade before I began this study, Horace College set out to reassess and transform its campus internationalization

program. College leaders, building on the legacy of internationalism discussed above and the foundations of the recently established International Studies Center (ISC), the College's faculty-run center for global engagement, committed the campus to a several years-long campaign to reinvest in and transform Horace's international profile and initiatives.

In the fall of 2006, Horace College began a campus wide assessment program funded by ACE (The American Council on Education) to examine its internationalization efforts. The first step was to invite a three-person team from a nearby in-state public university whose goals included exploring the value of having international students on campus, what value these students themselves placed on being at Horace, and the value of study abroad and faculty experiences abroad. In their final report, the team found, "there is no question that the College's efforts are valued and that these efforts provide for an important dimension of the Horace experience for those associated with the college but also for the larger community off campus" (Benjamin et al, 2006, p. 4-5). The report, based on focus group data and absent any informant voices, focuses mainly on the adjustment problems of international students (international student perspective), the usefulness of internationals for American students (domestic student perspective), and the usefulness of and challenges presented by international students for professors (faculty perspective). In addition, the report lauds learning opportunities between international and American students outside of the classroom by finding that: "the presence of a substantial number of international students" enables interactions at language tables (p. 17); campus clubs and organizations are a great place for mixing of students; domestics and internationals grow together as roommates; respect and openness is increased by diverse and international perspectives on the world; and campus dialogues, study sessions, joint research projects, and time together in the dining hall bring students closer together. The report finds that the host family program

and community tutoring programs in local K-12 schools are beneficial. Finally, the authors note that study abroad is a useful way for American students to “understand and articulate some of the challenges” faced by their international counterparts (p. 20). Ultimately, and similarly to Eland and Thomas (2013), the consultants find that the “presence” and contributions of internationals are invaluable at Horace and that “[i]n spite of [their] challenges the international students expressed great satisfaction with their education at the College” (p. 10).

In the follow-up report the next fall, *Articulating the Value-Added by International Students on the Liberal Arts Campus (2007)*, Horace’s Associate Dean and several other staff and faculty contributors elaborate on the work conducted in a summer 2007 workshop focused on what they learned from the university consultants about “an important but little-examined aspect of the internationalization of Horace College: the presence of an internationally diverse study body on our campus” (p. 1). Conceding that they should no longer take for granted the College’s international character, the Associate Dean and lead author notes that Horace must be more strategic in their campus and curriculum initiatives. Unlike the more adjustment paradigm-minded (and mostly glowing) outside assessment provided by the large school consultant group, the final report produced by the Horace authors (with feedback given by summer workshop participants) demonstrates a more genuinely cosmopolitan tenor, one consistent with the philosophical prescriptions of Coate and Rathnayake (2012) advocated for in this dissertation in the first chapter.

Among the many campus-wide proposals (each section is individually authored by staff or faculty members) offered by the workshop committee in this document, a new vision for international student recruitment is outlined. Stating that the College lacked a recruitment strategy beyond increasing numbers of Indian and Chinese students (and fearing

“a geographic imbalance” of primarily Asian students and too few from elsewhere) the primary author makes several recommendations: a 16% international student target goal for the student body, greater discipline diversity in internationals’ stated interests, seeking out and drawing in students interested the liberal arts mission, greater global diversity and the pursuit of at least two students per country to build “small ‘posse[s]” able to support one another (p. 5), an increase in full-tuition scholarships to allow for greater socioeconomic diversity, additional funding to be available for students to travel home at least once and for domestic students to travel to internationals’ homes, and the expansion of domestic recruitment efforts to match all campus diversification goals. Finally, and crucially, the authors remind colleagues who will read this report: “[w]e should consider our substantial number of international students not only as contributors to Americans learning about the world” (p. 5) because the Horace liberal arts experience is a fundamentally interactional education in which all students, by virtue of being together on the Horace campus and in Horace classrooms, are enriched and internationalize each other. This, the contention goes, is “a justification for broadening the number of countries from which our students come” (p. 6).

While the spirit of focused self-inspection and substantive reinvigoration drive *Articulating the Value-Added by International Students on the Liberal Arts Campus*, the report’s authors also make an important concession that helps to locate international students within this early internationalization context. In the section entitled “Configuring Administrative Structures,” the primary author expresses surprise in how relatively unknown the then-director of the ISAO is to faculty (with the exception of language departments) around campus and the detriment that this disconnect has for international students academically and socially because of professors’ unfamiliarity with these students’ “unique pressures” (p.

13). Indeed, this disconnect is also a fact noted by Elizabeth, who told me that she experienced a similar gap in faculty awareness when she first arrived in 2008:

I remember that, uh, [the] dean of faculty, I was at a planning meeting about, it was about New Student Orientation. And she turned to me and I, and I introduced myself and she said, “Oh, I didn’t even know that office existed.” [*Laughs*] And it kinda threw me. And I was, “What do you mean you didn’t know? How could you not know th-, this office existed?” (Elizabeth, 5Dec13).

How exactly international students, and the office on campus that serves them, fit into renewed efforts of campus internationalization, Elizabeth shared, was – and is – not always so clear. Elizabeth noted that her predecessor was “invited in at the last minute” to the summer workshop (composed of mostly faculty) and that “it felt kinda like it wasn’t even on the radar” that it would be “appropriate” for the director of the ISAO to be there. She further explained that during that time “we were trying so hard to have an egalitarian view” about diversity and international student inclusion “that we were forgetting that [internationals] were unique and had unique needs [*Laughing*] and contributions to make!”

In the closing of the report, the authors turn to how the specific suggestions from the workshop might be implemented, noting that the committee’s proposals would be distributed around campus to be discussed and be responded to.<sup>26</sup> While it seems that the committee was privy to the focus group data collected by the university consultants hired by the College, the authors admit that they also need the input of internationals to determine “whether and how to pursue the initiatives proposed” (p. 15). They explain, “[i]n our workshop, we spent substantial time talking *about* them but no time talking *with* them” (p. 15, author’s emphasis). The significance of this statement, I argue, cannot be overstated. Indeed, when considering the time, energy, and financial resources (almost \$10,000 in grants; \$6,000

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<sup>26</sup> The group suggests that what they learned would be used to conference about with peer institutions, that future workshops on campus internationalization would be worthwhile, and that the first year seminar course is a site for developing early relationships with international students. I did not learn, however, how the wider Horace community responded to the report or the internationalization program.



for the consultants) invested in the internationalization campaign one can see that internationals were a top priority for Horace administrators, faculty, and staff. However, like the oversight of the late inclusion of the then-ISAO director, the College still had work to do if it was to be more fully inclusive of international student voices and these students' values and needs (Gargano, 2012). Mindful of this fact, the report's authors suggest that the Student Group for Internationalization<sup>27</sup> newly formed by the ISC might serve as an advisory group to account for student perspectives. Moreover, in the short term, the transition in directorship of the ISAO to Elizabeth in spring 2008 would give Horace, once again, a renewed emphasis on international students, both within and separate from the campus internationalization framework.

In the official response from the President's Internationalization Taskforce in the spring of 2008, a distinctive kind of internationalism at Horace, rooted in the liberal arts and its inherent criticality of academic investigation, is articulated. The taskforce authors explain that from the internationalization campaign "[a] vision for the future has emerged that allows us to imagine a rigorous and enlightening global education at Horace" that begins in the first year and develops over the course of their time at the College (pp. 1-2). As opposed to mere "'exposure' to cultural difference," students at Horace "interact with the world through well-informed, sensitive, and active intellectual work" (p. 2). The highest objective, they write, "is to remove obstacles" of every kind that impede greater connections and understanding between faculty, staff, and students, which includes ensuring that international students are able to afford a Horace education. In addition to developing and expanding its global relationships with universities and programs abroad, bringing more foreign scholars to

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<sup>27</sup> According email correspondence with Amardo, the former ISC director, this group "only existed for a year and had about 4 students actively involved. It didn't seem to be the right format (long term) for involving students in CIS work" (20 August 2014).

campus, and supporting more students and faculty to study and do research abroad, the taskforce calls for “ensuring that the College attracts talented and diverse international students” by increasing funds (from 75-85% of demonstrated need<sup>28</sup>) to enable adherence to a need-blind policy (to meet full demonstrated need) for admissions<sup>29</sup> as well as devoting additional resources to special scholarships to “guarantee geographical diversity” in the student population (p. 5). In important ways, then, Horace College affirms continued commitment to the pathways initiated by Pat and her colleagues in the late 1970s. And, of course, the entire internationalization program is a testament to a legacy of international student inclusion first begun in 1850.

Today, international students continue to be a central and valued component of internationalization. There is perhaps no clearer indication of this than the fact that Horace’s international population continues to increase every school year.<sup>30</sup> As I was wrapping up data collection for this study in the spring of 2014, excitement and perhaps some trepidation about how big the next year’s incoming class might be were palpable. As Nik put it earlier in the year, “[w]e have been deluged with a record-shatter number of international applications. We broke a record last year with 1535 and this year got 1932 and counting!” (personal communication, 22 January 2014). When all was said and done, 1,937 internationals had applied to Horace and the new class was 19 students larger than in fall 2013 (18% of the freshman class). All of this, Nik explained, was in line with Horace’s goals for international student enrollment: “[the] [s]trategic goal is 14-18% of each entering class should be non-US citizens, no more than a 1/3 of that group can be from any one country, brought in at no

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<sup>28</sup> As noted above by Nik, this is considerably higher than most institutions nationwide but not on par with many of Horace’s peers.

<sup>29</sup> As noted above by Nik, this has not yet happened but very soon the need-blind policy may be extended to international students as it is with domestic students.

<sup>30</sup> As discussed in Chapter II, statistical data presentations of international student demographics is useful for context; though, alone this kind of representation of internationals works in problematic ways to commodify and homogenize these students (Gargano, 2009, 2012; Kell and Vogel, 2008).

more than a 50% discount rate<sup>31</sup> (using NCUBO standard<sup>32</sup>)” (Nik, personal communication, 13 March 2014). For comparison, the following chart shows the growth of the international population since 2000-01:

Year	Enrollment	Total %
2000-01	124	9.3%
2001-02	149	10%
2002-03	154	10.1%
2003-04	165	10.6%
2004-05	164	10.4%
2005-06	157	9.9%
2006-07	186	11.2%
2007-08	183	10.9%
2008-09	177	10.5%
2009-10	194	11.7%
2010-11	192	11.3%
2011-12	191	11.3%
2012-13	198	12%
2013-14	207	13%
2014-15	226	15%

These figures clearly demonstrate Horace College’s commitment to ensuring that the campus has a large international student group. If the College’s good fortune of rising enrollments continues, it could mean that next year, after only 15 short years, the population will have doubled in size.<sup>33</sup> Behind these statistics, funding for recruitment is also robust. Unlike when Pat began formal international recruitment in the early 1980s and “money wasn’t an issue” and no one “fussed at me about budget” (Pat, 19Nov13), today Horace

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<sup>31</sup> According to one administrator critical of this goal with whom I spoke, this is “an embarrassing discount rate. We have a higher discount rate than any of our peers. And Admission has tried and tried to change that, and with all their efforts, in the last year, year and a half, didn’t work! So! I don’t know what that means for our international population. I think it does mean we’ll continue to go with the pretty wealthy.”

<sup>32</sup> National Association of College and University Business Officers. See [http://www.nacubo.org/Business\\_Officer\\_Magazine/Business\\_Officer\\_Plus/Online\\_Articles/Tuition\\_Discount\\_Metrics.html](http://www.nacubo.org/Business_Officer_Magazine/Business_Officer_Plus/Online_Articles/Tuition_Discount_Metrics.html).

<sup>33</sup> It is important to note that this increase of international students is not unique to Horace College. As discussed in the previous chapter, HEIs around the country have been feverishly growing their international student populations, particularly today from China (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014; Abelman and Kang, 2014).

devotes \$25,000 per year to find talented and skilled internationals overseas (Nik, personal communication, 13 March 2014).<sup>34</sup>

This remarkable growth, however, is not without Elizabeth's cautioned guidance. In a 2012 open letter to leaders on campus, she implores the College's decision makers eager to continue increasing international enrollment to consider three important points. First, she writes, it is necessary to clarify the little mentioned fact that Horace's purported commitment to need-blind admissions and to meeting the full demonstrated need of its students does not apply to internationals. Second, she points out that Horace's "core values of *social justice* and *internationalization*" should mean "[o]ur legacy of supporting high achieving students from developing nations (promising students with high financial need) should be tightly coupled with both of these aspects of our institutional mission" (author's emphasis). Finally, she stresses that proposed increases in the international population should not be "based on the perception that we could easily increase the number of low need (full pay) students from abroad, to help lower the overall discount rate and earn additional revenue for the College." What is needed, rather than bringing in, predominantly, students from China, India, and South Korea is greater geographic diversity (especially since, when this letter was written, 56% of the Horace international population was from Asia and 40% of Asians were from China, India, and South Korea). Elizabeth points out that geographic diversity "impacts social and academic life, particularly on a small, residential campus" because students may "self-segregate" and/or migrate to particular fields of study such as math or economics (as 41 of 102 declared students had done). In addition to attention to geographic distribution, the College, she explains, should also be focused on ensuring that these students will be adequately supported once they arrive (Ozturgut and Murphy, 2009; Peterson et al, 1999;

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<sup>34</sup> I was not, however, privy to information regarding funding specifically for retention of internationals.

Sawir et al, 2008). More students, she explains, “will have a direct impact” on the ISAO’s staffing, budgets, and programming efforts, as well as the operations of other offices around campus who support internationals. Increasing the international population, while exciting, must be done carefully and responsibly (Coate, 2009; Coate and Rathnayake, 2012).

Moreover, American students I spoke with suggested that Horace’s “institutional identity<sup>35</sup>” campaign, its “re-branding of sorts,” has implications for international students and the growing international population. As Macy (Jr, F, NY) told the group, Horace not only has “the funds to go abroad and recruit” internationals, but it has a booming Chinese applicant pool that makes this easy (FG #1s, 10Apr14). She explained, “Horace wants diversity, and every school wants diversity, and that’s why international students are here.”

When I asked the group what role international students play at Horace, I was told:

April (Sr, F, WI/CA): We put them in our brochures. [*Laughter all around*] That was pretty cold.

[*At the same time; laughter all around*] Macy: No, but it’s true! Mona (Sr, F, CA): It’s true!  
Macy: It’s totally true!

April: [*Chuckling*] Very actively. Yeah.

Macy: They’re statistics for us.

And beyond being useful for brochures or being statistics, Macy continued,

[a]nd I think right now like diversity is this hot button issue. Um, or like that’s the selling point. And if you say, you know, like “look at all the international students we have.” Like, you know, people come here and they say like, “wow, if I go to Horace I’m gonna meet from people China [Mona: Mm.] cuz like a thousand people applied! Like wow! You know, I’m gonna get that!” Um, and it’s hard not to – I think knowing how hard our school is trying to build ourselves up as this elite institution

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<sup>35</sup> Horace College recently hired a consultant group out of Atlanta to learn how to best market itself. Horace faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents were interviewed to learn about Horace and its college culture. In its 58-page Review and Reflection Paper to the Horace community, there are two mentions made to internationals: first, the College “energetically recruits international students” and it “...strives to ensure that they stay here,” and second, how the consultants “heard that need-blind doesn’t pertain to international students.” Interestingly, on a separate note, a student in the last pages of the document expresses confusion over why Horace needed to hire consultants in the first place because Horacians themselves “can give the advice that people need about presenting Horace to the public.” See Crane MetaMarketing Ltd. (2014).

that's really appealing to American students – it's hard to assume that that's not part of the agenda.

Mona expanded this idea, suggesting that Horace must compete with universities and with Ivy League institutions and the international opportunities – having international students on campus or being able to study abroad – is “very appealing” to domestic students. For her part, Lucy (Sr, F, NY) did not really agree about internationals being useful for brochures or that they are just statistics, but added that there is “value of having international students here [at Horace].” Internationals benefit by being able to apply and “get in” and American students get to have “people with different perspectives” in classroom settings. In a shift in her position, Macy shared that given its “commitment to social justice,” which has a lot to do with the international sphere, it makes sense that Horace College is also committed to bringing international students to campus.

As already noted, Horace College is one of a cadre of selective, or elite, liberal arts colleges in the United States. As such, Horace is compelled, and has the privileges, to compete as an elite educational institution. The “institutional identity” campaign, led by hired consultants, is an example of institution shaping today at Horace. Indeed, as one administrator told me, “...they're hiring consultants, left and right,” instead of, this individual lamented, listening to on-campus constituencies about how to promote the College and improve campus life (see footnote above). Over the last several years, the administrator shared, “we've flown teams of people to Swarthmore, and other places that we'd like to be when we grow up,” which is counterintuitive because “we already have a niche market. Um, short of moving the entire college to the east coast, we will not be able to compete, in some areas.” And as previously discussed, internationalizing one's institution is part of a strategy by many HEIs to elevate prestige and rankings. The pressures to compete in the global knowledge economy and to sustain institutional viability are concerns for all

HEIs, Horace College included. The key for Horace will be ensuring that its leadership and their strategic planning are guided by the College's "commitment to social justice," as Macy insists, and not a primarily consultant-packaged usage of the Horace mission, large endowment, modern resources, and its highly qualified faculty and students (Altbach and Salmi, 2011; Volkwein and Sweitzer, 2006), a few of the makings of/aspirations to prestige and high rankings. And more to the point here, Horace should be wary of how and why it recruits international students as well as what impressions the recruitment of so many internationals gives those on and off campus about Horace's aspirations for/to keep elite status.

Campus internationalization is an ongoing process at Horace and its implications for international students have developed since the initial 2006 ACE-funded program that spurred the campus's renewed focus to its international character.<sup>36</sup> With the growth of the international population, however, there exists a familiar internationalization narrative about the role that these students play on campus. Amardo, a French professor, former director of the ISC, and one of the campus' more outspoken champions of internationalization, aptly explains – and is caught a bit himself by the idea – a recurring theme I discovered at Horace: internationals are and are not a resource for the benefit of, namely, domestic students. In our interview, he shared,

the education provided by international students is not just the perspective they provide in classroom discussion, but also the perspectives they provide wi-, in the dorms, in, in the clubs and organizations that they belong to, um, in the plays that they try out for. Because they essentially, um, are mixed with everyone else, and therefore people get to know them and have discussions with them that are far

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<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting that Horace has once again been selected among applicants worldwide (though mostly in the U.S.) to participate in a program coordinated by ACE. Horace is a member (and the only liberal arts college) of the 12<sup>th</sup> ACE Internationalization Laboratory Cohort (2014-16) that "provides institutions with customized guidance and insight as they review their internationalization goals and develop strategic plans" (<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/ACE-Internationalization-Laboratory.aspx>). Elizabeth notes this will provide Horace once again the opportunity to have campus wide conversations about multiple internationalization areas, including international students. Unlike other institutions that have perhaps less developed internationalization programs than Horace this ACE program, she explained to me over the phone, will enable her and other key stakeholders on campus to regroup and become aware of current contexts.

different and perhaps even more important than discussions that they might have in the classroom. So I think that international students, um, [5 *second pause*] I. It's important not to, of course, uh, uh, [6 *second pause*] instrumentalize international students, to say that their role at Horace is simply to educate the domestic students. That's not the case at all. Um, but in terms of internationalization, I think that these students *do* provide a vital perspective ... simply because they're 18, 19-year olds who are living the same things that other people are living. They're going to the same classes. They're eating the same food in the dining hall. And, um, they're perspective is different.

I argue that Amardo's pause and then insistence that it is important not to instrumentalize (read: make a resource or commodity of) internationals is his mid-thought correction of a tendency that many people, not just those at Horace, have in which they take for granted the idea that international students as a component of internationalization implies that these students are lucky to be on U.S. campuses and therefore necessarily or naturally provide a service in return for this generosity. While it is true that every international student has a perspective different from her/his classmates, internationalization might be better served by an approach in which international difference is not only valued but in which internationals feel valued for their differences and the campus is a better place because of this positive feeling. Another of Horace's internationalization champions, Elizabeth, proposes "international student friendliness" as a way to do just this.

### **An "International Student Friendly" Place**

Internationalization also takes shape in important ways at Horace today in the ISAO's highly visible, influential, and integrated role on campus. This has much to do with Elizabeth's belief that the ISAO is, while not required to be so, "a partner in campus internationalization efforts ... [and] with other areas on campus that are thinking more broadly about internationalism or diversity" (Elizabeth, 5Dec13). She contended that it is important "when we think about campus internationalization [that] the presence of international students is a big piece of that puzzle." Elizabeth noted, "I am always resistant



to the idea that campus internationalization is limited to, um, study abroad or faculty development around international curriculum.” And so, if Horace is “going to be an international student friendly place,” she explained, “[the unique experiences and needs of internationals have] to be on everybody’s radar that it matters.”

“International student friendliness” (ISF), a term she coined and used often in my two interviews with her, is Elizabeth’s way of putting campus internationalization for internationals into practical application with necessarily broad buy-in from offices and departments across campus. The result should be – and Elizabeth has been working on this since she came to Horace – that support networks for international students exist in every corner of the College and that the students’ experience is as seamless for these students as it is for Americans. ISF is, in other words, “mak[ing] their needs or their desires come to fruition because it’s a part of the fabric of the place” (Elizabeth, 5Dec13). She further explained that ISF means that internationals

know where to go for funding. [Me: Uh huh.] They know there’s some funding there and, um, will get some guidance on how to use it wisely and what to do if something goes wrong. And that they know how to reserve the multicultural kitchen easily without having to plan three weeks in advance. Um, and that they. That, that’s the social stuff. But, I mean, even in the classroom. That they know that their advisors, um, might be. There might, advisors might be more attuned to the fact that they’re coming to a learning environment where class participation wasn’t the norm. And so, when they’re shy in a classroom the professor doesn’t immediately write them off as stupid or write them off as, um, not caring, but might be a little more likely to pull them in and say, you know, “Can I help you better at this?” Um, I think if you’re an international student friendly place you think of the unique things that might either give them a heads-up or, or a leg up or a leg down. Right? Then, then you say, “How do we make sure that the things that are going to be hard for them can be enabled and facilitated more readily? And the things they’re really good at can give back, can be encouraged” (Elizabeth, 5Dec13).

For Elizabeth, then, international student friendliness is an issue of “equity,” one in which difference is “visible,” valued, and respected on the Horace campus and all members of the

college community feel empowered to be themselves and have access to all that Horace has to offer.<sup>37</sup>

Elizabeth described examples of her colleagues' receptivity to ISF and the ways in which they have indeed become the ISAO's partners in supporting international students, in an effort, in part, to create a campus culture in which, as Lynn put it, the ISAO is not "a one-stop shop" for all things international (Lynn, 3Dec13). With student payroll, the ISAO created stations at the Pre-Orientation for International Students (POFIS) for students to more easily facilitate the process of filling out and filing necessary paperwork for campus employment. In turn, this has helped with these students' tax compliance. The religious life center sees Diwali and other international faith-based holidays and celebrations as a part of their role in supporting international students and so helps students to plan, coordinate, and manage these events. The health center helps to ensure that if internationals waive the Horace health insurance that their home plans meet standards in the United States. The career center, Elizabeth told me, has also been an important ally, and they keenly recognize that international students have unique needs. This office has helped internationals make OPT, CPT, and summer internships more accessible, both during POFIS and during individual appointments. The examples abound.

One area in which Elizabeth noted the ISAO has "maybe struggled the most" is with the faculty; however, more recently going to department meetings and talking about how academic and non-academic issues may uniquely affect internationals has gained a lot of traction for international student friendliness at Horace. And, for the first time, after several years of initiating the contact, the ISAO has been invited to participate in the faculty summer

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<sup>37</sup> See the section "An 'International Student Friendly' Place, Revisited" below for students' comments about and praise of how the ISAO has made their lives at Horace easier and more hospitable.

training for the first year seminar<sup>38</sup> (in which all freshman are required to enroll). What is most important in this partnership, she explained, is impacting not the curriculum, which she noted is the purview of the ISC (though, Elizabeth does attend ISC meetings), but rather faculty-to-student advising<sup>39</sup>, which is a vital relationship for all Horace students because of the open curriculum model of liberal arts education practiced at the College. The goal is to make sure that professors understand the ways in which having an F-1 visa has different rewards and challenges, and how this status impacts, for example, academic honesty issues, internships, and post-graduation expectations and plans.<sup>40</sup> The ISAO, then, has worked hard to develop stronger connections with faculty, which as one staff member on campus noted, has much to do with breaking down what some believe is “a definite hierarchy” of professor superiority at Horace in which “faculty don’t really communicate...with administrators or staff.” It has been Elizabeth’s efforts to make the ISAO more visible, aided by her position as an Associate Dean and the groundwork of meeting with and educating faculty about international students’ needs, that have helped break down the kind of longstanding barriers with which Elizabeth’s predecessor struggled.

Amidst the ISAO’s challenges, it is Elizabeth’s belief that institutions that recruit and enroll internationals should consider the ways in which they are able to holistically provide “international student friendliness” to their incoming and already matriculated students from abroad. On the Horace campus, she explained, international students are not merely present; they are central to the college’s internationalization efforts and to its liberal arts mission (Edwards, 2012). While her position echoes in many ways scholars who claim that liberal arts colleges are especially adept in the realm of international studies and engagement, her claim

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<sup>38</sup> See the ISAO’s letter to First Year Seminar faculty and “Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching” handout below in Appendix III on page 344.

<sup>39</sup> See the ISAO’s “Advising International Students” handout below in Appendix IV on page 346.

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix V on page 348 for a brief discussion about internationals’ perceptions of their advisors.

is well beyond the reach of the literature on the “international liberal arts colleges” (Marden and Engerman, 1992), as it focuses on international students and the ways in which an integrated and comprehensive approach is necessary for the support of and satisfaction among these students. Elizabeth’s approach to internationalization, prioritizing the implementation of intentional and mindful strategies of “friendliness” across the campus and for the entirety of every international student’s experience, though, is not necessarily a new idea among international educators. This approach, however, is not readily achievable in today’s mostly economically driven internationalized higher education climate where the focus is on recruitment rather than post-enrollment programming and on individualized learning instead of community learning (Altbach, et al, 2002; Ozturgut and Murphy, 2009; Peterson, et al, 1999). Moreover, international student friendliness is in many ways concerned with recognizing and normalizing international diversity on campus, making it a partner to other campus efforts seeking to improve the quality of life for students on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.

### **Listening to the Horace Community about Diversity and Campus Inclusion**

As I learned during the nine months I was regularly on campus, Horace College is the kind of place where difficult and controversial subjects occurring on campus are discussed openly and at public venues. The administration, faculty, staff, and the student body engage one another in conversations, debates, and even town halls when problems and/or concerns lay within the College’s walls that merit serious and involved attention. While I had planned to explore the complex terrain of international diversity at Horace, unplanned in the design of my dissertation research were opportunities to attend public events exploring the topic of diversity, broadly, and the day-to-day implications and possibilities this topic held for internationals. Amidst campus-wide focus to the subject of

diversity, it became clear to me that it was ever more important now to ask international students how they perceived diversity at Horace as well as how they perceived themselves within the campus context of diversity. And while the topic was already salient for my participants and openly discussed by them in interviews and focus groups, more than anything else the four campus-wide town hall sessions and the one “listening session<sup>41</sup>” for internationals with the college’s President provided unique inroads to the topics of diversity and campus inclusion (matters intimately intertwined with internationalization and ISF) at Horace for international students. In what follows, I discuss the concerns most often registered by my informants. First, though, I briefly present a wider picture of the campus climate that led to the tensions and frustrations to which I was a witness.

### *Discussing Diversity Concerns at Horace College*

*The College Colors* student newspaper explains about the first town hall meeting:

“[f]acing growing student discontent about the College’s willingness to address diversity, [the Horace President] held several listening sessions last year with concerned students before agreeing to hold a ‘Town Hall’” (Yang, 28 February 2014). And it was not only the students who were feeling concerned about the state of diversity and inclusion at Horace. Faculty and staff were also actively engaged participants in the town hall meetings. Central to the organized events focusing on diversity was an academic and critically guided character, the kind of which Horacians believe is inherent to all dimensions of campus life. To this end, the comments and questions of those who stood and spoke during town hall sessions were almost always direct and were, in more than one case, emotionally charged. Moreover, the

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<sup>41</sup> Listening sessions, held for multiple campus constituencies with separate focuses for students with disabilities, religious affiliations, and internationals, were by-invitation, first-come-first-served, closed-door meetings in which groups of 20 students had the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the issues most directly impacting individuals in each constituency with the Horace President. For the most part, the President did not speak during these meetings and took copious notes as students spoke.

purview of “diversity” at Horace included disability, class, gender, religion, politics, and sexuality; however, for the most part, the focus was on domestic issues of race and racism.

The frustrations around campus that led to the formal discussions in town hall meetings and in the listening sessions with the President were manifold (too many to list here) and several years in the making. While issues such as alcohol and drug use and sexual assault were also discussed in the town hall initial meeting, diversity was the focus of the sessions. During the spring 2013 semester, students, notably the Concerned Black Students group, “criticized the lack of diversity staff and the lack of openness in the hiring process for new staff, which they felt weakened the institution’s efforts to create a diverse community” (Yang, 28 February 2014). This criticism resulted a meeting between the Horace President and seven invited students, to which 20 additional concerned students also arrived (and were invited in).<sup>42</sup> Students at town hall meetings also felt that orientations and pre-orientations for new students explicitly and implicitly divided students. In addition, there were anxieties raised about changes in Horace’s enrollment policies, particularly the relationships between the need-blind policy and students of greater financial need. Diversity concerns were also rooted in the memories of the #OneHorace Solidarity Rally in January 2013, a public response to “bias motivated incidents in the Horace community” and hate crime more generally (Purvey, *The College Colors*, 6 December 2013). In these incidents, drive-by harassers (both students and community members) made comments about the race or sexual orientation of targeted students on and near campus. Other issues, noted by the President in the initial meeting with the 27 concerned students, related to a fall 2011 campus climate report that documented the lack of diversity among faculty members and the fact that

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<sup>42</sup> The idea of the campus-wide town hall was first proposed during this meeting.

minority students at Horace “did not feel as comfortable in classrooms as other students” (Gruber-Miller, *The College Colors*, 26 April 2013).

In many ways, these public discussions (two in the fall and two in the spring) were held because of the feeling among some that, as one domestic student put it, “[t]here is a clear disconnect between what the administration thinks is going smoothly and how we feel about a lot of issues” (Oyolu, *The College Colors*, 27 September 2013). “There are some difficult conversations to be had on campus,” admitted the College’s Chief Diversity Officer during one of the town hall sessions. However, the public outcry over diversity issues has been a college-wide concern that Horace has struggled for some time. For example, the need-blind policy and the concerns over ensuring the enrollment of a truly diverse (racially and socioeconomically, for example) student body have been at the forefront for people at the College for a number of years. The town hall meetings of 2013-14, then, provided an inclusive forum for collective discussion of diversity and the mission of the college.

The listening sessions, on the other hand, were the recommendation of the College’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion (comprised of 18 staff, faculty, and students members<sup>43</sup>) during the first, spring 2013 meeting with the President and were designed to better hear the concerns of individual students and, hopefully, bridge the dialogue gap between students and the administration. As the President was quoted saying, “[w]hile town hall meetings can play a role ... not everyone has a chance to talk,” [he] said. “[This] is a better form for conveying information than having conversations, especially about sensitive, difficult topics” (Gruber-Miller, *The College Colors*, 26 April 2013). Presumably, in these smaller, closed-door sessions participants would raise and discuss similar (but also additional) topics.

### *Listening to International Students*

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<sup>43</sup> This group included Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), who was also President of the ISO, as well as Elizabeth, the Associate Dean and Director of International Student Affairs.

Many of my international participants felt that the ongoing conversations about diversity on campus were a positive thing but that they did not really apply to them, or, perhaps, that international diversity was an altogether different conversation because the town hall meetings and the buzz surrounding them did not usually include discussion of how internationals fit into the campus picture. A senior from South America shared during the second spring 2014 town hall that, with the exception of the ISAO, “I’ve never been included” in the diversity conversation. Her exclusion, she claimed, is due to the fact that “international students are not at the forefront” of people’s minds at Horace when it comes to diversity. In the very first town hall in the fall, on the other hand, Sara (Jr, F, E Europe) interjected that there is unity within diversity at Horace and that the College is not doing enough to bring people together to talk about the positives that do exist on campus. During the town hall meetings I attended, though, diversity as it relates to international students was discussed only when an international student or Elizabeth brought it up. And even in these cases, the conversation generally turned to another topic fairly quickly. Similarly, neither *The College Colors* nor Horace’s website discussed international diversity apart from an occasional quote made by an international student. This is perhaps a good example of what Elizabeth meant when she noted, “sometimes international students have felt like, ‘[w]e’re not in the conversation and when they talk about diversity they’re not talking about us’” (Elizabeth, 28Apr14).

The listening session in the spring of 2014, then, gave a small group of 20<sup>44</sup> international students the opportunity to expand the scope of diversity by speaking directly to the President about their concerns. And while I was not able to be present for this

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<sup>44</sup> To my knowledge, half of the session attendees were participants in my study. While I could not have known that so many informants I would select to participate in the dissertation would volunteer for a spot in the meeting with the President, it does demonstrate that a good number of my participants are active and engaged Horace students. In some ways, then, my data is a bit skewed to the viewpoints of students who are more inclined to be outspoken. Yet, my informant pool does include many less outspoken, publically inclined individuals.



meeting, my participants were very forthcoming about the topics discussed during the session, about the attendant issues diversity raises for internationals, and about their feelings on these matters. In what follows, I discuss three of the prominent topics of the listening session: segregation, recruitment, and the career center.

One of the issues of conversation during the listening session was siloing or segregation between international and domestic students, as well as between nationality/regional groups within the international population. On this topic there were differing perspectives and consensus did not exist about whether this is a problem. From the vantage point of the administration, there are concerns that increased recruitment of late has contributed negatively to divisions on campus. Alya (Sr, F, Middle East) registered this during a focus group session:

[w]ell, you know, I was in a meeting a week, two weeks ago, uh, with some people from administration and some of them brought up that they, uh, are. [*4 second pause; appears to be trying to choose her words very carefully*] How do I phrase this? Okay, so somebody in administration brought up that they're seeing a problem and that – not to use this person's words as my own – uh, seeing a problem with the fact that like trying to bring more and more Asian students to the campus and like make it more diverse, but they see, uh, cliques forming. And they feel like Chinese students aren't integrating with like other students. With other international students or with other American students (FG #1f, 1Oct13).

Alya's insider information reveals that there is some angst among College leadership about the size of the Chinese population and that there exists a perceived tendency that these students self-segregate. If true, of course, this would run counter to the College's efforts to diversify the campus for the benefit of all. Furthermore, as Chinese students make up a quarter of the international population at Horace and there does not seem to be any sign of abated recruiting of students from this part of the world, growing this student group further points directly to concerns raised by Elizabeth in her letter to administrators that self-segregation may result from a lack of geographic diversity, which, in turn, "impacts social

and academic life, particularly on a small, residential campus” (see also Abelmann and Kang, 2014).

Laura (Sr, F, Caribbean) noted that she and others explained to the President that segregation within the international student community is “split kind of by the multicultural groups that we have on campus” and probably has much to do with “the relationships that has existed historically on campus that formed groups in those ways. Like you would have never really thought to put, um, Africa and the Caribbean as one group, but like it just, it gelled that way. You know? [*Laughs*]” (FG #3s, 17Apr14). From her own vantage point, she explained,

I grew frustrated with the terminology, like “international students” for kind of, as like a blanket cover for all of us from all our over 50-plus countries. Because if you’re not treating an individual as an individual, you’re losing a whole lot. Um, and for the, the easiest way to, to combat that is to find some level of similarity, or that you can kind of use as a bonding point.<sup>45</sup>

For Laura and her friends, mostly students from either her home country or others in the Caribbean, it just makes sense to spend time together because they have a lot in common.

Horace’s Dean of Religious Life echoed this point when referring to a conversation she had recently had with another listening session attendee who told her, in response to the President’s acknowledging that the College would like to help curb segregation on campus,

“We don’t want or need them to take care of that. ...That we want...these places. That I have no desire,” she said very clearly, “I have no desire...to be...in a group of students,” or, I thought, for that matter, among faculty and staff, but, “I don’t wanna be, I don’t wanna hang out in an area where I have to explain to someone four times what I’ve said. I don’t wanna hang out in an area where people don’t understand my experience, because we have such a shared uni-.” What she was basically saying is: “Half of the things we do and say to each other we don’t have to say verbally because we *get* what we just went through in that class, in that building, on that team.” ... But she just basically said, “I’m saving sentences when I’m among, not just my friends. Because, you know, we get that with our friends, right? You know, it’s not, it’s a, it’s a language of eyes, it’s a language of experience, and body movements.” She was saying, “I feel that in a different way *among* international

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<sup>45</sup> Students’ definitions of and perceptions about the term “international student” are discussed in Chapter VI.

students, almost hands down.” Right, she wasn’t saying, “I have to be with my African friends.” She was saying, “I have to be with my international friends who get it! And they think they need to fix that. They need to make sure that we’re hanging out with others and there aren’t spaces where we would just go and. That, that *we* need to be more integrated. And they wanna make it that kind of place for us.” And, and what she was saying to me is that, “We told him ‘no’.” I mean, I feel very much that what she was saying is that the international students tried to school him. [*Almost whispering*] Who knows if he heard it (Darlene, 8Apr14, original emphasis).

Later on in my interview with Darlene, she noted that her international student, and others in the room with the Horace President, expressed appreciation for the College’s desire to make the campus a more integrated place for students. Ultimately, the African student on whose behalf Darlene was speaking wanted the President to know,

[y]ou’re perceiving something’s broken. We’re telling you, [Mr. President], don’t fix it. ...Right? We’re saying, for us, we *want* to hang out with each other. Could we use more hangout space? *Surely*. But...we figured out where those niches are for us in the dining hall, in the cultural suites, at individual dorms, in people’s [off campus] homes... (Darlene, 8Apr14, original emphasis).

So while segregation and self-segregation is a reality for some students at Horace, it is not necessarily a negative aspect of campus life for all students. Regardless of the size of the nationality or friend group(s), some students are content, and even prefer, to cordially relate with all students but spend the majority of their time and energy as a Horace student with only particular friends.<sup>46</sup>

International student self-segregation or the segregation of college students on lines of nationality and/or culture is not universal; however, it is quite common. Some internationals prefer to associate mostly or completely with other international students or students from their home country or region because they perceive the cultural, linguistic, or relational dynamics between themselves and others on campus as unfavorable. This is often seen between international and American students, where students’ real and perceived

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<sup>46</sup> It should be noted, though, that some student participants in this study, namely Mahdee (Sr, M, Middle East), Sabith (So, M, S Asia), and Zhenya (So, F, E Europe), have predominantly American student friends.

differences can make friendships difficult (Arkoudis et al, 2010; Campbell, 2012; Sawir et al, 2008). For many internationals, challenges with American students have much to do with real life experience with the narratives discussed in Chapter II. As I discuss in Chapter V, however, Horace international informants report a variety of reasons why segregation exists on campus, including the ease with which these bonds are made in POFIS, and the fact that, in many cases, these relationships last throughout the four year at Horace.

On the other hand, many international students, such as the African student on whose behalf Darlene spoke, find that self-segregation is beneficial. Namely, internationals appreciate spending time with other students who “get it.” International students feel a kind of freedom being able to, for example, speak their native languages, to be able to laugh together about shared jokes specific to home, or to not have to say anything at all because coming from the same country or region gives them a shared understanding about life before, beyond, and at Horace College. As Brenda (F, Sr, E Africa) explained, “Like for me it’s more to just remind me of home. Or the idea of home. And if I’m having a terrible day because it’s cold outside I know that they understand equally [*Chuckles*] how horrifying it is to be outside” (28Jan14). Moreover, she continued, “I don’t have to explain things...[or] explain myself without, you know, seeming weird.” As with everyone at Horace, internationals make decisions about close friendships based on their wants and needs, and most often, though not always, their friend groups consist of other internationals, at times from the same region. While the administration might favor a more integrated campus, internationals seem content to keep things as they are and to choose their own friends, even if this results in segregation between themselves and their American counterparts.

Recruitment strategy was another, and long discussed, topic international students raised during the listening session. Specifically, attendees were critical of the countries

Horace generally chooses from which to recruit its international students as well as the types of schools from which these students come. Danushka (So, M, SE Asia) summarized that the concerns of many in the closed-door meeting related to:

how the admissions process is structured in a way that it attracts only a certain group of international students from different countries. It's usually, ...uh, rich international kids who went to, um, private international schools with White teachers taught in English exposed to American culture. So people were saying they're not really diverse per se. You know, like they're, Horace's not making as much of an effort to really get like...the smartest kids from other countries who cannot afford to pay for their education here. So, I mean, Horace already gives a lot of money. So I don't want to blame the school for that. But that, that was one of the concerns that was raised. How, um, the admission process is catered to like a pretty, uh, I don't know, very isolated group of international students... (FG #2s, 15Apr14).

Danushka and Zhenya (So, F, E Europe) contended that a recruiting strategy focused mainly on bringing privileged, English-fluent students who “sometimes don't speak the language of their country” (Zhenya, FG #2s, 15Apr14) is flawed. Zhenya suggested that there are greater implications at stake for Horace. While the approach may be “understandable” because the College “ha[s] to be able to sustain [Danushka: Yeah.] [its] international population” and because it has a “commitment to, uh, covering so much of the [financial] need ... it's true that the diversity that we end up with is not really...legitimate.” This criticism harkens my discussion in Chapter II regarding the ways in which internationals are commodified in higher education today, wherein a narrative of “creating a more multicultural learning environment” is employed in the guise of “increasing seats for international students who pay higher tuition rates” (Deschamps and Lee, 2014, p. 7; see also Enslin and Hedge, 2009 and Habu, 2000).

In my interview with him earlier in the spring semester, Jose (Sr, M, S America), also in attendance during the listening session, stressed these same criticisms and the belief that the College's international recruiting belies “the diversity that they purportedly embrace here [at Horace]” (Jose, 4Feb2014). Thinking of individuals from his country, Jose claimed that

there is a “[v]ery, very marked difference” between students coming from international and American schools and those from public schools in that a lot of them “can relate more to American culture,” which means “[i]t’s probably easier for them to adapt” and they “probably also have more money.” This leads Jose to contend that “international students are accepted *because* they can pay” and because they have little choice other than to pay large amounts of money because the College’s need-blind admissions policy<sup>47</sup> only applies to domestic candidates. Consequently, he affirmed, “it’s some sort of a, I don’t know, a kind of like betraying the identity of the school and kind of like masking, you know, the reality of international applications, like the application process for international students. Cuz it’s something they didn’t talk about.” And so while he conceded to the complexity of the process (“I know there are pragmatic reasons why they...have to do this”) and noted his fear about registering his criticisms publically (“I mean, if I said these things...I probably, I would get in trouble”), Jose is ultimately a concerned student, and wants to know why there has been such an increase in wealthy internationals enrolled at Horace in the last few years and why there has been a precipitous rise in the numbers of Chinese students while there have been so few new enrollees from South America.

The recruitment of international students was a topic of special concern to many internationals, and others on campus with whom I spoke, because it so directly impacts the topic of diversity and the ongoing conversations about what the make up of Horace, a socially just and diversity-committed institution, should be. Horace, my participants seem to

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<sup>47</sup> Pat (19Nov13) also registered her concerns about the present-day enactment of the need-blind policy: “if you’ve got a thousand applications out of three thousand, and a thousand of those are international students, you could imagine some administrative angst [*Chuckles*] there about what, what could happen, and maybe some temptations possibly. Uh, about using those international students, looking for full-pays. And in fact that’s kind of what we’re doing right now.” Her anxiety on this topic, she later noted, relates to her belief that the College, “because of the whole financial crunch that Horace believes it has,” must be cautious when recruiting these wealthier students, even those who are not full-pay but “who have more money.” She explained that administrators should be wary to not allow the “need-*sensitive*” policy to reduce the geographic and economic diversity of the international population and to be aware that a gap between full pay and full-scholarship students might “be divisive enough that it could cause real issues, I think, for international students.”

agree, cannot advertise itself as a diverse, progressive, and inclusive educational institution if it is not pledged to its core mission of matriculating all kinds of students from every corner of the U.S. and the world. If the college is focused on, for example, students from wealthy families or a wide pool of Chinese students to help buffer institutional costs, student-critics will challenge this approach. Darlene, rephrasing what her African student friend who attended the listening session said, “[w]e said to him we’re not impressed. What you’ve done with international students and international diversity is *not* impressive to us” (Darlene, 8Apr14). For his part, Ban (Sr, F, Middle East) shared, the President “was actually surprised” by the claims she and her international counterparts were making about Horace’s recruitment efforts. Recognizing that it is “obvious” that not all talented students come from American and international schools, she explained that the President told her, “I’m gonna go look up like statistics of like were do we recruit students from” (Ban, 11Mar14).

The international students concerned about Horace’s recruitment strategy are well aware, as I discussed in Chapter II, that internationals are valuable source for revenue and for (often empty) diversity goals at higher education institutions. These students, I believe, hope they can prevent Horace College from being a participant in the “highly mercenary approach to internationalisation” (Waters and Brooks, 2011, p. 568), the kind of competition for student dollars, global rankings and prestige, and institutional sustainability through uncertain economic times that drives so many colleges and universities to recruit internationals in ever-increasing numbers. Moreover, listening session participants find “a serious ethical tension” between their college’s social justice commitments and “regarding [international] students as paying customers to whom we can sell our education as a traded high premium commodity” (Enslin and Hedge, 2008, p. 108). That is, though its application numbers are strong, particularly out of China and from international and American schools,

international student-citizens want Horace to remain committed to its long-standing tenets of geographic and socioeconomic diversity.

A third topic, this time regarding an issue of inclusion, that participants discussed during the President's listening session was students' frustrations with the Horace College career center and its inadequacies in serving internationals (although, as noted earlier, Elizabeth sees the career center as a proven asset to and ally for internationals). Much like segregation on campus and the concerns about the College's recruitment strategy, the failings of the career center was a topic that came up regularly over the course of my data collection. The criticisms of the career center were twofold. First, several participants noted that the availability of internship and post-graduation opportunities for which international students are eligible is extremely limited. Second, many internationals, particularly seniors, were vexed by the lack of expertise in the career center in guiding them through the unique sets of needs and challenges that their visa statuses present. As Ban shared with me (11Mar14), listening session attendees told the President,

“I have to go...to [the career center] to build my resume for this internship and then they tell me, ‘Oh, you’re an F-1 student. And okay, you have to go back to like international advising.’ [*Chuckling*] And then there’s like running around trying to find all the information to understand what you can and can’t do legally in this country. It feels like there isn’t the resource for international students to do that.”

Or, as Alya (Sr, F, Middle East) framed it in our spring interview, explaining the unfairness of the situation for international students at Horace,

I say this hesitantly because I don’t wanna sound whiny, like [*Mimicking a whiny voice*] “Why don’t we have someone who can just give me all the answers?” But at the same time, American students have someone who can just give them a lot of the answers! Um, and that kind of sucks (13Feb14).

Several older students expressed appreciation for the career center's recent change in directorship to a more concerned and supportive advocate for internationals; however, frustrations persist because opportunities for OPT and CPT and resources for post-



graduation job hunting are in short supply. Not knowing whom to turn intensifies matters and prompts questions from some internationals, like Alya (FG #1f, 1Oct13):

the [career center] needs to bring someone with expertise in immigration. Otherwise, it comes to the whole, “Why bring me here? Why bring me, why give me a scholarship? Why bring me here? Because you want me to succeed, right? You want me to succeed for the school’s reputation, for my own reputation, because you believe in me. All these things, right?! You feel the same way.” ... Horace feels the same way about American students, right? You’re trying to get them to succeed. I need someone who knows what I’m allowed to apply to do and what I’m not allowed to apply to. And, and all the games I have to play with immigration application, which are serious things. And if I have to create that dialogue between two offices [the career center and the ISAO], that makes things a lot harder.

Students like Alya, Ban, and others at the listening session wondered why they must constantly be disadvantaged by opportunity deficits and have to move back and forth between ISAO and offices like the career center in order to meet their needs. They addressed an apparent gap in the international student friendly approach Elizabeth and Horace work hard to ensure eases the anxieties of internationals on campus. Indeed, these are precisely the kind of matters of equity international student friendliness is designed to address, and they clearly speak, in part, to whether or not internationals like Alya feel valued and supported at Horace. It is no surprise, then, that this issue took center stage in a listening session about international diversity and inclusion.

For his part, though, Tom, the Associate Dean and Director of Career Development, believes that the career center is doing everything it can to meet international students’ various needs, amidst challenges posed, particularly, by U.S immigration laws. He not only told me, “depending on where our international students are from, culturally, um, linguistically,...all the unique dimensions about their background brings layers of complexity about how they might read” whether we are serving them well, but also that the career center “staff understands many of those nuances. Um, we try very hard to think about those things” (2Apr14). Tom cited changes to policies regarding community leadership programs

and summer off-campus research internships as well as renewed energy into bringing potential employers to campus as efforts being made to better serve international students – all of which he says are new initiatives: “if you would have asked me...three years ago, I would say we were doing very little.” Moreover, the career center is now working with the ISAO to ease CPT and OPT for internationals, and Tom claims his center is working on ways to connect internationals to alumni in their home countries and to acquire better resources for these students to conduct international job searches. And so ultimately, it may be the difference of opinion between Tom and so many Horace internationals and Tom’s insistence that “we absolutely want to see them be successful” that will create change.

### *Reflections on “Listening” to International Students*

Listening sessions conducted by the President over the course of the 2013-14 school year were an opportunity to flesh out concerns of different student groups on campus. Impressions among my informants about the meeting were mixed. Ban expressed appreciation for the chance to speak directly with the College’s top official: “that was a place where all international students had something to say. *Everyone*. [Chuckles] So it felt really helpful to target these problems by just creating discussions and [having] students know their problems are heard” (11Mar14, original emphasis). Sara (Jr, F, E Europe) told me that international students have not really been a “prominent issue” on campus lately and that “I just wish our like voices would be heard more.” The listening session, though, she told me, is welcomed and suggests an institutional “shift,” demonstrating that the College cares more now about “how international students are perceived on campus or like what international students have been needing or where we are headed with the international population” (25Feb14). Other informants, such as Weiguang (Fr, M, SE Asia), were not even aware that

such a meeting had taken place. Still others, like Joonsik (Jr, M, E Asia), were aware that the President had met with internationals but did not know what would come of it.

To this last point, several participants told me they were unsure how the many listening sessions (and the President's meetings with the Multicultural Leadership Council) would enter into the College's larger diversity conversation. All agreed that the issues discussed in the meetings were of real importance to improving campus life, but none knew just what, beyond listening, the President intended to do with the incredible amount of information he had gathered. Sara and Elizabeth both noted that they thought the town hall meetings on diversity held throughout the school year were going to be the place to present what he learned from students and what his recommendations were. Elizabeth explained:

[u]m, I think it's in theory a wonderful idea. I think students are feeling a little weird, like "Well, what was that all about? And will we ever know, um, [*Smiling*] what he heard or what he, how, w-,...why he listened [*Laughing*] to us to begin with?" So I think that's an int-, interesting question (28Apr14).

Indeed, there do not exist "publically printed notes from those meetings that people could read and see," which "would be sort of interesting" (Elizabeth, 28Apr14). And yet, Elizabeth cautioned, listening sessions are only one source of information in a very complex process of improving campus life. A listening session is an important space for internationals to raise concerns of all kinds and to advocate for broad changes to improve life on campus for themselves and their counterparts. However, in these meetings, she explained, "you don't hear the counterargument," which is important for the President, who then might say to himself, "Well, I wanna hear a counterargument to that.' And who should be, who should provide that? Um, and probably the person who should provide any counterargument wasn't sitting in the room" (28Apr14). Even so, from another vantage point, Darlene contended, "it's not helpful to just listen!" (8Apr14). There is some angst about ensuring that students' concerns will not just simply be *listened to* (or, perhaps more accurately, heard); action, on

behalf of deserving students, should be taken: “So someone asked the \$64,000 question in diversity council a month ago: ‘We’ve been listening for awhile. When are we going to start taking this data and *doing* something with it?!’” (Darlene, 8Apr14).

Uncertainty remains, then, about what will come of the conversations the President had with internationals (and in his other listening sessions with students). For the time being, these meetings may simply be the kind of wonderful opportunity that Ban described, a chance for international students to voice their problems and to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about campus diversity and inclusion. On the other hand, the administration’s lack of action is troubling. How, particularly when there are so few opportunities (such as a listening session) to, as a group, share their view with administrators, should internationals respond to their needs being (seemingly indefinitely) shelved? It is no wonder that some international students feel they are left out of the diversity conversation.

### **Contextualizing the Broader Terrain of Diversity and Inclusion at Horace**

Horace College has worked hard for many decades to create a truly diverse educational space for students, and the wider College community. The listening session was perhaps the most visible single event for international students to engage formally (albeit with only 20 attendees and behind closed doors) in the conversation happening about international diversity during the 2013-14 school year. However, the topics of diversity and inclusion take considerably more forms than what the hour-long meeting with the President permitted. Indeed, many of the internationals I spoke with felt that the Horace conversation about diversity was centered on domestic students of color as well as issues related to race and racism on campus. How international informants perceive diversity and, as Sara keenly pointed out, how these students feel about being or not being a part of campus diversity, were areas participants and I explored in interviews and focus groups. Several students and I

spent time talking about how socioeconomics and religion color their experience at Horace, for example; however, race and racism as (generally) American constructs and variously lived realities at Horace seemed to particularly affect how most participants understood diversity and campus life. As one might expect, perceptions about the terrain of diversity, not unlike the phenomenon of international study, varied greatly depending on whom I spoke with. In what follows, then, I outline the more notable themes related to campus diversity discussed by international students: race/racism, religion, sexuality, and class.

### *Race/Racism*

International student participants generally felt that the term “diversity” has particularly American connotations and that, while it has implications for more or less everyone on campus, diversity generally implies issues of race and/or racism and therefore has greater significance for Americans, especially domestic students of color. A few notable exceptions exist, but many internationals in the study had trouble relating to the experience of their American counterparts. For some, the concept of race was either not (as) prevalent in their home countries or was not discussed in the same, serious manner that they found it to be in the United States. Other participants felt compelled to explain, either to me in interviews or to international counterparts in focus groups, that race and racism cannot be taken lightly or be detached from the American context, especially for people of color. For other participants, racism was an overused term on campus and was employed by Americans of color in situations that did not merit it. More than a few international participants shared that humor is an oft-used manner of lightheartedly talking about people of other races or nations. Regardless of how internationals talked about race and racism, it was clear to me that the issues each raised were inherent to the Horace experience and, often, inseparable from the broader context of campus diversity – even to the extent that this, other kind of

diversity conversation impeded the ability to have one about international diversity and the pressing issues of, among others, the (self-)segregation of internationals, Horace's global recruitment strategy, and campus support for international students.

For some international informants, noticing difference in the U.S. populous happened upon arriving here. In our fall interview, Sun (Fr, F, E Asia) explained that she was a bit “struck” when she first landed in the Dallas airport because there were so many people who looked unlike herself and others from her country. “[In my country] only people with my, with the same skin color and similar faces exist. [*Smiling*] But in the U.S. there were so many people who had different physical appearances” (22Oct13). Sabith (So, M, S Asia) noted, “the faces you see [in the U.S.] are not similar to the faces you would see back home” because they had a “different skin color” (14Nov13). Some of Zawadiye's (So, F, E Africa) first realizations were quite poignant for her:

[i]t was, it was so overwhelming actually [*Chuckling*] now that I think back on it, you know? But, but it was like different people. It wasn't the s-. There were Black people, there were White people, there were Asians, um. [Me: Mm hm.] There was totally different people and speaking totally different languages that it was like nobody would know that I'm *not* from here (20Nov13, original emphasis).

Anand (Sr, M, W Asia), on the other hand, told me that Washington D.C. was “surprising” for him because, “[u]h, I thought it was going to be just a bunch of White guys [*We laugh*] everywhere... [*He laughs*]” (10Oct13). In each of these cases, then, students expressed a brand of excitement about difference and the newness of racial diversity. Zawadiye's comments particularly emphasize that this difference was welcomed and that being different meant that she was just like everyone else. And in each of the examples, students, notably Anand, had particular expectations and assumptions about race in the U.S. These expectations, sometimes, lasted into the semester, as was the case with Weiguang (Fr, M, SE Asia), who noted, after going home with his roommate over winter break, that his roommate's family –

convivial, middle class suburbanites – was the kind of “very typical White American” family he remembered seeing in American TV shows and movies.

On the other hand, some internationals, like Alya (Sr, F, Middle East) and Vincci (Sr, F, SE Asia), were more familiar when they arrived in the U.S. that the country would be quite (racially) diverse. Yet, it was not that they had American schoolmates during their international school experience that taught Alya and Vincci about the complex ways in which race and racism color history or life in the U.S. today; this familiarity, each explained, came through their studies at Horace College. In one particular instance, Alya’s knowledge about American race relations compelled her to interject during a fall focus group in response to Yinan’s (So, M, SE Asia) claim that students overuse the term “racism”:

“Horace is so crazy about this thing called racism,” Yinan proclaimed (FG #1f, 1Oct13). He went on to explain that during a recent party called “Around the World,” in which each dorm was assigned a region of the world, U.S. students of color were upset by the fact that ISO members had chosen to serve fried chicken at the dormitory assigned to Africa. Though the ISO was on a limited budget and knew that fried chicken was cheap, and were following what they thought was a harmless idea from a student from East Africa, Yinan recalls that Black American students told him and other internationals, “hey, you guys are racist.”

Breaking up the tentative agreement of international informants around the table, Alya offered an alternative view:

I think this kind of situation happens often with international students because I think many of us haven’t taken U.S. history. [Rinchen, Jr, F, SE Asia: Mm hm.] Um, and I think we aren’t living within the American cultural context, especially even if we’ve come to Horace. This is not indicative of, um, American [Rinchen: Yeah.] society, and how living in Chicago [for example] would look like and so I think while sometimes they think, and not just for international students, but for everyone. But we’re more likely to not see it in the way American students would see it. Um, and you know, something might make sense. There is such a need for a sensitivity of the history and of the like racial prejudice and the, uh, the racism that has occurred in this country. That, I mean, it’s, it’s, um, it’s a tough burden to put on [international

students] ‘cause we like come here and we don’t really get it. I’ve kind of felt, uh, what is called “race blind” in my classes, and couldn’t perceive the level that my, uh, American counterparts were talking about racism in America. But it is so real for American students and I think it’s really important that we take the time to realize that even though it might not be real for us, [Rinchen: Mm hm.] um, fried chicken is a, is a, is a, like that has a lot of connotations. There’s things like, uh, paper bag. [Yinan: Yeah.] Which I didn’t know this, um, until I took like Critical Race Feminism. They used to like hold up the paper bag, and if you were lighter than that paper bag, then you got to work in the house. And if you were darker than that brown paper bag, you worked in the field. Like things that you, that I think we’re not used to thinking about, but, um, it’s, it’s a tough line to walk, but we need to be aware that there, that these things [Rinchen: Mm hm.] exist (FG #1f, 1Oct13).

Alya’s admission that international students are likely to experience this kind of ignorance rather easily because of their lack of familiarity with the American race context resonated with the group. They nodded their heads and listened earnestly as Alya explained that her path to edification allowed her to see American culture and her American counterparts in new ways and that taking classes like Critical Race Feminism had helped her be more “aware,” and also, less likely to rush to judgment.

Opinion that domestic students of color are quick to claim someone as racist has much to do with the belief among many of my international informants that race (and racism) is a uniquely American construct and one to which, at least while they are studying in the U.S., international students are subject. For example, Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), Ban (Sr, F, Middle East) and Alya all reported being read at Horace as “White,” something they never considered themselves, or much thought about, before they arrived in the U.S. And in another instance, in response to Soufien’s (So, M, N Africa) frustrations about not being able to joke about race (something he is accustomed to doing with friends back home and with internationals at Horace) for fear of Americans calling him a racist, Maurice (who, as with



many internationals in the study, also connects with friends through jokes<sup>48</sup>), like Alya, shared that talking about “the race thing” is not so simple:

America has like a long history, like segregation and all of that. So I do in a way, sometimes I’m more careful when I talk about race issues because it’s something, it’s not just past. It’s something that some people are still working in. And I think that’s perhaps why it’s sometimes a bit more delicate to talk about race in certain situation. [Soufien: Yeah, I agree.] (FG #3s, 17Apr14).

Though also feeling a bit pressured to conform in the U.S., Maurice contends that this is necessary, and the right thing to do considering the complex factors that face Americans regarding race relations, a history of segregation, and continued struggles today.

Furthermore, it should not go unnoticed here, as above with Yinan and Rinchen, that Soufien recognized the validity of Maurice’s defense of their American counterparts.

In another example of some internationals’ disconnect with race and racism, Mirza (Fr, M, E Europe), despite originating from a country with noted regional ethnic tensions and on-going civil strife, shared his unfamiliarity with race and how racism has even narrower implications. He explained why he has never experienced racism, the counterproductiveness of being asked about one’s race, and his optimism about diversity:

[m]aybe it’s because [4 *second pause*] racism was never exp-, racism was never experienced by White people. And it’s, when, when you say word “racism” you, you connect it necessarily with, with Black people. So that. I, I didn’t feel racism. And I never heard that someone was offended based on color of his skin. In [my country] there is no such word, as in English, Black, White, yellow, Hispanic, whatever, and purple race. We have human race in [my country], and that what, what is contradictory to, in my opinion, in United States that the biggest, the biggest, uh, uh, advocates of equal opportunities and – at least officially – uh, non-discrimination, NGO, stuff like that, on one side. And on the other side you have, when you enter a country, when you enter a college, when you come to some town, you’re asked about your race. If – again, race being color of the skin – if you’re promoting equality, why are you ask that? So, and I would. If, I, I mean, why would

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<sup>48</sup> Dmitri (Alum, M, S Europe) elaborated on international students’ “tendency to joke about, you know, like nationalities more than the American students” (18Mar14). He told me that it is an understandable, and tolerated, way to ease tensions over difference. “I don’t agree with it,” he noted, however; despite the fact that there is no “malevolence” in joke-making, “when an international student jokes about another international student, then it’s more acceptable than if a domestic student was making a joke about an international student.” If, say, “an American student makes a joke about a Mexican, then, okay, we have a serious issue of racism right there.”

anyone here ask you, “Are you African American, Latino, or coming from Asia?” if that is so unimportant here? That, that’s sub-race, like or hidden race, not racism, but inequality that I see. Not, not on this college! In this country as a whole. Uuum, religious differences were welcomed, there were different talks, everyone is interested about diversity. That’s a cool thing (11Feb14).

For Mirza, it is confusing why race and racism have such salience in the United States because, as he contends, in his country people do not label one another by the color of their skin. This is something I heard quite regularly. And, according to Mirza, asking someone what race they are constitutes a kind of circuitous inequality practiced in the U.S. Thankfully, for him, Horace has been racism and inequality-free in his first year.

Sara has experienced racism at Horace – she was called “Gypsy<sup>49</sup>” by someone in a passing car, but says, “I wouldn’t say that’s representative” of my experience (25Feb14) – but agrees with Mirza that people on campus are not racists.<sup>50</sup> And like Mirza she is confused about the prevalence of claims about racism, partly because she did not know “how big of a deal racism is” before arriving and also because, in light of the campus discussions about diversity, the focus on racism seems unwarranted for a College that nurtures inclusiveness:

one of the things I, I he-, I’ve been hearing from other international students and I *kind of* agree with, um, is that [3 second pause] Black students talk a lot about how they were oppressed, how they’re not being given, being given their rights, and how this country mistreats them constantly, and they keep whining about it – basically the way we perceive it as international students. We don’t whine as much. We don’t ask for like, “Oh, I’m an international student, look at me, poor me, like I don’t speak English properly” or stuff like that. Um, so I just, I think that it’s a little bit reversed at Horace: we talk so much about racism and offering rights to, to students of a different race that it’s, it’s just a little bit too much for me. I do understand that maybe they have different perspectives, maybe they had come from very different backgrounds – maybe I’m just completely insane to be saying this – but it’s, but it’s just really in my face sometimes, and I just wanna be like, “I just look at you and I see like another person that I can collaborate with. I like, I don’t think in terms of race. So because I am, I tend to think that way, and I don’t like, I don’t necessarily

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<sup>49</sup> Xenophobia towards and violence against Gypsies in Sara’s home country have been troubling markers within society since World War II and, notably, during and since the Communist period.

<sup>50</sup> Internationals in a fall 2013 focus group explained that Horace College is “a zero tolerance institution” in which, from their vantage point, if students “express any sort of, um, racist, sexist, homophobic, sort of any action” or other form of verbal or physical discriminatory behavior they may be subject to suspension or even expulsion (FG #2f, 2Oct13).

put people in a certain category just as because of the way they look. Maybe that's why it's so hard for me to understand why they're making such a big deal out of it.

Sara, like many internationals with whom I spoke, struggles with the subject of race and has difficulty relating to domestic students of color. Most of the internationals I spoke with noted, by virtue of the size and inclusiveness of the Horace campus, that they know students of all backgrounds. However, in the interviews or focus groups where racism was a topic of conversation, very few registered close relationships with Americans of color or the kind of "awareness," or empathy, Alya advocated as being necessary for understanding the experience of these domestic students. Difference, one might say, is recognized by many of my international participants, but it is not necessarily genuinely appreciated.

Vincci (Sr, F, SE Asia), on the other hand, counts her closest friends as mix of internationals and American students of color and noted that there are divisions along racial lines on campus that she and her friends of color have talked about in which they are "treated as like tokens...for White students" (30Oct13). She explained that domestic students of color understand much better what it means to be Othered than do internationals because "*this* idea is more prevalent, like being an Other, a person of color, in America is, is, is like a historical like, you know, that goes beyond [internationals'] Horace experience." Vincci explained that midway through her first semester she realized, "I have *no* White friends. This has never happened in my life!" Rather than Horace creating these divisions, she postulated, the wider American racial context might be the cause: "You know, I wonder cuz is it like growing up in different neighborhoods, you know, and then color is so like tied to socioeconomic status? Like is there a natural segregation that happens *before* you get to college?" In college, and at Horace, the struggle continues: in our spring interview Vincci told me that she believes "communities of color feel so, or like more unhappy" at Horace, despite the fact that "the institution *is* really supportive" (27Feb14), a point echoed

by the Horace President above. She elaborated, “So like all of the MLC groups are like great places, but like they’re geared around like, ‘We have to fight for more rights’ or ‘We have to ask for this,’ you know?” This is unlike other clubs and organizations on campus that collectively grow and succeed together; a good example, she offered, are international students, who are “much more focused on like celebration.” Finally, her experience at Horace in relation to these matters has inspired her to “learn more about what [oppression and marginalization] look[] like in [my home country]” and to “re-examine” what race, gender, and religion look like in order to make a difference there.

Danushka’s (So, M, SE Asia) view of Horace’s racialized space is also centered on a disconnect he felt with White American students, whom he referred to as “the prominent race” and “the richer, upper class people” (15Apr14). And where “the background social class” of Horace students of color “varies a lot,” Danushka asserts, “I feel like the majority of White students here probably did not have much to worry about in their lives.” This truth was exemplified to him in a history class during a previous semester:

[w]e watched, uh, a documentary, a film about a, the genocide in Rwanda. And then I was walking out of school with this, uh, White American student and he was saying like. I realized it’s very different because he was raised in a community where he literally had nothing to worry about in his life. Um, he had meals. I mean, it’s not like [people in my country] have issues with like having three meals every day. But, you know, just the fact that the struggle sort of, the background that we, that people came from is very different. So it’s harder to connect with, uhh, White American students as opposed to other sort of, um, uh, probably, uh, lower, uh, middle class or whatever. You know, people who actually had other kinds of struggles in their lives. Um, to connect with them is easier because. For example, one of my best friends is Nepali. And we – and I’m from [a Southeast Asian country] – so we share a lot of the same struggles. Not struggles. Just like as a country, as a nation, you know, we have the same issues: infrastructure, Internet, electricity, having a third world passport. You know, all these things. So it’s easy to connect with them. When you talk about something they just understand where you come from. But when you say these things to White American students they will never understand what it means. You have to. I don’t know. So they won’t. And they won’t be interested either, I feel like. So that’s probably, that’s what makes the more distinct, uhh, difference between, uh, Whites and other [Me: Mm hm.] Americans, I guess.

Danushka's problems with developing relationships, or even having meaningful conversations, with White students is tied to his belief that they are privileged, ignorant of the world, and uninterested in the experience of individuals unlike themselves. International students from developing countries, he contended, can relate to one another about the struggles people from their home nations share. While he did not explicitly state friendships with Americans of color, Danushka suggested that they are more likely to understand and relate with how he, his friend from Nepal, and other internationals from developing countries feel. Race, class, and place, Danushka felt, create divisions on campus for him and for other international students.

Also, while many international students cite that ignorance is most often to be blamed for any misunderstandings or light tensions with Americans and that they otherwise have not experienced any problems on the basis of race, five students did specifically mention, if a bit reluctantly sometimes, that they had been victims of discrimination. As noted above, a passerby, at the time of the incidents leading to the #OneHorace Rally, called Sara "Gypsy." Jose (Sr, M, S America) told me he was also harassed, that someone driving by said "something racist" to him and a friend while they were walking on campus, which was happening at that time "to a lot of people on campus, like a lot of, uh, people of color and international students" (4Feb14). Vincci noted, "Um, have I experienced microaggressions? Yes. But like I try not to make a big deal out of that, you know? ... so for me it's not like overt racism, right? But I think it's like just like not talking or engaging with like people's cultures" (27Feb14). Yinan reported that intoxicated students have "often" said, "Hey, Asian, what's up?," which he noted is "never really bad. But, um, not very pleasant" and "imagine if you are being called 'American' instead of your name. I don't think anyone would like that" (17Feb14). Weiguang shared, "[t]here's no open, I mean, very obvious

racist. Or stuff like that. But sometimes you can feel it. Just like in eye contact or people like the way they treat you.” This, he explained, he and other Asian student friends have particularly felt from White American female students on campus: “if you find any unpleasant, uh, experience, that happens from a White girl” (6Mar14). While it is reassuring that most internationals do not register or have experience with racism or other discrimination, these examples demonstrate that neo-racism does exist in small town Horace (Lee and Rice, 2007).

Finally, there is one notable example of an international students’ part in what many people at Horace felt was an explicit propagation of racism (and sexism) at Horace. During the 2012-13 school year, Sabith (So, M, S Asia), then a freshman, following a national trend, began the website “Horace Confessions,” a controversial and popular site funneled through Facebook in which individuals could anonymously post comments of any sort, presumably, to give those unfamiliar with the institution an insider’s (brutally) honest perspective about student life at Horace. I first learned about this website from Vincci, who described it as containing “all sorts of racist shit” that “you didn’t think people would say.” One person, she said, commented that the College library is “like Chinatown” (27Feb14). According to Sabith, one commenter claimed to have “had sex with three or four drunk women and gave them all [*Laughing*] some STD or something!” Another made “a joke about Black people having giant penises” (3Apr14). Sabith explained that he started the webpage “as a joke” and that things simply got out of hand because, on the one hand, people posted sexually and racially explicit and highly offensive comments – which he maintained were clearly mostly jokes – and, on the other, “the Horace community is very sensitive to jokes at times,” especially “the more, umm, activist people and people who really have a strong voice in issues about, say, rape, culture, discrimination.” Because public outcry, including through *The*

*College Colors*, was so strong and because he gained considerable unwanted personal attention, Sabith was finally compelled to shut down the site.

Race and racism are complex and were variously contextualized by my international informants. Nearly all of these participants expressed that they believe Horace College is an inclusive institution and campus, but it is clear from the examples above that how these individuals experience the many contours of a racially diverse, differently situated study body differs greatly. The particular divisions and the certain tensions discussed here give ground to a way of understanding that Horace is not without its problems of race. More importantly, though, international students in this study offer the kind of divergent viewpoints that are valued at Horace College and that, presumably, make the diversity conversation – when these individuals’ voices are included – a necessarily more nuanced and, likely, more friction-filled dialogue. I say “friction-filled” because many internationals do not necessarily start from, have learned about, or agree with the brand of social justice, critical, and liberal-oriented positions of the Horace majority (this is a topic I return to in the next chapter). On the topic of race and racism, there is great range within the vantage points of Horace students, and the College’s diversity conversation benefits greatly from them. On the one hand, internationals, like Sara, express the kind of potentially racist sentiments that divide students along lines of race. On the other hand, international students, often divergent in their views on this subject, concede significant gaps in knowledge about the U.S. context and are open to critical and constructive discussion about it. Opportunities to build bridges of understanding on this very important and sensitive topic are rife.

### *Religion*

Religion was also a topic of discussion in interviews and focus groups, both as it was directly associated to the diversity conversation in town hall meetings and also, more often,

as a topic of inclusivity for students seeking to engage their religious selves. Several students described how religion was/is a regular part of their lives back home but when in Horace these individuals are very content to be less religious (Jose; Mahdee, Sr, M, Middle East; Sabith, So, M, S Asia) or to keep religious idols as decorations (Anand), to attend religious services from time to time (Jose; Laura), or be active volunteering in local churches in the Horace community (Zawadiye). Anna (Fr, F, E Europe) and Alya each noted that many American students are ignorant about the religious faiths practiced in their home country or the countries of other internationals. Finally, when religion was a point of discussion, the experience of Muslim students was an important focus.

For most of the students in the study, the Horace campus was perceived to be religiously tolerant. As Elizabeth pointed out, Horace is not only a place where students are “exposed to different opinions on faith traditions” but also “different opinions on sex and sexuality<sup>51</sup>, or different opinions on, um, just the, the choices you make in your every day life” (28Apr14). And as Mirza exclaimed excitedly (noted above), “religious differences [are] welcomed” all around campus (11Feb14). Professors are accommodating to students needing to miss class for religious reasons, Jose explained (4Feb14). Vincci noted that she was surprised when she arrived in the U.S., and to Horace, because, contrary to the secular America portrayed in TV and films, she found, “a lot of people are, feel very comfortable like, um, expressing their religion openly” (30Oct13). This she said was a new experience for her and that it was “cool” to see people so freely talk publically about religion (Berger et al, 2008).

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<sup>51</sup> I elaborate on this below on page 184 in the subsection entitled “Sexuality.”



For a couple of students in the study, being Muslim at Horace has been quite challenging at times. In a fall focus group, Rinchen (Jr, F, SE Asia) described her frustration over the ignorance of American students to understand her religion:

[f]or example, ummm, I don't remember where that happened, but I where a scarf [*Pointing to face and head*] and people ask, "Are you a Muslim?" I'm like, "Yes." [*4 second pause*] And then I saw them like, they don't know about Muslim. Like, I tried to process it [Maurice: *Smiling understandingly*, Yeah.] in my head, like, "Why?" Do you know what I mean? [M: Right, yeah it's impossible.] And I'm just like, "Yeah." And then like, I've tried, I try to make eye contact and be like, "You have more questions?" [*Maurice laughs*] "I, I will explain to you!" It's, It's like [*4 second pause*] very small things, so. Another day, uh, they have bacon...in [the dining hall], right by the halal station. So I got the bacon, the turkey bacon that I could eat. [*Growing louder as she speaks and more excited*] And then my friend got the same thing at the same station. And then we sit together and she just like [*4 second pause*] "Wait, you can't eat bacon! Why did you get bacon?!" I'm like, "You just got it from the halal station, dear! It's halal bacon, okay?!" [*Laughing*] And it's just small things like that (FG #1f, 1Oct13).

On the other hand, Vincci compared her experience of being Muslim at Horace with others, noting how challenging drinking and party culture is for, especially, conservative Muslims:

[u]um, I think as somebody who's not so conservative it's been easy for me. Um, but I know people who struggle a lot, uhh, trying to be Muslim and trying to like not drink and, you know, and still feel, like have a good time. Um, I, I know that that is difficult. Like and people have dropped out for that reason. Uum, I actually think that Horace has been very important for me as a Muslim. Um, because it's like caused me to like, like I said, kind of re-examine my faith, right? But for me like that came out more positive. Right? But it's not, I, I wouldn't say that that experience is the same for like other students (27Feb14).

These comments, however, contradict with Vincci's admission in our fall interview in which she shared how she struggled with the drinking culture at Horace and whether or not to participate. Having only had alcohol a few times in her life at family celebrations, she described her first semester as an almost "breaking off point...from my culture" in which she then was "entering something different" because of the difficult negotiation within herself about whether or not to drink with friends (30Oct13):

I had taken a long time to think about it. So I was like, "Is this a reasonable reaction," you know? [Me: Mm hm.] Um, and like the reasoning behind this religious

rule. Is it going to alienate me? Or is it going to be something, I don't know, not to say like positive, but is it going to really be something negative if I drink?

For both Rinchen and Vincci, religious cultural differences were marked hurdles to overcome. In Rinchen's case, American students struggle with her hijab and her needing to eat halal meats, causing her to have to often explain to American friends about her religion, a lived reality that prompted a combination of laughter and frustration. Vincci explained that fitting in as a Muslim student can incite inner turmoil over the question of alcohol (generally considered among informants as a favorite weekend activity for many on campus), especially for conservative Muslims. On the other hand, Horace has provided her significant educational opportunities in her classes to grow and develop her relationship with her faith.

Ultimately, as Vincci pointed out, the experience varies for Muslim students, whose identities are often very visibly marked (wearing a hijab) and/or are accompanied by juxtapositions of culture and faith when in predominantly non-Muslim spaces such as U.S. HEIs. On the one hand, as Lindkvist (2008) explains, this has much to do with how "September 11, 2001 forever changed the landscape of what it means to be Muslim in the United States" (p. 165). Rinchen may not express concern about "[r]acial profiling, verbal and physical assaults, and public demonstrations against mosques [that] exacerbate the already difficult integration of Muslims into American society" (p. 165); however, she implies recognition of how the more widespread hyperawareness of and misunderstandings about Islam and Muslims complicate the dynamics between Muslims students on U.S. campuses and their non-Muslims counterparts. Conversely, in Vincci's case, Lindkvist notes that "[w]hat it means to be...a 'good' Muslim [is] highly contested" for Muslims conflicted "about appropriate religious and cultural practice and how to preserve a cultural or religious identity while accommodating the norms of a non-Muslim...context" (p. 194). Norms

regarding modesty and alcohol consumption are less straightforward now that she is on the Horace campus.

For their part, Darlene and Elizabeth stressed that ensuring that students of all faith traditions feel welcome in the Horace community is a College priority and is the approach of an international student friendly campus. Darlene has dedicated her professional career at Horace to this cause and stated, “the beauty of Horace” is the diversity of the campus, notably the international population and how diverse it makes our work here” (8Apr14). The challenge, she explained, is “trying to meet [the] needs” of all students and making sure that all students know the Horace religious life center is there for them. Providing transportation for Mirza and other Orthodox Christians to the church an hour away, advocating for halal foods (and later a halal station in the dining hall<sup>52</sup>) and a dedicated prayer space for Muslim students, or making sure that the Ganesh memorial on campus is properly covered, among many others, is all a part Darlene’s, and the College’s, effort “to better support the very diverse international community we have here” (8Apr14).

### *Sexuality*

Much like with the racial diversity of the United States, sexuality, particularly discussion and expression of homosexuality, was an unfamiliar, and often misunderstood and/or stigmatized, reality for many international informants in the study. At Horace College, an institution often labeled “liberal” by participants, sexuality is openly expressed and is variously responded to by internationals.<sup>53</sup> To familiarize students to the diverse

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<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth explained to me several times how important it was to her to have a halal bar, not only for students who require this for their religious beliefs but also others, especially Americans, to learn about faith traditions around the world: “by making that available to them we’re teaching our kids, who, like me, grew up in Iowa and had no idea even what halal was, to see that sign and go, “What’s that about?” [*Laughs*] Um, “Can I eat that, too? Is it different? How’s it different? Tell me about that.” Elizabeth’s position, then, puts Rinchen’s frustrations (which are also important) into new perspective: asking questions is welcomed and it is encouraged. An international student friendly campus, Elizabeth explained, can and should benefit everyone.

<sup>53</sup> This is also a topic I discuss in the next chapter, in which I explore how students talk about their perceptions of being a “Horacian” and the associations, including openness to homosexuality, tied to the moniker.

student body, Elizabeth and the ISAO staff include sessions each year on, for example, racism and sexuality in the United States and what internationals can expect to encounter and learn about while a student at Horace. Andrei (Alum, M, W Europe) applauded these sessions, explaining how “extremely valuable” they were for him and for other students like him who were not “exposed” to this kind of diversity previously and who come from “quite a racist, quite a homophobic society” (27Nov13) (many participants attested to the value of these sessions and to feeling like Andrei). Despite the POFIS session being generally lauded by the individuals with whom I spoke, homosexuality is a topic about which a few internationals admit feeling conflicted.<sup>54</sup> Most, though, described that being on a campus where friends or acquaintances are LGBTQ has made them (more) accepting of homosexuality and other sexuality identifiers and issues. In fact, several internationals noted feeling even more strongly in these changed views when they returned home to friends, family, and others because they had spent so much time immersed in Horace’s diverse campus culture (Brenda, Sr, F, E Africa; Jose, Sr, M, S America; Zawadiye, So, F, E Africa) and because they were offended by those who were openly and unapologetically homophobic and discriminatory (Danushka, So, M, SE Asia).

Furthermore, three students noted that the diversity conversation has expanded recently to be more inclusive of homosexuality. First, Dmitri recalled how several years ago, in response to incidents in which students wrote “bad things” on the whiteboard of a student identifying as lesbian, the College took swift and deliberate action to communicate to the student body that acts of discrimination would not be tolerated (18Mar14). Second, Sara shared that some individuals who have not felt included in the campus dialogue have spoken

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<sup>54</sup> One American student perceived “seeing all these people [at Horace] being incredibly fluid with their sexuality” or seeing “girls making out on the weekends” or understanding a “queer” identity as being potentially “really off-putting and kind of shocking” for internationals unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable with such openness (FG #1s, 10Apr14). Ban registered this, recalling first seeing two men kissing at a party her first semester, and Xiaonan (So, Female, Southeast Asia), too, remembering how she felt when her friends described to her a drag show they saw.

up, and explained that there was a moment during an MLC meeting in which someone stated, “I am part of a gay pride group and I’m an international student,” to which Sara added (to me), “and how do those things play out within diversity and why are we still having the same conversation?” (25Feb14). Finally, Alya believed that “student discussions” are increasingly openly confronting “complicated” diversity concerns along the lines of sexuality. For instance, “let’s say someone doesn’t believe in like gay marriage. Do you just let them advocate against gay marriage on this campus? Does that make some people who believe in gay marriage feel uncomfortable?” (13Feb14). Indeed, many of the international students in this study agree that sexuality is a subject that greatly shapes their view of and experience at Horace and should therefore be included in the diversity conversation alongside issues such as race, religion, and class.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

Finally, socioeconomic diversity at Horace, as discussed by international students during the listening session with the President, is also a very important, and many times sensitive, topic for several international informants in the study. According to listening session participants, the College has made recruiting wealthier students (usually from American or international schools) a priority, which, these students explained, has particular consequences for the diversity of the international population and, more generally, inclusivity on campus. Student-critics claimed that this kind of recruitment approach, and the growth of the wealthy segment of the population, signals a preference among College leaders for students that can pay full tuition costs at the expense of those who attend public schools and who require financial assistance. This, some of my participants suggested, belies the value of broad diversity the College claims to espouse. While wealthy students generally have greater facility in adapting to Horace and American cultures because their status has enabled them

to have more exposure to Western ideas, values, education models, and the English language, some informants told me, these students are often unable to speak their native languages well. Perceiving growing economic disparities, frustrations led to increased barriers between those who are wealthy and those who are not. Below, I expound on the tensions and the optimism that my participants expressed on matters related to socioeconomic diversity.

One of the prevailing concerns regarding the heightened campus-wide awareness of the growing international student population is the misconception that all, or even most, internationals are wealthy. Macy (Jr, F, NYC), one of five American students that sat with me for a focus group in the spring of 2014, owning her own once-ignorance, summarized the flawed belief (FG #1s, 10Apr14, original emphases):

until this year, I did th-, I assumed international stu- – and this is like, this reflects so badly on me – but I thought that international students didn’t get financial aid because everyone was like, “Oh, if they’re coming from the U.S., if they’re coming to the U.S. they’re like rich enough. Like they don’t get financial aid.” And I had heard that. And *obviously* that’s not true! [*Chuckles*] Like they *need* help to come here. And college is expensive. I mean, like the tuition was just raised to \$57,000 a year. [Me: Hooo!] And so it’s like [*Chuckling*] no one can pay for that! I mean, people need help with that. But they’re Othered as this like this entity that’s very – at least from like what I perceived – an entity that’s very wealthy, and they can afford to come to the U.S. and spend their money on an education. Um, because we’re worth it, I guess.

Macy’s admission of her assumptions about international students being “a wealthy entity” that must be able to afford high tuition costs because, of course, “we’re”, or American higher education, is “worth it” aptly describes the frustrations of many internationals in the study who believe that their value to the College and the campus community is increasingly being measured in dollars (Habu, 2000). That is, all too often, seeing one or several wealthy internationals conflates the belief that all people who come to a U.S. campus from another country are wealthy. The tendency is to rush to judgment because people often, and understandably, interpret world travel, living in another country for four years, and the cost

of attendance at an American HEI to be a marker of privilege. What gets discounted, however, is the person, that is, the individual's background and their financial aid and/or work-study statuses (Marginson, 2012a).

International participants are keenly aware of these stereotypes. Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), who needed and does receive full funding, is one international student that registered these suspicions; though, Sara directed her comments to college leadership:

[u]m, there is this common perception ... that international students have like wide pockets and that's why they should be here. But then once they're here, I don't know if they're like considered as an essential part of the community, and like the essential part of the community that they are (25Feb14).

She continued by explaining that, from her vantage point, the diversity conversation is more centered on domestic students of color and ensuring that these individuals are included on campus and that they are successful after graduation. However, "the same discourse is not seen on campus [for international students]. Because we are perceived as more rich. Because that's why we come here" and "that's why they bring us here." Sara's contention, then, is that international students are less of a priority on campus because they are commodified at Horace and because they are seen to have fulfilled their end of the educational contract upon payment of the tuition. Vincci, who attended an international school and whose family had "financial difficulties," agrees that there is a perception of wealth among international students, and also believes that there is a misconception about students with her background. Contrary to what some international students, like Jose, might believe, not all international school graduates fit the stereotypes often assigned to them. "It's assumed that [my experience] was very privileged the whole time," she told me, because "there's like a less, uh, nuanced understanding of, of that experience. I think just cuz it's so different from what people usually know" (30Oct13). Despite Horace being a place where "we look through

things with like a lens of gender, race, and class a lot,” most people assume Vincci is wealthy because of her transnational background and international school experience.

International participants also acknowledged barriers between international students along lines of socioeconomic status. And perspectives vary. Sara, for one, commented,

[u]m, a problem that I really had with like international issues here was that if you keep bringing really rich international students they're not gonna care, they're not gonna get jobs on campus, they're not gonna get engaged, they're not gonna care about your liberal arts education because they usually come from backgrounds where they think like about business and like management and that kind of thing. Um, and then I'll, I'll have to struggle with like not getting them to my [ISO] events cuz they don't care that much (25Feb14).

Drawing on her own assumptions, and also her experience as a student leader, Sara contends that wealthier students are less interested in engaging on campus and that, presumably, a larger contingent of wealthier internationals could result in a shift in campus culture in which participation in student organizations and in the Horace liberal arts mission are compromised. This is a slippery slope, to be sure; however, for Sara, these fears are real and they suggest not only a move away the kind of campus involvement she values but they also have the potential to negatively impact the whole of the international population.

For his part, Soufien (So, M, N Africa) drew a hard line between whom he does and does not consider an “international student.” “For me I think it depends on nationality,” he shared with the group. “It depends on the social status of the international student in his own country because the richer you are the more Americanized you are.” Soufien, and Ashwini, further clarified this point in our focus group exchange with other internationals (FG #3s, 17Apr14):

Soufien: ...there are a lot of international students that I consider to be American, even if their passports do not say it.

Kusturie (So, F, E Africa): Mm hm.

Yating: (Jr, F, SE Asia): So you're saying rich and poor students? [*Laughs*]



Soufien: Yeah, you could say that. [*Laughing around the table*]

Me: Thank you, Soufien.

Ashwini (So, F, S Asia): That's what I meant about the...community [from my country]. They are, they're mostly rich kids. And, um, they're more Americanized. So I don't really need to like, you know, approach anyone. They know about things already. And they would rather not be associated as an international student. ... So it's different [Me: Mm hm.] for different people.

The term “Americanized” for students like Soufien carries a pejorative connotation, presumably, in the ways that it does for many people around the world who see the U.S. as being a wealthy, powerful, and imposing nation. If one does not have wealth or does not come from a wealthy country, then he or she is said to be “Americanized” or “Westernized,” which brings with it a different kind of Othering that implies a real or perceived identification to Western culture. Torres and Rhoads (2006) explain, according to a particular logic, that “Americanization,” or “McDonaldization”

[f]ocuses on the ways in which central nation-states affect the semiperiphery and the periphery. Here, the flow of peoples and ideas is seen as mostly one directional, from west to east and north to south. Hence nation-states such as the United States impose their values, norms, and beliefs on other parts of the world and for the most part are not mutually influenced, at least not to the same degree (15-16).

In this case, Soufien is making a judgment about international students in which, regardless of where they are from, not everyone at Horace from abroad can be an “international student” because being rich implies something else; being a wealthy international student implies an association to the center and its “values, norms, and beliefs,” which he (and his friends), and people from more internationally diverse cultures, do not.

And where these students perceive that socioeconomic divisions run through the international population, Anna (Fr, F, E Europe) suggests that class lines cut across the entire Horace student body. She explained to me, recalling an article she had read in *The College Colors*, “People that come here are either *very* rich. That's the stigma. Very rich, so that

they can afford it. Or very poor, so they chose Horace because it, it's so rich that it offers you a lot of aid. So it creates this like *huge* gap” (30Jan14, original emphases). Under the present circumstances, then, it is quite understandable that socioeconomic diversity, or the perceived lack of it, registered quite strongly for international student participants and that there is particular emphasis on ensuring that incoming classes cover the spectrum of class positions rather than widening the huge gap between.

On the other hand, Sabith (So, M, S Asia) believed that Horace's international diversity has allowed him unique and valuable opportunities to get to know wealthy individuals from his country, students he claims he never could have befriended and to this day cannot really ever interact with back home. Like Ashwini, Sabith affirmed that many students from his country at Horace are quite wealthy, which, for him, meant “they move in different circles” back home and “[I]live in like better areas! And go to better schools” (3Apr14). And yet, “here we get to interact on like some sort of a similar plane, you know?” Describing a kind of “nonchalance” with which his countrymen at Horace talk about owning cars and having drivers, Sabith laughed, noting his inability to relate. However, he explained,

I mean, I'm glad for the opportunity, I guess. And, and in some ways I'm, I'm also glad to learn that they're also like nice people. [*Chuckling*] They're just a product of their circumstances as much I'm a product of my circumstances. You know, like there's nothing intrinsically bad about them just because they're rich! [*Laughing*] It's a good thing to learn, I guess. And, eh, I guess it has made me like [*Chuckling*] a little softer towards rich people. But. And, so, and I managed like to make at least one friend from [home]. I wasn't very close with him until, say, the beginning of this semester pretty much, and when he started hanging out with me more, spending time with me. So he's, he's a really nice guy. He's like much wealthier than I am, [*Laughs*] yeah. And, I mean, but he is still really nice and I'm glad to like have his friendship basically. So [Me: Mm hm.] it's a good thing, I guess. Yeah, it's just a little [*Chuckling*] strange sometimes. Gives me something to think about, you know?

Sabith's story about his relationship with his wealthier counterpart not only demonstrates that he, as with others like Sara and Vincci, defies the perception that all international students are wealthy. That he was visibly uncomfortable talking about the class disparities

between he and his friend suggested to me that Sabith struggles a bit psychologically with the divides that socioeconomic status imposes on students. Significantly, he credits Horace College with providing avenues for bridging these divides. New friendships and more nuanced understandings about people from home that might otherwise have never met or found common ground are possible, and appreciated, on the Horace campus.

Socioeconomic diversity, as with racial, religious, and sexuality diversity, prompts a complex array of opinions that complicate the broader context of diversity at Horace College. International student participants recognize that racial, religious, sexuality, and class differences matter and have the power to divide, but also to bring together, people on campus. For example, there is a strong, unified position by several of my international participants who believe that Horace College should give great scrutiny to how it plans to diversify the student body because, despite the very generous financial aid received by internationals, this matter is currently causing rifts between the international population. In another, these students, in many ways, propose that College leaders on this American campus would benefit by broadening their conceptualizations of diversity to include more global viewpoints so that more international students will feel included. On the other hand, many international student participants have much to learn about their domestic classmates of color, and they, too, would benefit quite significantly from learning how to make Horace the kind of truly inclusive place it has the potential to be. Ultimately, as I learned from interviews and focus groups, there is great appreciation felt by internationals for the opportunities to register their perspectives in a fluid and ongoing conversation that matters; international students in the study gave me the impression that they respect very much the College and their place in it, and believe that it is made stronger by, as Sara contended, engaged community citizenship and commentary of all kinds.

### **An “International Student Friendly” Place, Revisited**

One of my goals during the spring 2014 semester was to expand and complicate Elizabeth’s understanding of “international student friendliness” by including the varied and less holistic perspectives of international students. That is, I wanted to know how these students perceived support for internationals on campus and whether they would characterize Horace College as an international student friendly campus. More to the point, I wondered, “how do internationals feel about their place, and the place of their international peers, on campus?” To begin, there was effusive praise for the ISAO, which is held in a special kind of esteem among my international student participants. Fruitfully, though, many more students’ answers directly contradicted one another, reflecting the highly personal and subjective nature of the college experience, as well as, once again, the fallacy that international students’ experiences can be discussed in collective terms (Coate, 2009; Gargano, 2009; 2012). As Sara aptly explained, “I feel like there are a ton of layers” to describing whether Horace is an international student friendly campus (25Feb14).

More than any other indicator for informants of the College’s international student friendliness and support for internationals is the ISAO. Vincci gushed and said that other offices, such as the multicultural office, “could definitely model themselves after” the ISAO. She also said that, when the career office lacks, “it would probably almost be better to talk with Elizabeth or Lynn” about careers and future planning. Ban smiled and told me, “it helps that there’s a separate office that says ‘international student’” where she can go for “an issue that has to do with me, being international” or where she can go and speak in confidence with Elizabeth about “personal issues and everything!” Weiguang told me, “I think they know every international student’s name.” Anand shared that the ISAO “does a better job communicating to international students than the Horace College office of

communication does to communicating to the rest of campus.” With all they do for internationals, Sara says Elizabeth and Lynn are “fabulous,” and could really use another staff member to aid with an ever-increasing international population. The ISAO indeed enjoys a kind of consensus admiration and appreciation I found nowhere else on campus.<sup>55</sup>

International student friendliness also has associations to racial diversity. When I asked Yinan (So M, SE Asia) if Horace is an international student friendly place, he replied by saying, “It’s not disastrous, no” (17Feb14). He then qualified this statement and said, “Umm, some things could definitely be improved. It’s just, um, people are not aware of the things that could be improved.” In part, this meant that Yinan and others in his international student friend group take issue with how “diversity is defined” at Horace by race, that is, “whether you’re Asian, whether you’re Black, whether you’re White. But, um, we feel like international is definitely diversity cuz we’re not part of this, uhh, American community.” On the one hand, like the examples I discussed earlier, “diversity” is a particularly American construct at Horace for Yinan. On the other, he further explained, racialized diversity conflates national identities and their unique cultures. He stressed, “Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese cannot be generalized as [*Makes air quotes*] ‘Asians’ just by one word.” Yinan took note with the fact that, from his vantage point, the label “Asian” has been assigned to him and to others on campus; as noted earlier, it is “not very pleasant” to be racialized this way. If Horace is to be a truly openly and genuinely diverse place – and international student friendly – then people must be willing to include global definitions of diversity and recognize that American labels can be offensive to international students and can greatly limit the

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<sup>55</sup> This paragraph only skims the surface, though; participants recalled countless examples of their admiration and appreciation for the ISAO – enough, I think, to almost fill a whole separate chapter. And international students are not only ones that laud the International Student Affairs Office. Praise for Elizabeth and Lynn was ubiquitous across the Horace campus. Seemingly every person I interviewed raved about the job being done at the ISAO to support and advocate for international students. Several others complimented Elizabeth’s efforts in raising awareness about and providing critical thought into campus internationalization.

possibilities for the broad inclusiveness of all Horace students – which is its purported objective.

International student friendliness also has much to do with the avoidance of homogenizing internationals. For her part, Anna (Fr, F, E Europe) contended that support for international students is not so straightforward. “Cuz when you think about it, international students is a, is a group that within itself has the most, is the most diverse, you know?! Cuz it’s all the [*Makes air quotes*] ‘internationals.’ That’s calling it by one name, but it’s like really just a junk of everybody” (30Jan14). Not only does this kind of single-term labeling homogenize individuals within the most diverse group on campus (as Laura also noted above), Anna explained, but it is also presumptuous: “I wouldn’t like if every office reached out to me especially and had a ‘Dear international students...’ thing. You know, I really wouldn’t appreciate that.” Rather than a broader understanding of diversity, Anna believes that the College’s support for international students can be achieved by treating her as capable and as equal to every other student (Marginson, 2014):

[i]t’s kinda like, “...I’m not capable of being treated like, uhh, domestic student, and then, you know, maybe finding the answers that I maybe need by myself or reaching out to you by myself?” It, I wouldn’t like that. You know, I wouldn’t like that type of special treatment.

So while she does not disown her particular international or non-American identity – far from it, in fact – Anna does resist the kind of Othering that leads to people in the United States and at Horace to believe that international students require “special treatment.” Like Yinan, she advocates for a greater awareness of the diverse talents and personalities of “internationals.”

On the other hand, international student friendliness can require greater group recognition. Sara (Jr, F, E Europe) is more explicit about her desire for international

students, as a group, to be recognized and more explicit in her critique of the Horace administration. As she told me,

I think the college talks a lot about diversity and about “Global Horace,” and about like how great we are at bringing people from all over the world here. But then they bring us here and then they don’t care that we’re here. I wish that they would give us more outlets to show who we are, to like represent who we are other than what ISO does (25Feb14).

Beyond feeling that programming and outlets for international students lack, Sara explained that support for internationals is not necessarily a part of the fabric of the college because “everything that like shows our diversity on campus is not necessarily coming from like a, an institutionally supported level.” International students must work hard to be included and to be appreciated on campus, she lamented. When I asked her what the College does well in supporting internationals, Sara explained, “there are a lot of things that I have been offered, but they are not necessarily, ‘Oh, here have this because you’re an international student.’ It’s been more of a ‘Here, have this because you’re a Horace student.’” Sara was torn over the disconnect she perceived between support for international students from the ISAO (“[they] are fabulous”) and from the College administration more broadly (“I just wish our like voices would be heard more”). The institutional vision for a Global Horace and the lived experience on campus in terms of diversity and inclusion efforts do not add up for Sara.

Sabith’s (So, M, S Asia) perspective on international student friendliness is markedly different from the three above. He, like Mirza, Alya, Vincci, Mahdee, and Zawadiye, was quite emphatic in belief that Horace is an international student friendly place and that the College has worked hard to foster a welcoming and inclusive campus. Recalling visits with his many domestic student friends to universities around the country, Sabith described Horace as being a comparatively, and significantly more, inclusive campus for international students. Because of its “small size,” the fact that there are fewer ethnic student enclaves,

students are mixed in living arrangements the first year, everyone is “extremely nice,” the College is “so isolate[d] from the rest of the world,” and people are “very open-minded,” Horace is “more international friendly than pretty much everywhere else I’ve seen in the U.S.” (3Apr14). Internationals, he explained, “get out much more here than they do anywhere else.” Also, “[t]hey eventually start feeling comfortable then, you know? Like actually manage to make friends of all kinds.” When I asked how, if at all, the administration contributed to this congenial campus atmosphere, Sabith explained, “I guess they’ve always like wanted to make Horace an international student friendly place.” Being “welcoming” is both a part of the College’s image and its dedication, unlike many other institutions, to not view and treat internationals as “cash cows” (Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Luke, 2003; Marginson, 2013; Peterson et al, 1999; Waters and Brooks, 2011). During POFIS, he shared, Horace “treat[s] you like very valuable, important people to them. [*Chuckles*] It just gives you the sense you matter to Horace.” The College gets internationals from the airport, helps them set up their rooms and bank accounts, and offers them free winter jackets. They “don’t leave you out in the cold,” Sabith said, because “[t]hey understand you’re in a new country, so you might need some help.” For Sabith, then, Horace *is* the kind of place that goes out of its way at every turn to support its international students and to provide a space where these students want to be.

The question about whether Horace is an international student friendly place, then, elicited many different responses, a whole host of competing positions regarding how these students perceive diversity and inclusion at the College. Their perspectives should give us pause to think longer and more critically about how these, and other, international students necessarily impact the ongoing conversations about what diversity looks like on campus and what internationals need to be happy and successful students – conversations, with the



exception of the listening session with the President perhaps, that generally happen without these students' contributions (see the opening quote to this chapter). There is no clear path through these very complex and often quite sensitive subjects and much time will be needed to more fully consider the ways in which Horace College is or is not, according to these international participants, an international student friendly place and a higher education institution genuinely interested in the diversity of its campus.

Vincci's (Sr, F, SE Asia) comments help explain the kind of nuanced, dually committed positions of the student-critic and happy Horacian<sup>56</sup>:

we complain a lot as students. That's like, we are taught to criticize, deconstruct, [*whispering and smiling*] "Oh my god, the administration's not doing this, [the President] is, uh, he's like not bringing the right students, like everything is changing!" Um, but, but as a whole I do feel like our voices get heard. Like we can get funding for like *anything*. Like you know. There, there, there are problems with it, but I think like, yeah, it's kind of this amazing place where you meet like *amazing* people (27Feb14).

In Vincci's estimation, then, Horace College has done well to train her, and, presumably, her many international counterparts, to see into the complexities of life on campus and to hold accountable a College that aspires to be the kind of place international students want to be because, as Sabith believes, it is welcoming to and supportive of internationals. In this light, it is well within her purview, as she explained later in our interview, to charge Horace to do more: "I don't think it's like a, Horace's not racist or unwelcoming or anything like that. But I think it could do like a better job of like engaging with like race, international culture, things like that." True to the spirit of a social justice, critically oriented liberal arts education, internationals ask that people at Horace College do a better job of *listening* to international students, both to learn more about how to do "a better job" as well as to continue doing what Horace already does so well to make the College an international student friendly place.

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<sup>56</sup> I discuss the moniker "Horacian" at length in Chapter V.

### **Horace College Looking Ahead**

Horace College has long made international diversity a College priority, and it has done this primarily through recruitment and campus internationalization efforts. Likewise, and more recently, Horace has turned its attention to ensuring that international students feel welcome and supported on campus, namely by way of what Elizabeth, Horace's lead international student advocate, terms "international student friendliness." During the nine months I was on the Horace campus, I was also privy to the ongoing, and often difficult, campus conversation about diversity and how, as a College community, Horacians might become more transparent in policymaking and admissions; more respectful and appreciative of one another's similarities and differences; and more mindful of how the College institutionally defines "diversity" and supports its-already-very-robust-but-ever-growing diverse student body.

While I did not speak with the entire international student population during the nine-month data collection phase of this study, I did have the opportunity to listen to many internationals, as well as a few domestic students and a number of campus professionals, speak about the recruitment of, support for, and inclusion of international students. And, as I have shown, their perceptions on these issues are mixed. International informants in this study seem to appreciate the opportunity to live in and to study at Horace; they are glad to be students at Horace College. Moreover, according to participants, Horace administrators, faculty, staff, and students are directly taking on the complicated issues that face their college today and are increasingly making the campus the kind of place internationals want to be.

What is less straightforward, however, is the role that international students play in the shaping of the Horace campus culture. To be sure, international students are not at a loss for platforms to contribute. To name a few, participation in the ISO, the listening session

with the President, town hall meetings, conversations in classes and dormitories, and in student government have enabled internationals to be active Horace student-citizens. Yet, international students have more to say about the role that they, and their voices, do and do not play on campus and within the College's critical consciousness. As the President's Internationalization Taskforce explained in the spring of 2008, there exists a distinctive kind of internationalism at Horace – rooted in the liberal arts and an inherent criticality of academic investigation – in which the most important goal of internationalization is “to remove obstacles” of every kind that impede greater connections and understanding between faculty, staff, and students.

Amaro's (French professor and internationalization advocate) “thought experiment,” which challenges “some of the unwritten assumptions” about a Horace, and an American, education (15Jan14) is a potentially useful place to begin. Imagine, he said, we

ask people, “What if Horace was 80 percent non-U.S. and 20 percent U.S., holding all things equal? Same faculty. Same financial. I mean, it can. Let's imagine that it can work financially, et cetera, et cetera. Um, do we object to that, for reasons other than, “well, they can't, you know, not all those students can get in” or “not all those students can pay the price,” or “not all those students can, can, can write in English,” or something like that. Well, let's say that they all can! Um, would people object to that because they'd say, “well, you know, [4 *second pause*] 12 percent's okay. 20 percent maybe. But when you get over 50 percent you've done something that is, that is not what this college is [*Slaps his desk twice*] fundamentally about.” And that's where you then, uh, get into the, the uns-, unwritten or unspoken assumptions about “to what degree are we *rrreally* about preparing people for American norms of identity, citizenship, etcetera, as opposed to something more fluid?”

Horace College is not likely to enroll an 80, 50, or even 20, percent international student body. Imagine the possibilities, though, if Horace, or any U.S. HEI were to fundamentally reconsider what diversity, inclusion, campus internationalization, and the mission of a globally committed American educational institution might look like if the majority of the student body were international students. More than simply “an interesting thought experiment,” this kind of criticality and deconstruction, as Vincci put it, not only has the

potential to create more positive change for internationals but it is also exactly what Horace College is fundamentally about.

## Chapter V: We're All Horacians, Or Are We?

I think that when an individual understands, and gets exposure to ideas, people, experiences outside of their home, that they undergo an important transformation, and that it makes an individual more, uh, empathic, more, um, uh, sensitive. Uh, it makes a person more ethical, I think, in his or her decision-making. I think it makes a person more aware of the, um, the conventions that he or she is not aware of obeying until he or she sees, uh, that those conventions are not obeyed outside. So, I *fundamentally* think that learning about a place other than where you are from is an essential part of ... what the college is doing in providing an education. It's essential to the mission of our college in terms of – as we say at the end of our mission statement – um, “preparing students for the common good.” And, uh, it, it, you cannot understand the common good if you do not have any knowledge of people, ideas, places of outside of where you are from.

- Amardo (Professor, 15Jan14)

### Introduction

In this chapter, I deconstruct and analyze participants' perceived connotations of the well-used moniker “Horacian,” a term which I almost, mistakenly, took for granted. I explore the label as it is variously understood – by internationals, domestic students, and College professionals – and how, in some significant ways, its meaning can differ and have implications for international students. This chapter, then, is concerned with the ways in which the particulars of place matter, and how the Horace mission, campus, and its localized culture produce and situate meanings for participants. I ask: Who is a Horacian? What is a Horacian? How does being a Horacian differ for American and international students? To explore these questions, as well as how the adjustment paradigm (covered briefly in Chapters I and II) impacts relationships between Horace College international and domestic students and creates ruptures to a kind of Horacian coalescence, I survey data (mostly) from spring 2014 focus group conversations. Finally, my informants posit how being a Horacian can transform the cultural and ideological divides between people at the College and how the moniker might even bring these individuals closer together.

### “Horacian”: What's in a Name?

My investigation into the seemingly ubiquitous and matter-of-factly-used “Horacian” revealed that there are countless subjective meanings to the label. One consistency in the

definition of the label Horacian I discovered is that there are many kinds of student-Horacians. As Laura (Sr, F, Caribbean) explained, “I feel like everybody here embodies Horace in such different aspects of Horace” (17Apr14). And this fact, she noted, is also true for alumni, who continue to be connected to their Horace legacies. To clarify her point about embodying different aspects, Laura shared,

it’s a current state of being part of this community, whether you’re in your dorm room all the time or at the [dining hall] or at the gym. Like whatever your social sphere is on campus, as long as you have something to tie here, to tie yourself, um, to Horace, the campus, like, then – and you embrace Horace in some way, shape, or form – I think that’s what makes. At least, that’s what makes *me* define *myself* as a Horacian.

For Laura, the definition does not require specific qualities so much as it is important to have a connection to the College and to “embrace” Horace in one’s own way. In this way, she infers, everyone at Horace can indeed be a Horacian. Not only that, but, from her definition, Laura also considers herself a Horacian, a belief that not all internationals share.

Moreover, the operative word – as I found to be another consistency among my participants – is “at” Horace, not “in” Horace. That is, when I asked if being a Horacian only extends to students, Laura explained – and the other students around the table confirmed with head nods and “mm hm”s – that faculty and staff can be included, but that “townies<sup>57</sup>” (people in the town of Horace) generally cannot: “I think it all comes down to like your participation in the community. Um, in the campus community.” So in order for Laura to consider a Horace towns person as a Horacian, they must “associate with the college [more than just] coming to a public event or two.” In other words, Horacians are those with regular, active affiliations to the College, and if one is being honest, this means, according to my participants, that people in the Horace community surrounding the College are not of

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<sup>57</sup> The label “townie,” another well-used moniker among college and university students (around the United States), is often used pejoratively. Towns persons are often positioned as Others to those who live and/or work on campus. Among my participants, the term was generally met with laughter.

the same ilk. As April (Sr, F, WI) put it, unprompted, “I think right off the bat – and correct me if anyone disagrees with me – but ninety-nine point nine percent of the time a Horacian will not be used to describe somebody from the town” (FG #1s, 10Apr14). The group of American students agreed, and Macy (Jr, F, NY) added, “[a]nd when townies come to Horace as students [*Laughing*] they’re still considered townies! [*Laughter around table*].”

If there are many ways of being or defining a Horacian for those living/studying or working at the College, are there more prominent and consistently noted associations among the informants? Indeed, I discovered that among the many understandings of the term and amidst the many ways of expressing its meaning, a Horacian is usually one or a combination of four characteristics: political and social liberal-mindedness, belief in and advocacy for social justice, open-mindedness and a welcoming of difference, and pride in and connectedness to Horace College (and its liberal arts education and mission). How participants – and, again, I will outline mostly the perspectives of international students – framed these four features matters quite significantly at Horace because of the ways in which they give shape to the culture on campus as well as how these individuals freely identify with and/or are expected to identify with this culture. Because it is so prevalent, and so often taken for granted, the majority view of what it means to be a Horacian, is met with, by some, a mixture of acceptance and appreciation and, for others, discomfort and resistance. In many cases, being “liberal” and having a “social justice” orientation registered the strongest reactions, with many believing that these two characteristics give Horace its variously responded to institutional uniqueness and its rigid particularism.

### *“Liberal”*

Horacians are “liberal.” Of the connotations of Horacian that participants shared with me, political and social liberal-mindedness was most prevalent. A few internationals

noted in our first, fall interview that they had heard about Horace's liberal reputation before they arrived to campus. Jose (Sr, M, S America) noted that he was drawn to this politically "leftist" college because he grew up in a politically leftist and socially and politically active family setting. He also noted that many Horacians are "hipsters" who "want to be different from...popular society" and so they listen to "different music no one listens to" and "dress differently" (16Oct13). Ban (Sr, F, Middle East) shared that in her pre-arrival research of Horace, a current student told her that Horace was perhaps "too liberal" because there are "guys who dress like girls here and like all of that. Are sure you're up for it?" A bit confused about what this meant she read about the College and learned that the president is "Black and gay," which surprised and impressed her: "I want to be in a place like that liberal," she said to herself (6Nov13). Anand explained that his brother, who had attended a different American liberal arts college, told him that Horace had a "very distinct personality" of being "very liberal." From his vantage point, Anand said that liberalness at Horace included "tons of marijuana everywhere," a "social justice aspect," and a political disposition wherein the "college [was liberal] in like a conservative state" (10Oct13). These early impressions – which were based on Internet research and second-hand information – in many ways parallel the perceptions of these, and other, now-current students; though, definitions and perceptions of liberalness did vary among the larger international student participant group. For Elizabeth (Associate Dean and Director of International Student Affairs), political liberalness is less salient at Horace today. She explained, "historically at Horace to be a Horacian maybe meant more of an activist mindset and more of a, um, a maybe even a leftist, liberal kind of perspective. Um, but I think that's evolved" recently, particularly this year when listening sessions with the President focused on political and religious diversity on campus (28Apr14).



For the most part, however, my understanding of what it means to be a Horacian relative to various understandings of the connotation about liberalness came from the three focus groups I conducted in the spring 2014 semester. (In fact, the four characteristics were quite interwoven in these focus group sessions. For the purposes of clarity here I treat them separately, but I stress that they are interrelated.) For example, an exchange between American students Mona (Sr, F, CA), April (Sr, F, WI), and Lucy (Sr, F, NY) is revealing:

Mona: ...Um, I have some friends who wouldn't, like they consider themselves conservative and they wouldn't, um, identify as Horacian just because. Yeah, a Horacian is pretty much tolerant, tolerant and accepting, [*Chuckling*] except for people who don't

[*At the same time*] Mona: think the same way. April: Think the same ways.

[*At the same time*] Lucy: I mean, they're political. Mona: Yeah. Yes.

April: Yes, political progressives.

In this instance, being a Horacian and political liberalness is one and the same, that is, being a person who is tied to an ideology and who are “tolerant and accepting” of those who share the same progressive viewpoint. Mona explains that her Horace student friends who are conservatives would not identify themselves as a Horacian. Moreover, she implies, “political progressives” on campus might well not consider their political counterparts Horacians either, as Horace College, the logic seems to go, is a “liberal” place. A bit earlier, with Macy chuckling, April explained that the presumption of Horace being a liberal bubble of sorts means “Horace’s really accepting of people who already agree with us<sup>58</sup>.” To this end, Mona and April agreed, with April adding, “And we have this kind of mob mentality sometimes, I think, when it comes to politics.”

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<sup>58</sup> This is a theme that I often heard from Horace students, both international and American, and one that I discuss several times in the following pages of this chapter.

In a similar exchange (15Apr14), Danushka (So, M, SE Asia) and Zhenya (So, F, E Europe) discuss the irony of Horace being “a progressive, like open-minded school”

(Danushka) in relation to religion and, especially, politics:

Zhenya: I don't feel like you can be suppressed here because you're religious. I do definitely feel like if you're conservative and you're open about it, you might

Danushka: [*Cutting her off*] Like, you can't be a R-

Zhenya: You can-

Danushka: [*Cutting her off*] Republican in Horace. Like that's something that people actually talk about. Like there's no way like you can actually say to a group of like progressive-minded like Horacians, “Oh, I support the Republican party.”

Zhenya: Well, I know people like that. Like, [D: Yeah.] like people have a harder time [D: Yeah.] communicating. Just like probably avoid talking about politics.

Once again, there exists a belief that to be a Horacian has a particular underlying political association, one that makes it difficult to be conservative on campus. As above, there is a tension for these students in the supposed open-mindedness of Horace College. People at Horace are open to differences perhaps, but only so far as they do not stray too far politically from a liberal, progressive center.

This is a point that Joonsik (Jr, M, E Asia) also took up in this focus group session when he stated that “to be a true Horacian you gotta be really liberal and acceptful,” which is, to him, a falsity because people at Horace often “pretend to be liberal” when “they accept only certain [kinds of] difference.” He laments that at Horace

you gotta follow only one, um, ideology, I will say. Because I feel like if you don't support gay right or any of those right of the majority group you're to support, then you're considered to be [Danushka: Mm hm.] a non-liberal person and a person who doesn't fit in the society. And I'll be honest, like I'm cool, as Danushka says, I'm cool about seeing gay people, lesbian – I wasn't too comfortable at the beginning, but living here for one year, two year, three year, too, I change. I don't see any judgmental look for them. They're my friends. I even got asked out [*Chuckling*] two times. And I'm pretty cool. I mean, I'm not that cool, but like. Um, [*Chuckles softly*] but it's okay, I accept it. But there's some things I learned are most important. I know it's okay because it's their business, but I don't want to support it because I

don't, I do disagree on their point. But this school make you to agree on them. And if you don't agree they consider you wrong! So I found lots of hypocritical people in Horace. So in my own sense like I met many great people, many great friends, but there's like some hidden side in Horace that come, blocking the true motive or liberal education, I feel like.

For Joonsik, being a liberal Horacian is not so straightforward. Certainly, he affirmed, he has become a more open-minded person being exposed to forms of difference in people he otherwise had not been; however, the degree to which one must conform, or adjust, to the Horace standard of liberalness is troubling to Joonsik because, while he is a congenial student-citizen at Horace, he does not share all of the views of the majority campus culture. This is really a disappointment to Joonsik, who very much appreciates his Horace experience, but disagrees with the idea that “to be a true Horacian you should be liberal. But at the same time”

Danushka: [*Interrupting Joonsik*] But a very specific kind of liberal.

Joonsik: Yeah, very specific type of liberal. For me, I don't think I fit in this school. Um, I met good people to hang out, make great memories. I still keep in touch with some graduated students. But I honestly don't think I fit in in this school.

Joonsik has really internalized his belief that he is something other than “a very specific kind of liberal.” With what I perceived as dejection in his voice, he admitted that perhaps he simply does not “fit in” at Horace because he is not, so to speak, a good Horacian.

For Soufien (So, M, N Africa), as I touched on in the previous chapter, being a Horacian also means being liberal and has different connotations for American and international students. Soufien believes that being liberal for American students is to be politically on the left, not a Republican, of which he said, “I have not seen that many” on the Horace campus (FG #3, 17Apr14). To be a Horacian as an American student, he noted, could also be one who is “socially active.” For international students, who are not necessarily of the same ideological persuasion as their American counterparts, on the other hand, fitting

in on the Horace campus “absolutely” requires suppressing opinions and parts of their personalities, particularly when it comes to talking about and making jokes about race and stereotypes: “they *don’t* really express their ideas, I think. Only sometimes amongst a few international students. They don’t say it out loud with other American students” for fear of being accused of being a “racist.” From his vantage point being from a developing country and being, often, critical of American and Western values, Soufien ties together his own stereotype of American students as uniformly liberal and ideologically Other to (all) international students, positioning them as people who are quick to judge and who inhibit internationals from being open and expressive about difference on the Horace campus.

Finally, and crucially, these differing connotations, many internationals explained, do not simply affect their lives on campus; a “liberal” Horace education – and even simply attending college in the U.S. – can greatly impact relationships international informants have with friends in their home countries.<sup>59</sup> Danushka, Joonsik, Brenda, Zawadiye, and Jose each shared how being “exposed to so many new things,” such as philosophy, feminism, sociology, and being on a “safe campus with a lot of safe space to express everything you feel,” can result in changes to “your ideals and your outlook” (Danushka, FG #2s, 15Apr14). Consequently, these students expressed, many of their relationships either changed or ended because they and their friends no longer saw one another the same way or shared the same values. Danushka noted that when he returned home for the summer break his friends “start[ed] seeing me as a deviant person” and someone who now had “more like liberal, like progressive thoughts.” He went on to explain,

[i]f I’m, if they’re saying like, if they’re calling someone “gay” or like, and like, they’re like saying something in a condescending way, I’ll be like, “No dude, that’s not right. You shouldn’t say that.” And they’ll be like, “Oh, what are you gonna?” [*Chuckles*]

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<sup>59</sup> International informants’ relationships with friends and family back home (and in other countries) and their relationships with their home country is a subject I will discuss in greater length in Chapter VI.

*softly*] They start giving me shit for it. Um, that kind of thing. And if they, and. Back home there is a pretty racist culture, too. So if they, they would just make jokes that I would just consider benign like two years ago. But then they would make jokes against like Indian people or Black people. Then I'm like, "Dude, that's not, you, you shouldn't say that kinda stuff." [*Smiling*] And then they'll be like, "Oh, are you, what are you? Are you an American now? You're gonna tell us not to say these things?" So that kind of thing is interesting, yeah.

Me: How do you feel about that reaction from your friends?

Danushka: It's hard because I can't just be like, "No dude, you're wrong." Because I also understand, I guess. Because I grew up with them. And I was like them, too. But then. I don't know, it's, because it's me against like, I don't know, 10 of my friends, I can't just be like, "No, listen" and then give them a lecture about everything. I changed through time. So I can't just, uh, in like two months, over the summer, change their mind either. I don't know, it's kind of frustrating, but I also just choose to not emphasize it too much in conversation. Yeah.

Danushka finds it "frustrating" to hang out with his friends back home because his experience abroad, namely at Horace, has made him more socially aware of homophobia and racism and has given him the courage to speak up against the offensive jokes his friends make. It is important to Danushka to name ignorance when he sees it. However, these actions have consequences; having more liberal and progressive thoughts earned him the censure of his friend group. Knowing well the social context his friends live in and that he cannot force his friends to change their beliefs any time soon, Danushka decided to keep his differing values to himself.

### ***"Social Justice"***

As many of the examples above demonstrate, a social justice orientation is also often considered part and parcel of being a Horacian. Perhaps more than any of the other three characteristics I discuss here, believing in and working towards social justice is the closest to an actual institutional value, as it is very much central to the mission of the College, which, in part, states that its graduates are individuals "who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities *to serve the common good*" (emphasis added). Elizabeth was clear

when she stated the importance of social justice to a Horacian identity: “It’d be pretty hard to be a Horacian and say, ‘I think social justice is stupid.’ [*Laughs*] You know, I think it’d be kinda hard to pull those apart probably. Um, but I think we’ve broadened our definition of social justice to be very inclusive” to where, for example, one can “have a social justice mindset and work in the corporate world” (28Apr14). Danushka agreed with this sentiment, stating, “Horace is known for like the social justice part of it” because the people who attend the College are “idealist[s]” and “good” and “very like motivated to like, uh, strive for causes, um, that they believe in. Which is a good thing” (FG #2s, 15Apr14). In the same focus group, Zhenya echoed this point, and the mission of the college: Horacians “strive for social justice and...work for the common good.”

According to American student Ron (So, M, MN), being a Horacian is tied to social justice ideals endemic to the far-reaching mission Horace College. For international students, this has significant implications, he explained:

I think a Horacian is someone who’s not only committed to social justice but kindness. ... Um, social justice has two. It’s a two-sided coin. I think we can look at it with that critical eye and say, “They’re, oh, they’re just. International students are just a number. We wanna get them here, um, to get another student’s yada, yada, yada.” Or, um – and this may have already come up in the conversation, but – it’s also to provide opportunities for those, um, who otherwise would not have them. Like my roommate never would have been able to pay for college if he hadn’t have heard of Horace. Um, cuz is parents own a farm. I mean, uhh, and that would have been tough. But because this institution exists and because he was able to connect to it, um, and have that opportunity, he was able to, you know, be risen up. And hopefully to continue to become more successful as he wants to, uh, in life. So, I think being a Horacian is someone who sticks to that mentality and lives up in their actions (FG #1s, 10Apr14).

Ron’s contention that internationals are not simply a number contradicts views of his American counterparts<sup>60</sup>; however, I would contend that his view that Horacians, and Horace College, help these students “rise up” in life is a mixture of commitment to equity in

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<sup>60</sup> See the discussion in the previous chapter on page 146 regarding American participants’ views about the extent to which they believe international students are a statistic and useful for College brochures.

global higher education and an American brand of paternalism and arrogance in which, because Ron's roommate's (Maurice, So, M, E Africa) "parents own a farm" he would not have been able to have opportunities for upward mobility were it not for the generosity of Horace College. This form of social justice, for Ron, is a "kindness" rooted in making people's lives better, a form of kindness to which he believes Horace is dedicated.

International participants have mixed perceptions about the association between a Horacian identity and social justice principles. Internationals like Vincci (Sr, F, SE Asia) and Alya (Sr, F, Middle East) believed that their strongest friendships on campus were due to the fact that they were not only aware of and advocated for social justice but that "we all have this common goal of like, um, of almost like dedicating our lives to like social equality or social justice, right?" (Vincci, 27Feb14). Alya explained, "Instead of like – and this is still a tension in Horace – but instead of like making Horace, um, a reflection of the real world or going by like these very realistic standards, [she and her friends, and many other Horacians strive to make] Horace a utopia. Um, not necessarily something at all reflective of what you're going to have to deal with once you leave Horace" (13Feb14). This, she told me, has united her and her friends and was "the best thing I could have asked from this college" because "I enjoyed coming here and having like *amazing* debates with people who were all trying to think of like how to be, how do we make the world better and *enact* social justice, and how do we compromise theory and activism" (original emphases). Alya lauded the Horace utopian incubator that gave students like her and her friends the opportunity to learn how to make the world a better place after they graduate. Mahdee (Sr, M, Middle East) agreed that many Horacians have "an idea of Horace as like being this sort of haven" but said that "hippie dippie ideals" and a "holistic sort of natural, free environment" is "a really nice idea. But unfortunately, the world [*Chuckles*] doesn't work like that" (3Mar14). Mahdee

noted that the world, and Horace College, is not a haven separate from the “friction[s]” of modernity and the turn, for example, to students who “come from a slightly more wealthy background.”<sup>61</sup> As much as these students value, or recognize the value of, social justice at Horace, they agree that campus “tension” may not sustain commitment to it.

From another vantage point, international students in a spring 2014 focus group contended that social justice has different meanings and implications for American and international students. As Yating (Sr, F, SE Asia) explained,

I think Americans stress more about social justice as a part of the identity of Horacian. Whereas, I don’t know, at least for me and some of my other international friends, we don’t really care about social justice. Like we want the human race to be good. And after we make enough money we want to donate money to charity or make the world better, uh, in general. But we don’t necessarily want to start from a grassroot to make like one person good. I don’t know what I mean.

Working through her own understandings of social justice, Yating believes that there are differences in how people at Horace can and do view ways to “make the world better.”

Yating’s conception of an American brand of social justice focuses on social activism and grassroots efforts in which change is affected on a small scale. Ignoring the ideas that grassroots efforts are not only American and are not necessarily as small scale as she perceives them to be, this type of social justice is in contrast to her (and her friends’) preferred method of self-ensured upward mobility and later donation to worthy causes.

Conversely, Laura (Sr, F, Caribbean) and Ashwini (So, F, S Asia) felt, on the one hand, that their social justice concerns were filtered through different and differently complex dynamics associated with problems directly tied to their home countries and, on the other, that the energies they devoted to learning about social justice and creating positive

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<sup>61</sup> When I asked about changes over the course of their undergraduate careers at Horace College, international participants such as Anand, Alya, Vincci, Jose, and Mahdee, all seniors, suggested that the make-up of the student body has changed somewhat because more students appear to be wealthier. Wealthy students, they told me either directly or indirectly, are less committed to social justice priorities. This trend, in turn, has impacted these students’ perceptions about the degree to which Horace College students will continue to be invested in social justice education and social change for “the common good.”



change were necessarily for the benefit of their home countries and other, similar developing nations. For example, Laura offered to the group,

I guess for a lot of us coming from developing countries like seeing inequality, or like living in a space where inequality is persistent, we look at, we look at ways for solving the problems differently. [*Smiling*] And it's like, "Oh, you *could*, um, like send all this aid to these countries. But then there's corruption." [Yating: Mm hm.] So you know, we just, we just think about things differently.

She went on to suggest, however, that Horace classrooms, such as her Global Development Studies (GDS) course, and the wider campus, serve as a "convergence point" where the social justice concerns of students from the U.S. and around the world can talk about important issues and learn from each other. In large part, for Laura, this also requires educating American students about her home country, which, in turn, "allows us to come to a convergence point on what it means to be a Horacian and how that affects what we'll do after Horace." In addition, she explained, "And so, we definitely take different paths and different approaches, but like Horace being a convergence point is like critical to like each of us reshaping our definition of being a Horacian, whether international or domestic student." Therefore, where differences may exist and American students may lack first-hand context to issues abroad, Laura is willing to create bridges for her classmates – an important aspect to her of being a Horacian and to learning about different approaches to social justice.

Ashwini, building on Laura's comments and reflecting on her own experience in the GDS course, noted, "the concept of social justice" is "kind of different for, for people in a developed country versus people from a developing versus people from an underdeveloped country." She explained, "it's interesting to hear what Americans, an American student's perspective on like issues going on in [my country]" because Americans have only read about, for example, social movements opposing dam construction, and these students' ideas about what should be done stand in contrast to "what I have been like seeing and heard

about the entire movement [back home]. Eh, I, I just feel like the social justice movement here, they have their own issues, but we have our like much graver issues to work with.” In other words, she clarified, “I’m not that much involved in social justice in campus right now” because the issues in her home country, “or in *any* developing country” are more important to her (original emphasis). Or as Yating put it, jumping into the conversation, “Yeah, I agree with that. It’s like that is what’s related to us. [Ashwini: Yeah.] It’s like more a priority of doing something that would help where we are from first.”

It seems clear that on the subject of social justice, international student participants view things differently than American informants and that, within these contrasts, there is great potential for learning. And yet, there are also differences between international viewpoints. Where Alya and Vincci, who each have American and international friends, view social justice at Horace in very holistic ways that infuse their lives on and beyond campus, Yating, Laura, and Ashwini (who each noted having few domestic friends) believe that there are distinct dissimilarities between how international and American students view and understand social justice in a wider global context. And while it requires an additional burden, so to speak, to educate her domestic classmates, Laura views the classroom – and perhaps thereby the liberal arts medium of learning – as an important site for cooperation and understanding about the wider world. This parallels Stanley’s (2000) belief that the liberal arts classroom is a site for broadening the scope of learning about international issues and for increasing “global competence,” as well as Marden and Engerman (1992), who contend that the liberal arts cultivate in students “an openness to new ideas and experiences, a sense of personal and societal responsibility, and a capacity for self-reeducation” (p. 45). Furthermore, there is potential here to disrupt what Gillespie (2002) argues is “a kind of passivity and insularity” (p. 264) within the liberal arts approach to international education in

which faculty and curriculum strive to intellectually contest hegemonic unevenness around the globe and “develop values and practices that run counter” to them (p. 267).

### *Proud and Connected*

Another dimension of being a Horacian I often heard from participants – not usually associated with either liberalness or social justice – was pride in and a feeling of connectedness to Horace College – the institution, the setting, and the people. For example, Yating noted that being a Horacian “is the willingness of us to associate ourselves to Horace.” She explained,

[L]ike when people ask, “Where do you come from?” I said, “Oh, Horace. We go to school in Horace.” Like we just think about Horace quite frequently, and that’s why. That’s, it’s through this process of four years that we gradually identify ourselves as Horacians. One more thing is that, um, as Horacians we are pretty willing to help reach out to other Horacians, and help encourage students to solve problems after we graduate.

Yating, proud of her Horacianness, goes out of her way to connect herself to Horace and to ensure that other people know where she is “from.” Moreover, being a Horacian is an identity that blossoms on campus and continues beyond the college years because as alumni Horacians are well networked and seek to continue helping one another. This kind of commitment to Horace is, in part, Ndaba shared, due to the fact that Horace is “an isolated place,” unlike, say, New York City, which has obvious appeal for many people. Those who recognize the uniqueness of Horace want to be there: “So generally I would say Horacians really feel part of this community. They’re kind of like engaged. And they really like feel like a sense of belonging, like they’re, like they’re here because they want to, not just because they came to get the degree.” And that sense of community for international students is important. Kusturie, in the same focus group, explained that being a Horacian is all about “belonging in this community.” Because internationals are “far from home,” she commented, there is a desire for and appreciation of the “social solidarity among us,

regardless, like if it's among internationals, and, um, the native Americans here or not.”

Yating, Ndaba, and Kusturie each freely associate with Horace College and proudly identify as Horacians. What is more, these students, and all who expressed pride in and a connectedness to Horace, exemplify the exhibition of the “ways of being” (a person’s actual social practices and relations) and “ways of belonging” (those practices which endorse identity and that encompass a conscious connection with a particular group) endemic to transnational social fields (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, pp. 1010-11; see also Chapter I).

Horace, I was also told, is unique, particularly for international students, and a certain kind of pride resonates from this fact. Ashwini spoke to this idea, saying that not only is “being a Horacian...so unique” because “it’s these awesome looking buildings in the middle of cornfields,” but that the people who choose to attend Horace “are a kind of different in *some* way, that’s why they choose to come to such a different place” (FG #3s, 17Apr14). She reasoned that international students who choose Horace are each unique because they do not simply go “where everybody’s going” or “follow the herd” to big colleges in their countries or institutions abroad that have “big brand names”:

I don’t see many people following a liberal arts pattern in [my home country]. Cuz they don’t believe that, you know, it’s a good thing. They, they’re more career-oriented. Like [Yating: Yeah.] where they can earn their money back. It’s like an investment! So you get something in return. Like with Horace investment you get like *a lot* of things in return, not especially monetary terms.

When I asked Ashwini what kind of investment one procures at Horace, she explained that a Horace education is an ongoing process of learning, of growing up as a person and maturing. To have taken the path less traveled and to be gaining so much and so many skills that will set her apart from her national counterparts has been well worth the risk for students like Ashwini. She is proud to be a Horacian, to be “unique” and “different.” And

this kind of risk for a prior-to-arrival unknown payoff of unique and different learning and growth is no small risk. As Yating was quick to share, following Ashwini,

for every international student it's pretty much a big investment to abroad to go to a college. So if you know that after college, after you finish your degree for four years with so much hard work you can't find a job here – or you can't find a job anywhere – then what's the point of coming to the United States and studying and getting the best education in the world? And that's why I think we said we don't usually choose the schools without big names or something, yeah.

On the one hand, then, it is understandable to see why Ashwini has such affinity for Horace College: going off the beaten path in her home country creates a lot of unknown for her future. On the other hand, what Horace has given her and the possibilities that lie ahead comprise a special opportunity the likes of which most people she knows back home will never experience.

#### *Open-minded and Welcoming*

Finally, there is a belief by some of my participants that being a Horacian also implies open-mindedness and being welcoming to everyone. In many ways, I discussed this theme in Chapter IV as it relates to the diversity context at Horace and the ways in which international informants do and do not believe that they and other international students feel a part of the College's diverse student body. Judy, director of the Horace writing center, aptly described this aspect of what, to her, it means to be a Horacian. When I asked about relationships between American and international students, she replied, "Horace as, as you undoubtedly know, really prides itself on, on being open and on being accepting. Well, except for maybe really right-wing politics. Um, and so it wouldn't be Horacian not to, um, value diversity and diverse experience. And I, and I think people are serious about that." (9Apr14). International and American Horacians alike, she seems to say, value one another; and yet, is there also an implication here that Horacians are Americans who value the diversity and diverse experience that international students bring to Horace? Helen, the

director of the health center replied similarly, “By and large, Horacians are friendly and welcoming,” generally speaking and specifically to international students (1Apr14).

For some, however, as I discussed above, there was a distinct irony in the notion that Horace, being a purportedly liberal and social justice-oriented institution with a majority of people claiming these ideological persuasions, could be an open and welcoming place. Judy’s admission just above makes the point clear: Horace is open and accepting, “except for maybe really right-wing politics.” And as April put it, “Horace’s really accepting of people who already agree with us [those among the left-leaning majority].” Or, as Danushka and Joonsik explained, in order to fit in well at Horace, a person must be “a very specific kind of liberal.” Indeed, there seem to be very explicit, though, with the exception of these examples, little discussed limits to the open-mindedness at Horace. For international students like Joonsik that do not agree uniformly with very specific tenets of political liberalism and/or who grew up in more conservative countries, cultures, or families, there are some pretty specific consequences. Recalling a time when he debated classmates by sharing alternative, more conservative viewpoints, he noted he was instructed by a professor, “Joonsik, um, instead of keep arguing, break the discussion, uh, atmosphere, you should just listen and try to understand there are different types of people.” From such experiences, Joonsik has learned to keep his opinions to himself because at Horace “they just tell me I’m wrong and tell me I’m an ignorant guy” (FG #2s, 15Apr14).

In our spring interview, Alya shared her thoughts on the detriments of the Horace “bubble.” Responding to my request to hear about a challenging academic experience, she described a time when, like Joonsik, she expressed a “dissenting opinion,” in her case about the Israel-Palestine conflict, a topic that hits close to home for Alya (13Feb14):

[w]e never coalition build in Horace. We’re, we’re so! Because, we also align on a lot of things, anyways, as a community, we don’t like talk to people who disagree with

us. And what we don't realize – and this is a part of like the whole utopia versus reality: where do you, where do you go for the utopia, where do you go for the reality? – is like, you can't get anything passed in Congress [*Chuckling*] if you're not dialoging with people who disagree with you! You can't, and a lot of the time we sit here in like little communities that just like tell each other, "You're right, you're right, you're right, you're right, you're right." And I think it's why Horacians leave here and have a hard time – and I think that Horacians are really smart – but have a hard time really pushing a lot of policy, really doing a lot of things is *because* we're in such a bubble. We don't experience a lot of dissenting opinions, right?

Alya recognizes, like Mahdee, that the world beyond Horace's campus is not utopic in the ways that she describes Horace being. If her, and Joonsik's, classmates do not "experience a lot of dissenting opinions," Alya asks, how are they to be strong critical thinkers and compassionate debaters, both of which are liberal arts learning objectives? It may be comforting to be surrounded by those who agree with you and tell you "you're right," but it may also make life as a Horace graduate more difficult having not learned more genuine open-mindedness and the capacity to welcome difference.

It is perhaps fair, then, to say, as Macy did, "I think parts of Horace are accepting. And I think there are parts – and I can imagine this for international students – that would be really unaccepting" (10Apr14). For instance, Lucy noted that people in the community (or "townies") who work in the dining hall are visibly short with internationals ("Like just *deal* with them!") and assume that these students, when they are "not able to communicate in English perfectly" are "less intelligent" than American, native-speaking employees. Macy cited Horace's acceptance of "different sexualities and different gender norms and ways of expressing yourself" as being potentially off-putting for and may result in international students with more conservative backgrounds being "kind of shot down" for expressing, say, a dissenting opinion. To this, Lucy described her resident advisor's quandary about an international student friend's regular use of the phrase "that's so gay," and recalled that the student advisor posited to her,

“[h]ow do I like understand that that’s like okay from like where he is and that it’s not okay here?” And like, “How do I get him like to understand that without feeling attacked and like ‘Othered’ as like someone who wasn’t, who like isn’t from this country and doesn’t fully know the connotations of what he’s saying, in some way?”

The American students in the focus group did not offer any resolutions to these challenging situations, but admitted that language, cultural, and ideological differences can be prevalent on campus. These incidences both heightened their awareness of difference and challenged their understandings of what it means to be an open and accepting person.

Beyond associations to political orientation and social justice-mindedness, international informants regularly noted how welcoming people are at Horace College. Brenda (Sr, F, E Africa) remarked how much she appreciated being on a small campus and “the whole sense of community” (28Jan14). Whether it’s professors, staff, or other students, “everyone makes you wanted and special and they treat you like...an individual. And they get to know you.” Mirza (Fr, M, E Europe) noted, “I found the Horace community welcoming, and I have really good relationships with, for example, staff members on campus, facilities management, host parents, people on the street. So very inclusive, I would say” (11Feb14). Zawadiye (So, F, E Africa) shared, “I feel like a lot of people here are so welcoming and hospitable” and that many people in the Horace community have invited her over for dinner (14Mar14). In addition, in a fall 2013 focus group (1Oct13), several students raved about the host family program, how wonderful most of the participating families are, and how the program signals to them an effort being made by the college to have internationals feel comfortable and welcome in Horace. Several international participants noted in another fall focus group (2Oct13) that they were surprised by and were appreciative of the friendly smiles, waves, and greetings they received from people at Horace when they first arrived.



What it means to be a Horacian is very subjective. As Ndaba suggested, “no matter how much I try to be broad I will never be able to totally define it because in a way I will still exclude some component” (FG #3s, 17Apr14). While true, I found that the majority of people in the study agreed, for better or worse, that the moniker has particular associations: a Horacian is liberal, believes in social justice, connects to and is proud of the college, and is open-minded and welcoming. And if Elizabeth is right when she says, “I think people who say, ‘I’m a Horacian’ are people who have made the choice to invest [emotionally and intellectually] in this place,” then being a Horacian, just like (Elizabeth’s belief about) the definition of social justice, must be subjective, understood broadly and in “very inclusive” ways, and ever-open to evolution (28Apr14)<sup>62</sup>. Moreover, to the extent that the College, and its many student, staff, and faculty-residents, seek to be that kind of very inclusive place, more attention needs to be given to the ways in which Horace is – or, perhaps more accurately, is aspiring to be – a global institution. As I have suggested in previous chapters, this will require active listening to international students about how being a Horacian is and is not about being liberal, believing in social justice, connecting to and being proud of the college, and being open-minded and welcoming. Genuine efforts in understanding how internationals identify with the College will also help to ensure that the arrogance and insistence of the adjustment paradigm, wherein “[t]he international student ‘adjusts’ to the host nation but not vice versa” (Marginson, 2013, p. 12), is not explicitly or implicitly dictating meanings of the well-used moniker.

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<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, the College will be taking a different approach to defining the moniker if it decides to follow the guidance of Crane MetaMarketing Ltd. to create its “institutional identity.” That is, it seems that by hiring the consulting firm, Horace College seeks to have a more uniform definition of a Horacian in order to brand itself nationally and globally for marketing purposes. In its Trial Promise Statement, the firm has done its best to typecast the College and what it means to be a Horacian. The first of five paragraphs states: “Horace is the national liberal arts college where *thinking otherwise* defines the once-in-a-lifetime intellectual discourse that catalyzes original scholarship, spurs global endeavors, galvanizes internships and fellowships, inspires social justice pursuits, and sets the tone for each student’s ongoing personal and professional transformation into an incisively prepared, critically thinking, and socially conscious human being: a *Horacian*” (Crane MetaMarketing Ltd., 2014, original emphases; see Appendix VI on page 351 for the full Statement).

### **Adapting and Adjusting (to One Another): Vantage Points**

As I discussed in the first and second chapters of the dissertation, the notion that people must adapt and adjust (or assimilate) to life in the United States and to the particulars of the campus culture of the institution they attend gains particular salience when discussing the experience of international students. Moreover, I have contended that, to some degree, all students engage in a process – of varying form, length, and intensity – of self-discovery, change, and growth in order to fit in and fit themselves in (at Horace College). As Mona, an American student who did not at first identify as a Horacian aptly stated, “it’s really hard when you come here and you have to assimilate to the Horace culture, like the Horace College culture. And you don’t necessarily like coming in already feel that way” (FG #1s, 10Apr14). Over time, she explained, “it’s by your mindset and your practices on campus” that one becomes a Horacian. As such, students of all backgrounds and beliefs must find their way. According to Marginson (2014, p. 12), however,

[s]elf formation among international students is especially interesting because it can involve substantial changes in compressed time periods. International students move across geographical, political, cultural, and linguistic borders; they are engaged in rapid learning about the new country; and they negotiate plural identities on a more or less constant basis.

Indeed, there are important differences in the form, length, and intensity of individual international students’ processes of self-formation and of becoming, should they so choose to identify that way, a Horacian compared to those of their domestic counterparts. In fact, there is much to be said about how “assimilating to the Horace College culture” (read also American and U.S. higher education cultures) impacts international informants’ experiences at Horace and how they feel about the real or perceived need and desire to adjust.

### *Reconsidering Discussions About Adjustment*

Scholarly discussions of adjustment generally focus on the ways in which international students, by virtue of their unfamiliarity with the “host” context, struggle to fit in on campus, to make sense of their lives in a new place, and to reconcile the cultural differences between their home countries and the host country. While there can be many areas of concentration, those that garner the greatest attention are usually the adjustment to a new place, especially if the HEI is in a small town or city; adapting to issues related to language, most often challenges with reading and writing academic English as well as cultural references in social situations with domestic students; adjusting to the expectations and demands of a new (usually Western) tertiary educational system; adapting to social life, most notably the prevalence of drinking, drug use, and sex at American HEIs; and the adjustments needed to make and sustain relationships and even close friendships with American students. International students at Horace College are no exception; in fact, my international participants and I spent considerable time discussing these (and other such) issues and how they personally experienced early adjustment to Horace, both on their own and collaboratively with (usually other international) friends, and how, in some cases, they are still figuring out certain of these areas of adjustment one, two, or three years later.

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore the many, and very important, even life-defining, contours of informants’ adjustment experiences, I take the position that this kind of discussion is well known to the scholarly discourse about international students<sup>63</sup>. Moreover, as I discussed in Chapters I and II, literary discussions of adaptation often devolve into the myriad ways in which – again, by virtue of these students’ presumed unfamiliarity with the host country and culture – internationals are deficient

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<sup>63</sup> In truth, the decision to leave out a more detailed discussion of informants’ perceptions about and experiences with adjustment is a difficult one for me. My conversations in interviews with informants about the Horace campus, language issues, U.S. and liberal arts education, Horace party culture, and friendships revealed to me the degree to which each of these topics were/are formative and salient in the lives of many international participants. Nevertheless, and unfortunately, one cannot include all of the data she/he collects in the field.

academically, socially, and culturally (Coate, 2009; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Eland and Thomas, 2013; and Sidhu and Dall’Alba, 2012). Additionally, as I have argued, there is too often a presumption that all students from abroad attending American HEIs must adapt in order to survive on campus and that these individuals acknowledge and submit to this requirement. In order to give the adjustment discussion the full and serious attention I, too, believe it merits, I devote space below to charting the conversations I had with international and American student informants about the salience of adjustment, *for both* internationals and domestic students. Together, we explored – and I committed myself to listening to – what these individuals felt were the most important aspects related to expectations about and the implications of adjusting and adapting to each another. In other words, I am choosing here to focus on the fifth dimension of adjustment I listed above: relationships between internationals and domestic students. I do this because I believe in the significance of relationships between people and because I discovered that participants’ perceptions about relations between international and American also spoke to other facets of adjustment. Additionally, I argue that my international student informants reclaim, through sharing their perspectives about adjustment, the co-optation of the adjustment conversation by scholars. As Marginson (2014) contends, each international student is “a strong agent piloting the course of her/his life,” not someone who is “habitually weak or deficient” (p. 12). Therefore, like Marginson, I believe that these individuals, as “subjects of research,” should, can, and do “influence [research] content” (2014, p. 9).

To guide this section about relationships between international and American students, I turn to the responses to two of the questions I posed to international and American participants during my final spring 2014 focus groups. To international students I asked, “to what extent do you all think you, as international students, need to adapt and

adjust to the culture/campus here in the States?” and “to what extent do you think that Americans on campus should adapt and adjust to you all, to international students and their cultures, needs, and ways of doing things?” Conversely, to American informants, I asked, “to what extent do you all think international students need to adapt and adjust to culture here in the States?” and “to what extent do you all think that you and the other American students on campus should adapt and adjust to international students and their cultures and ways of doing things?” Participants’ answers to these questions – and the larger topics they usher – are revealing and further complicate, in significant ways, the contours of the Horace experience for international student informants. Furthermore, exploration into the nuances of participants’ beliefs on these topics, and the differences between international and American vantage points, offers insights into the extent to which the adjustment paradigm is and is not prevalent at Horace College, and how it colors informants’ perceptions about what it means to be a Horacian.

In addition, the use of focus groups for this very important, sometimes sensitive, subject was also intentional. Focus groups enabled me, as I discussed in Chapter III, to observe the social aspects of meaning making. Moreover, these group sessions provided the ability to explore taken-for-granted cultural assumptions in the ways people talk with one another (Hollander, 2004; Sieg, 2008; Warr, 2005). And importantly, focus groups were well suited for ethnic minority groups – in this case, international students – because they were spaces in which people who shared backgrounds, views, and opinions could engage safely in research about them (Liamputtong, 2010; Madriz, 2000).

### *International Student Perspectives*

In my first focus group with internationals during the spring 2014 semester, Zhenya (So, F, E Europe), Joonsik (Jr, M, E Asia), and Danushka (So, M, SE Asia) agreed that there

is a disconnect between international and American students at Horace. For his part,

Danushka was clear about why relationships between internationals and Americans suffer:

[y]eah, I didn't really make that much of an effort to connect with American friends, per se.... There's a double standard, I think, in terms of learning different people's culture. International students are just sort of geared to learn a lot about American culture. And then that way we can fit in and make friends. But I feel like there's not as much of an emphasis for domestic American students to learn about other people's cultures to make friends. Because if you're an international student, if you learn about all the pop culture, American, you know, customs, you can fit in and become friends with the Americans. But it's usually not the other way around, where American students try to become friends with, uhh, international students, and they show an eagerness to learn about, you know, their customs as well. So what I, what ends up happening is, I, that's why I just, most of my best friends are international students. And among my international students and myself, we do have like White American friends. It's usually like sort of the few minority Americans who are sort of raised in a way to very, to be very open to learning about new cultures. Like there are just some people who are like automatically very interested to hear about how we do things. And so, and so those kinds of people are the White Americans that I become friends with and can hang out. Otherwise, you just, I also have kind of stopped making an effort to get more friends. Because I already have a pretty close-knit group of, what do you call it? There's a comfort zone for me to stay.

Danushka's position that there is a "double standard" between international and American students' willingness and interest to learn about one another inhibited him from making friends with domestic students, even from his earliest days on campus. From his vantage point, then, there is no point in making the effort himself because he has for so long been disappointed in Americans' lack of effort and care to get to know him. In large part, he noted earlier, he links this to his belief that Americans are "a lot more individual-oriented" than most international students. Only a few domestic students of color, he clarifies, defy this generalization of Americans. They are, crucially, "very open to learning about new cultures," unlike their White counterparts (a point I discussed in the previous chapter)<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, Joonsik feels the same way about non-White, second-generation friends from Mexican-American and El Salvadorian-American backgrounds. From his vantage point, there is considerably more overlap in interests; therefore, he has made strong personal connections with these two friends.

On the other hand, Zhenya postulated that the country from where a student comes and how many others from that country are at Horace matters for adaptation. She explained,

I feel like the extent to which you need to adapt depends, *maybe* depends on where you come from. Because I'm thinking about, uh, we have a really big Chinese population here and Chinese students tend to stick together. Maybe they don't really need to adapt socially that much because they have people from their culture that they can be friends with all the time. They don't need to branch out. Eh, I am the only ... student [from my country] in Horace. And I can't think of anybody from my region who goes to Horace. So I'm really isolated. So maybe I was forced to adapt more than usual. And I, I can't think of any international friends that are like really friends with me. Most of my friends are Americans.

Zhenya makes an argument for the salience of “critical mass” and the facility with which, for example, Chinese students can feel comfortable on campus because of their large numbers. Though she does not suggest one way or the other that critical mass is positive or negative, she does say that being the only student from her country made her feel “isolated,” and so she had no choice but to look more broadly for friends. While she has international friends, she notes that most are Americans, implying that she, unlike Danushka, has shared experiences and found common interests with Americans.

And Zhenya was not the only international student participant with a majority American student friend group. Mahdee also shared that most of his closest peer relationships were with Americans, not internationals. Mahdee spoke at length in our fall interview about how while he struggled quite a bit, particularly during his freshman year, with adjustments to life in Horace and in the U.S.<sup>65</sup>, he never struggled to make and maintain friendships with Americans. In fact, from the outset, he was resolved to make domestic friends. He explained,

I came here with the like expressed goal of not getting stuck with the international student crowd. [Me: Hm.] Like POFIS was nice, but I was not trying to be friends

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<sup>65</sup> Mahdee explained that he grew up in a wealthier family and his needs were always cared for. He was, in many ways, unprepared to live on his own (and in another, different culture) or to be responsible for himself. Also, while he never made the connection, it is possible – as other internationals in this and Chapter IV noted – that Mahdee's early comfort with American students had something to do with this upbringing.

with anyone. I don't know, I, I don't really know what the reason for this thing of mine was, but I was like, "I'm not going to become one of those people who goes to college and doesn't branch out, and like sticks with like the first group of people that they met." So pretty much the first chance I got – that was also one of the things I put down on my roommate form, I believe – I was like, "I don't want to be with another international student or something." Like I was just like, "Man, I'm gonna come around and be with as diverse a group of people as I possibly can." Which I later realized was a completely like false like, um, whatever, assumption. Not assumption. It's a, it's like an incorrect thing in my head. Because the international students are like [Chuckling] way more diverse and, way more diverse than White Americans, let's say. [Me: Hm.] Like people from here. Not in the sense that like th-, their anymore or less interesting than people from here, but this, they're from way, like 70 different countries. [Chuckling] Versus like one. And also, mm, I can connect *a lot* better like on, on the surface, like not on the surface. Like, like when I immediately meet someone, I can connect *way* better with international students here than I can with Americans (5Nov13).

Cutting in, I asked if he had only more recently come to see that he can connect much better and more quickly with internationals, and Mahdee went on to explain,

[t]hat's true, tha-, no, that was probably always true. I just see it, recently. Like we have way more in common coming here, so many common experiences coming here and getting used to this new environment. Or just like coming from s-, common environments back home even, even if they're coming from different countries. [Me: Mm hm.] And just like issues of being away from home, missing your parents, like keeping in touch. Things like this. Getting used to America and being American and getting along with Americans and functioning in American s-. All of these things like are things that I have in common with all these people. And yes, I have this side of my personality that's like very good at going to a party here and any Americans, ev-, not even here, man. Anywhere. Like I can, I've traveled in this country a lot, a decent amount. [Me: Mm hm.] I can get along *really* well with *a lot* of people from here. Cuz like I developed this side of like. I'm getting along with you right now, [Me: Mm hm!] really well. Or at least I know what to say or how to conduct myself because I've like developed this skill. But with, with international students here, it's much, it just comes much more naturally. [Me: Hm.] I don't really need to access that side of my personality. In fact! I would even say that when I do venture into that side, like this Americanized version of myself, [Snaps his fingers] [Me: Mm hm.] like they can very easily notice it. [Me: Hm!] Like my international student friends can very easily tell [Snaps his fingers] like, uh, or just be like, "Dude, what are you doing? Like what are you saying?" Or just give me a look or something. Not in a malicious way, not in a derogatory way. Just like they, it's noticeable in what I'm trying to say.

Over time, as he has learned about himself, Mahdee's interactions with both American and international students have changed and grown. Having to adapt to his new life at Horace has allowed him to develop his relationships with others on campus. While at first he wanted



only to be friends with Americans he came to appreciate more his relationships with internationals. Today, he knows, and is proud of knowing, how to access different sides of his personality.

A bit later in the interview, Mahdee noted, “most of my close friends are not international” and that “this I just where I’ve ended up.” He explained that while it might be easier to connect with international students because of the myriad of things they have in common, he prefers to be close with Americans, with the people with whom he early on developed close relationships. However, he added,

[over time] I got over this stupid notion that I had of wanting only to be friends with Americans and not getting stuck in that crowd [of only internationals]. After I got over that, I became way more open to being friends with international students. And I am now. I have lots of friends.

For Mahdee, building relationships with peers on campus has been a complex and developmental but mostly satisfying process. Ultimately, and unlike most of my other international informants, Mahdee has, and has wanted to have, good friendships with both internationals and with Americans.

In our spring interview, Mahdee and I again returned to this topic. He noted, “I think international students tend to hang out with other internationals students more. Again, I’m probably an exception to that. And there are definitely exceptions” (3Mar14). While close friendship groups do not usually blend between international and American students, Mahdee shared, “I don’t think they’re insular on purpose,” but that

the culture here is very different. And there are some people who like don’t want to or can’t or, you know, yeah, are not interested in like, um, joining the culture, this like American culture and society so much. I mean, not to like a, um, like a negative stance that like, “Oh, I hate this,” or something. But some people, *yeah*, are just not interested in that. I personally am, as you might have guessed, am more interested in that, or have been more interested in that. But a lot of people just aren’t. And so you find like common, you know. Uh, you, you, you’re able to connect more with international students just because you’ve all gone through that journey at least

together. And chances are you also come from a sim-, more similar background. Um, and I, I totally get that because I feel that with my international student friends.

Again, aware that Mahdee's perspective on friendships was different than most of my participants, and wanting to know more about his own experience, I asked Mahdee about how he felt about being able to more easily connect with internationals, individuals with whom he has "gone through that journey," while at the same time being closer with Americans. He shared, "Um, that's just how it is. And it's not that I feel closer. So it's not that I feel closer to these international students than I feel like to my really close friends." He relates very positively with his international friends, and on different levels, but ultimately, he explained, "we just aren't necessarily in the same social groups. So as a result of that we don't spend that much time together." Mahdee's closest American friends, also his roommates, are the people with whom he has always has spent the majority of his time.

It is also interesting to note that Mahdee was dating a White, American woman. After our spring interview, in a follow-up email I asked about how his family feels that he is dating an American, particularly considering his comments in our first interview regarding the apprehension some people in his Middle Eastern, majority Muslim home country, notably his grandparents, would likely have about him dating someone not from his home. He wrote back,

[m]y parents are ok with this. They have traveled a fair bit, and in addition to that over the years have been friends with a number of expats living in [my home country]. So the concept of me being friends with/being romantically involved with a white woman would seem pretty normal to them. Plus, I've told them about her and they've been interested and supportive as I would expect them to be. As far as grandparents, I haven't mentioned it to any of them, so not much to say as far as their reactions go. My expectation from them though, would be this: I think that they would (if a little begrudgingly) be ok with me dating a foreigner, chalking that up to a relatively temporary relationship. If I was to enter into a more long term relationship (get engaged or married), I think they would all expect it to be a [home country] woman. This in my opinion has to do with the fact that marriage in [my home country] culture is as much a merging of families as it is of individuals. So to them,

having an outsider be part of their family in this permanent way would be something they would be against or at the very least display their disapproval of.

Mahdee's life is very much about crossovers between Americans, internationals, and, indeed, those back home. Studying in the U.S. has allowed him to develop relationships of all sorts with all different kinds of people. His closest friendships and his romantic relationship (at least for the time being, perhaps), unlike most of the internationals in the study, are with Americans. For Mahdee, "that's just how it is."

While he is not the only international student participant whose friends are mostly American (Zhenya and Sabith each reported the same), Mahdee's story serves as an important counterpoint to Danushka's position that there is a "double standard" in which American students do not "learn about other people's cultures to make friends" as much as internationals learn about American culture and make American friends. Clearly, Mahdee and his friends have found much over which to connect. While it is true that in this study almost all informants cited divisions between the two student groups and that expectations about adaptation play one part in the tensions between American and international students, it would be inaccurate and misleading to suggest that some internationals do not have all, mostly, some, or many American friends and/or acquaintances.<sup>66</sup> I present this lengthy focus on Mahdee to show how the ways in which the adjustment paradigm, relationships between internationals and Americans, and my participants' views about these matters have multiple,

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<sup>66</sup> It is also significant that each of my Chinese participants noted that their relationships with other Chinese students, a group often homogenized and believed to self-segregate from the larger student population, is not so straightforward. One explained, "I think, uh, I'm the special case because I didn't choose to stay with the Chinese when I first, uh, get into Horace" (13Nov13). She preferred to spend time with her U.S. and Indian dormmates, and then later became close with other Chinese students. In another case, I was told that while he is close with Chinese students, and his American roommate, this participant thought, "some of them think they are here to study. Just study and get, maybe get a very good job or get into a very good graduate school. That's their choice" (7Nov13). This informant preferred to be social and to make academics only one part of his life. Finally, a third participant explained, "I'm not really as close to Chinese as I am to my group of friends. Um, I cannot figure out why, but I think they're pretty weird" (29Oct13). He explained that while it is nice to speak his native language and connect to home with them, his interests, goals, and how he spends his free time are simply different from the Chinese students at Horace: "I don't think they can give me anything that's actually valuable to me, to my career, except some, some, you know... a shoulder to cry on," so to speak (17Feb14).

varying, and deeply complex factors and implications. Danushka, Zhenya, and Mahdee's experiences and their perspectives are each very personal and subjectively positioned.

Ban (Sr, F, Middle East) also complicates this discussion in yet further ways, connecting divisions between internationals and Americans – and between internationals – to the listening session with the President. Seemingly with individuals like Mahdee in mind, she explained in our spring 2014 interview,

[t]here are a lot of international students who have American friends. Um, [*Smiles, then chuckling*] but they are view negatively by other international students, to be like, you know, just Americanized. They're just doing everything the American way. And that's why they drink on the weekends. They, you know, they have causal, uh, relationships. They do everything the American way. They don't keep their own lifestyle. Um, so they sort of assimilate. And that's why they have American friends. They're cool. [*Chuckles*] (11Mar14).

In my transcription of this interview, I noted after these comments that I was a bit struck by my feeling that Ban's tone about these "Americanized" internationals was a judgmental one. She seemed almost disgusted by what she perceived as a kind of betrayal on their part in not "keep[ing] their own culture." She then explained how this is a concern noted by several during the listening session with the President: many internationals "that have more American friends" have been "picked" by the College, precisely because they are Americanized and will therefore be able to easily "assimilate," as they "know how to think, you know, in two different ways." This, as I suggested in the previous chapter, is a notable rift – assuming that other internationals feel similarly, as she suggests – between international students. Not only do internationals who "assimilate" regularly drink and have casual sex, but by implication, they are less "international." Ban cannot, nor does not want to, relate.

Unlike Mahdee and Zhenya, Joonsik has not been able to connect satisfactorily with American students. The divide between him and his American student counterparts has to do with the confluence between language, culture, and personal interests:

I think if you're raised in America and know how to speak in the way American people speak, and know the humor, American humor, I think those are things make people to fit into the society. Trying to understand the humor. Like I think my English is decent enough to talk with people and good enough to understand some jokes. But when there's an American comedy show, when everyone else is laughing I'm not laughing. It's not that I'm not laughing because I don't understand it. Like it just doesn't really comes to me. So I feel like skin color might matters a little bit, but more I feel like more what matters is like whether you were raised here or not. ... What we share is different. Like what we think is important is different. [*To Zhenya*] And I don't know how you interact with your American friends, but like in my sense, when I hang out with Americans, trying to like discriminate them, like trying to devalue them, I, most of the time we only speak about women or about like some sexual part. And I want some other things to talk about, you know? And when I talk about some other like deep philosophical stuff, in my sense, they don't really want to talk about those.

Joonsik notes that English language fluency and comfort has impacted his relationships with American students. He cites this as an important factor in why international students find difficulty in connecting with native speaking Americans. Like Zhenya, he has felt “isolated” at Horace, too<sup>67</sup>. And so, while race does matter, Joonsik contends that connecting with American students matters more. For him, being left out of comedy TV shows and feeling uncomfortable talking primarily about and demeaning women rather than making meaningful conversation about grander topics proves too much. He neither fits in nor wants to fit in with American students at Horace.

During the second spring 2014 focus group, international students were in consensus about the fact that internationals should not have to adapt or try to become “Americanized.” Soufien (So, M, N Africa) noted that students from countries beyond the U.S. will have to adjust to, for example, the weather, a new academic system, and national laws; however, he felt “strongly” that to adapt culturally is not only counterintuitive but counterproductive:

[o]kay, so if Horace is all about a college that has people from all over the world, from different cultures, if the students were to be Americanized before coming here

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<sup>67</sup> In fact, as several international participants attested, not understanding American cultural contexts can really affect relationships, especially when little or no effort is made on the part of domestic students to include internationals or to explain the confusing context.

or while being here, what is the purpose of that international student being there? He is here in order to – I believe that’s why, that what Horace. That’s why Horace is bringing international students – to show American students another point of view, another culture. Something else.

Soufien recognizes that Horace has made considerable and purposeful efforts to bring international students to campus. The value of doing so, he seems to imply, is lost if everyone is “Americanized.” What is the purpose, he asks, of having international diversity if there are no other perspectives to share with domestic students? Notably, then, Soufien’s position acknowledges that internationals at Horace serve as a resource, an argument I made in Chapter II regarding the commodification of these individuals (Deschamps and Lee, 2014). While I have contended that this is quite problematic, Soufien was mostly matter of fact about it, noting that, really, it goes without saying that internationals show Americans “something else.”

Others in the group agreed with Soufien that the presumption that only international students needing to change to fit in is inaccurate. Ndaba (Sr, M, S Africa) believed that all students, in this formative time in their life, do, rightfully, adapt: “I think in, in a way like our essence shouldn’t really change that much. But learning from others, it make us better person.” Yet, he qualified, “there should be like certain like code of values that we perhaps are going to share together. But it shouldn’t be forced. Like we shouldn’t be compelled that we have to act in a certain way to be accepted.” Finally, he noted that in Horace, “people usually accept the way you are.” For her part, Yating offered,

I think that we should adapt in a way that retain our self identities, and to a degree that we don’t need to compromise too much so that we lose, we don’t know who we are anymore. And I feel like if we’re talking about relationship like friendships or like even romantic relationship like that person, those, your friends who, should respect you and love you because of who you are. So if you adapt too much and you become totally Americanized, what’s the point? Like you’re not who you are. You’re behaving in a way that maybe you’re not comfortable with.

Yating is open to adaptation for growth but not to adaption that threatens retaining one's self-identity. She believes that relationships should be based on mutual respect and that people become friends because of "who you are." Should internationals be compelled, to use Ndaba's word, to adjust, then they will become "Americanized" and will have lost what makes them unique – in large part, she implies, their non-American-ness.

Other internationals in the focus group explained – when I asked whether they thought American students would agree that internationals should not have to adapt to American cultural ways – that they believed Americans today, generally speaking, harbor xenophobic sentiments towards and assimilationist expectations for immigrants, and, therefore, also international students. Ashwini (So, F, S Asia) recalled a presentation given by an American Horace alumnus who described an Indian middle-aged man that had been living in the U.S. for 20 years as someone who had not yet learned "in Rome do what the Romans do." Ashwini confessed that she believes Americans "would expect you to behave their way. Because like technically we're living in their country so, you know, we should like inculcate some of their, um, cultural patterns in order to fit well, and just go with it." Though she did not note personal experiences at Horace or elsewhere in the U.S., Ashwini's tone carried some resentment even thinking about this kind of attitude of arrogance. Kusturie (So, F, E Africa) expressed similar perceptions about American society. Citing learning about the history of U.S. immigration in an education course and the ways in which immigrants were/are expected to learn English, Kusturie shared,

[b]ut me on the other hand, I'm walking around campus and I hear someone talking on the phone to their mom or like someone I hear like a different language I'm like so excited. I'm like, [*Gasps*] "I know what language that is!" You know, I'm like so happy to hear like the diversity of languages and like just seeing like difference. You know, just like the diversity on campus. So, I don't know, I feel like, I feel like American students expect us to adapt. Even like me when I, I, I, I try to take every opportunity to, uh, opportunity to show that I'm not from here, that I'm international, that I have a different culture! Um, I try a lot of times to speak Swahili.

If I meet other [people from my country] we speak Swahili like that [*Snaps her fingers*]. And it's great but this, the, the stares we get and everything, I'm like, "Yeah, it's because we're speaking Swahili. You know, it's, it's Swahili. It's alright now!" So I feel like they do expect you to like always be speaking English because, "Hey, you're coming here. Like the point that you, like you have made it here shows that you actually know some English, so speak English." Something like that. I don't know. I'm generalizing.

For Kusturie, the stares she receives when speaking Swahili are proof of her belief that "American students expect us to adapt." Moreover, the idea of speaking only one language or seeing only certain kinds of difference is foreign to Kusturie. In fact, she goes out of her way to show her internationalness and that she is "not from here" because she is excited by the diversity that exists on the Horace campus.

When I flipped the question for my international participants and asked to what extent they felt American students should be expected to adjust to international students, individuals were once again in accordance. Zhenya stated, "To a greater extent," as Joonsik and Danushka nodded affirmatively. She qualified, "[i]t's like not sufficient right now I feel like" and gave two examples:

[u]h, sometimes people just forget that international students exist. And, um, I'm thinking about classroom discussions. Um, when people. I'm thinking about my political science class. Uh, we would, like all discussions would slide to just talking about America as if nothing else exists. And sometimes an international student will raise [D: Yeah.] their voice and say something. But [*Chuckling*] that's usually. People forget, um, um, that there is diversity present. Um, [*5 second pause*] yeah.

I'm thinking, one funny, silly example I have is, um, there is the, the college transportation form that you have to fill out to get a place on a shuttle to go to [the state capital]. [*Chuckles a bit*] Uh, and that form, it doesn't give you an option to choose your country. It only gives you an option to choose your state from, in America. So like that always annoyed me to no end. It's just little things like that. People just forget that we're present.

Zhenya's response to my question was poignant. She was not focused on whether domestic students could or should adapt to internationals. Rather, she sought only to express her desire that Americans not "forget that [she] exists." The fact that most of her friends are



American students and that she generally feels quite happy at Horace College aside, Zhenya is hurt by the belief that all too often internationals are not included as full-fledged Horacians.

Danushka, too, was discontented by his domestic counterparts and said, like Zhenya, “To what extent should they? A lot more, I think.” Reflecting on conversations he had had recently with other international students, including the focus group he sat for with me and other international students in the fall semester, Danushka shared,

I feel there’s a lot of the similar frustration or concerns about the Americans at this school, I think. I just thought it was, “Oh, this is how I feel.” But I feel like there’s a lot of people who feel the same way. So I feel like that’s definitely a pattern, which means there should be a greater extent where American domestic students have to try to connect with the international students. Even with events that are like supposed to be like open to the entire school. For example, like hosted by the ISO, people usually just say, “Oh, isn’t that just for international students? Isn’t that just for this group of people?” [*Zhenya and Joonsik shake their heads in agreement*] But it’s supposed to be very inclusive of everybody. They still don’t realize that. [*Z: Yeah.*] I mean, they know that they can go to Shabbat just for the food, you know? [*Z chuckles softly*] But not to like [*Z: Interesting. That is crazy.*] help us celebrate that. I don’t know. I don’t know what the right way to do it is, though.

Danushka, similarly to Zhenya, feels defeated by the lack of American student interest in international students. Even when events are publicized as open to all students, Americans generally feel un-international<sup>68</sup> – well, until free food can be had at a Shabbat celebration.

Joonsik later offered his insights into the perceived problem with American students. He shared, “I don’t think that many American people exposed to international culture when they’re young,” and therefore international students should not expect that college-aged domestic students will necessarily go out of their way to befriend internationals or to step

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<sup>68</sup> Yinan also spoke to this point: “American students would say [at the annual fair for campus organizations], ‘I’m not international. Can I come?’ But, I mean, America is apparently not a part of the world. [*We laugh*] It’s not like segregated to anywhere or different categories. So like of course they can join! But, um, I feel like people are labeled. Americans are labeled as Americans. Internationals are labeled as internationals” (17Feb14).

beyond their more national comfort zones.<sup>69</sup> While he concedes it is fair to be disappointed, Joonsik sees his own position differently: “I decided to come here. So I think instead of making them change, I should make them change. And like instead of changing the way they approach me, I should be someone rare so they say, ‘Oh, I should approach different to him.’” Joonsik’s comments are striking because, on the one hand, he already firmly noted his belief that he does not fit in at Horace, and, on the other, he posits here that he should take the onus upon himself to be “rare” and to be someone that American students, and Horace College more generally, should want to include. Rather than feeling defeated, he chooses to take action.

When I asked the second spring 2014 focus group about the extent to which they believed American students should adapt to international students, Ashwini was the first to reply. She offered a kind of appeal to her American counterparts:

I think there’s a huge distinction between American community and international community. Like an international student usually, you know, hangs out with another international student. That’s what I’ve noticed. They are mostly, in most cases. And in, in many cases, like you wouldn’t find an international student as much involved in an American group. Like, you know, so there’s a huge distinction. And I feel because we come, we travel like overseas, we come, we leave our countries and come to U.S., I think American students should reach out to us rather than wait for us to reach out to them. Because we are kind of. Um, we, um. Like, for example, like [some internationals] they don’t like to be outspoken because it’s a part of their culture. I, [back home], didn’t speak much in class because we were constantly told by teachers to keep quiet. [Yating: Mm hm.] So I wouldn’t talk in class. And because of that people think I’m timid. And like I don’t ha-. I mean, they don’t like tend to approach me first. Like I have to make an extra effort to do so. So I feel if American students would reach out more to international students, like if they would, you know, introduce them in their groups and things like that, it would be more helpful, which is lacking in Horace.

Ashwini, like many other international students in the study, told me that international students tend to have more international friends than they do American friends. In order to

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<sup>69</sup> Several international informants noted the Americentric-ness of U.S. education and media and how both falsely presume internationals are familiar with the American context and that they (often unintentionally) hinder American students from being able to have international friendships and interests later in life.

blur these friendship lines, Ashwini suggests that Americans could reach out to her and to other internationals. While she puts the responsibility to connect squarely on her domestic counterparts, she also explains that she, and many other internationals, grew up being told that being quiet was a virtue.<sup>70</sup> We can posit – as much as this might be considered a stereotype of Asian students, that it is also true for many of these individuals, and that, because too many Americans, as Joonsik offered above, are unfamiliar with these kinds of cultural differences – that the “huge distinction” between the international and American communities is likely to continue, and unnecessarily.

On the other hand, offering different kinds of appeal to American students, Ndaba explained that much of the divide between the two communities has to do with fear of the Other. First, he suggested that domestics could adapt to internationals by “not being afraid of being wrong.” Americans, he said, most often do not know where his home country is on a map of the world and are too embarrassed to admit this fact. Nevertheless, they feign (usually poorly) to know. He also noted that international students often worsen this kind of exchange: “Perhaps some international students don’t react well when an American doesn’t know [where their country is located]. But actually I feel like very happy when someone asks, ‘Where is [your home country]?’” because this is an opportunity for him to talk about where he is from. Moreover, Ndaba conceded that he too is sometimes ignorant: “Like if someone told me, ‘Where’s Colorado?’ then gives me the map of U.S. I won’t have no clue.” It is good to learn from one another, he offered. Second, he suggested that American students and faculty can adapt by helping to bring internationals in on culture-specific jokes: “perhaps

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<sup>70</sup> For further discussion of issues related to cultural differences in teaching styles and expectations for students in the classroom as well as the problematics of East/West representations see Coate (2009), Doherty and Singh (2005), Eland and Thomas (2013), and Sidhu and Dall’Alba (2012). Crucially, it must be noted, Ashwini’s testimony here should be read as being both part and parcel of the critical commentary of these authors and as her own very real and very personal life experience.

just give a bit of context to international students so that they will learn from that.” Finally, and with what I registered was a mix of humility and sincerity, Ndaba suggested,

perhaps not assume that your way – we know America has like great strength and like economically and in terms of science and like many aspects – [*Students laughing*] but don’t assume that your way of thinking should be the way to go. Like always like try at least to expect to, if not accept, at least hear other opinions, so, because they’re like quite many other ways of thinking. And I think just by knowing how other people are thinking, if, if nothing else, at least it helps like for us to have a much broader perspective. Otherwise it’s as if you’re not studying actually in an international school.

From his vantage point, then, Ndaba offers very practical advice for how Americans can adjust to international students. In his final suggestion, he recommends that domestic students be more open-minded to other ways of thinking and to be as open to learning from internationals as he is open to learning from Americans. Doing so – and practicing the three suggestions together – he offers, will help Horace College truly be “an international school.”

Yating also had some practical advice for Americans. Picking up on Ndaba’s points about dialogic interactions, particularly in classroom settings, Yating lamented,

sometimes they don’t have the patience to listen to, uh, our opinion and what we wanna say, especially whenever we approach a really complicated [topic] and we want to. We use this, uh, mental translation process to express ourself and then when we stop to think they would like, like, as if, “Why do you even need to *think*? You should *speak*. Like you’re English is so *bad*.” Stuff like that.

Highlighting the sometimes very intense experience of participating in classes, particularly when discussing “really complicated” topics and issues, Yating is sensitive to the feeling that she has been judged for not speaking quickly enough in English. These kinds of situations, she explained, require a “mental translation process” from her native language to English. By implication, she is also calling out American students for questioning her intelligence and her ability to communicate in public spaces. Like Kusturie, she advocates for greater appreciation of the multiple languages and ways of expressing oneself that international students bring to Horace.

Consistent in these students' views is the belief that international and domestic students should not be so divided. Moreover, and crucially, internationals do not insist that any one language must be spoken, that people should conform to any particular academic or social standards and values, or that their American counterparts should be a resource for internationals. While critical of their parochial and Americentric educational system and self-aggrandizing popular culture, international students seek to connect with their domestic counterparts. They are frustrated by what they perceive is a lack of interest in non-American, well, pretty much everything. They wish that American students were more willing to reach out and to be friendly, particularly when, having not grown up in the U.S., they are not familiar with specific cultural references and social situations. Ultimately, then, the international students above are resolved, albeit usually reluctantly, to live with the divisions between themselves and domestic students because they perceive U.S. students' inability to understand them and their disinterest in and unwillingness to connect with them as being the course that their U.S. counterparts seem to prefer and/or to which Americans generally defer.

### *American Student Perspectives*

What did American focus group student participants say on the subject of adjustment? In response to my question about the extent to which their international student counterparts need to adapt to culture and to life in the U.S. and at Horace College, I heard a variety of views that, for the most part, differed, at times quite significantly, from the vantage points of international informants.

American students Macy, Lucy, and April (all White women<sup>71</sup>) reasoned that adjustment is a reality felt most strongly by non-Americans and by minorities. Macy (Jr, F, NY), first to speak, suggested that it is necessary for internationals to adjust:

I mean, I think in order to not be Othered you have to adjust. And, yeah, Ron just mentioned there's, they are a huge minority. *They*. The international students are a huge minority. And it's. I mean, in order to fit in anywhere, you have to adjust to the majority. And that's just something that is universal. And I think that in order to, for – and I forgot the exact phrasing of your question – but in order to feel like they're fitting in, international students – anyone not from the U.S., anyone not used to this like way of schooling or culture [L: Mm.] – has to adjust, to a *certain* amount, to that way of schooling or culture.

Macy is firm in her belief that all minorities “have to” adjust, at least “to a certain amount.” This is universal. Interestingly, Macy appears to catch herself generalizing and, perhaps, homogenizing international students as “they;” however, this recognition does not deflect from her greater point that “anyone not used this like way of schooling or culture” will have to adjust. Ironically, and unwittingly and unintentionally, I think, Macy undercuts her belief that adjustment to the majority culture avoids being Othered because, in this statement, she has broadly Othered internationals and “anyone not used this like way of schooling or culture.”

Presumably building on the idea that adjusting oneself to the majority culture is “universal,” Lucy (Sr, F, NY) offered to the group, “Well, you find other people who feel the same way [Macy: Yeah.] and I think that's part of the reason people do things that way.” In response to my question about whether she means that people find others who resist the idea of needing to adjust to the majority, Lucy explained,

[o]r [those individuals] who are having like the same, who are like used to the same things or who like are doing things the same way as you're doing so like you don't have to completely adjust. Or so that, you know, if, yeah, English is hard and it's like

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<sup>71</sup> As noted in Chapter III, I recruited American student participants by asking international participants for recommendations (a friend or roommate) and by enlisting the help of the student government association. I invited all six of the students that were available and willing to participate for the focus group date and time, of which five attended. Despite seeking a more diverse composition to the group, four of the five were White.

a constant struggle to be speaking English all day every day, um, you're gonna find people who you can like speak in like your first language with.

In other words, Lucy, following Macy, seems to suggest that while it is a given that people in the minority must adapt to the majority, these individuals – international students struggling with English, for example – naturally find others who also do not wish to “completely adjust” and together they self-segregate. While she may not acknowledge the complexities of language learning and usage noted by Yating above, Lucy’s point resembles the argument many international students made during the listening session with the Horace president that I discussed in the previous chapter. Of course, the vantage point differs and Lucy does not register that she is advocating for a kind of siloing that also results from feeling Othered.

For her part, April (Sr, F, WI), also separating herself from internationals and other minority groups on campus, contended, “I think to an extent, I mean, that’s one of the nice things probably about coming to a new country in a college setting, is everyone’s like entering as a freshman in a new place.” Offering the idea that all students must adjust to Horace College and the Horace culture, April suggested that the need to adapt touches all people, “even the student from town,” and “like a Posse student, maybe like growing up in an inner city.” For Posse<sup>72</sup> students, April also notes, “[i]t’s like they’re gonna be in a *much* different environment in Horace than they were [before]. Um, possibly it’s even harder for them to adjust than somebody from, you know, London.” By intimation, then, she believes, Horace College is a more foreign place for Posse students than for internationals.

In a different kind of response, Mona (Sr, F, CA; the only non-White student; Latina) explained that in “reflecting on our four years” she and her friends were recently

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<sup>72</sup> “Founded in 1989, [The] Posse [Foundation] identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. Posse extends to these students the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams—Posses—of 10 students. Posse partner colleges and universities award Posse Scholars four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships” (<http://www.possefoundation.org/about-posse>).

talking about like things that made us uncomfortable, um, [and that] we actually had more in common in terms of like what we did to fit into the Horace culture, or what we thought was college culture. Um, and what [international friends] thought was just American culture. Um, like drinking. Drinking on campus. Like neither of us drank. But I was drinking to fit into the college atmosphere and they were doing it to fit into the American atmosphere. So I think they're like similar struggles but the intentions behind it is different. Like our perceptions of what is changing and how we're fitting in is different.

Mona explained, touching on a subject about which my international informants and I spoke quite a bit, that she and her international friends faced some of the same challenges of adaptation, of trying to fit in on campus. From her vantage point, these “similar struggles” and “the intentions behind” them had been, for four years, in the domain of collaborative discovery about the “Horace culture,” for Mona, and “American culture,” for her international student friends, and how together they would find their place on campus. Unlike Macy, Lucy, and April, adjustment was something that Mona experienced, and alongside internationals.

When I flipped the question and asked about the extent to which they each, and the other American students on campus, should adapt and adjust to international students and their cultures and ways of doing things, my American focus group participants explained that all students, really regardless of where they come from, must adapt to life at Horace and that each person “enter[s] into a ‘negotiation with everyone else’” (April, 10Apr14). As April put it, this negotiation entails each person saying, “I am who I am and you are who you are and we’re gonna make this work. Either, whether that’s by not talking to each other cuz it turns out we hate each other or, you know, or, you know, having it be really easy because we already share a lot of the same ideas.” For her part, Lucy’s “immediate reaction” to the idea that American students should adapt to internationals was: “as much as you want.” She explained that most Americans have “probably partially chosen” to attend Horace because they know “there is going to be a certain like percentage of international students” and so



they know that is “what you’re gonna be around” at Horace. Both Americans and internationals, she noted, have the same choice to “shut yourself off from [adapting]” or to “acclimate in ways you want to. But I don’t think anybody should be able to tell either way like [*Chuckling*] you have to do certain things.” For the most part, then, April and Lucy avoid situating themselves in relation to international students, preferring to more abstractly proffer that all students make choices about how and why they will effort to relate with other students and to fit in on campus. In the process, they problematically, and, I think, again unwittingly – an ignorance which is also problematic – excuse themselves from having to make concessions and adjustments for internationals and minorities, a point they emphasized is necessary for these non-majority individuals. Moreover, they demonstrated a lack of empathy for and connection to their international counterparts, and the ways in which international students might have to meet and live up to the real or perceived expectations of domestic students, faculty, and staff. A lack of empathy was particularly striking coming from Lucy, whose roommate and supposed close friend is Mahdee (Sr, M, Middle East).

Macy took a different stance than her American focus group counterparts. She began by agreeing that all people can and should be able to decide for themselves how much they “want to assimilate.” However, Macy then complicated her response:

I mean, I think *a lot* of other people here would be like, “No, they shouldn’t,” I mean, like, “You [Americans] shouldn’t have to acclimate to the way they [international students] are cuz they’re here.” Or maybe not even people in Horace, but people in the U.S. would say like, “No,” they’re like, “They came to the U.S. and you have to, to. They should, they should acclimate to the way things are here. You shouldn’t have to acclimate to them.” But I don’t fully agree with that. And I think that they’re, you, you have to like make some concessions for the fact that they came here and they’re bringing, they’re also bringing their culture. They’re not just letting it go. Um, yeah, I think it’s however much you want to accept it and however much you want to bring it into your life. Um, I don’t know, like if you want to question what they’re doing, that’s for you to do and you’re welcome to do that. [*Chuckles*] But it’s also like kind of rude. Cuz they’re bringing their culture here and that’s part of

them. Just like if you brought, I don't know, if you brought your culture to ano-. Or if *you* just went to another country there are certain inherent things that you would do that you wouldn't even think about doing but you would do, and people would be like, "What's that?" But it's just a part of who you are.

Macy vacillates in her opinion of whether Americans must adapt to international students. First, she notes that "a lot" of people in Horace and in the U.S. would object to this idea, instead believing, like Yating and Kusturie expressed, that because these individuals come from another country, they should "acclimate to the way things are here [in the U.S]." This, though, she does not "fully agree with;" internationals, she seems to say, have come a long way and bring with them their unique differences, their "culture," and they are "not just letting it go" because they are living in the U.S. Next, however, she claims that Americans can choose the degree to which they want to "accept" internationals and their cultures and that, should an American be compelled, they might find it appropriate or necessary to "question" international students for being different. Then again, she retracts, this kind of attitude is "kind of rude" and Americans should be more empathetic, should remember that living abroad involves a complex set of identities and even more complex ways of being, all of which host country nationals often find perplexing. Macy's response is provocative because she so aptly stumbles through the complexities and the contradictions that her American focus group-mates dismiss exist in cross-cultural engagement. In other words, Macy demonstrates how the adjustment paradigm is flawed and nuanced, and endemic to the experience of international students (Marginson, 2014).

Ron, quiet for most of the discussion about adjustment, brought the conversation back to the privileges of American students. When I asked him whether he thought that his roommate, Maurice (So, M, E Africa), would agree that international students can choose, like American students, to adjust or to not adjust to Horace and American cultures, Ron replied, "I don't think so, no." Expanding on this belief, he said,

[t]hey're, they're being taken and put into Horace. And they're being forced to acclimate, in that sense. Um, but, yeah, I, I have a choice to say, "Well, I, I'm, okay, I'm personally all for broadening my horizons and becoming more cultured. Um, and experiencing new things." Like, you know, the fact that the Diwali dance and the Around the World [party], um, is here, is. And, and that Horace's a great, I guess, foundation to have those things. And the fact that they can come and bring those things and I can experience them, I have a choice to go or not. It's an event. Um, but I digress. Um, he [Maurice], yeah, I think [*Speaking very softly*] they're in a completely different boat than us because we, I don't know, Lucy was saying because we have a choice to interact, get to know them.

From Ron's vantage point, as an American he can, unlike his roommate and other international students presumably, broaden his horizons, become more cultured, and experience new things by picking and choosing between different cultural events to attend. Moreover, it seems that his ability to do this is premised on internationals being a resource for him: "they can come and bring those things and I can experience them." International students, on the other hand, he contends, do not have a choice about whether or not to "interact" and to "get to know" Americans. Internationals must adapt; they are "forced to acclimate" by virtue of their being the minority group.

### *Fueling the Adjustment Paradigm*

From what these students have shared, there is certainly much to divide international and American students and to make difficult the notion that everyone at Horace can be, and would want to identify her/himself as, a Horacian. The greatest impediment to friendships between the American and international students in this study (and the reason that I chose to focus on perceptions about relationships between these student groups in my exploration of adjustment narratives) is the marked ways in which beliefs about Self and the Other vary between them. From my own vantage point, international students struggle less with the perceived and the real need to adapt to Horace and American cultures. Rather, internationals are more frustrated by the mixture of unaware and unapologetic entitlement of (usually White) American students who all too often cannot and/or do not understand, appreciate,

or respect what it is like to be expected to adjust. Most international participants want, even expect, that their domestic counterparts be more, one might say, Horacian: equitable, caring, open-minded, welcoming, and proud to be student-citizens of Horace College. It is American students' lack of complex empathy and their disinterest in international students – much in the way that Macy described it, and as reported by both internationals and Americans in this study – that fuel the adjustment paradigm in the Horace College context described to me.<sup>73</sup>

It is important to say here that I do recognize that, to some degree and in certain particular forms, adaptation and adjustment is inevitable and perfectly acceptable. It is expected that people moving to another country will need to make some adjustments. For example, Soufien noted having to get used to the weather, a new academic system, and national laws. Laura shared that in the United States time and timeliness are “perceived differently” than in her home country. Being on time and keeping up with a fast-paced culture is important. Yating suggested that being outspoken in public is an asset in the U.S., something with which both she and Ashwini have struggled. I, too, can personally relate to adjusting to new and different realities related to weather, laws, time, and etiquette in public having lived abroad for two years in Mongolia. However, as both international and American student informants have contended in this chapter, people should not be expected or forced to change who they are as a person. Moreover, expectations should be measured when people in the host country are unwilling to also change to make life better for everyone. Lopsided adjustment akin to assimilation all too often reifies us/them, majority/minority, and dominant/oppressed binaries.

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<sup>73</sup> I was struck throughout my time collecting data at Horace how often American participants, usually faculty and students, either explicitly or implicitly invoked assumptions, conjectures, and stereotypes about internationals at Horace because they did not know well, or at all, the individuals about whom they spoke. I caught myself regularly asking these informants in my head, “Why didn’t you simply ask X how they felt about Y?” or “Couldn’t you have asked X what they thought about Y?”

As scholars contend, the adjustment paradigm “places the responsibility to adjust and integrate squarely on the [international student] and inordinately blames him or her for having difficulty making the necessary adjustments” (Lee, 2010, p. 69). Moreover, Lee argues, the “underlying assumption is that host campuses” – and in the case of the discussion here, host students – “are blamelessly ignorant and play no role in the negative experiences of international students” (p. 69). In fact, according to international students in this study, American students – and staff and faculty – are not and cannot be blamelessly ignorant and do play a rather large role in whether internationals’ experience are not as positive as they very well could be. Lucy and April, on the other hand, demonstrate, via their “to each their own” position, that American students do in fact place the responsibility to adjust and integrate squarely on international students. Any difficulty in making the real or perceived necessary adjustments, according to their statements above, do seem to inordinately burden international students while they themselves are blameless because adjustment is a “negotiation with everyone else.” This, in many ways, sounds like a kind of colorblind ideology mixed with a pick-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps mentality that works only to divide and keep divided international and American students, much to the chagrin of the internationals in this study.

I do not mean to indict all American students or to exculpate every international at Horace College; however, I have found in this study that American students (and faculty members, for that matter) are often confused by and feel distant from international students, which, I contend, results from a difference in approach to relating to one another. Ron’s admission that his roommate (Maurice, So, M, E Africa) “hides a lot of things from me” is indicative of the divide between the two groups. As Ron explains, “whenever he’s hanging out with his other friends or someone else is in the room he kind of acts a little differently.

Kind of in a way I've never seen before." Or, as Mona shared, thinking of "one of my best friends [who] is from Jamaica," it was not until this, her senior year, that "whenever one of her friends would like, another Jamaican would pass by us or would like join our conversation, she would quickly switch to her Jamaican accent. But when she spoke to me it was the American accent." It was not until they got to know each other much better "four years later" that her Jamaican friend became "more comfortable." Lucy summed up the divide between Americans and internationals to "a perceived power differential," in which "they *feel*, um, as international students, as people from a different country." These examples highlight the extent to which international and American students do not know one another, and that, as Mona noted, it takes getting to know each other to be more familiar and "comfortable" together. The problem, as reported by international informants, is that American students all too often do not make these attempts. On the other hand, American participants say that internationals are different and must, of course, figure out how to assimilate accordingly in order to fit in – not with them on a personal level, but with Horace College culture generally. The disparity in viewpoints is wide.

And yet, there is overlap. When international study, rather than being "a journey of conversion," is understood as a *more genuine* "never finished cultural negotiation," (Marginson, 2014) wherein mutual understanding and benefit is the goal, there is great promise for better relationships between international and American students. For a few of my participants, the potential for this kind of cultural negotiation already exists in (the revisiting of and reorientation to) the "Horacian" moniker.

### **Not Visitors, Not Internationals, Not American Students, But Horacians All**

As Laura explained earlier in this chapter, Horace classrooms and dorm rooms are "convergence points" where differences are explored and where students from around the

world learn about one another in, for the most part, curious, critical, and meaningful ways. In other words, being a Horace College student and sharing intentional spaces of interactive learning can be a way to transform what and how students from different countries and cultures think of and how they treat one another. Or, thought of in yet another way, if differences are always present and divides often inevitable, then choosing to be a Horacian, whether from the Americas (of which the U.S. is one), the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, or the Pacific, can be a profound way to embrace every person's differences and similarities and a profound opportunity to converge in order to learn about and connect to the Self and the Other. At least, this is what some of my informants believe.

Mary, Elizabeth's predecessor as director of the ISAO from 1987-1997 (and currently the Assistant Director of Employer Relations and Employment Counseling in the career center), explained in our interview that international students are not visitors or guests at Horace College because they are Horacians (5Dec13):

I used to talk a lot about this idea of, of being in another culture and thinking that you're a visitor and that everybody around you is the host. And that's not going to happen at Horace. "Y-, your fellow students, who are U.S. students, are not gonna feel like they're your host and you're their guest. And so there's not going to be that kind of politeness or hospitality, [*Chuckling*] for the most part. It doesn't mean they're not gonna get to be friends and be invited home." I don't mean th-, I don't mean it in that way. I just mean that students would, should not feel like they're a guest here. And shouldn't expect that people are going to reach out and take them by the hand and, and assume that they need to be their host and sort of help them through. "That it's good to think that you're a part of this campus. You may feel like you're a foreigner because you just ran the gauntlet of, of the, um, the counselor office and the port of entry officials and you, you know very clearly you're, you're, this isn't your country and you can't stay here as long as you want and do whatever you want. So in that sense you're a visitor, but on Horace's campus this is your campus. You're a Horacian. And, um, and there are lots of resources and support for you here."

From her vantage point, recalling a speech she would recount to international students when she was director of the ISAO, internationals may often feel like they are guests or visitors, particularly because they have experienced "the gauntlet" of immigration protocols.

However, she always wanted them to know that Horace College “is your campus.” Mary’s comments not only reflect Marginson’s (2014) point that “the first step in apprehending [international students’] self-formation is to understand these students as self-responsible adults...and not as akin to dependent children” (p. 11), but she also identifies Horace as being these individuals’ *home*, thereby recognizing that international students, just like their domestic resident counterparts, *live* for four years at Horace College. She does not employ narratives and practices that exoticize and Other international students but rather goes out of her way to make clear that they are Horacians.<sup>74</sup>

This was a point that international students also expressed. Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), for example, shared, “[i]t bugged me and frustrated me for the longest time for some reason” when people would ask whether she was going to study abroad for a semester or year because “I felt like, ‘There are plenty of other students that are going abroad and this doesn’t, there isn’t, it doesn’t feel like studying internationally you’re studying abroad anymore because it feels like home.’ It’s been becoming a, more and more of a home over the past few years” (25Feb14). In other words, Sara was upset by the fact that no one thinks twice when American students consider “going abroad.” On the other hand, the logic went, international students were already studying abroad and, therefore, it made sense that she would not be considering the opportunity. Poignantly, Sara shares that Horace “feels like home” and so it makes complete sense that she, too, should consider a study abroad program.<sup>75</sup> For her part, Sun (Fr, F, E Asia) explained that Horace College has been a unique and “gratifying” experience for her because “I think that I made friends and I [am] comfortable around people from other cultures,” which, she noted, is in large part due to her

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<sup>74</sup> For a longer discussion of this pervasive theme in the literature on international students, see Chapter II, pages 38-62.

<sup>75</sup> There is a common misconception that international students are not eligible for study abroad programs. An F-1 visa does not restrict students from participating in the same programs abroad as their American counterparts. While fewer internationals “go abroad” than do American students on an aggregate, internationals regularly spend a semester or year in another country as part of their undergraduate experience.



feeling that she fits in at Horace: “Like if I traveled, I will still like, I will be a visitor or traveler. I wouldn’t be like one of them. Or, like in this setting or this environment I am kind of like, I’m a, I’m an equal to them. And yeah. That I can be friends with them as on an equal level.” At Horace, Sun is neither visitor nor traveler. And while she may not go so far as to say Horace feels like her home, Sun is an equal among friends from countries around the world, something, she said, “I wouldn’t have been able to do...anywhere else” (10Feb14).

And yet, not all internationals see Horace as their home. According to Jeri, a professor of political science and a former international student in the U.S. herself, some international students would do well to think more like Sara about opportunities at Horace and to think of themselves as a Horacian as opposed to an international student:

[o]ne of the things that I always tell [my advisees] is, “When you’re here you’re not an international student. When you are here you are a Horace student. That means you take internships like everyone else and that means you go abroad like everyone else.” Because a lot of international students think that coming here is their international program. Right? Their off-campus study, their, their going abroad program. And then they don’t join the, they don’t take the opportunities that the college offers as much, especially when it comes to going abroad. Or summer things that happen in the United States – internships and things. They don’t take them because summer for them is the time they go *home* and they get to see mom, dad, and friends. And I say, “No, now you’re, you’re, you’re in pair with the rest of students here. And that’s what they’re doing. Why are you opting out? Mm hm, especially if you are planning to stay or especially if you are planning to go on to, on to graduate school. They’re gonna compare you, not to the rest of kids in your home country, but the kids here” (21May14).

On the one hand, Jeri sees being a Horace student as a strategic decision. These individuals, she explains to her advisees, are in competition with American students and should take advantage of every study abroad and internship opportunity that they can if they seek to be marketable in the job and graduate school scenes after graduation (Kim, 2011). On the other, Jeri demonstrates the presumption – and a valid one, I, too, contend – that international study has particular and definite benefits for internationals – as opposed to

these individuals being a benefit to or resource for Americans (Andrade and Evans, 2009; Johnston and Edelstein, 1993; Pandit, 2007).<sup>76</sup>

A few international student participants, though, explained that being a “Horacian” is a more preferable label than “international student<sup>77</sup>.” These individuals explain that they identify as Horace College students more so than they do as an international student, which, for some, is an unnecessary marker of difference. Sabith (So, M, S Asia) explained,

[t]he term [“international student”] loses its meaning the most *in* Horace’s campus. If you step out of it with your friends or something it might become slightly more relevant. But besides that, I mean, it’s just, as I’m a second-year now and I’ve managed to acquire some friendships and have, find some place and the culture of Horace, I don’t think [the term “international student”] means very much. Or I don’t associate with it very much. I don’t really [*Chuckling*] talk about being international very much, or it doesn’t really come into my thinking that much. You know, I kinda just behave as any other Horace student would, or try to behave as any other Horace student would. Maybe. You know? But, yeah, I don’t think it has much relevance to me, and personally, yeah (3Apr14).

While it may have taken Sabith a semester or so, the fact he has found his place on campus means that he associates more as a Horace College student and with the culture on campus. While he may not say that he is a “Horacian,” Sabith shares, “I kinda just behave as any other Horace student would.” In some ways, Sabith’s case is unique and his expressions of comfort at and identification with campus culture may be attributable to his friend group being primarily American students. Regardless, Sabith prefers to see himself as a Horacian, a term whose actual meanings likely mean less than his friendships with other Horace students and his comfort on campus. The “international” label, then, is applicable outside of Horace, but, for his purposes, it is not so relevant where he lives.

Jose (Sr, M, S America) feels similarly. While a strong and persistent advocate for international students and a loud voice in opposition to inequality and hypocrisy at the

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<sup>76</sup> For a longer discussion of this pervasive theme in the literature on international students, see Chapter II, page 45.

<sup>77</sup> Participants’ understandings of and personal connections to the term “international student” is a topic to which I will return in greater depth in the next chapter.

listening session with the College President, Jose conceded that, while language is a regular reminder of his international/Other self, the label “international” has its limits, particularly on the Horace campus where everyone “bring[s] something different”:

I forget that I’m international. Sometimes. A lot, a lot of times. Um, and really the only-y, the only time that I’m reminded of that is when I have problems with my English. You know, because that’s like the, I think it’s one of the last traces of difference in a, in a place, you know, where people, you know, can like influence each other and kinda like adopt this Horace culture, that is not [my home country] culture, is not a L.A. culture, is not like a, you know, a Chicago culture. It’s a Horace culture. It’s like everyone brings something! And everyone’s different! No one’s. Everyone. You know, Americans or internationals, they bring something different and they have this Horace culture. But at the same time, like that language aspect is what really *still* defines me as different. Sometimes, you know, when I become conscious of that. And I’m not even conscious of it all the times. You know, so that’s, that’s what makes me feel international sometimes (4Feb14.)

For Jose, even as a senior, his perceived problems with his English speaking skills still affect his ability to more fully “adopt this Horace culture.” He believes that when he cannot speak to his satisfaction both he and others define him as “different.” In this way, Jose sees himself as international. Though troubled by this reality and unable to connect as much to Horace as, say, Sabith, Jose does admit that “a lot of the times,” perhaps implying most of the time, he believes that both Americans and internationals “bring something different and they have this Horace culture.” Amidst differences, some, like language, very apparent, Horace unites.

For two participants, being a Horacian is something much simpler; it is a feeling of connectedness to others on campus and it is a label that both recognizes difference while also transforming what everyone at Horace has in common. Talking about relationships between international and American students, Zawadiye (So, F, E Africa) relayed, “I guess, if you feel like they’re different or separate or, then of course they are. If you feel, eh, ‘they’re all Horacians, I’m just gonna hang out with them,’ then sure, that, that’ll be the thing” (14Mar14). For his part, Yinan (So, M, SE Asia) explained,

in Horace people should not be labeled as “American” or “international” because we’re all Horacians. So, uh, that’s part of the reason why we wanna tell the President that “diversity” should not only be defined as “Asians” or, you know, that kind of stuff. [*Smiling*] We should be as Chinese-Horacians or Korean-Horacians, or something like that. But in the end we’re all Horacians (17Feb14).

Matter-of-factly, but also with a tenor of passionate resolve on this subject, Yinan expressed his disapproval of how the campus conversation about diversity almost entirely positioned international students by their local, and narrow, he explained, understandings of race. From his vantage point, as I perceived his logic, what people have all too often left out of the conversation is how though, sure, we’re all different, of course, *we’re all Horacians*. While there is some lack of acknowledgement on Yinan’s part of how a national and Horacian combined identifier is preferable to the already existing labels – as these also have the (potentially problematic) effect of categorizing students – he maintains that what gets lost in the tired “international” and “American” default labels is the idea that, as Zawadiye put it, “If you feel, eh, ‘they’re all Horacians, I’m just gonna hang out with them,’ then sure, that, that’ll be the thing.” In other words, it’s all in what people are choosing to see and how they are choosing to treat one another. Recognizing both difference and what ties people together has the linguistic, and actual, potential to disrupt the divisions between groups of students that for all too often have seen, experienced, and felt the realities of division on campus. That is, if true, a “we’re all Horacians” approach might very well reorient not only the campus conversation, but those in the literature about how international and American students are divided, about the place and salience of the adjustment paradigm, and about, more broadly, how scholars and research present and represent international students.

### **Contextualizing Horacianness and the Adjustment Paradigm**

I do not mean to suggest that either my participants or I believe in a reductive solution to the very complex relational dynamics on the Horace campus. After all, it is very

apparent that the salience of the three labels, “Horacian,” “international,” and “domestic,” and the seeming potency that each possess in keeping divided people on campus, is a definite theme at Horace College. Moreover, it is clear that the adjustment paradigm is a strong feature, and is a contributor to the divisions, where they do exist, at the College.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, I contend that Yinan’s position is worthwhile. While it may not be possible, practical, or even desirable in many cases to discontinue anytime soon the use of the “international” and “domestic”/“American” labels, he offers a potentially more unifying place to start: the “Horacian” moniker. Where there are differences in the associations to the name, some of which appear impassable (such as the seeming rigidity of its connection to a particular brand of liberalness), Horacian seems the most viable option to disrupt the ubiquity of the problematic international/American dichotomy and the apparent need to categorize, a habit, which, while arguably a very human tendency, only perpetuates tired, further problematic, and highly divisive we/they, us/them binaries. Indeed, the potency of the dichotomy and the unconscious ease and regularity with which it is used in conversation was pervasive. And I must admit that I, too, have found that I cannot help but use and default to “international” and “American students,” and, in so doing, call up the adjustment paradigm that the dichotomy often inspires. These tendencies and habits merit critical analysis.

Perhaps, then, within the context of this case study, a replacement, or, maybe more accurately, a stand-in to call attention to the myriad problematics, positives, and possibilities, is necessary. After all, as I have shown in this chapter, critical and honest conversations are happening about whether “we’re all Horacians, or are we?” – just not between and among

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<sup>78</sup> To be honest, I came into this study not wanting to believe that there would be such division between internationals and Americans or that the adjustment paradigm would be so prevalent. Despite how much was made of this in the literature and regardless of how often I knew this kind of thing existed at Syracuse, I came into the dissertation open-minded to the Horace context – with its liberal arts and social justice mission – and skeptical of the scholarly predisposition to default to division and adjustment paradigm narratives.

the people to/for whom it matters most and most affects. Classrooms, dormitories, and the dining hall all serve as very important convergence points for Horace students. So too perhaps do listening sessions and town hall meetings. ISO meetings have yet to become such spaces. Yet, in each, it strikes me, there are more than just traces of dissatisfaction, frustration, and cautious optimism with the ways things are. It might be time for Horacians of all stripes to converge, to unpack their expectations of one another, and to re-explore together through critical liberal arts education, as Amardo put in the opening excerpt of this chapter, “ideas, people, experiences outside of their home,” the sort of exploration through which each person might truly “undergo an important transformation” of self (Amardo, 15Jan14). Such a transformation, rich with newfound empathy, ethics, and awareness, he purported, is an “essential part” of being a Horacian.

There are additional considerations. For example, and crucially, if I were to have asked the Horace College international students that participated in this study about the degree to which meanings of the term “Horacian” and the particulars of the adjustment paradigm – and even the processes of adaptation to life and culture on campus and in the U.S. they have and continue to experience – are prevalent in their daily lives at Horace, I suspect that most would have said that these are only two – and possibly, for some informants, small – aspects among a cornucopia that color the contours of their lives. Moreover, they would have said – and did say – that, on an almost every day basis, they are very happy that they chose to attend Horace.

Among other aspects of life at Horace, first and foremost is the rigor of the Horace College curriculum that keeps these students extremely busy and focused on academics (in fact, most of these individuals came to Horace for its reputed academic program and the intellectual pursuit they would find at the College). Indeed, all of my international

participants said that they were quite pleased with, though at times overwhelmed and exhausted by, the education they were receiving, both in the classroom and in life. When not studying, these students explained that social life, whether it be just hanging out with friends at the grill or at a party on a Friday night, participating in clubs and organizations, competing on College sports teams, or developing relationships with faculty and staff in office hours were other, wonderful dimensions of their Horace experience. Opportunities for personal growth and academic and professional development abound. Moreover, their friendships with peers, whether they were with other internationals and/or American students, were always noted as (in)valuable and fulfilling parts of life at Horace. Many said that the make-up of their friend groups were less important than the fact that they have made friendships that have made their time at Horace rich and help buffer and balance the demands of academic life. Several international participants also explained that their close friendships would likely last the rest of their lives, no matter where their paths might take them.

I also found, as I discussed in the previous chapter, that students were not reticent to note the ways in which they recognized and/or appreciated that their College leaders (administrators, staff, and faculty) are aware of and, in many ways, are addressing the concerns of its students, American and international alike. Several students in this chapter noted that they chose Horace because it is the kind of institution that cares about its students, goes out of their way to make people feel comfortable and included, and challenges them to find personal ways of making the world a better place. The whole package, the liberal arts education that they were receiving and the mostly collegial, friendly, informed, and caring atmosphere on campus – which included, and was impacted by, its location in a small, Midwestern town – contributed to participants' beliefs that Horace is the kind of place they were glad to be.

In this chapter, then, I do not discount these sentiments; in fact, I channel them. I ask, “what happens when issues of association to place and issues of adjustment are highlighted and brought to the surface at a college like Horace?” What I came to find, as this chapter has explored, is that for internationals there is a definite and unsettled mixture of dissatisfaction, acceptance, and optimism with how things are at Horace between international and American students. Together, my participants and I have argued that it is important to point out and to explore the term “Horacian,” that light should be shed on why it is used seemingly ubiquitously, as well how the meanings that all too often get taken for granted actually belie how people feel about the moniker and facilitate a problematic and divisive adjustment paradigm. Horacians (as understood via Yinan and Amardo) should not take the topics of this chapter for granted because they not only purportedly have high standards for themselves and the institution but also because they present themselves to international recruits and applicants as a liberal arts college committed to social justice and “the common good.” To not investigate the issues herein – laden with complexity, contradictions, and, at times, surprises – would, like the critiques that Jose and Danushka cited during the listening session, be a disservice to the college and would falsely frame its institutional mission, one that, as noted above, might very well be an essential – and, in my view, a worthy and admirable – component of becoming and being a Horacian.



## Chapter VI: Being International, At and Beyond Horace College

Me: So what does it mean to you to be an international student at Horace, then? How does that fit and not fit with how you see yourself?

Alya: [*Laughing*] Isn't that your dissertation?!: "What does it mean to be an international student?!"

- Alya (Sr, F, Middle East, 13Feb14)

### Introduction

This chapter explores the question "what/who is an international student?" In many ways, mobility for higher education is an intimately personal and potentially transformative journey, and how students experience this phenomenon varies greatly and is shaped by individuals' backgrounds, personalities, values, and their goals. How students perceive the term "international student" and the meanings associated with being an international student differ. Scholars have assigned their own labels and attendant meanings, but these do not necessarily match up with how individual international students see themselves. Chapter VI, then, positions these students as experts of their own international and transnational lives and, building on the previous chapters, explores the various ways that these students interpret the multiple and shifting dimensions of international study. First, I explore the term "international student," what it means to international informants, and whether/how it describes them. Second, I explore these student participants' relationships with their families and friends back home and their relationships with their home countries to further understand the varied ways in which being an international student entails having connections to and/or living lives in multiple places. Finally, I briefly turn to how internationals in this study perceive their own personal growth as well as their projections for the future, be it the next year at Horace or what life might look like after they have graduated.

The transnational social fields (TSFs) theoretical frame heavily informs this chapter, particularly the work of Terra Gargano (2009, 2012; see also Chapter I). TSFs is instructive because of how it “address[es] evolving associations across borders to better understand how university students construct identities and negotiate social spaces, physical locales, and the geography of the mind” (2009, p. 331). As Gargano (2009) further explains, “employing the concept of transnational social fields in an analysis of student mobility illuminates student negotiations by recognizing simultaneity in localities and multiplicity in identities and refuting the generalization or homogenization of student experiences” (p. 331). In other words, TSFs privileges the complexities of the very real experience for internationals of living and of being both in and beyond Horace. The theoretical frame explicitly positions each individual’s context as unique and significant.

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, it is necessary, at times, to acknowledge that people in this student group have much in common and can and should be discussed categorically; however, because each student comes from a different country, background, and family and has unique personalities, beliefs, and perspectives, they also defy the category in which they are so often placed. In our fall interview, Elizabeth spoke to this point. On the one hand, she said, “I think there’s times when identifying international students as a single unit is really key and important,” because these individuals are on F-1 visas and have “unique needs” (5Dec13). On the other hand, though, “[t]he problem is when we forget to drill in.” She continued, “it’s a huge mistake to think all of them are the same.”

There are countless such cases, she went on to explain:

[a] student from Jamaica, for example. Jamaica is so culturally diverse. They might be Chinese, they might be Indian, they might be, um, um, mm, Black Jamaican. They, they, I mean, what. The community they grew up in or whatever just is incredibly diverse in that tiny little nation. [*Laughs*] You know? [Me: Yeah.] Um, so we can’t assume, for example, that we’re gonna, that every student who comes to us from

[Smiling] France is gonna be White. Or from Iraq is gonna be Muslim. [Laughs] Um, cuz we see over and over again the minute that we make that assumption, it's wrong.

As Elizabeth aptly points out, it is a mistake to assume that international students are all the same. While they do all share a visa status that implies and requires certain responses and needs, we must “drill in” and learn more about each person in order to really begin to know who they are.

Additionally, Gargano contends that what TSFs offers is “an opportunity to situate students experiences within a social network that holds the possibility for exploring aspects of education border crossings and saliency of identities that international students themselves define as influencing their sense making” (p. 339). As my international participants shared in interviews and focus groups, their lives are mediated by a myriad of factors that pull and push them to see themselves, the world, and their place in it as being contingent on what happens on campus and also what is happening back home and/or wherever else their transnational ties connect them. Crucially, as a theoretical frame, TSFs “does not limit or predict” how internationals’ lives and their experiences in and beyond Horace unfold (p. 335); rather, amidst the varying power relations connected to mobility and the numerous, often contradictory, circumstances in their personal contexts, internationals can and do “articulate the past, make sense of the present, and predict the future” (p. 340). Participants describe the ways in which being an international student and navigating their transnational social fields is, as Collins (2009) describes it, an “embodied” practice. The experience of simultaneously living lives in multiple places is full of frictions and freedoms, pleasures and pains. It is never seamless, uncomplicated, or bereft of “the dynamics of the multidimensional tension and conflict” (Kim, 2012, p. 457) inherent to it, of which internationals have varying levels of control and agency. International informants operate

within an uneven and complex world and are individual agents moving through a fluid yet bordered system of global higher education<sup>79</sup>.

### **Being an “International Student”**

Informed by scholars such as Coate (2009), Gargano (2009), Koehne (2005), Kumar (2003), and Matthews and Sidhu (2005), I knew well before I began data collection that I could not take for granted the term “international student” in this dissertation. While straightforward definitions of the term, such as “a student who comes from another country to study at an HEI in the U.S.” or “a student on an F-1 visa,” do exist and were sometimes given by informants, most international participants shared more complex, personal meanings, as well as feelings about “being international.” The quote that opens this chapter demonstrates, as Elizabeth noted above, that it would have been “a mistake” for me to assume that I could know what it means to be an international student for other people. Reading now a bit into what she said, I think Alya (Sr, F, Middle East) aptly points out that something as involved and lengthy as a dissertation is necessary to explore such weighty questions. Or, maybe she was just implying, since my study was all about international students and I had been at Horace for six months already, that I should have had a better idea by that time. Either way, Alya’s question to my questions reminds me that the term’s meanings are both subjectively oriented, and, in the space of a research study, mutually explored, sometimes even constructed, between informants and the researcher. As Alya and I, and I with so many of my participants, seemed to be agreeing, definitions of “international student” are not so simple, and they require drilling in.

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<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, international participants did not often raise or discuss concerns related to the bordered, regulated aspects of their experience. When I asked about what she viewed as students’ greatest challenges, Elizabeth noted, among others, “I don’t know that they view the regulatory pieces as very challenging. [Me: Mm.] I think many students would be surprised at the amount of time that we spend on those issues. [5 *second pause*] Maybe when it comes to their internships and employment post-graduation they start to connect with that a little bit better” (5Dec13). This may, in part, explain why students did not often bring up these issues, beyond the circumstances Elizabeth describes. See also Alya’s comments below on pages 291-292.

### *Focus Group Perspectives*

I first posed the question “what does it mean to you to be an ‘international student?’” in my two fall 2013 focus groups. I wanted to know from the outset of the study, and in an interactional setting between multiple internationals, how the term is perceived. I hoped they would feed off, agree and disagree, as well as contradict one another. They did.

Students in my first focus group session explored several meanings of being an international student. Alya was the first to speak. She explained that to be an international student is:

[t]o have taken a huge risk, to have chosen to become like super independent at an early age. Like every person to me, like, who I’m looking at [around the table] is very courageous: here without their parents in a foreign country, going at it like on their own to decide to like place yourself in another country for four years (1Oct13).

For Alya, courage is a defining feature of being an international student. As Ashwini pointed out in the previous chapter, it can be a risk to go off the beaten path of higher education and attend an institution abroad. Yet, internationals are also courageous because they venture off “without their parents” to a “foreign country”; whether or not every international feels “independent,” as she suggests, Alya affirms that to “place yourself” abroad is real courage.

In addition, Alya shared, she and other internationals are “misunderstood<sup>80</sup> a tremendous amount of the time [Maurice (So, M, E Africa) *Chuckling*: Yeah.],” for example, “in like the way we interpret text.” For his part, Maurice agreed that internationals are misunderstood, saying that his domestic counterparts from L.A. think they have traveled far to be at Horace. The whole group, including me, laughed over this prospect. “That, that’s

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<sup>80</sup> Alya later also explained, “[i]t’s also being misunderstood and it’s misconceptions of what our countries look like. Now, obviously I’m not expecting American students to know what the whole world looks like, but then when you’re an international student, and you’re like, ‘I speak five languages, I know what your country looks like. You know, I know your political system.’ I mean, it’s unfair because I’m also, I feel like I over-judge. Of course like I know what the American political system looks like. Of course I know who’s running for like office. [*Chuckling*] It’s like, it’s like things, and you know, and they’re not going to know what’s going on in my country. But when you’re sitting there as a student, you’re like, ‘How is it that I speak your language, I know your religion, kind of know your history, know like you’re politics, and you think that...’. Somebody, when I was a first year, thought that my parents speak Spanish, because that’s what they do in [my country]!”

nothing. [*We all laugh again*] And so I. The distance thing is big.” However, being misunderstood also has a lot to do with the challenges of ignorance, that is, ignorant classmates: “[s]ome of the people here are very ignorant. That, that, that’s, and it’s fair to say that.” He and Alya explained,

Maurice: You have no idea what happens out in the world. [*I laugh and Rinchen (Jr, F, SE Asia), Yinan (So, M, SE Asia), and Alya clap loudly in agreement.*]

Alya: [*Almost laughing*] They have no idea what’s happening outside of America.

Maurice: Yeah, like it’s, they have no clue. They don’t know what countries are in Europe. Sometimes they think Europe is a country. I mean, how can people in Horace not know that? [*Rinchen laughs*]

The group then erupted into a mixture of laughter and talking over one another, and mostly agreeing that all (American?) students at Horace are ignorant. Alya interrupted to say, chuckling, “[n]ot on an aggregate, you guys! Not everyone you’ve met.” While these informants might have been exaggerating, it was clear to me that there was a lot of overlap between what it means to be an international student. Being different, misunderstood, and dealing with ignorant<sup>81</sup> classmates is central to international study in their eyes.

Later in the session, Sun (Fr, F, E Asia), returning to points her international counterparts made, shared impressions of her own, nascent experience. She confessed that her being an international student does not preclude her from being ignorant: “I’m pretty ignorant about ... other people, like other cultures, other countries,” and about “the news.” However, she wanted to learn and be more connected to the world, she explained: “[a] part of why I wanted to come to America was because I wanted to meet other internationals.” She continued, “I don’t really want to know about America that much. I want to know about

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<sup>81</sup> While I do not discuss it here, the kinds of ignorance these students discussed also included the religious and racial ignorances I discussed in Chapter I. Rinchen spoke about frustrations with American counterparts and her Muslim faith. Maurice shared, “Somebody asked me where I was from. I said I’m from [my country]. [He said] [l]ike, ‘Oh my goodness, I have a friend from South Africa. Do you know him?’ [*Laughter around table*].” Yinan also noted that an American (a friend of a Horace student) asked him, “Hey, so do you live in Tokyo?” I was like, ‘No, I’m from [my country].’ He was like, ‘Yeah, do you live in Tokyo?’ [*Laughter around table*].”

like other countries. And like America was the best place to meet other internationals.” She also noted that she was not able to befriend, or even see, people of other races in her home country; in the U.S. and at Horace, though, she can. Moreover, she went on to say, becoming an international student is not about being courageous:

Sun: Since really young I wanted to come to America to experience diverse cultures, to see a larger world. That was what I wanted since I was very little and I, I went through those steps. I went to high school to, that, that enabled me to go to foreign countries to, for college. I went to middle school and studied hard so that I could get to high school. Like, I, I had those steps and I always had this in my mind that I will come to America to, for college. And so this wasn't something courageous or, or something like that for me. It was like something natural.

Rinchen: Ah, it was your plan.

Sun: Yeah. Cuz I, I had that plan, since like for my whole life for me.

For Sun, unlike Alya, being an international student is “something natural,” it is all a part of her “plan” to “see a larger world.” And being in the world, Sun concedes, means that she, too, is ignorant of many things. While she did not comment on her American counterparts, she shared that her own ignorances are very much a part of her journey, and something that, over time, she is addressing by “experienc[ing] diverse cultures” and the larger world.

A bit later, Yinan, with Rinchen's help, returned to the idea of courage, in broader terms:

Yinan: I feel like being, uh, international students requires a lot of courageous. Not only for yourself, but also for your family. [Rinchen: Mm hm.] It's a two-way.

Me: What do you mean “for your family”?

Yinan: You miss your home, your family miss you.

Rinchen: They have to learn to let go.

Yinan: Yeah, they have to learn how to.

Rinchen: They have to be courageous enough to, to. How to say like? Trust your child, to know your child will survive [Maurice: Yeah.] and thrive. [*Speaking with*

*animated hands, up and down on the table*] Will be able to achieve whatever you expected them. [Alya: Yeah.] And then come back.

The students agreed that being an international student has much to do with distance from family (a point to which I will return later this chapter). As Maurice pointed out, “[i]f something happens to me now it will be like a couple, at least a week for my dad to get here. If something happens to my roommate (Ron, So, M, MN), he’s gonna be here this night.” Moreover, Maurice shared, “there’s the expense factor. That’s like if [my family] can afford to come. [Rinchen: Yeah.] I mean, there’s this huge disconnect. It’s not just in terms of time.” To this, Alya added, Skype becomes an invaluable tool for connecting home: “[m]y parents Skype me every single day.” So while there are ways to mitigate the pangs of distance, being an international student, for these students, is also a courageous act of missing home, family. Arguably, all students miss their families and families their student-children; however, as Maurice points out, for international parents, the trip to Horace is far, takes a long time (Horace is in a small town in the middle of the country), and, in many cases, the cost is prohibitive. “Missing home,” “surv[ing] and thiv[ing],” and “if something happens” all have different implications for these international students.

In my second fall focus group, internationals shared some similar, though many different, meanings for and feelings about what it means to them to be an international student. Kusturie (So, F, E Africa) listed positive attention and unique privileges as being part and parcel of international study. “I just know that I like it,” she explained. “[Hanh (So, F, SE Asia): Yeah!] I love being international because [Hanh: It’s so cool!] of the attention” you get and “people hear you speaking your own language and their like, ‘oh my gosh, that’s so cool!”<sup>82</sup> [*Hanh laughs loudly*]” (2Oct13). Furthermore, she added, privileges include being

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<sup>82</sup> Interestingly, this is in stark contrast to what Kusturie shared in a spring focus group six month later. See chapter V, pages 235-236. In the April session, she noted that American students judge her and her friends for speaking Swahili on



able to stay on camps during breaks and “having host families [Hanh and Danushka (So, M, SE Asia): Yeah.] that’s like...really, really fun, so.” This latter point, that having host families is a unique and special aspect of their experience at Horace, registered strongly with the other informants around the table<sup>83</sup>. As Tim (Fr, M, W Europe) shared,

I like the idea of host fam-, having host families. It’s great that at least international students get to see the world out of Horace College because I think it’s kind of like a bubble [Hanh: Mm hm.] Like I have not been in town [4 second pause] more than three times in the last five weeks. I’ve been trying to get off campus, but it’s just you have everything you need in here. Um, it’s just this very secluded community somehow. You have your friends here. You have really no reason to leave campus in a way. So it’s, it’s just, um, great to have the host family that you know is outside of campus and you can always go there. And I think it’s something the Americans are sort of missing out on.

For Tim, host families are a way to get out of the Horace College “bubble” and to share time with an American family. Not only that, but this aspect of life at Horace is unique for internationals; domestic students do not have host families.

In addition to feeling positive attention and having host families, participants in the second fall focus group noted that “international student” has several other, more general connotations and has complex personal meanings. In a quick barrage of definitions, students shared that the term means that “[y]ou have a special name” (Xiaonan, So, F, SE Asia), that “[y]our family’s back home?” (Hanh), that you were “[b]orn and raised in another country with different citizenship” (Danushka), that “[y]ou speak another language” that is “more fluent than English” (Hanh), that “[y]ou’ve traveled for miles to get here?” (Kusturie), and that you’ve “[h]ad a terrible jet lag [*Laughter around the table*]” (Kusturie).

On the other hand, when I asked, “what does it mean to you guys *to be an international student?*” on a personal level, students shared more complex feelings. Kusturie

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campus. It is probably fair to say, then, that internationals experience both scenarios, and, understandably, feel validated with positive comments and dejected by negative ones.

<sup>83</sup> Internationals in the other fall focus group – and in interviews – also spoke at length about how being an international student has a lot to do with having, and feeling a variety of positive feelings about, host families.

explained, “it means I’m different” and I am one of “those few people who are not Americans.” Moreover, she clarified, “I like being different,” “different and unique.” For his part, Danushka shared (noted many times in the dissertation, his fundamental belief),

[y]eah, you have a different perspective I guess. And I, a different view, outlook on [Kusturie: Mm hm.] the world compared to Americans I guess. Because you come from a different culture, a different background [Kusturie: Mm hm.] where a lot of things are very different. So you get to see things very differently.

In addition to feeling different and knowing the world in different ways, Tim explained, that being an international student is all about “community building”:

I mean, we know it, we’re here kind of by ourselves and our families are abroad and, um, kind of far away. And then again, we know that we have other international students and, I mean, I’m trying to really make friends with people who are not international students. And I actually do have a lot of friends who are not international students. But then again, you always kind of come back to an inter-, to an international student [Kusturie: Mm hm.] because you kinda share the same [Hanh: Mm hm.] feelings about life. [Hanh: Mm.] You have the same problems. You can bond over that. And I think that’s just great. It’s just being in a community of others who have experienced the same thing, [Hanh: Mm hm.] which I think some American students don’t have.

And for Hanh, picking up on Tim’s response, being an international student is about feeling distance from family: “What you just said remind me. We had family weekend. And all my American friends have their parents coming over. And my parents have never been on campus. So it kinda like make me think about them even more. [Tim: Yeah.] About my family. [Tim, *Quietly*: Totally.]” For her part, though, Hanh also channeled this separation from family in productive ways. She has learned to take care of her bank account and tighten her budget, which before her mother took of: “[s]o, yeah, so more responsibility, growing up, making decision that would matter.”

### *Individual Interview Perspectives*

Participants of these focus groups expressed some of the salient aspects of, what for them, it means to be an international student. Feelings of being, or being perceived as,

“different” are prevalent. Where an individual student comes from and what their life was like before Horace matters. Relationships with family and friends beyond U.S. borders, often quite far away, are important. And international study, as a journey in life, is a central theme in these students’ understanding of being an international student. To further explore these themes and many others, and to learn better how individual students perceive their experiences at and beyond Horace<sup>84</sup>, I turn next to the 16 international students who sat with me for fall and spring one-on-one interviews<sup>85</sup>. With interview participants, similarly to focus group informants, I asked, “how does and doesn’t the term ‘international student’ fit with how you see yourself?” and “what does it mean to you to be an international student at Horace?” In what follows, then, I trace participant perspectives in order of the length of time they have been undergraduate<sup>86</sup> international students at Horace College. I begin with the four freshman participants, after which I survey four sophomores, one junior, and, finally, my seven senior informants, each of whom were on the cusp of graduation.

Anna (Fr, F, E Europe), only in the U.S. for 10 months when I interviewed her at the start of the fall semester (this was also her first time abroad), explained that there is a difference between her view of being an international student and what others want it to be:

[u]m, what I think Horace wants it to be in an ideal world is: you bring a part of your cu-, culture and the way you deal with things, then you interact with people and those people get educated on how things are dealt with in other parts of the world, and then, um, a discussion is, um, enforced and, you know, people, people benefit from it. Um, but how I see myself as an international comes to a very superficial level, um, which is: I don’t have a phone with American sim card, because it’s way

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<sup>84</sup> Many dissertations give individual participant profiles in one of the early chapters to help familiarize readers to the informants in the study. As I noted in Chapter III, this option is not available to me because of the difficulty it would have presented in protecting the confidentiality of participants at small research site like Horace College. In lieu of these profiles, to show individual differences and to highlight the importance of individual student’s voices (Gargano, 2012; Garrod and Davis, 1999), I here survey each of the primary participants on their feelings about being an international student.

<sup>85</sup> In many ways, the invaluable data I collected during fall focus groups helped me prepare – to know better how to ask and to talk about important topics – for the spring individual interviews, in which, among others, I planned to explore more in-depth the subject of “being an international student.” In this case, without the company of other internationals, these 16 participants explored with me the contours of their own associations to the label often ascribed to them.

<sup>86</sup> Three primary participants (Brenda, Vincci, and Alya) attended international secondary schools abroad. One (Xiaonan) attended high school in the United States (as did Joonsik, a spring focus group participant).

too expensive and I can just contact you on Facebook. It's, um. I don't have family here so if I wanted to go outside of Horace, I couldn't. And, um, I don't know people here, so if I wanted to find employment I'd have to do it through my hard work and not my family relationships. It's a very pragmatic and practical approach that I have to "international student." It's just the idea that I'm not from here, and that's it. Um, sure, do I bring a part of my culture here? Yeah, but when people ask you, "Oh, you're from [your country]. What kind of food do you eat there?! Do you come from the capital? Do you live in huts? Do you have?" I don't know, like somebody asked me if we have malls. [*Tone and facial expression suggests to me that she is both surprised and put off*] What the fuck? Like, "Yeah, I have malls." Or like, "What language do you speak?!" [*Whispering*] "[National language]" (30Jan14).

For Anna, the "ideal" and the more stereotypical impression of cross-cultural engagement at Horace is not how she sees the international-domestic student exchange. Being an international student is "superficial," "pragmatic," and "practical": she is away from home, having to make things happen on her own, and she must regularly deal with the ignorances of her American counterparts, clearly something that frustrates her view of cross-cultural engagement. She also shared that it is hard for other people to "understand where I'm from" because "[t]hey don't understand what happened, you know, where I'm from. You know, they don't understand that it shaped me. And they. And it's a very complex thing! H-, how would you know? I mean, only the people closest to me *do* know it." In her first year at Horace, Anna struggles to connect strongly with people not from her home country for cultural reasons. As she put it, "culture is such a thing that you have to be soaked in to understand it." Knowing Anna well, it seems, will require more time and shared experiences.

The distance she felt from her American counterparts may well be connected to her thoughts on being an international student in the classroom<sup>87</sup>. In our fall interview, she expressed being "nervous" and fearing being seen as a "stereotypical international student":

Anna: I'm far less inclined to actually raise my hand and actually, you know, say something. I, I'm nervous when I hear my voice in class. Umm...

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<sup>87</sup> In truth, I am disappointed that I do not have more space in this chapter for students like Anna. I could write an entire chapter, or an article, about Anna's impressions of being an international student. She spoke about the topic quite a bit, at times passionately and confidently and, at others, more carefully and with vulnerability.

Me: Why are you nervous?

Anna: I just feel like people are already like, “Oh, she’s an international.” And so, so they will tag you as an international very quickly.

Me: What does that mean: “they will tag you”?

Anna: I mean, I just feel like people don’t expect you to succeed as an international. Um.

Me: Mm. When you say “people,” who do you mean?

Anna: The classmates. I feel like they expect you to be, you know, less successful in class. I feel like they expect you not to, just not to be able to follow with the program as well as they would. It could be a falsely assumption, but I don’t know, I just feel like it (8Oct13).

Thinking of a home country counterpart in her political science class whose mannerisms and public presentation style is very typical back home, she noted, “people here are not used it and then, you know, he tries to explain stuff, he’ll get so into it and they get confused half way into it. And I, I’ll see people, you know, rolling their eye, their eyes and being like, ‘Just get to it, man.’” This is disappointing and frustrating for Anna because, on the one hand, communicating in a second language can be challenging, and, on the other, because she does not “want to be that stereotypical international student,” or,

you know, that student who has a weird accent, that whenever he says, says something, or she says something, there’s kind of an awkward silence after because people are like, [*Whispers*] “What did he say?” [*Regular volume*] You know, umm, then teachers are extra, you know, devoted to listening. They will give them like 30 seconds before they answer, 30 seconds after they answer, so like they’re sure they said everything. Like I don’t want any special treatment! Like I’m not medically ill! This is just not my native language! So, um, [*4 second pause*] it’s not that I want to portray myself as an American. I just don’t want to be in any type of way different than all the other American students because we’re just all students here.

Anna’s strong feelings about professors and students giving her “the international face,” as she would put it in our spring interview, makes her nervous to speak in class and to be seen as “that stereotypical international student,” the student not expected to succeed, the student

who needs “special treatment.” While very proud of being an international student from her home country and very happy to be a Horace student, she both vehemently repels this stereotype and appeals for equal treatment and respect among her Horacian counterparts.

Mirza (Fr, M, E Europe), whose perceptions of being an international student differed quite a bit from Anna’s, told me that the descriptor “international student” fits him well. On the one hand, he noted, “every student here is international student” because of “being in new setting, new experience, new people questioning your own beliefs,” etc.

(11Feb14). However, and more to the point in his own life, Mirza told me that international study is an incredible journey across and through space and time, in which his life is happening concurrently in two places – back home and in Horace. He explained,

the core stays, but everything around like changes, shifted! And when you go there, you’re f-, you’re, uh, experiencing that shock! Someone will call it cultural shock! Someone would call it negative. No! Like for me it’s such cool thing to see, oh, what’s happening, what’s changed.

Smiling ear to ear, almost laughing, he excitedly relayed, to my question about whether he felt he was living multiple lives, that it is more like “I’m going on the same path and just changing outfits from time to time and adapting to certain conditions.” Or perhaps, “[i]t would be just driving on highway and when rain starts [*Smiling*] and you need to do something so you can drive, and change tires in winter and summer. Or wash your car.”

Rather than needing to “buy[] a new car or driving one car,” the trick is to “establish that as one highway with multiple tracks that you can switch to. Then, then, then you’re in good shape.” About being an international student, he clarified:

*no matter how* great that landscape is, it becomes boring if you are constantly seeing it. [*Smiling*] No matter how, how tasty food is, if you eat it three months every meal, I mean, you get bored. And the ability for me to, to change experiences; to question my beliefs, even some fundamental ones; to, uhh, see how people react when I come back, when I leave, both from here and there; to um, become – that’s, that’s one side that is – connected to my country. The other side, to become. My mom always said, the citizen of the world. I mean, spending time here, understanding different

cultures, and spending time in one of the most developed countries of the world. If, if you're able to combine those two things – and I believe I'm, I'm currently successful in doing that – then the, the product of that experience, of being international student is, is, is great.

For Mirza, the experience so far of being an international student is about challenging himself, about growing as a person, and about seeing what the world – and life – has to offer him. Mirza is a “citizen of the world” who seeks change and seeks to question his “fundamental beliefs.” International study is exciting and full of possibilities.

However, I would be remiss – and would represent Mirza incompletely, even falsely – without also noting his motivations and his “responsibilities” to self, family, and country:

I said to myself, “Okay now, you are on a mission here. You are representing yourself and developing, both. Representing and developing yourself, your family, your nation, your country. All those. And be focused on what you're doing.” So the things that I do, the things that I say, and the mark that I leave after me about me as a person, and then broader and broader, my family, and my city and my, my country, it's going to be there for the rest of the life. Like this talk with you or my grades. Or relationships with faculty, staff, and students here are, are going to characterize my education. Both to others and to myself. So, I'm highly responsible now for all my actions. I'm in a foreign country and, uh, um, one, one bad move or one thing that I've found, “Oh, it's not that important,” can cost me losing education or, uh, accreditation of what I'm saying or what I'm doing or whatever. So that is why I'm fully concentrated on, on developing myself in that sense (17Oct13).

Inasmuch as Mirza sees life as a journey of excitement and discovery about himself and his world, he is also grounded by his actions and his choice to attend Horace College. Being an international student is a serious endeavor, and is about being responsible to people and purposes much greater than himself. To honor self and home he is completely focused.

For her part, Sun (Fr, F, E Asia) believed that the term “international student” “fits me perfectly” (10Feb14). For one, she said that when she introduces herself she “will definitely say that I am from ... [my home country]. Because there is a difference. Like I cannot be an Ameri-. I always have a [home country] identity within myself.” She went on to note that, in her view, the definition of an international student is one “who has different, [6

*second pause; chuckling*] a student who has two homes, I guess. One is in Horace. Like two emotional homes. Yeah. That are pretty different. [*Laughs softly*] And who are trying to make that into one, I guess. Yeah.” In addition to feeling different and having, and trying to bring together, two “emotional homes,” Sun told me that “there are some times when it, like when it’s easier for me to say I’m an international student. And sometime there are, there are times when there is no *need* to say I’m an international student.” That is, she explained, in classes, for example, “I will definitely have more like, more difficulty in, in trying to remember what vocab I wanna use. So if I say that I’m an international student [classmates and professors] would be more patient, and waiting for me to think about what I wanna say.” From her vantage point, then, it is fair to say that Anna’s notion of “international face” is a welcomed, and, at times, needed interlude to the intensity of class participation. She is “granted the chance to be, um, stupid. Yes, I feel much more free *here* that I don’t know something” because “it’s not embarrassing to not know something if, if a, if you’re not in, if you did not live in that culture. Or if it’s not your native language. [*Chuckles softly*] I could just ask what, what, ‘What does that mean?’” This is in real contrast to classes back home where not having studied enough or lacking vocabulary leads to embarrassment. Being an international student, then, has its advantages, and presents opportunities to learn at her own pace.

Weiguang’s (Fr, M, SE Asia) feedback on this subject differed quite a bit from the three previous freshmen. He spoke to the idea that internationals must academically and socially “work harder” and that, contrary to public opinion, they do not contribute to campus diversity. In the case of the first, it is “not just for the class, but for everything. Like you wanna talk to your American friends you have to know what they’re talking. So you have to spend time on reading and just watching” (6Mar14). Being able to connect with Americans means the added burden of spending time honing language skills and learning



cultural references – all of this on top of keeping up with the rigors of Horace academics. Regardless of these extra efforts, Weiguang was skeptical that being international at Horace translated into being a recognized and appreciated part of campus diversity. Only do “activities hosted by international students” (I took him to mean the ISO) display the international diversity at the College. If not for these activities, he reasoned, “American student will not experience this<sup>88</sup>.” Despite his disappointment about diversity, Weiguang remarked the following when I asked if he thought the term “international student” described him:

Weiguang: Yeah, for sure. Cuz you’re different.

Me: [4 *second pause*] Mm hm. How are you different?

Weiguang: Your appearance, your accent, your lifestyle, and the way you think. Just everything, I think. And even it’s the food you eat.

For Weiguang, difference was a mark of pride, as much as it was a matter of fact. Troubled a bit by the extent to which some Americans seem to be ignorant of “people from another country,” Weiguang sees himself as someone willing and wanting to “work harder” to make the most of his experience at Horace.

Among the primary participants in the study, sophomore Sabith (So, M, S Asia) had the least connection to the term “international student<sup>89</sup>.” He shared, “I don’t really have any particular favor for the term. I don’t see myself as an international student very much. But, I don’t know, some other people probably do, I’m sure.” To this latter point, he told me,

if I did spend more time with international students we’d probably talk about how some things in the U.S. are strange. You know? Or something like that. Like international students talk about that. I mean, whenever I see some of them talk about it, they talk about how people drink differently here or driving is different, or maybe shops are different. They complain about, say, maybe [*Chuckling*] the sales tax

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<sup>88</sup> In Chapter IV, I discuss Weiguang’s comments, and other internationals, on this topic at greater length.

<sup>89</sup> See also Chapter V, pages 254, where I also discuss Sabith’s perceptions on this topic in reference to being a “Horacian.” The same is true for Yanan, whose comments here connect closely to those on pages 255-256.

or something, like prices are not even and things like that. And the metric system not being in place. And things like that. See, if, if I were with international students more we'd bring up those things more. So I'd probably *feel* more international. But since I'm with domestic students, they take all those things for granted and don't talk about them very much. I mean, [my American friends are] smart people so they talk about everything, [*Chuckling*] every once in a while (3Apr14).

While he does not consider himself one, Sabith does have distinct ideas about what being an international student might be like: they talk about how “things in the U.S. are strange” and about how facets of American life like drinking, driving, and shopping are different. In contrast to spending time with internationals, who he thinks complain too often and are too narrowly focused on differences, Sabith hangs out primarily with Americans, people who “talk about everything, every once in a while.” Sabith not only disfavors the term, but he prefers the topics of conversation and the lifestyle that he and his domestic friends share.

For his part, Yinan (So, M, SE Asia) was also not committed to the international student label. Rather, he told me, “I'm transitioning” (17Feb14). He explained,

I was an international student, I would say, when I first stepped my foot onto this college. I'm not anymore. [*Smiling*] I'm more like a mix of, more, more like a mix of international student and American student. Cuz, um, we're being uniformized with American culture. We're being influenced. I'm speaking American accent instead of like my, um, uh. Maybe. Cuz back then. Cuz every single [person from my country] started learning English with, uhh, in British accent. So I'm changing my accent. [*Smiling*] Even though I still have my [home country] accent. [*I chuckle*] So yeah! That's like a trivial part of the whole thing. We're transitioning from what we were to whatever we're becoming. Some, some students are like, could be like *very* Americanized. They can speak *very* well accent American English. Um, they behave like American. They're totally transformed. Some people are not. Some people stay, like with, with what they were. But still people are transitioning, I feel like. So I don't think the word “international student” still apply to students who have been here a while. And also, being in Horace people should not be labeled as American or international because we're all Horacians.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, Yinan feels strongly about revisiting and revising how people at the College understand and talk about diversity. As his comments here make clear, it makes more sense to Yinan to blend home country and American identities. Yinan is an

advocate for international students on campus, and so, from where he stands, internationals, “influenced” by American culture – very much on a spectrum – would do well to embrace the idea that mixing and transitioning from an “international student” to a “Horacian” is an inevitable, healthy, and unifying formulation of identity<sup>90</sup>.

Unlike most of the students in the study, Xiaonan (So, F, SE Asia) had not only extensive experience being an international student before arriving in Horace but she also attended a high school in the U.S. Thinking well into their daughter’s future, Xiaonan told me that her parents “heard that it’s easier to get into a um, uh, good universities if I studied in the U.S. for high school<sup>91</sup>” (13Nov13). It was perhaps because Xiaonan experienced homesickness and the challenges of moving to and living in another country several years earlier that she framed being an international student so matter-of-factly: “Um, well, it just means that I, um. For me, it just means that I’m part of the, um, international student organization, and, um, I will go to the international student shows. Otherwise, I feel like the same [*Chuckles softly*]” (20Mar14). And when I asked what the term “international student” meant to her, she remarked, “[w]ell, um, [*Chuckles softly*] I think it means that you are around, uh, you are surrounded by international students more than American students. And, um, you like different food. And sometimes maybe you dress differently. Yeah. That’s all I can say, [*Chuckles softly*] I think.” For Xiaonan, like many other participants, being different is a salient aspect of being international. Like Weiguang, Xiaonan feels difference is a positive:

Xiaonan: I think, uh, the difference are good because it marks you as special. And you want to be special in this college. Yeah.

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<sup>90</sup> While his views were not always so inclusive and open-minded – in fact, he was at times resolute in his opinions, particularly about his home country – it is also worth noting that Yanan’s third-option position here is similar to his views about what choices international students have after college. At first he stated, a person can “[e]ither stay in the U.S. or go back [home],” and likely, as in his case as an only child in Asia, meet “family expectations” (29Oct13). Yanan, though, has other ideas in mind: a Masters or doctoral degree in Germany.

<sup>91</sup> This is consistent with Farrugia’s (2014) findings: “[m]any international students are now seeking to earn high school diplomas abroad to position themselves as more competitive applicants for higher education institutions in the host or destination country” (p. 2).

Me: Why do you want to be special in this college?

Xiaonan: Because. Okay, so I think no one wants to be the same as everyone else. You want to stand out and be special. Yeah.

As an international student, Xiaonan is a member of the ISO and an active attendee at its events, she has many international friends, and she eats and dresses differently than her American counterparts. More than anything else, the fact that she is international, and different, contributes to her specialness, a defining quality for her being at a college where, she seems to say, everyone can lay claim to different forms of distinctiveness.

Zawadiye's (So, F, E Africa) perspective, much like a response from Mirza, was that "[e]verybody's an international student" (14Mar14). Clarifying this, she said, "[e]ven the domestic students are international to me. Like, I don't know, yeah, I'm an international student. I'm different from pretty much – actually, I am – from everybody here! [*Chuckles; Smiling*] So that, I like the word 'international student,' yeah." From her vantage point, she was amenable to the "international" qualifier, a pretty straightforward label:

Zawadiye: Well, what is "international," I guess?

Me: Great question.

Zawadiye: Um, between nations. [*Laughs*] You know, that's everybody here! So, I don't know, I guess we're all students. I guess, I guess the way it's used here it's really to mean students who are not domestic.

She went on to say, in response to my asking, "so what does it mean to you to be a Horace College international student?": "[*4 second pause*] I don't know. Um. I don't know. I don't think I've really thought about that. I mean, I came from pre-or-, for POFIS, international pre-orientation program. [*Chuckling*] It was helpful to be with a whole bunch of other kids. Um, but that's just, that's just about it. [*Chuckles softly*]" For Zawadiye, it is self-evident that everyone, including Americans, are international students. This perception of fact, moreover, precludes the need for greater thought on the topic. Her strongest association to the term,

when it is meant to differentiate “students who are not domestic,” is POFIS; however, she did not have anything else to say on the subject. To her, *everyone* really is international.

Contrary to Zawadiye, whose comments on the topic were comparatively brief, Sara (Jr, F, E Europe), the only junior in the primary group of 16 participants, had a lot to say:

Um, it used to be really exotic when I came here. People would, were like, “Oh, you’re from [home country]. That’s so exotic.” And for me “exotic” meant like for me coming from, from Ecuador or, or something like that. It’s really warm and has a lot of palm trees. Um, but now I just. “International student” means [4 *second pause*] having a different perspective on things. And I think we’re one of the most adaptable groups on campus. Because we come and we have to embrace a different culture for four years. And we learn how to keep our own values from a culture that we like and we love and think how to respect our own background while still being able to respect the new world that we’re into and blending the two. Um, my second year I started going to counseling on campus because I just didn’t know how to deal with the fact that I’m both [from my country] and becoming Americanized at the same time<sup>92</sup>. They, like these two concepts to me were just, they were things that I wanted to do the, I felt that I should be doing in a proper way from a [home country person’s] point of view and then, um, like the American way was not like something that I liked. So I had to like choose from those things. And I think that’s a thing that a lot of international students do. And being international means being about that flexibility and, um, I, I think it also means being, um, [8 *second pause*; *Exhales*] uum, open-minded about. I, I want, I want to bring like academics into conversation somehow. Because we are, we come, I, I, I guess it comes back to flexibility and adaptability in that way, too, because we’re used to very different systems and, um, very different ways of like teaching and learning, and then we come here and start learning and adjust to this idea of like critical thinking or like interacting with professors, like and with classrooms, and writing papers and things that we don’t necessarily have to do at home. So culturally we’re a very interesting hybrid. Um, and another thing is that when you first asked the question the first thing that popped into my head was that, um, when people ask me if wa-, if was gonna go abroad and I said no, they’d be like, “Oh, yeah, I guess because you’re already studying abroad!” And I wanted. It bugged me and frustrated me for the longest time for some reason because I felt like, “There are plenty of other students that are going abroad and this doesn’t, there isn’t, it doesn’t feel like studying internationally you’re studying abroad anymore because it feels like home. It’s been becoming a, more and more of a home over the past few years. And, um, I guess it depends on the international student, but I don’t necessarily think I’m going back home. So for me this is not, might not

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<sup>92</sup> Mental health issues was a topic raised only by Sara and Vincci (as well as Elizabeth). When I asked for her thoughts on the campus health center, Sara explained, “there is a certain reticence to go to [the health center] for counseling services because they, I mean, you’re wary it’s a small place.” Moreover, she noted, “[b]ut, um, I, I think they’re very willing. For me it was very helpful and I know a few other international students that have like looked for help there. Um, but I think it can definitely be, be improved because not so many people do it” (25Feb14). To her point, counseling services is often a very sensitive subject, regardless of one’s nationality. Not an area of focus in this study, mental health and quality services for students are very important topics in the research about international students.

necessarily be abroad, and I'm going back to a different, to my initial place. Might go to another place. But yeah. [Me: Mm hm.] We're Third Culture Adults (25Feb14).

For Sara, being an international student has particular, very personal, and intertwined meanings. Processing what it means to be “exotic;” “having a different perspective on things;” being “adaptable” and learning, perhaps with professional help, how to deal with and/or to embrace two different cultures, and, therefore, also be “flexible” and “open-minded;” having to learn and be successful in a new style of academics; and figuring out where “home” was, is, and will be because this is no longer so straightforward make up Sara's belief that she, and other internationals, are “Third Culture Adults”<sup>93</sup>. More so than most of my participants, Sara's understanding of international study is holistic: it is personal, social, and academic. Being an international student has not only been infinitely complex, overwhelming, and life changing, but Sara's experience in her first three years at and beyond Horace has indelibly shaped how she sees the world, her place in it, and her relationships with the many people who helped her get to where she is today. Notably, all of this has empowered Sara to be a leader on campus, both in the ISO and the SGA.

Brenda (Sr, F, E Africa), like Xiaonan, who spent her secondary years at an international school in another country, explained of being international,

I think it always gives me an edge. Like [Me: Hm.] I go into a room, if I'm the only international person in the room, I know that I have something to contribute that someone else will not be able to, you know, bring. [*Chuckling*] So that's how. I feel like it's benefitted me more than I've lost out on. Sometimes I may be lost in translation, if. You know, I took a class in American Studies. I had to teach myself everything. [*Laughs*] (28Jan14).

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<sup>93</sup> For further discussion of “Third Culture Kids (TCKs)” and “Adults,” see Pollock and Van Reken (2010). For clarification here, though, TCKs are generally defined as young people who are raised in one or more cultures/countries outside of their parents' culture/country for a significant part of their development years.

Brenda had noted in our first interview the previous semester that her first-year seminar course was quite Americentric<sup>94</sup>, which made learning course content and keeping up with her American counterparts challenging. With the exception of experiences like her American Studies course, though, she told me, “it’s worked in my favor to be like an international student at Horace.” Again similarly to Xiaonan, Brenda feels that being an international student makes her unique; from time to time, as in her first semester class, she may feel “lost in translation,” but, for the most part, she has “an edge” because she can walk into a room and “have something to contribute that someone else will not be able to.” And as a senior about to graduate, this advantage, Brenda implied, is something she knows will benefit her long after her Horace days.

For his part, Jose’s (Sr, M, S America) position on being an international student developed and changed over the course of our two interviews. In our fall interview, Jose recalled that upon his arrival, he was happy to see another international student, a POFIS leader, waiting for newcomers: “I guess that was also like a little easier because he was like not American, you know? So I felt a little, um, I don’t, we shared, you know, like this un-American-ness in away” (16Oct13). This reassured him, he said, because “you know, like the idea of being different. ... we were both different, so that, that helps, you know, like not feeling so different [Me: Uh huh.] in a new place.” Later in the interview, Jose shared that his studies at Horace had sharpened his skills of criticality and skepticism and he now was unsure of concepts like “nationalism” and “cultural essentialism.” Growing up, he had been “socialized” to believe he “should feel [like a home country person] and if I do not feel [like

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<sup>94</sup> A few students noted that they have taken classes at Horace College that were Americentric. As Brenda explained, “I did not even know what the first amendment was. I didn’t know who the founding fathers were. Like I didn’t know the basic history of even any of the dialogue that was going on in the U.S. And that just threw me off. I was like, ‘Okay.’ That made me reevaluate everything. Like, ‘What am I doing?’ Like, ‘how do I tackle this?’” (9Oct13). Vincci shared similar first year sentiments (30Oct13). However, as Alya reasoned, “it’s harder to participate ... because most of the classes are going to be about America. ... it’s something I don’t think about a lot because I go, ‘Well yeah, you came to an American university. [Laughing] Like this is what it is like!’” (13Feb14). Alya posited that as more international students come to Horace, there will be more academic programs like the Middle East concentration and organizations such as the Peace Conference.

a home country person], then I'm a bad person or whatever." His own ties to home, he now knew "are not necessarily inherent." Critical of essentialist ties to home, Jose posited, "I don't feel like I need to connect to that. It's like, it's more of a cosmopolitan like point of view right now." Similarly to Mirza, Jose explained, being cosmopolitan means,

[w]ell, it's like you become a citizen of the world, you know, realize you don't have to be attached to one particular country. And in a way it's good because it allows you to understand different perspectives, like different cultures. Like sometimes people d-, judge other cultures because they like cannot put themselves in other people's feet, you know? Um, so this like point of view allows me to be just more aware of, you know, where people are coming from and just understand these differences.

Jose also noted that he does not have the same struggles as TCKs he knows:

they feel like they don't belong anywhere. And that sucks! It really sucks. Like it can suck because "I don't belong anywhere" and "Where are you from?" They don't know. I can still say that. You know, I feel like it's kind of a cheat because like, "Yeah, I'm not [from my country]. I don't care about that." But then if you ask me where are you from: "I'm from [my country]." You know? And sometimes like, "Yeah, that's so cool." "Yeah, [my country's] cool." I can tell you all this stuff. It makes me look cool because I'm different. But at the same time, I'm rejected. You know, it's kind of like, I don't know, it's doubled faced. It, it's easier, it's always, I think it's always good to be able to say, "I'm from here. And this is where I belong." Even though I don't really, think that, you know? Yeah.

A philosophy major concentrating on multiculturalism, Jose is still very much processing his cosmopolitan journey. He knows that difference marks this journey and that it is not always easy "to face the Other, you know? Cuz the Other is scary. It's different from you. Um, they may not share your beliefs. You may be rejected in many ways. Or you have that fear of rejection because its something you don't know. It's something very uncertain, you know?" These, he noted, are some of the valuable lessons learned by being an international student.

In our spring interview, thinking ahead to graduation, Jose had different thoughts on how the term "international student" fit with how he saw himself or what it meant to him to be an international student at Horace. He told me,

mm, I never really thought of that. Um, I guess I'm only an international student as long as I'm here, you know? And I guess I will be for a while if I. That, that, that's



interesting because, yeah, I'm an international student because I'm a foreigner. You know, I'm not from this country. So I have a different culture and all of that. But for example when I applied to grad school, I, I felt, I didn't feel like an international student anymore because I had studied here, you know, I'd gotten my undergrad here. I have had, I had the same experiences as other Americans and, you know, gone through the same process. And I was like, "I don't feel different." I mean, in terms of, I guess in terms of the application process – which is a big thing. It was a big thing for me because I didn't know back then, you know, when I was applying to college I didn't know what to do or anything so I feel like I had a disadvantage. Whereas now I feel like, you know, I had the same choices, the same chances as the Americans. So in that sense like, you know, saying "international" seems like cheating, in a way. [Me: Hm.] Because like I feel like international students, it's like they come with this, you know, all this baggage but all these disadvantages because they don't know the culture, they don't know application process, they have to adjust to so many things (4Feb14).

Having personal relationships with professors, knowing how to be politically correct in social situations, and learning how to fit in with the Horace culture have all been a part of Jose's development over the last more than three and half years. Having had more time to learn from and process his journey, as well as being more settled into the U.S. educational system and feeling he has the advantages of experience behind him, Jose feels less like an "international student." However, he noted, he does still, from time to time, notice difference: "But at the same time, like that language aspect is what really *still* defines me as different" and "makes me feel international sometimes"<sup>95</sup>. Jose's journey, then, as an international student and, soon, as a graduate student in the U.S., continues.

Anand (Sr, M, W Asia) was generally succinct, and, in some ways, contradictory, in his perceptions of the term "international student." His definition, he said, was "[*Smiling*] "living, living abroad. Thinking from another perspective. Um, liking international issues, I think. You can call, uh, a student international. Like my roommate, uh, he's from [a city in-state], but I would call him international" (6Feb14). In an email exchange over the next few days, I asked Anand if he would elaborate a bit on these comments. He first wrote,

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<sup>95</sup> See Chapter V, pages 254-255, for discussion of Jose's thoughts here in the context of being a "Horacian."

[f]or me, an international student would be someone with a very different premise than many of the domestic students here in Horace. I could mention about that different premise leading to social exclusion, which is also what it could mean to be an international student, but that would be rather cynical (7Feb14).

Two days later, and curious by what he meant by “a very different premise,” I asked for further clarification. He responded,

I'm not sure how to elaborate. International students come with different values and different form of judgement. That's their premise. And, in some instances those values and forms of judgement can stand out too much, even in Horace, where people are open to a lot of things. This may lead to some exclusion (though you're more likely, i believe, to find someone with compatible views here than elsewhere).

Anand was tentative, yet definitive, in his characterization of an “international student.” On the one hand, “living abroad,” “thinking from another perspective,” and “liking international issues” constitutes an international student. However, international students, he notes, “come with different values and different form of judgment,” presumably, than their American counterparts. This can even lead to “some exclusion.” For Anand, it seems, these meanings coexist. Everyone can be international, as Zawadiye maintained, and only those who come to the U.S. and to Horace who are “different” and prone to “exclusion” can be international students. Either way, as he used to tell incoming internationals as a POFIS leader, which he noted in our fall interview, you don't have to “change [your]self to *fit* this new social scheme” in the U.S. (10Oct13). You can, he told these freshmen, “*stick* to what you know and what your strength of character is, uh, and build on it. Uh, because that's the reason why the College got you here.” Ultimately, Anand's oscillating viewpoints are just that: they are his and they, like international study, do not need to be consistent to be true.

Mahdee (Sr, M, Middle East), on the other hand, told me, “I'm definitely an international student.” However, he also explained,

that distinction has sort of been blurred a little bit over time as I've become more accustomed to living here and adopting the mannerisms and, you know, conventions of this society. But at, like, it's still very much there inside me. Like I know that this

is a. I'm, I'm pretty conscious of the fact that this is like a different place. Yeah. And that I'm not from here. Not in a negative way. But I just know that. And that's not something that I've lost yet. And I don't want to lose. [Me: Mm.] Um, and I think that's also been part of like this, this, this distance from family, distance from my country, and like sort of like that, those relationships becoming more important to me and more valuable to me. And so that makes me want, you know, makes me want to keep ahold of them even more (3Mar14).

Mahdee went on to say that that his attachments to home are what make him most strongly feel like an international student. He noted, "I don't want to feel like I'm from here," which is something other people from his home country have done, and is fine for them, but for Mahdee, "if I lost those things and I, and I flipped a switch in my brain that I actively sort of focused on this, solely on this side of being here or the, actually just being here and not this other where-I-come-from aspect, I would feel like I, I have lost this feeling of being an international student." More so than many of the primary informants, Mahdee's personal connection to the term "international student" is interlaced with his ties to home. While he has "become more accustomed to living" in the U.S., he is still very much an international student, one who is distant from and necessarily connected to people back home<sup>96</sup>.

Ban's (Sr, F, Middle East) ties to her home country also shaped her perception of what an international student is. She did not think of herself as an "international student":

[u]hh, it's a hard question because when I first came here I didn't consider myself equal to all the other international students. Uh, I felt like they were, they had so many more things that I didn't have, that I didn't have. And they knew things I didn't know and they were more independent. Um, and I feel like that sort of came because I was so spoiled with my [college preparatory] scholarship program. Like it. I was treated in a different way from other people from different countries because it's [my country] specifically. And the people who have volunteered to help with my, with the program were all people who were feeling *horrible* [*Chuckling*] and guilty about the U.S. invasion. So they treated us so like nicely, maybe too nice. Uh, and when I came here I was suddenly like everyone else. [*Smiling*] And then I remember specifically telling Elizabeth, "I'm not like everyone. Everyone knows what they're doing." And she told me, "No, like you'd be surprised how many people are in the same situation as you." Um, so like I could not put all of them together, like "international student." I would say "[home country] student." [*Chuckles*] (11Mar14).

<sup>96</sup> Informants' relationships to home is a topic I discuss in greater length below on page 294.

Ban cannot compare herself to other international students because of where she grew up and because the circumstances of war-torn life in her home country, though beyond her control, left her feeling more dependent on other people and, in many ways, unprepared for life at Horace College. However, like other internationals in the study, Ban shared that she was determined to make a reality her “dream” of going to school in the United States (6Nov13). Moreover, like many “courageous” international students, she has had to do much of the work on her own to get to the U.S. and to navigate the American college scene. Briefly, Ban allowed herself to identify as an “international student,” but only briefly:

the general term, an “international student,” [*Chuckling*] it feels like, you know, like this global nomad, [*Chuckles*] you know, like, “You are worldly and like we respect you!” But, um, again, I can’t, I can’t say “international student.” Because for me I think, “as [a person from my country] where does that place me?”

While a part of her might be “worldly” and respected, always, Ban was clear that being from her home country – in the indelible ways growing up there and being connected there still has shaped her, her family, and her worldview – is the defining lens through which she has experienced international study.

For Vincci (Sr, F, SE Asia) and Alya (Sr, F, Middle East), being, or not being, an “international student” was, in many ways, connected to third culture, or transnational, identities. In our fall 2013 interview, Vincci explained that growing up in many countries and attending classes at her international school “with a lot of people with the same experiences” meant she did not feel “different” from anyone else (30Oct13). Like her TCK classmates, she would say, “Yeah, I’m from [home country], but you know I’m not *really* from [home country], you know?” So while she did receive a world-class secondary education, she was without a “sense of like cultural stability or like groundedness”:

before I came here I always thought that [my home country] was home. You know, people were like, “Oh, being detached, being like, you know, transnational, you must

have lost the concept of home.” Before I came here, [my home country] really felt like home, um, because it was the culture I most like related with, I guess. Um, but then I came here and my mom also moved to Italy and so, you know, [international school city], like, it wasn’t like I was going back to [my international school city] to see people I knew there. And I didn’t know anybody in [my home country] really, except for like people who moved out of [my home country]. Um, and I felt like I knew like America feels better, you know? Or like I felt more connected here. [Me: Mm hm.] Um, so, yeah, I think losing that [*Snaps her fingers*] idea of home made me feel really disconnected. Um, and then it was really hard because I was like, okay, yeah, so then I was like, “Who am I?”

This feeling of disconnectedness, it seemed to me, colored Vincci’s world, as well as how she interpreted the term “international student.” It is someone, she told me, “who’s just not, just like a domestic, American citizen, right? Um, I guess like that, that would be like my definition for it.” A bit later, though, she added, “it’s like this marginal identity, right?”

(27Feb14). Curious by this statement, I asked her to clarify. She explained,

I guess because like it kind of, it like doesn’t mean anything. You know what I mean? Like, um, there’s no. Like being international doesn’t mean. It just means you’re, you’re not like American. You know, but it doesn’t highlight that you are [my nationality] or Indian or anything like that. Um, and even for me like that doesn’t mean anything. Like I’m international here but when I’m like in [my home country] I’m like not international.

When I asked if American students could be “international,” she noted, similarly to Anand, “I guess anybody can be international really, if you’re like internationally aware.” However, Vincci was hesitant to extend full “international student” membership to Americans without “a link to countries outside of America” because, as she put it, “maybe like their stakes are like in America, you know? Um, whereas like I think having your stakes like abroad as well” makes a person “international.” She also noted that being in her final year at Horace she has become close friends again with many internationals because “suddenly we’re thinking about our futures and like this whole other country is like really relevant, too, you know?” For Vincci, then, being an “international student” is not a salient part of her identity and has not shaped her worldview in the same ways that her more fluid transnational disconnectedness

has (as Jose posited about TCKs); however, her links to her home country, now that she is nearing graduation, have become “really relevant.”<sup>97</sup>

Last, though certainly not the least, among the primary group of 16 international participants, Alya explained that, over time, being an “international student” at Horace changed how she saw her life as a transnational person. In our spring interview, she said,

[w]hen I first came to Horace, I didn’t think I was doing anything amazing like being *an international student and abroad*. Like I never thought of it like that! Because I’d grown up abroad anyways and I’d always like traveled, and it just didn’t seem to me like a big deal, going to America. But at some point during these four years I drank from the Kool-Aid of the international dialogue that I was somehow amazing for having, you know, taken this risk and gone without my parents. And I drank the Kool-Aid of that. And I was just thinking about that before our interview because I never thought like that before I came here! I was like, I had *always* been in an international community (13Feb14).

She went on to explain that “drinking the Kool-Aid” also has particular implications for relationships with American students, in which divides are created: “[p]art of the joke is like, you know, they don’t get us. They’re American. We are international.” Where before Horace these narratives did not exist, Alya noted, “I can’t tell anymore what is part of the culture that I was placed into and I drank the Kool-Aid that older international students set up for me that they drank the Kool-Aid.” And while she did not explicate her more complex background of the term “international student” in the fall focus group (discussed above)<sup>98</sup>, it seems clear that “the international dialogue” has, to some extent, colored her perceptions of

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<sup>97</sup> It is also worth noting that Vincci later lamented being the only student from her home country. This, Vincci said, she wished she “had known before like coming and like deciding to stay.” Though she has many friends, Vincci explained, “even just one would make a lot of difference,” someone “who understands like, like your history. You know, or like one person who understands like that place where you come from and like how that influences where you are now like without like having to explain it to somebody. Um, yeah it just helps. And also like, you know, like deciding what to do next is helpful. And like just like cultural specific problems would like, it would be just like really helpful. And *really* nice really. [Chuckles]” (27Feb14). For his part, though, Andrei (Alum, M, E Europe) had a different perspective. He was “very happy” that there was no one else from his home country because “I was sort of forced to mingle with people.” Moreover, he explained, “[w]hen you’re an international student and you have multiple people from your own country, you tend to stick together in a group” and “stick together at the dining hall table and speak [your] own language,” which “makes it much more difficult for you to, um, really get involved with ... people outside that group” (27Nov13).

<sup>98</sup> It is notable, and I found it surprising at the time to hear Alya say, “I think the first time I got to have like a, a very interesting conversation about Horace and student life and being an international student was in your first, um, group interview. [Me: Really?!] [Chuckling] ... Up until that point! And I’ve been here four years. Yeah!” (13Feb14).

it. As someone who spent her life “abroad” and thought it unexceptional, today she is not sure if being international is indeed “amazing” or just, like Kool-Aid, a story she swallowed.

Alya, being transnational, or international, or maybe just herself, has helped her develop a cross-cultural fluency and has made her a keen observer of the international student experience. For instance, in the case of the former, she explained in our fall interview, “I can hang out with like a Middle Eastern crowd and I can hang out with a European crowd and I understand them both [Me: Mm hm.] kind of well. So it’s fun” (24Oct13). In the case of the latter, she described the anxiety of entry into the U.S.:

[u]hh, standing in immigration is *super* long. It’s super long and I had all my papers. And I was so grateful to have my parents with me. A lot of international students come alone, and my parents came and so like. Cuz, you hold – now I come in and I only hold my I-20 and my visa. But the first entrance, you hold your acceptance letter from Horace. You hold your parents financials. You hold, uh, Horace’s commitment like to give you financial aid for four years. You hold everything. I had like a binder like this thick. [*Hands out, one palm facing down and one up, about a foot apart*] And you give it all and you go, “Please let me into the country.” Uh, and it was really scary. You’re really scared. And I thought, “Oh my god, I’m so glad I speak English fluently and I have a really good accent,” I think. I think. [*I laugh*] Other people don’t. . . . Cuz, uh, you’re pretty much coming at the same time that all students are coming in and you see the students who aren’t, don’t have a strong accent, who are nervous, who were on their own. And God it looks scary. [Me: Mm.] It really does. And you also see people who are just coming in for vacation who don’t speak English, [*Chuckling*] and they take them to like a side room. [*Chuckles*]

In contrast to her comfort in being able to relate to people from around the world, Alya’s description here of being in the immigration line suggests that being an international student can be, and from the very outset, a very uncomfortable and “scary” experience. Alya recalls observing students who are alone, afraid, at the mercy of border officials, and marked as Other. She is grateful that she speaks English “fluently” and that her accent is “good,” but she sees and feels empathy for other students whose faces register “nervous[ness]” and whose feelings of being an outsider fearing the American inside appear to be stronger than her own. As I discuss in Chapter I, international students are subject to and experience first

hand the realities and power relations of a bordered world<sup>99</sup> (Gargano, 2009; Kim, 2011; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004), a point Alya describes well here.

Ultimately, though, after “liv[ing] this transnational life,” Alya is ready “to go home” (13Feb14). While abroad in secondary school, she shared, “[e]veryone was used to having me come back for like a few weeks and then leave again and then come back. So nobody, nobody is really surprised by that. Me included.” However, being so far from home in college in the U.S. the last four years has been a different kind of experience. For one, it has meant, “[m]y dad, my mom, and me, are on three different continents. I actually posted this on Facebook the other day as joke because my dad was writing an email back to someone and he said, ‘I have to consult with Hanna and Alya, but we’re on three different continents right now.’” More importantly, though, she explained,

I only go home on these *really* long trips and stay for a significant amount of time and then leave for a really long time. Has, it has tired me out. [Me: Mm.] I’m tired of living. I’m, I’m tired of living abroad. Um, I’m tired of being a foreigner. I’m tired of just living away from my family and friends. I ju-, I can’t really put my finger on it, but it’s a sensation of like going out to a bar in, in [my home country] or something. And knowing that like you’re [a host country national], that this is your country. Like I. Uh, and it’s, it. Yeah, it’s only dawned on me recently. But it’s this very weird feeling and I missed it so much and I’m just ready to go home. And I don’t know if I’ll have my life at home, but I’m worn out. [*Short sigh*] [Me: Mm hm.] And I think Horace played a huge part in that. Not in a negative way. But just the fact that I went so far and it’s been so intense. I mean, I think the other thing is that it’s intense. [*Chuckling*] Horace’s a really hard college and it’s warn me out!

Alya’s proclamation, “I’m ready to go home,” sums up her contentedness with her transnational life. She is not only “tired of living abroad” and of “being a foreigner,” but she is “tired of just living away” from the people with whom she is closest. Moreover, she seeks to live in a country in which she feels she truly belongs. Alya concedes that she is not sure

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<sup>99</sup> Alya relayed another story, this time about the barriers imposed by visa restrictions: “to fall in love with somebody [*Chuckling*] who’s American and isn’t international is really interesting.” Describing her own life and that of a friend, she added: “there’s a lot of things to handle. You weren’t raised the same. You don’t come from the same places. [Me: Right.] One of you is here on a visa that ends. That’s like a huge thing. Um, how another person. I have this friend who graduated and she’s international and she just couldn’t stay. [Me: Hm.] You know, she hadn’t applied for grad schools yet, and she really wanted to stay with her boyfriend but she can’t just stay in this country [*Chuckles.*]” (24Oct13).



what lies ahead, or “if I’ll have my life at home,” but she believes that returning there on a more permanent basis is both the logical and intuitive next move. And, in many ways, she simply needs a break from the exhaustion of Horace’s academically “intense” demands. Having done so much, Alya is drawn back to where her story began and to where it will next be centered – “home.”

For Alya, and for each of these informants, life at Horace is full of questions and it is rife with subjective, multiple, complex, and, at times, contradictory associations to and perceptions and experiences of being an “international student.” Though it is not within the scope of this chapter to present each participant’s full picture of his or her experience abroad at and beyond Horace College, international informants here speak to a myriad of impressions about international study and about the extent to which *being* an “international student” is profound and mundane as well as positive and negative. While I could not hope to capture in full the depth and breadth of my participants lives in the short space of 9 months, then, these snapshots serve as windows into the lives of these 16 very unique individuals<sup>100</sup>. And crucially, in this section of the chapter, as elsewhere in the dissertation, it is clear that these informants can and do speak for themselves and are the experts of their own lives, each “a strong agent piloting the course of her/his life” (Marginson, 2014, p. 12).

Not having one way, or even a few ways, to define what it means to be an international student underscores the point that to try is to deny the complexity of experience and perspective that is inherent to international study. As Gargano (2009) writes, scholarship “is bereft of significant and robust concepts that bring into view international

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<sup>100</sup> Moreover, I hope that I have shown in this section the challenge and responsibility of sifting through, making sense of, and presenting the various viewpoints these 16 participants. I have adopted Weiguang’s philosophy to “work harder,” that is, in my case, to read, write, and analyze diligently. To do right by the informants in the study, I am beholden to listening carefully to my informants; to presenting, and as “accurately” as I am able, as many of the nuanced perspectives as I can; and to expecting the reader to give equal attention and consideration to the 16 variations of what it means to be an “international student.”

student experiences and identity reconstructions, thereby homogenizing and generalizing the negotiations of international students when great dimensions of difference actually exist” (p. 331). As participants’ conceptualizations suggest, identification with the term “international student” is highly contingent on personal preference. Similarly, describing what their journey abroad has been like, how it has changed, and how it can be contextualized in the bigger picture of their lives is an entirely personal enterprise. The bodies of literature on international students, particularly ISM, simply cannot account for these perspectives, and thereby leave out research such as this study that presents the diversity and the many complexities of the student group.

### **Relationships Beyond Horace College**

As several of the participants above discussed, relationships to family, friends, and home countries beyond the Horace campus, and, further yet beyond U.S. borders, are important dimensions to these students’ international study experience. In the same way that being an international student is about campus social life and in-class participation, it is also very much about what is happening to and for loved ones abroad. Moreover, as quite a few informants shared, being an international student is to have associations to and perceptions of one’s home country (and possibly other countries, especially, for example, students who attended secondary school abroad). As Ban explained, “I think for international students, they’re more torn because. I mean, that’s obvious because their families are back home, they have a lot of friends back home” (11Mar14). And from her vantage point, Ban continued, “[i]t’s harder for me to like, um, feel that, you know, I’m comfortable here when there’s something else going on, like there’s another part of my life that’s somewhere else.” In what follows, then, I explore how students’ relationships with their families, friends, and home countries help to give shape to their experience at Horace. It goes without saying that each

of my primary participants' life stories are different; however, these differences provide significant insights into how these particular individuals contextualize their lives as international students (Gargano, 2009).

### *Relationships with Family Abroad*

Much of the literature, particularly in the field of counseling, on international students focuses on how these students are homesick and/or how feelings of loneliness can be an inevitable result of being away from a person's family or home culture (see Mori, 2000 and Sawir et al, 2008). While I do not contest that homesickness and loneliness are, at times and in various ways, elements of internationals' experience abroad, I contend here that missing, thinking about, and/or talking about loved ones is a natural, healthy, and personally varied reality of international study. That is, undergraduate international students, like those in this study, are young people who pursue higher education in countries far from their own. And, in some cases, these students are away from home for the first time. It is perfectly understandable that these individuals are interested in and affected by what is happening for their family members, people with whom they generally can only contact via telephone, Skype, or other such technologies. Below, international participants discuss the ways in which relationships with family have either changed and/or stayed the same; how distance impacts these relationships; and how these relationships, from a distance, have contributed to their personal growth.

In our spring interview, Anna explained that her relationships with family members are now better than ever. For her part, Anna affirmed, “[m]y family loves me! That’s a new thing” (30Jan14). She then added,

[o]h, they adore me. [*I chuckle softly*] That never happened. [Me: Oh!] Like they, they. Woo! My mother be sending me messages all day, every day: she loves me so much, she’s so proud of me. Okay. Sure. Um, so my, I. I would say that my relationship with my family grew way, way, way tighter than it was ever. Um, because, you know,

when you live with them it's that idea of, "Oh, we get along, but we're family. We, we kind of *have* to." I guess I love them. But then again, I *have* to. It's my sister. I don't, I don't, I don't ever have to explain to you why I love her. It's just a thing. But now I can tell you *why* I love them. [Me: Mm hm.] You know, the distance made me see not only what our relationship is, but like, who is my mother? You know, who is this person? And who is my sister? And, you know, um, yeah, I mean, I love them. I always loved them. But now I *like* them. You know, I, I like who they are and I like our relationship [*Smiling*] and we're so cool. We're like such a cool little family.

In our fall interview, Anna, her eyes watering a bit, shared that she speaks via Skype or Viber every day with her mother, "just to hear her" voice (8Oct13). She talks with her younger sister, a busy, professional dancer every weekend. She explained, "I don't feel like we are missing out on anything just because, you know, they are very committed to talking with me." In fact, "the distance," Anna explains here, has helped her appreciate her mother and sister for the people they are. Her love for them was never in doubt, but she now says that she "likes" them, too. After five months away from home – her very first away from family for such an extended period of time – Anna has gained a perspective she never had when she was there. For her part, Anna is tickled by these developments: "we're like such a cool little family."

For her part, Sara shared that her relationship with her parents has changed quite a bit over her years at Horace, and that her most recent trip home was an important one. In our fall interview, she explained,

[t]hat relationship has changed *tons* since my first year. [Me: Mm.] Umm, I'm very close to my mom, and I'm, I'm her best friend and I'm aware, I know that. Um, so, [*Coughs*] my first year she would call me if I couldn't. If I couldn't Skype on one give day she would call me. So I remember worrying Elizabeth [the director of the ISAO] with the fact that I would Skype my parents every single day for 30 minutes my first year. And then, uh, I had this moment when my roommate when she told me that she hadn't talked to her parents in two weeks, and that's like common among American students. And so I told my mom, "Mom, you need to like let go. This needs to happen. [*I chuckle*] Like, just like that." [*Chuckling*] And my poor mother started to cry. [Me: Aww.] I was just like very harsh. And then I realized that I can't be doing that kind of thing, toying with her emotions. Um, so I. We kind of learned how to become more separated, I guess. But my first year when I, my first winter break, I was just looking forward to it *so* much. And then over the summer, I was

home over my first summer. [Me: Mm hm.] And I go, I go back home every winter break. That's probably going to happen until like, until I die. Or until my mother dies. Um, because she was born on Christmas Day. [Me: Ah!] So I, there's no way I can miss that. And my dad's birthday is in January, early January, too. So both of their birthdays are in that area and it's the holidays and I need to be home. Um, but as I got busier and as I got more work to do, in terms of schoolwork but also work, work and extracurriculars, um, we started talking less often. So we, it would happen every 3 or 4 days last year, I think. Then I went to Malaysia this summer and I just couldn't talk to them much. So now. And she, she would still bug me, my mom would still bug me about like Skyping her. Uh, she'd be like, "If you can't Skype me just leave me a message: 'I'm okay, I'm okay.' Cuz then I get worried." But now, um, I can Skype her like every two weeks and it's fine. [Me: Mm hm!] So. And in terms of *how I feel*, [Coughs] I'm dreading going home this winter. [Chuckles softly]

Me: Why?!

Sara: Um, I feel like so many things have changed. And I haven't been home since January. And my parents have certain expectations of like. I think they haven't changed much. The, their idea of me hasn't changed much since I was 18 and left home. S-, So it's the, it's been two and half years, and I feel like I'm a different person, I have different ways of seeing the world. And so, I, I'm afraid of going home because I feel like I'm gonna be expected to behave in my old patterns. And I don't wanna do that and I, I also don't wanna like fight with my parents (25Oct13).

Not only is Sara's relationship with her parents, particularly her mother, very important and regularly on her mind, but also it is a relationship that she is consciously aware is constantly changing as she gets older, "learn[s] how to become more separated," and experiences "different ways of seeing the world." To this point, she explained in our spring interview, the changes in her personality are, in part, due to the "individualistic American philosophy and like standing up for yourself or like what you believe in, and like being able to express yourself" (25Feb14). This philosophy, though, she recognizes has its merits and its flaws because, as she learned with her mother, she cannot always assert this more individualistic side of herself with those back home that she most cares about. Today, she explained, she and her mother talk by Skype once per week, a good compromise.

In another case, Anand described himself as being “very engaged in person, but it’s very hard for me to do so like over the phone or, um, over Skype,” and so it has been his trips back home that have been the defining element to his relationships with family:

I would like to think, um, I have changed or at least before I go every summer, I’m like, “Alright, I’m a new man!” and all that. But you, you go back home and your parents treat you the same. And your like, “Alright, it’s like I never left.” So, it’s very easy to go back home. Um, you think just because you’re in a new place and you’ve had all of this responsibility of taking care of yourself, you kind of carry that back home. [*Laughing*] And right away that crumbles down and you realize you don’t have to do anything. So it’s really nice going back home. Um, my parents, uh, do tell me I’ve changed. Uh, I send, uh, my, like anything I’ve written and things like that to my dad and he tells me like, “Alright, I, I can tell that your language has improved.” Uh, I think my writing is very bad. [*Chuckles*] And so, uh, he looks at ‘em and every year like I send him a couple papers. And he’s like, “Alright, it’s pretty good! [*Tone softer, more serious*] I didn’t know this, I didn’t know that.” Um, they’re growing old and you can see that and pretty soon you’re just saddened that you’re not going to be there with them that much. Um, so I, I cherish my, my visits back home more so these days. [*Louder, still a serious tone*] But [*5 second pause*] Um, I don’t know, you start thinking over what you’re parents say after you get away from them. [*Laughs*] (10Oct13).

Anand’s growth as a person and his travels abroad have led him to understand that returning to his parent’s home can, on the one hand, lead to feelings that “parents treat you the same” and “it’s like I never left,” and, on the other, that he should “cherish” his visits because “they’re getting older.” Now a senior, Anand knows that his trips back home may be few and far between. He appreciates his father’s compliments of his written English and thinks fondly on the lessons his parents taught him. As he put it a bit later, “you start, um, valuing them much more, I think, when you’re away from them.”

Yet, not all international participants talked about close relationships with family. Sabith shared that he does not connect very often with his family. He noted, “I don’t really mind being away from home that much” (14Nov13) and:

[I]ike I think I do connect with them a little bit. I mean, fairly reasonable amount. We do talk about like classes sometimes or, but like ever since my childhood, I don’t think I tell them much at all. [*Me: Hm.*] Like I don’t talk very much when they try to like. Even when they call me it’s like, “How are things going?” “Okay.” “How are

you?” “Okay.” “How are your friends?” “Okay.” “How’s classes?” “Okay.” Just like say “okay” to everything and like, “Oh well, see you then!” [*Chuckles*]

Me: How often do you speak?

Sabith: Ehhh, I think once in two or three weeks, I guess. Not, not really often at all. Because Sabith has never been so close with his parents, the distance away from them and the infrequent phone calls are sufficient. Moreover, flying home really is not an option either as tickets are so expensive (approximately \$2,000, he reported).

Finally, some students, like Ban, explained how family members did not just live in their country of origin. In Ban’s case, several family members lived in the U.S. At various times while at Horace, three of her siblings lived in Midwestern states, two older sisters who came as refugees and a younger sister who is an undergraduate at a HEI in Chicago. After her first few days on campus during POFIS, Ban struggled with her new surroundings, and her older sister came and helped her settle into life at Horace (opening a bank account, buying needed items, etc.): “[s]o I was like, [*Laughing*] ‘Oh my god! Thank you! Like I feel, you know, so taken care of.’ Uh, but after that I felt good. I could like breathe” (6Nov13). Over the course of their time together in the U.S., Ban and her sisters grew closer. She even related with one by trying to understand Americans counterparts, talking about them “anthropologically.” As for her younger sister, also a college student now, Ban visits regularly. Her sister, her host family, and her friends from their home country are her “family in Chicago.” Ban’s other family members, also in Chicago, is a different story:

I’m not their family! I’m someone, I’m just a guest, you know? Um, so I’ve always felt like a guest. Even if it was just in my relatives’ house. And if, if I’m not in my house I always feel like that. Um, in fact I like, I felt more at home in [*Chuckling*] like some American families’ houses.

For Ban, then, family is not only back home. Her ties to family, notably through her sisters, have been a godsend and they have helped her feel more connected to home. She is thankful that she has had them so close, for so long.

### *Relationships with Friends Abroad*

Similarly to relationships with family members, ties with friends, either back home or those also studying in nations abroad, also impact international students. As I discussed in the previous chapter, internationals' friendships back home can be impacted, sometimes greatly, by pursuing higher education in the United States. For Danushka (So, M, SE Asia), friends back home saw him as “a deviant person” because he shared more “liberal” and “progressive thoughts” when he confronted their racism and homophobia. Participants below discuss what their relationships are like today with friends back home; the ways in which American friendships differ from more longstanding friendships back home; and how their friends in their home countries have helped them better understand themselves and shape their core values and beliefs.

For her part, Brenda shared that she has few friends back home. As she put it, “[e]very year I go home, with the friends I left, I think I lose like [*Chuckling*] five.” In addition to no longer agreeing with her friends' positions on homosexuality, which “is considered a bad thing,” (28Jan14), Brenda described other rifts in her once-friendships:

[m]ost of my friends back home want to graduate, get married, you know, and like find, find a man who's going to provide for them. Kind of mindset of “even if I have a college degree I still want to find someone who's going to, you know, take care of me.” Which is not wrong! But then I'm in a position whereby I wanna go to graduate school and no one understands that. [*Chuckles*] “Why do you wanna do that? Like why do you want to continue staying in school? You're going to get to a point where no one's going to be able to consider you even for marriage cuz you're too educated.” Um. Yeah. So with my friends we've. I have very few friends now that I consider friends. Most of them I'll just say are, are acquaintances from home. Most of my friends are now the ones who I think either have here or had in boarding school while I was in the UK. Cuz yeah. [*Sigh*]



Me: How do you feel about the fact that you've grown so distant from these people who were your friends?

Brenda: In the beginning it was really hard. And I was very sad about it. Like cuz every time I'd go home I'd try to make the effort to like meet everyone, talk to everyone, hang out with everyone. Um, and then I got to a point where it was like, "Why am I trying *so* hard to like?" Even like sometimes some of the conversations I'd have to like bite my tongue, hold back because, you know, just trying so hard to get accepted. And just to be accepted and to, you know, be reintegrated in, you know, as part of the group. But then over the period of time I came to realize we're all growing up and we're still in, you know, these phases where everyone's coming up with their new ideas and their new goals and new visions. [*Chuckling*] So I stopped taking it personally. [Me: Mm hm.] And, yeah. But yeah, I definitely have lost half of the people I used to think were my friends. So when I go home it's very selective who I hang out with.

Like Danushka, Brenda has experienced fundamental differences of opinions and lifestyle choices that have made it difficult for her to return home. However, she came to realize that "we're all growing up" and that because she and each of her friends are in a phase of life in which they are constantly acquiring "new ideas and their new goals and new visions," she, too, must go her own way. While "really hard," the moves away from home friends, to Horace and boarding school friends, and to her life ahead in graduate school, have liberated her from feeling she must "try so hard to get accepted" and "reintegrated."

Sabith explained, though, that in addition to relationships still being strong – unless "I ever like use an English word too much or something" and "they might pull my leg" for it – upon his return home he was greeted with an enjoyable "attention" that comes from being the one who "ha[s] spent quite a bit of time abroad" (3Apr14). His friends, he said, are

very interested and curious to see what I do, and how my life is. Which is pretty different than their lives in college, so there's just a lot more curiosity, more questions about how it is. And I don't know whether they treat me very differently. I don't think they do. Just. They're pretty chill people in terms of that. And then. Yeah, so it's fun. It's just, I guess, more curiosity from everyone else, is the major thing that stands out to me.

Because they were “very surprised” that he went to the U.S. for higher education and because “[t]hey’re not used to people just going abroad for *any* reason,” Sabith’s friends are “very interested and curious” in him. Moreover,

they know it’s a new experience for me so they’re really curious about it, and curious to see how I turn out, thanks to the difference and maybe education and all that. So, I guess, [*Chuckling*] they pay more attention to whatever I say now, probably, you know? I’d be the one guy studying abroad. So it’s just like more, whatever I have to say has some sort of relevance [*Chuckling*] in some respect, or it’s like interesting in some respect, you know?

Though he believes his friends do not treat him any differently now than before he left for college, Sabith notes that his studying abroad has given him a new “sort of relevance” with them and has made him “interesting” in ways he never was before. His friends, to some extent, can live vicariously through him to learn about how “difference” and a foreign education might impact Sabith’s life.

From another vantage point, Mirza believes his friendships with people back home are unshakably strong. In our fall interview, Mirza explained that he and his friends have kept tight-knit connections through online mediums such as Skype and Facebook in which they “hav[e] fun and tell[] like unique jokes [that] only, uh, connect to our group.” (17Oct13). For Mirza, keeping up friendships with people from home is not a problem because of the ease and frequency with which technology allows interaction. More importantly, though, it is a given to him that he and his closest friends would be intrinsically connected. That is, as he explained in our spring interview, he will never be as close with Horace friends as he is now with home friends because “the amount of, of time we’ve, I’ve spent with those friends and what I have lived through with them, uh, is far greater than I will ever experience here. I’m sure” (11Feb14). Moreover, “stepping over that cultural

difference will take, first, huge amount of time.<sup>101</sup> Once we step over that thing, we, we, we don't have a lot of time spending together." Mirza went on to explain that the kinds of jokes he tells back home are different, the advice he gives to friends about dating is different, and the kinds of movies people enjoy are different. And so, when I asked him whether internationals are at a disadvantage in terms of making friends in the U.S., he replied,

[f]or me it's not. Maybe for someone hoping to come here that didn't have friends back home and come here to gain friends: "Oh, this is perfect chance, new life for everyone here, let's make some new friends." That would be hard and that's double minus in my opinion. [Me: Mm.] For me that's double plus because I have *really* strong, uh, I call them like [*Chuckling*] family there back home, uh, I am sure that will never leave me. Family of friends, I mean. [Me: Mm hm.] And here then because I'm relaxed, because I know I have firm ground back home, I come here, uh, start making relationships that someone not having a-, as strong relationship back home would be afraid of or, uh, or will have spent more time with. So even though my relationships here are not as strong, they are, they are really good.

Mirza, a freshman, affirms that friends back home are his "family of friends," people who "will never leave me." From his vantage point, time spent together and cultural familiarity are the inextricable ties that bind. Unlike Danushka and Brenda, then, he has not experienced, nor does he ever expect to, the difficulty of changed values, beliefs, lifestyles, and personal goals.

Anna feels that distance is a double-edged sword. In her view, being so far away has isolated her from the group but has also strengthened her relationships with those whom she is closest. In our fall interview, she noted, "I do kinda feel I'm losing grip" with friends back home because "they're making new memories that I'm not really a part of" (8Oct13). In the spring interview, she expanded on this:

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<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, describing her return trip home, Zawadiye found that there weren't as many cultural differences as she once thought. She spoke her native language while thinking, "[o]h wow, this is [Horace] all over again" because "they're playing the same music. I was like. So yeah. It's, it's not that different. It's just that I wasn't that exposed to it. And they watch, people watch the same movies, people dress the same way." She explained further, "I guess coming to America I was thinking it's gonna be so different." And where, "[o]f course the infrastructure is way different," "people listening to the same thing. Everybody is Snap-Chatting or Facebooking or they're wearing the same clothes. They're [*Chuckles*] doing same things at parties. It's a lot like than you would think, you know. [Me: Hm.] So like, I, I, I guess I'm become, I became more aware of globalization or Westernization" (20Nov13).

I'd be lying if I didn't say that I was missing out on stuff. Sure. You know, we, we have a What's App like, um, group where we talk about things. And they'll talk about what happened yesterday. I mean, do I feel left out? Kinda. Wasn't physically there. I didn't laugh when it happened. I don't laugh now because the joke was about yesterday and I *wasn't there* yesterday. *But* I'm still in that group. You know, nobody deleted me from the group. And, um, you know, I'm another joke. I'm the, another friend who's just somewhere abroad. You know, it's, um. It gives another dimension to your friendship. Can it, you know, can it, can you grow apart? Sure. I just don't feel like that's happening right now with me and my friends. I'm really confident that we're really, you know, um, maintaining the relationship that we had. Um, again, I feel like even those relationships grew tighter. Um, the ones that it did, um, because of the idea that, you know, I don't like you because I have coffee with you every day after school or because we help each other with our homeworks or because our parents used to hang out. You know, I like you because the, the fact that I have this much distance between you allows for interaction that, um, makes me see who you are and who I am. And, um, the friendship there is so much more pure (30Jan14).

For Anna, bonds between herself and her friends are strong enough to weather the distance between them. In fact, she is on the inside of the group, to some extent: "I'm another joke," the "friend who's just somewhere abroad." So though she feels left out of the everyday happenings, Anna is "really confident" that her friendships will "grow tighter" because, like with her family, distance grants the opportunity to "see who you are and who I am."

Some students also spoke of close friends who were also studying at HEIs in the U.S. or elsewhere abroad. Yinan, for example, shared stories of visiting with these friends, most of whom studied at large, state universities along the West Coast. In addition to being able to connect with these friends in the U.S., Yinan noted that he has learned much from them about the differences between their lifestyles and his: "I stayed with my friends for two weeks last spring at UCLA and their life is like very laid back. It's more laid back than my life. It's surprising because they live in a big city, whereas I live in a village. [*I chuckle*] And, uh, they, their workload is like much less than ours" (29Oct13). From this, he concluded, "Each of the time coming back from other cities, I appreciate Horace more" because "I will learn more stuff here, not anywhere else." However, Yinan is not able to connect with these friends whenever he likes. As he told me, "we all have our work. And they go to school in

California and there's, there's a time difference. So it's kinda hard." So while he may not get to talk or visit with friends so close by as much as he would like, he has been able to take a short flight to see them and spend time together for two weeks. Moreover, his friends have given him invaluable perspective about and appreciation for his choice to attend Horace.

### *Relationships with Home Countries*<sup>102</sup>

International students and I also spoke about their relationships with their home countries and how, if at all, Horace College helped them learn or re-learn about it. These students shared how living abroad has provided them insights into their opinions about their home countries and their ideas about "home" and about how their relationships with these nations have given them greater perspective about themselves and their place in the world. Whether they have greater appreciation for home and seek to explore it more; no longer feel connected to their home country and doubt ever returning there; have newfound sentiments of home nation patriotism and pride; or are continuing to process how growing up with war and living with it vicariously through friends and loved ones back home, international students' relationships with home nations matter a great deal.

Mahdee explained that being away, and for four years, he now appreciates his home country more than ever. He shared,

I definitely appreciate a lot, a lot of things. I definitely appreciate a lot more. I realize like after being away for a while and experience a new culture that like, um, [5 *second pause*] that, that, that I do definitely feel at home there. There is sort of an ease of being there. I mean, when you think about it like that it's really obvious. Like obviously it would be that way. But that is, that is how I realized that I feel. And it took me awhile to realize that. But like there are some really, really good things there for me: the environment, the people. ... Coming here and like seeing the rest of the world has made me wanna explore [my country] more. [Me: Mm.] Cuz that's something I haven't really done. Umm, I haven't had a chance to do that yet. Cuz I've been here. And I probably will not get a chance do that for a while. But that is

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<sup>102</sup> I realize that the regularity with which I say "his country," "her country," or "my country" appears on the page as repetitive, confusing, and even reductive; it also very much limits in some ways the kind of contextual analyses I can provide; however, in order to protect the identity of participants' identities it is necessary for me to not disclose the names of students' home nations.

something that I wanna do because I've seen so much of the world now, and, you know, I haven't seen that much of my own country. So I would love to do that.

A bit later, Mahdee explained that his ties to his home country were not politically, culturally, socially, or religiously based, but that his real draw to home is, on the one hand, his family (as discussed above), and, on the other, the opportunity to “explore [his country] more.” As he noted, he has a “sort of ease” back home. For Mahdee, then, home is a place he is happy to see again, to be again; although, this might be awhile since he has secured post-graduation employment in the U.S.

Jose, on the other hand, told me, “I think every time it gets worse” to go back home.

His most recent return, he explained, was the worst:

[u]h, I think that, you know, I think it's just, like the people just seem so different from me. You know, it's this, we seem so apart, in just like every way we act. I mean, not my friends! Because I know them personally. But like people on the streets. The way they act. Or just like the culture. It's so different, you know, and it's just, I'm not *that* anymore. I *can't* be that anymore. Because I know all these other things now. You know, it's not that, that I'm better. It's just that I changed because of that. And it's hard for me to adjust to that again. Um, so yeah, when I, when I see, when I just like walk, you know, on the streets and I see people I feel so strange. I feel so different. And I, I, I don't think I felt like that before. And that's probably like. I think that's the first time I feel like that, um, since, you know, of like going back and forth. Um, [5 second pause] yeah (4Feb14).

Jose described how the way people drive, compared to “Midwesterners,” is “crazy” and “scary” and that people's opinions about homosexuality and religion are too much unlike those in Horace, “a very liberal place.” In addition, he is unsettled by feelings of superiority:

Jose: And there's always, I mean, there's always that aspect of like feeling superior, I guess. And I really hate it. Because it actually gets to me sometimes. And I don't want to feel that way, but it's like

Me: [*Cutting in*] You're saying you feel superior, or?

Jose: Yeah, because it's like, I mean, just like the. I wanted to phrase it like, “They *still* think this way. And that's *still*”, you know, [Me: Oh.] has that heel of like, you know, this feeling of like superiority and this feeling of having come from a. And, and, I, I, I think that happens, I mean, that there's. That happens a lot. I think that, you know, just being, you know, thinking, “Oh, you came from America,” you know,

which is, you think of it as a better, you know, more advanced society than [my home country], let's say. And then you always have that idea. Um, and probably people think that of you as well. Probably people think, "Oh, he came from America. He must be like, you know, so full of himself and all that stuff." It's like but maybe not, you know, and it's just, it's, it's hard and. Just like the culture, I can't. [*Chuckling*] I don't think I could go back. [*Smiling*] I also don't like the city because it's like so humid and makes me get a lot of allergies. [*Chuckles; Smiling*] So there's so many things. And that's the main reason I wouldn't go back actually. It's just my allergies are so bad.

For Jose, going back home does not give him a sense of ease like it does for Mahdee. It is just the opposite, in fact. Jose is troubled by how different he feels from people there and the degree to which, as he puts it, "I'm not *that* anymore. I *can't* be that anymore." His social and ideological open-mindedness, discomfort with his perceptions of national lifestyle differences, and his nuanced and confounding feelings of superiority have changed him. While his allergies may well be the "main reason" he cannot and will not return, today, it seems, Jose identifies much more with his American life. It is no longer possible for him to "adjust again" to his home country.

For his part, Yinan explained that he has learned much about his country by being away. He shared, "whenever I go back home I have this like American-influenced way of thinking," which results in a difficulty in "accepting like whatever is going on with my family or with the country" (17Feb14). He contended, though, "I'm trying to change that. I wanna be versatile. I wanna be, you know, okay to live in both countries. I'm still trying but it's definitely affecting my life." Nevertheless, living in the U.S. has given him new perspective:

I feel like going abroad definitely, um, make me perceive how strong of a patriot I am. ... I hated [my country], but, um – back then – but now if anybody said anything bad about [my country] I would be mad. [Me: Mm.] I'd get mad. Not crazily mad, just, you know, annoyed. So, yeah! Um, I've come to appreciate my country. It's very ironic, but, um, especially when I'm abroad. You know, so this things makes me wanna, sometimes, you know, makes me wanna go back and do something there. It's my own country. [*Smiling*] Um, I think it's very positive feeling and I appreciate it.

Over the course of the time he has been at Horace, Yinan has become a “patriot,” someone now quick to defend his country, something he (and other participants from his country) noted he must often do considering the constancy with which he perceives Americans at Horace focus on and criticize his country. For Yinan, being abroad has made him realize that there is much to be proud of as a citizen of his home country and that there are definite reasons to, possibly, one day, return home.

A few students, like Alya spoke of ties to more than one country. For all intents and purposes, Alya grew up in the country where her secondary international school was located. This nation was her home for many years, and, to some degree, she nostalgically recalled it:

I have [national] music on my iPod. And when I see like a picture of a street I know: “Ah, [country]!” And I like talking about the culture, and the clubs we went to, and the language. [*Laughing*] But I’m not going back! [*Chuckles*] Um, I’m not going back. It’s not my country. [Me: Mm hm.] It’s not my people.

For Alya, living for so many years in two different countries has provided her the transnational lens through which she understands her world. While her secondary school country does not inspire the feelings of connectedness to place that her home country does, Alya was clear that her ability to fit in easily with all kinds of people from cultures that span the globe is due, in large part, to the fact that she knows firsthand about life in more countries than her home nation and the U.S.

Finally, while most students discussed the many ways that their home nation was, for better or worse, an inseparable part of their identity, of their past and future, and a guiding force to how they view and negotiate the world in which they live, others, like Ban, also shared how their lives were shaped, in part, through violence and war. In our fall 2013 interview, Ban explained that she and her family members evacuated her capital city in the middle of the night, before the bombings began, and took shelter in the north of the country in the village where her grandfather lived. However, the family could only remain there for



40 days, until food and money ran short and living with 25 family members in one room became an untenable situation for everyone. Upon their return, Ban and her family members found many places in the capital, their home city, in rubble. Some of Ban's teachers, and other members of the nation's intelligentsia, had been killed. As she explained during a campus presentation<sup>103</sup>, living in the capital meant, "you could not negotiate danger. It was just everywhere" (7Nov13). It was at this point that she applied for and was accepted into a preparatory college program in a neighboring country that helped displaced and/or education-needy students from her country apply for and get scholarships to HEIs in the United States. Now a student at Horace, Ban described that her relationship with home has been a back and forth exchange between feelings of "guilt" and a recognition of her "privilege":

[a]nd I guess, um, like mentally I'm not away because, um, especially in the beginning when I came here, there was a series of church bombings, in 2010 in [my home country]. And that like indirectly impacted my life, um, because I knew a lot of people in these churches. And so like, um, I would be like glued to the news all the time. And I wouldn't. I like. My idea was, "This is more important than homework, than anything else." Um, and so mentally I was still there. I was not away from the conflict. And I was constantly reminded that I shouldn't be. Um, and so, um, but being physically away I think gives me like a, a sense of guilt. Um, which is still like healthy, um, because, uh, I think it's, it's good to remember that I'm being, um, I'm like really privileged, um, by being here, that I have like so many more opportunities by getting an education, um, in like a really good institution, and, um, uh, and like not having to think about where I go or what's going to happen next, or like the security, or like the danger aspect of it (7Nov13).

Before coming to Horace, Ban did not want to talk about her home nation positively: "for me at that point it was impossible! I was like, 'No, it's horrible. Don't like sugarcoat things! Like I'm not gonna talk good things about [my home country]. It's horrible. That's why I got

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<sup>103</sup> Ban not only spoke to how war has impacted her and her family's lives in our two interviews, but, and for the first time, she spoke publically on this topic at a campus event which I attended entitled "Raised in Conflict" during the fall 2013 semester. In the presentation, a day after our interview, Ban expanded on her story and took questions from the audience. She was joined at the front of the room by two other internationals. Zawadiye was one, and she spoke about growing up in the post-genocide society of her country.

out.’ And it sort of, it neutralized my opinions” (11Mar14). At Horace, however, her view has changed:

[L]ike now I can see the good things about things and just be really objective about it. And so my relationship with. I don’t know, it became more objective. It’s, because I was not affected by [the country] personally. [*Laughing*] But I feel like when I go back there I’m gonna slowly re-build that theory of like “[the country] is horrible and it’s so corrupted. Like I can’t live here, you know!?” Um, but I don’t know.

Like Jose, Ban’s studies at Horace have provided an outlet and filter through which to understand her country. While it will still be difficult at times, her education will provide her a healthier, more constructive way to return home when she graduates:

when I go back home I’m gonna be irrational about things. Like, um, I’m gonna hate certain things in my country and not understand where they come from, you know? Um, but when I go back, at the same time, like my knowledge is ex-, is really big. Like I know why [the country] is at this point now. I have looked at it, I have analyzed it, I’ve researched everything, I’ve looked, you know, I. Now I have different questions. Um, it’s not just anger [*Laughing*] at my country, and frustration.

Today, Ban has a more extensive knowledge base about the historical, political, and social context of her country and she will be able to weigh its pros and cons, as well as be able to compare her country to the U.S., which has its flaws, too. What she has learned about where she comes from at Horace has been of vital importance, for her sanity and her future.

“Simultaneity,” an essential component of transnational social fields, recognizes that internationals “simultaneously negotiate contexts of origin and new contours of lived realities abroad” (Gargano, 2009, p. 340). And where there is a temptation to cite nationality – even here – as being the most salient aspect of these students’ identities, as much of the scholarship suggests, simultaneity also gives credence to “the ways in which international students recreate or contest [particular] ideologies” associated with the home country and/or culture (p. 340). The examples in this section demonstrate that participants do definitely have ties to family and friends from their countries of origin and do most certainly have relationships with their home nations. However, these connections do not, or, may not

always, necessarily predominate in these students' lives because their relationships with the people they meet at Horace are continually diversifying and expanding to new places. Moreover, many relationships are complex and subject to change and/or reevaluation. Rather than being unilaterally back and forth between "home" and "host" countries, students' attachments connect them circuitously to Horace, across the U.S., to their home countries, to study abroad and internship sites, to their closest friends' associations, and to the many other "daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1003).

Finally, participants show that these relationships engage various "ways of being" and "ways of belonging" where specific personalities and contexts matter. In the case of the former, ways of belonging, Sabith, for instance, calls his parents in his home country to check in and keep connected, albeit not so regularly to his parents, though he does not identify as belonging to his home country. In the latter, ways of belonging, Alya may not have any personal ties to people in her international school country anymore; however, she identifies, in relational ways, with it via nostalgia. She demonstrates that individuals can and do "enter [a] social field when and if they choose to do so" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1011). Indeed, the examples abound.

### **To Be Continued...**

In the final question in each of the one-on-one interviews, I asked informants to think about the future. To the seniors, I asked what the coming year would bring and what they would miss most about Horace. Whether heading off to graduate school; hoping to find employment either back home or in the U.S.; or still unsure of what would come next, seniors were mixed about whether or not they would miss Horace College. As Brenda put it, "Maybe I'll have to leave Horace to know what I miss." Or, as Mahdee explained, he is

going to miss his friends and “[t]he life that I’ve built up for myself that I’m now going to have to do all over again. *Which is great* because of adventure, et cetera. But it’s also lame because I have to like leave all this good stuff behind.” For her part, Vincci noted that graduation means leaving, and missing “having that thriving intellectual community” of people who “care about issues that you care about” and “think the way you do.”

To students returning to Horace the next year, on the other hand, I asked what they were most and least looking forward to in their upcoming years at the College. Most explained that they were excited to challenge themselves in their coursework and to taking advantage of internship, study abroad, and campus organization opportunities. Others said getting new roommates was high on their list. A few noted wanting to avoid dining hall food. Some students were already looking forward to or were fearful of upper-level classes and/or graduation. Sabith shared that he was least looking forward to “the monotony of Horace sometimes, you know? Just the fact that people do the same things over and over again every weekend” (3Apr14). Or, as Mirza put it, “I’m looking forward to meeting new people and, uh, learning about, about myself and the world,” and “[t]here’s no such thing I’m not looking forward” (11Feb14). Or, as Sara shared, she was ready for “learning even more about ‘where do I fit in as an international student in the U.S. and in Horace?’ It’s, it’s always exciting to like think about like constant growth for me” (25Feb14).

I, too, will think about that constant growth, for all of my international student participants, and for as long or as short – and well beyond the time – that the label, “international student” still fits them. I will wonder about their journeys at Horace, in the U.S., and wherever life next takes them. And, like Sara and Mirza, I will consider the many ways in which life’s journey is as much about learning “where do I fit in?” as it does “where will I fit myself?” and “how can I learn about myself and the world along the way?”

In the closing of her article, Gargano (2009) writes, “Adopting a transnational framework of analysis raises some questions that initiate a dialogue to uncover the range of meanings associated with educational border crossings” (p. 343). And while she lists a good many, I, too, contend that there is great, nay, significant, value in the following questions:

How do students incorporate personal histories into sense making in transnational learning spaces? How do socioeconomic, cultural, educational, and familial histories influence student identity negotiations and constructions in transnational social fields? What border crossing and life experiences form the lens through which international students articulate the past, make sense of the present, and predict the future? How do students reconstruct identities within the increasingly mobile contexts in which we live? How do students reconcile dimensions of difference that manifest across contexts? How are student experiences shaped through ongoing interactions between the traditions, worldviews, and values of contexts of origin and educational spaces abroad? *How, if at all, do students define themselves as international students?* How do the perceptions of others contribute to student self-representations? How does the positionality of students on campus inform the construction of a sense of being and belonging? (p. 343, emphasis added).

Gargano is further correct that “These are not simple questions, but rather questions that involve an exploration of student-defined spaces, negotiations, and identities” (p. 343). In this chapter, I have consulted experts on the subject of the international study experience – international students. I posed these kinds of complex questions and explored together with these students how they define, conjecture, and/or understand their lives at and beyond Horace College.

Furthermore, in many ways, international participants in this study demonstrate that they are like all undergraduates – a point of emphasis because of how international students are often Othered and exoticized (Coate, 2009; see also Chapter II). Were I to have asked domestic students about their relationships with family and friends back home, I might have received similar responses to those given by international informants. Some students remain close with family and friends after they have gone away to college while others grow distant. Were I to have queried about what American students most look forward to in the coming

years at Horace, they likely would have shared their excitement for classes and internship opportunities to come and new friendships to be made. Domestic soon-to-be graduates, too, very well might have cited parting ways with their closest friends and the life they had made in the last four years at Horace as those parts of their college experience they would miss most. Although distance from loved ones and from countries of origin is a clear, and significant, difference between international and American students – a case in point is Maurice’s description of the difficulties his family would have in the event of an emergency on campus – internationals have many of the same hopes, fears, desires, and goals as do their American counterparts, and all students who attend institutions of higher education. To qualify international students, then, as “different” solely or primarily because they are far from home would be a shortsighted and inaccurate simplification of, at the very least, the realities shared by the internationals in this study.

Moreover, and importantly, these students demonstrate there can be no monolithic definitions, no uniform understandings of what it means to be an international student. In fact, a few informants made it a point to clarify that their views were entirely their own and that I should not use their comments to generalize. As Zawadiye put it, “most of the questions were directed at me and if they were asking for a general opinion, that’s my opinion of things. That’s not necessarily, you know, reflects everybody here, all [people from my country] or international students” (14Mar14). For his part, Yinan ended our interview with this caveat: “I wanna make it clear that my opinions might be a little too radical, to the left, I’d say. Some might be, might not be very representative. [*Smiling*] And might not be very, um, might not be the best answers you would get” (17Feb14). There was a certain kind of resistance to speak on behalf of others. Zawadiye and Yinan prefer to lay claim only to what they know, what they have experienced, and what their experience can explain about a

larger topic such as “what is life like for international students at Horace College?” Perhaps they remember that in my initial meetings with them when I was still recruiting participants, I told them, “I want to assure you that this is not going to be a study about international students at Horace College. Rather, this is a study about the individuals at Horace College, most of them international students, who agree to be participants in the study.”

Having said that, there is much to be learned from how the international participants self defined their “spaces, negotiations, and identities,” for those who read this dissertation and for them, the informants who so generously contributed to the dissertation the stories of their lives. Indeed, participation in the study was itself a way for some of these students to continue learning about their lives. As Alya, nearing her graduation told me in our spring interview, “I think the first time I got to have like a, a very interesting conversation about Horace and student life and being an international student was in your first, um, group interview” during the fall semester (13Feb14). So if Alya, herself a senior international student, has much yet to learn about “being an international student” – and from her international counterparts – then, I believe, we all do.

This chapter, in many ways, has been about getting to know the primary group of participants – their perceptions about being international students and their lives at and beyond Horace College. Each of these primary informants has a different idea of what it means to be an international student, as well as whether, and, if so, in what ways, the term “international student” fits with how each sees her/himself. What their life has been like at Horace College contributes. What their relationships are like with their families and with their friends matters. How they do and do not connect with their home countries shapes them, too. These students have shared personal stories and supplied evidence rooted in opinion and in the facts of their lived experience. Whether viewed as straightforward and

self-evident, or nuanced and inherently complex, or, more likely, somewhere along the spectrum between the two, international participants in this chapter articulate for themselves the dimensions and the contours of their lives as Horace College undergraduate international students. Scholarly knowledges of this very diverse student group are growing, and the contributions of student voices are vital to this continued growth (Gargano 2009, 2012). Similarly, the opportunity for individuals, like the participants in this study, to speak about their experiences will continue to add to internationals' constant growth and the possibilities that await them in the future ahead as they learn about themselves and the world they navigate.



## Chapter VII: Conclusion

[I]t's the way you look at it. It's how, what you said: how you see yourself as an international. You can see yourself as weird and you can see yourself as awkward. But sometimes embrace the awkward. You know, the awkward makes you. Like sometimes I'll be talking to people and I'll feel, like I'll have this out of body experience. I'll be, you know, looking at the table and be like, "Who are you? Who is this person right now?" Cuz as I said, it's not just the language thing. [International study] strips you from a part of your identity because none of those people know you. Um, but then again, it really makes you like, when you look at the mirror you really see yourself. Cuz it's, you know, you're completely taken out of everything you ever knew and you are supposed to perform yourself. You know, so perform Anna, perform like, "Who are you?" And for me it's been a great experience. You know, it rips you out of your skin and it makes you see who you are. Right now, I love that person. You know, I. I just do. And I'm, I'm really proud of what, what I've accomplished so far. Do I account for the fact that I'm an international? Yeah.

- Anna (Fr, F, E Europe, 30Jan14)

### Summary and Discussion

In this dissertation case study, I have explored and analyzed how international students at one liberal arts college, Horace College, perceived their lived experience on and off campus. Primarily through two rounds of one-on-one interviews with 16 internationals – as well as four diversely composed focus groups of international students – I mapped the various ways that these individuals interpreted and contextualized their relational realities. That is, I was most interested in what these students' perceptions were about their relationships with people and places. At Horace, the focus was to understand how international students felt about the College and about the students, faculty, and staff – the other "Horacians," even – with whom they shared their daily, on-campus lives. Chapters IV and V explored, primarily, on-campus contexts. In addition, I have focused in this dissertation on aspects of internationals' lives that connected them, alongside those in Horace, simultaneously to family and friends beyond the College's campus and the countries from which they originated and/or to which they had ties. Chapter VI focused on these contexts. I have sought, throughout the course of conducting this study, to understand and to report important pieces of the "big picture" of participants' lives, as they saw them, as Horace College international students. In what follows, then, I first summarize and discuss

findings from each of the three data chapters and then I turn to a discussion of the broader implications of this study for higher education.

In Chapter IV, I discussed how Horace College's institutional mission and the architects that designed its comprehensive internationalization approach have, in many ways, shaped the campus climate today for international students and for the College's purported commitment to diversity and equity. Charting how Horace's international foundations set the stage for the internationals currently enrolled revealed that College leaders, both then and now, have acted mostly purposefully, responsibly, and with care in their recruitment of these students, but that they have also reified problematic narratives and practices about the role and value of international students. In its efforts to expand its legacy of international student inclusion, the College, committed to enrolling qualified students from countries around the world and providing generous financial assistance to those who needed it most, also framed internationals as a "campus resource" for the benefit of all students and reasoned that these individuals could be "utilized" to showcase Horace's "international character." Likewise, and more recently, Horace has been criticized by international students for concentrating on the recruitment and enrollment of students from China and those who attended American or international secondary schools despite a longstanding belief among College leadership that each international student is an individual person with a "unique... family background, personality, and goals." I found these tensions, and others, to mark the landscape of a Horace College community striving to blend its "distinctive" international legacy with a present day, more complicated reality in which internationals felt proud to be Horace student-citizens but were not always so sure of their place on campus.

College leaders would be wise to listen to and to heed the counsel of those who have concerns about Horace's agenda regarding international students. The College is justified in

its pride in the growing international diversity of the student body, but it must resist the temptations to conflate internationalization with an agenda to swell its ranks with full-pay internationals. As one faculty informant aptly stated,

the moral of the story is a little – right? – is a little iffy when they’re, on the one hand, saying “internationalization,” but, on the other hand, they’re saying, “bring ‘em with money.” ... It’s almost like the discourse of social justice has a door, you know, where it stops and then it’s, internationalization doesn’t count.

Moreover, the administration’s lack of response, *to this day*, to the concerns of students during the President’s “listening session” is troubling. Internationals hoped they were not just heard but listened to regarding the disconnect they perceived between Horace’s social justice mission, its focus on campus diversity, and their critiques about international-domestic student integration, recruitment, and the unmet needs of international students in the career center. These disconnects between the College and its international students harken the 2007 failings of Horace’s internationalization leaders to recognize that they “spent substantial time talking *about* [international students] but no time talking *with* them” (p. 13). Coate and Rathnayake (2012) contend that we must all accept “some level of complicity” in the “edubusiness” that is today’s international higher education sector and that we must rethink with ethically guided inclinations “what we are doing as educators” (p. 46). For the most part, I found Horace College to be a cosmopolitan institution and that, collectively, its administrators, staff, and faculty care about and act responsibly towards international students; however, there were slippages in what Horace educators were doing with respect to international students, and the College must be more mindful about its own complicity in the scheme of an increasingly “consumerist model of higher education” (p. 39).

Having said that, I also found Horace College to be a site for open, engaged, and critically minded self-introspection and an intellectual community endeavoring to live up to and be a model for its social justice ideals. While as an HEI competing with other elite liberal

arts colleges it must make calculated business decisions regarding, among others, internationalization, Horace also expects and teaches its students to hold themselves and the College to high standards that serve the “common good.” The wider campus diversity conversation was an example of this. For one, I found that the intentionality of holding the College accountable and of employing empathic consideration for others provided invaluable insights to campus actors about what kind of place Horace College can and should be. For another, study participants shared with me how the ongoing public dialogues gave a platform for discussing international diversity and the ways in which it does and does not resonate on campus. Ultimately, while more time and effort is necessary for international student inclusion to reach satisfactory levels, Horace, as a campus community, is making strides: the international student population is growing, internationals are challenging the status quo, and the ISAO and Elizabeth’s “international student friendliness” approach is enacting ethical and purposeful mindfulness in every corner of campus. Horace College is committed to the growth and prosperity of each of its international students. However, it should also be noted, and I think College leaders are aware of the fact, that simply being a liberal arts college does not necessarily make Horace more adept at internationalization (Mullen, 2011) – or for that matter diversity relations and inclusiveness of students (Martinez Aleman and Salkever, 2003). This must be an ongoing and intentional enterprise.

In Chapter V, I discussed the ways in which the label “Horacian” has implications for a kind of broad institutional identity and is a moniker with which participants in the study both do and do not identify in important ways. According to informants, a “Horacian” generally referred to a Horace College student, but could also be a faculty or staff member. A model Horacian, so to speak, was one who ascribed to a left leaning, or “liberal,” political, social, and ideological value system. Belief in and advocacy for social justice was central to

this identity formulation, as was being proud of and feeling connected to the College and being open and welcoming to all people and all forms of diversity and difference. For those who did not share wholeheartedly the beliefs of the majority culture, particularly notions of liberalness and social justice, the supposed guiding tenets of the College seemed hypocritical and/or rigid. While most of my international informants were proud to be students at Horace, felt connected to and welcome at the College, and were glad to be at a school that strives to work for “the common good” and seeks to make the world a better place, they often found it difficult to identify with a normative Horace College culture that made them feel un-Horacian because they did not share particular Horace-Americentric values.

The differences in viewpoints regarding what it meant to be a good, so to speak, Horacian also shed light on how relationships between international and American students were impacted by implicit and explicit expectations for individuals in the latter group to adjust to the former. Where international students acknowledged that adapting to the host culture was necessary as it applied to following national laws or notions of timeliness, these informants were in consensus that no one should be expected or be forced to change who they were at their core. Internationals were also mostly in agreement that their domestic counterparts should make more efforts to show greater empathy for, awareness about, and interest in them – that is, in people other than themselves, people outside of the majority culture. American students in the study contended that adjustment to the majority culture was a “universal” truth and a necessity, at least to a certain extent. On the other hand, as Americans at Horace College they, unlike their international peers, could choose whether and how much they were willing to adjust to the cultures of, differences between, and needs of international students. In too many cases, the adjustment paradigm – a prominent feature of relational dynamics on many U.S. campuses – indeed contributed to and reified divisions

between internationals and domestic students at Horace. There were, however, exceptions. I found that international students whose friends were mostly, or predominantly, domestic were significantly less inclined to note divisions between international and American students (notably, each of these students shared that they also had several or many international acquaintances).

Despite the fact that Horace College's institutional identity (not the brand being created by the College's consultants) painted a picture of the college as a site for socially just, globally guided educational pursuit for "the common good," there were internal divisions and tensions that inhibited its international and American students – and the College itself – from realizing the full potential and promise of its prized mission statement. International student participants wanted their American counterparts to act more "Horacian," or more equitable, caring, open-minded, and welcoming. For everyone to be a proud student-citizen of the Horace College community, a few informants proffered, students cannot categorize and treat one another in ways that allow, encourage, and sustain divisions. Recognizing that mutual understanding and benefit was the key to strengthening relationships between international and American students, I was told, began with seeing – and believing – that "in the end we're all Horacians." Ultimately, individuals at the College must turn inward and recognize that as much as the prominent associations to the moniker "Horacian" unify the majority campus culture they also exacerbate the we/they and us/them binaries that already go mostly unaddressed, even ignored, by a majority of people on campus. And where the efforts of the ISAO were a notable remedy-in-progress, it cannot do the work alone. It will take the whole College to acknowledge, "we're all Horacians," and to proactively bridge the gaps between students through the appreciation of differences and the prevalence of similarities.

In the sixth chapter, I turned to how international student participants perceived as well as personally related to (or not) the term “international student.” To guide this chapter, I employed a transnational social fields theoretical frame in order to privilege and to understand the nuances and the complexities inherent to these individual’s experiences abroad. Having discussed in previous chapters some of the ways that international informants located themselves primarily on the Horace campus, I focused in Chapter VI on how they viewed being simultaneously at and beyond Horace, how they felt about having close ties to and moving between multiple localities around the world, and the ways in which this mobility contributed to and shaped their personal, often multiple identities. As posited in Chapters I and II, I found that Horace College internationals defied the more stereotypical representations of international students common in the scholarship. There were no definitive definitions or characterizations of international students and generalizations left out too many of the complexities inherent to international study. In addition, it became clear that while these individuals’ experiences were quite unique because of the transnational scope of their globally mobile lives, they were also, in so many ways, very similar to those of domestic students.

In this chapter, I discussed data gathered from both focus groups and individual interviews. In the case of focus groups, international student identities were often produced dialogically and could gain salience through whether and how people agreed and/or disagreed on the meanings associated with being an international student. Many impressions were given, such as the prominence of differences between themselves and American students; the challenges associated with relationships with and distance from family and friends back home; and the idea that international study was a journey in life and an experience from which to learn and grow. Internationals also offered explicit differences in

opinion with each another, such as one student who stated that international study, for her, had nothing to do with being “courageous” because being an international student was always a part of her “plan” in life. I also surveyed, through interviews, each of my 16 primary international participants. On the one hand, I set out to learn how these students would talk about being an international student with just me present. As might be expected, the views of focus group informants did and did not match those from individual interviews. On the other hand, I sought to further explore how these specific – not just any – individual students’ perspectives mattered. Understanding international study and what it meant to be an “international student” – often a generalized, easily definable category of student – required purposeful listening, appreciation for individual differences, and recognizing the value of presenting as many expert voices to speak on the subject as was possible.

International students also spoke about the realities of living away, and so far and so long, from home. In Chapter VI, I gave particular attention to relationships with family, friends, and home nations. As one primary participant noted, it was only by venturing abroad for an extended period of time that he was able to re-frame, and in significant ways, how he contextualized his life and his life in relation to his family, his friends, and his home country. He also shared, “I wanna be versatile. I wanna be, you know, okay to live in both countries. I’m still trying but it’s definitely affecting my life.” Whether these relationships remained more or less the same as before they left for Horace, have changed greatly since then, and/or have been reconsidered through studies at the College depended entirely upon the individual sharing her/his story. Each of these participants, in their own ways, was affected by “simultaneity,” by living in multiple countries and each engaged various “ways of being” and “ways of belonging” to suit their particular personalities and contexts. Ultimately, I contend, having listened to the first-hand lived experiences of experts, being an



international student is a subjective enterprise full of simplicities and complexities, straightforwardness and contradictions, positives and negatives, and pleasures and pains. Scholars would do well to understand that it is in speaking with, *listening to*, and reporting on a good many internationals that one can really get a clearer idea of the many forms that international study can and does take for those who live it.

### **Broader Implications of the Study**

When I began this dissertation, I sought to “drill in,” as Elizabeth so aptly put it, and learn as much as I could about individual Horace international students, their lives, and how they viewed their international study experiences. I was bothered by the many ways in which international students in the literature and on campuses were commodified, homogenized, expected to adjust, were believed to be deficient, were Othered, and were considered temporary. However, I also knew that global mobility for the pursuit of higher education is an embodied practice, and that globalization and a single international student’s daily, lived experience unfold concurrently. How these individuals perceived their educational journeys, then, would not only ground and locate this phenomenon and offer great insights into the actual beliefs, worldviews, and realities of individual students who are too often sidelined in the scholarship. In addition, and crucially, it is very clear at the close of this study that international students’ experiences have important implications for higher education more broadly. In this dissertation, my participants and I have raised concerns about how we use internationalization and, more specifically, international students in dubious and often problematic ways to further what would otherwise be important and worthwhile goals of, among others, cosmopolitanism, diversity, and global competence. In what follows, I discuss what international students have to tell us about internationalization in the contexts of higher education, liberal arts education, and American culture. Having discussed these larger

implications, I then turn to my own position. First, though, I would like to revisit the theoretical orientation that guides this study, taking into full consideration now the breadth of the data presented above.

At the outset of the dissertation, I outlined my view of the current state of things today in higher education as well as assumptions I have about international students. Globalization and the internationalization of higher education, I explained, abide by and operate within the proliferation of the dictates of a market-driven global economy. Consequently, the need to keep up with and to remain competitive in this economically driven climate is a pervasive and daily reality for higher education institutions. In many cases, this results in strains to the ability or the prioritizing of institutions to provide a welcoming and supportive campus infrastructure for international students. While it is understandable that colleges and universities must give considerable time, energy, and funds to so many other significant needs and initiatives, the extent to which internationals are regularly deprioritized and/or underserved once they arrive on our campuses is very concerning.

For their part, I have also explained, internationals, individuals who have travelled far from home, in many cases for the first time, are not the deficient and easily homogenized people they are all too often made out to be. While they are, problematically, a commodified student population viewed as challenged by having to adjust to life in the U.S. and to life as a tertiary-level student in a new culture, I contend that internationals are also “strong agent[s] piloting the course of her/his life” (Marginson, 2014, p. 12). Navigating a highly complex and a structurally uneven global system of higher education, these students accept, reject, and redefine for themselves and with others what it means to be an international student. These viewpoints coexist with both great tension and possibility, and, increasingly, are a source for debate in the literature about who international students are and how they should

be perceived within the global scheme of higher education and treated on their specific campuses. On the one hand, they are a reliable form of revenue, and, on the other, they are human beings deserving of a more just and equitable educational experience.

The theoretical constructs I have selected to frame this dissertation take up these issues and speak, with significance, to the wider implications of this study. Terra Gargano (2009) could not be more accurate when she writes, “international student voices and the complexity of their experiences are strikingly absent from the discourse” (p. 341). More than the impetus for this dissertation, Gargano’s claim, and her employment of “transnational social fields,” highlights the lack of critical of discussion about internationals as well as the fact that these individuals’ agency has been stripped from them by the masses who diminish and/or dismiss the truly complex and transnational worlds in which these students live and the globalized system of higher education in which they operate. In this dissertation, my international student participants take back the microphone, so to speak, and share in their own words who they are, what their experience as an international student has been like, and what the experience at Horace has meant to them – complexity and transnationality abounding.

“Global intercultural capital,” a merging of Kim’s (2011) concept of “global cultural capital” and Pollman’s (2009) “intercultural capital,” not only recognizes but appreciates, for one, the fact that international students operate within a market-based globalized world and system of higher education rife with power dynamics, and so they must be strategic in attaining their educational goals. For another, though, global intercultural capital appreciates the time and energy internationals invest to connect with and learn from others, to nurture an interconnectedness with others that has the potential to disrupt the more economically driven priorities of higher education and of personal achievement. The internationals in this

study demonstrate that global intercultural capital is dependent on context, it is variously accumulated, at times comes at the expense of other people in their lives, and, at others, is exchanged or given to others such that it becomes mutually beneficial.

Marginson's (2014) notion of "self-formation" is premised on student agency and the need to trouble the adjustment paradigm so axiomatically attributed to internationals. For his part, Marginson gives particular salience, like Gargano, to the unique experiences of international students and the phenomenon of international study. International education, he contends, offers novelty and personal growth, as well as barriers and problems, opportunities to re-learn and to experience differently or anew one's living environments, relationships, values, and the contours of un/blended culture/s. International participants in this study, notably in chapter VI, demonstrate that international students are self-forming, agential individuals. Also, while definitely impactful, the adjustment paradigm must be considered in personal and particular ways to be most meaningful.

Finally, among the theoretical constructs I have selected, Coate and Rathnayake (2012) argue for "responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism," a philosophical approach to respond to today's "consumerist model of higher education" (p. 39). Whether at Horace College or any other HEI, these authors contend that we must be more responsible to one another, we must care more about one another, and we must recognize all of the ways in which we are interconnected. This involves acknowledging that we are all Others to one another and that we are okay with never knowing each other fully (see also Levinas, 2006). The approach also involves a critical disposition to make meaning of the complicated, contradictory, and interlinked circumstances of students', and (therefore) our, transnational lives. In this dissertation, I confidently find that the exercise of responsibility, care, and cosmopolitanism could have transformative potential for Horace College and for higher

education and that its value cannot be understated. If we seek to disrupt the current climate of market-driven prioritizing – and this case study shows how hard that can be for a school like Horace – this philosophical approach must be our guiding ethic.

With this theoretical framing revisited, and the full dissertation in mind, I turn to some important ramifications regarding internationalization in the contexts of higher education, the liberal arts, and American culture. First, it is my contention that international students, and other participants in this dissertation, tell us much about the state of higher education in the United States and give us insights for pause, reflection, and, hopefully, action. As Horace professor Amardo's thought experiment in the closing of Chapter IV aptly demonstrates, in many ways, HEIs, and the whole of the American higher educational system, are not ready to embrace the full potential of internationalization or of the growth of international student populations on our campuses. On the one hand, we must be honest with ourselves about what our approach to internationalization entails and what its consequences are. The question, I think, about the extent to which full-pay internationals, especially today from China, are recruited and admitted in greater numbers annually, in large part, to supplement losses in public funding sources and to buffer budget cuts and restraints has been answered. That is, higher education in the United States, and around the world, is not in danger of becoming an "edubusiness" (Luke, 2010; see also Coate and Rathnayake, 2012). It is one. Indeed, market-driven priorities are a reality we can no longer pretend does not drive international recruitment in significant ways. For their part, international students are not only aware that colleges and universities – Horace College included – are racing to grow international student populations. These students insist that unchecked recruitment is objectionable and they speak up against the commodification of international students to ensure that HEIs live up to their word as being places where international students, like all

students, are treated fairly and justly and can genuinely contribute to and benefit from the cosmopolitan character of the campus and the education all students receive.

On the other hand, and to this last point, international students challenge the often-unwritten assumptions we have about the purposes and goals of American higher education. As Amardo asks, “to what degree are we really about preparing people for American norms of identity, citizenship, etcetera, as opposed to something more fluid?” If international students are simply “present” on our campuses, then, perhaps one might argue that it makes sense that U.S. education at the tertiary level is Americentric. However, international students are *not* simply “present”; they live in the U.S. and on U.S. campuses and engage actively and collaboratively in their educational experience, as do all students. The fact that we have globally diverse student bodies at our institutions, internationals remind us, should compel and inspire us to make campus cultures, curricula, and co-curricula as richly diverse as are our students – and non-students, too. Anything less would belie and inhibit the full potential – and, let us be honest, the purpose – of higher education, be it in the United States or anywhere in the world, for that matter. It is therefore important that we imagine<sup>104</sup>, as Amardo challenges us, what an institution comprised of 20, 40, or even 60 percent international student enrollment might be like. We should also consider critically what internationalization, diversity, inclusion, and the mission of a globally committed American HEI might offer us all. International students highlight the fact that higher education is so much more than an “edubusiness.”

In addition, international students force us to reconsider whether liberal arts colleges are better adept at internationalization. In Chapter II, I reviewed literatures in which scholars

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<sup>104</sup> In fact, we can do more than imagine in some places, such as at institutions like Soka University of America in Aliso Viejo, CA; The New School in New York, NY; Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill, MA; and Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA where during the 2013-14 school year international student populations were 39, 31, 29, and 25 percent respectively (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-liberal-arts-colleges/most-international>).

proffered that liberal arts colleges, notably the International Fifty (again, of which Horace College is a member), have long embodied and practiced internationalism. While I do not recognize a perceived premium on a kind of inherency of internationalism, I will concede that international students in this study viewed their own institution as one making considerable efforts to be an “international student friendly” place. This, many explained, has much to do with the social justice and egalitarian tenets of the College. And this, I think, is important because in today’s internationalized higher education landscape, institutions around the U.S. can and do lay claim to internationalization. This includes student interest in study abroad, area studies, foreign languages, and making global connections on and off campus. Additionally, faculties with international ties of all kinds are increasingly growing. And graduates from HEIs across the country pursue international affairs in graduate schools, earn PhDs in international fields and languages, become U.S. ambassadors and foreign service officers, and enter into the Peace Corps. Colleges and universities of all types and sizes are instituting and growing their campus internationalization programs, including growing their international student populations. Rather than focusing on who is more international or “supranational,” as Stanley (2000) puts it, international students in this study teach us that in today’s world it behooves all of higher education to be “grounded in a set of social commitments both to members of our campus commonwealths and to the society beyond the campus” (p. 289). The liberal arts *and* undergraduate education broadly should cultivate “an openness to new ideas and experiences, a sense of personal and societal responsibility, and a capacity for self-reeducation – attributes that are eminently deployable in a changing world” (Marden and Engerman, 1992, p. 45).

International students also tell us much about American culture and about how they do and do not feel welcomed on U.S. campuses or feel they do and do not fit in with their

particular campus cultures. Insights into these important matters, in many ways, come through in the relationships between American and international students and in how so many internationals feel “decentered” upon arriving at college. American educators must ask themselves very pointed questions and be honest in answering them: Why do we not listen to international students, particularly when we give them the forum to contribute to change? How can we motivate American students to care more about international students? How do we use the international/domestic binary and in what ways is its freely and unexamined usage detrimental to us all? How can orientation programs, those designed for international students, be more inclusive of domestic students and better prepare all students to enact inclusivity, collaboration, and interdependence early on and more regularly? How do we conceive of “diversity” on our campuses, and how do international students fit into these conceptions and the policies made to increase and broaden diversity? These are not easy questions to answer, and they will unfold differently at different HEIs, but they are each very important. For their part, internationals in this study explain that even at an institution being intentional about internationalization, inclusion, and diversity, there is a lot of work yet to do. If, for example, we take my discussion about relationships between international and American students in Chapter V, it is clear that the divide between these students is great. Despite the influences of Horace and liberal arts cultures – social justice, egalitarianism, inclusivity, and appreciation for diversity – American students are often still distant from their international counterparts, unaware of their own arrogances and ignorances, and disinterested in more genuinely connecting with internationals. Are these not the concerns common to international students and the criticisms so often levied against Americans and American culture? How have we failed these American students? How have we failed international students? Let us count the ways.



This dissertation, then, contributes to the field of studies about international students a reconsideration of international students, generally discussed as a component of internationalization, as individuals to whom we must listen and with whose insights we must diligently and genuinely reframe and recast internationalization. I argue that this means that we are going to have to first admit the degree to which internationals are viewed, often primarily, as an economic asset and, secondarily, as a resource for campus internationalization before they are viewed as individuals deserving of the benefits of internationalization and of the global higher education system in which we all immersed. This must change. Listening to internationals in this study makes clear that internationalization must encompass a more human, and also less market-driven, character, one that is saturated with complexity and reflexivity and is open to the truly diverse peoples that traverse the system.

It is my position that international students challenge our assumptions in many ways. We assume, for example, that recruiting internationals is sufficient because we provide them with an opportunity to, say, receive a world-class education in the U.S. Does not the approach, however, expose our Americentricness? Our arrogance? The answer to both, I think, is yes. Do not our responsibilities to international students extend much further than recruiting and enrolling these students? The answer, I think, is yes. There are hundreds of international students on our campuses, and, in many cases, thousands. Putting their, mostly, full-pay tuitions aside, we can no longer seek international students primarily, among other reasons, to help educate our domestic students about the world, to grow domestics' global competencies, and, hopefully, to serve after graduation as ambassadors of soft power and alumni gift givers. What do we achieve by this kind of selfishness and by operating with predominantly Americentric (as opposed to global) sensibilities? We should not be trying to

make the world in our own image or to fit it into an American mold, unless the visage we see looking back us at in the mirror resembles the genuinely globally diverse and equally complex, multiple, and shifting picture that is, for example, the Horace College campus. Our responsibility as educators – scholars and practitioners alike – is to expose and contest such Americentricness. Our responsibility is to speak up and to disrupt the largely self-serving and economically driven dictates of the internationalization of higher education. Our responsibility as educators begins by listening to international students, truly, and to providing the sort of high quality education they came to the U.S. to receive. We must then embrace the myriad ways that internationals challenge our assumptions and the premises of our motivations. We must then ask: are we really all Horacians?

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

My dissertation only scratched the surface of the international student context and, therefore, the scope of this dissertation is limited in many ways. First, the location of this study was inclusive of only one liberal arts institution. Further research should include case studies of additional liberal arts colleges across the United States, or even abroad, as well as studies in which the experiences of international students are explored comparatively at multiple liberal arts institutions. Additionally, this project excluded the broader array of liberal arts colleges, as Horace College is considered among the Tier 1, that is, selective/elite liberal arts institutions. Another study could investigate how the status of the college affects international students' perceptions and experiences. An interesting comparative study might also be conducted considering issues among undergraduate international students who attend liberal arts colleges and those who are enrolled at community colleges and larger universities. Furthermore, this research, while inclusive of the diverse representativeness of international students on the Horace campus, only directly engaged 29 current international

student (and 2 alumni) participants in individual and group interviews. Approximately 180 internationals students (and the near-entirety of the “home” student population), then, were not included as subjects in this study. Remaining committed to giving space, in an in-depth way, to internationals’ unique voices and experiences, additional research should include more time in the field and the inclusion of larger informant pools. Conversely, future studies would do well to use the “portraiture” method used by Gargano (2012). She explains that this methodology, developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, “is utilized for recovering and privileging student voices, ‘capturing – from an outsider’s purview – an insider’s understanding of the scene’” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 25, in Gargano, 2012, p. 146). While I was unable to use “portraiture” due to confidentiality concerns, this method enables important and useful ways to conduct research with internationals that profiles these individuals’ experiences and their very important perspectives on international study. Finally, fields of literatures such as migration studies (transnational social fields is but one offshoot of this larger body of scholarship) and border studies are valuable and useful avenues for continued research about international students. Though not employed in this study, each has numerous possibilities for the exploration of, for example, concepts such as mobility, identity, “home,” adjustment, and inclusion and exclusion. In upcoming articles, migration and border studies would cogently add to and complicate my discussion in Chapter VI.

Further research, specifically at Horace College, a site rife for exploration into the narratives of international participants, should investigate some of the limitations of this study<sup>105</sup>. First and foremost, I was not able to learn what, if anything, came of the knowledge acquired by the President during his listening session with international students during the spring of 2014. How does Horace plan to address the concerns registered by students in

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<sup>105</sup> See also participants’ recommendations for Horace College in Appendix VII on page 353.

attendance? As I pointed out in Chapter IV and above in this chapter, College leaders conceded in 2007, “[o]ne important constituency who should have a say in whether and how to pursue the initiatives proposed [about internationalization in relation to international students] is our international students themselves. In our workshop, we spent substantial time talking *about* them but no time talking *with* them” (p. 15, original emphasis). The current articulation, which could perhaps be something along the lines of, “we listened to international students but have done nothing with what we learned from them” is not step in the right direction for Horace College. I – and others in this study – contend that listening bereft of action, or, at the very least, meaningful acknowledgment and response, is not only insufficient but it is also an insult. Additional inquiry into how, again, if at all, the College will “talk *with*” international students – as the 2007 leadership team advised – is necessary. And what are international students’ reactions to this inaction/eventual action? Secondly, I was unable to explore how College professionals (faculty, staff, and administrators) perceive the disparity I discovered between Horace College’s social justice and egalitarian institutional foundations and the propensity with which American students in this study expect internationals to adjust, or assimilate, to Horace (and also U.S.) culture. Further attention to relationships between internationals and domestic students, as well as the inclusion of more American student participant voices, would help flesh out greater understanding of the divides between these students. Future research could then also explore the ways in which the College might narrow the gap between its longstanding value structure and relations on campus between its students.

While I am on the subject, I suggest that the complexities offered by international participants, particularly in Chapter VI, might provide insights for American-Horacians into the experiences of their international counterparts and, because there are unique differences

but also abundant similarities in the life circumstances and worldviews of international and domestic students, these insights might help serve as a bridge between these two student groups. The overlaps between what it means to be a Horacian and what it means to be an international student could help renormalize primary associations to the former moniker. Ultimately, it is important to dispel narratives of and myths about the notion that there is a homogeneity of experience among internationals and about the idea that generalizations of these individuals are sufficient. Interactions between students, ideally beginning during POFIS, could assist in deconstructing and transforming notions that internationals are exotic Others that are different than domestic students (and for that matter, staff, faculty, and even HEIs). Intentional reconsideration of, reframing of, and reorientation to how these individuals' are both uniquely different from one another and are abundantly similar during POFIS, classes in all disciplines, and campus presentations of various sorts are not too much to expect from Horace College.

One additional provocative avenue for subsequent studies at Horace College, or with future research involving international students, exists. When I was mulling over which questions to ask informants in the second round of focus groups in the spring 2014 semester, I ruled out an option I still think has merit. I believe there is great value in sharing the critical scholarship about international students – namely, the “pervasive themes” section in Chapter II – with international student participants and discussing their reactions. From conducting this dissertation, I have no doubt that many of the intelligent, insightful, and frank Horace College informants in the study would be more than up to the task. Coupled with the data I collected about these students' lives and their perceptions on the topics and issues we discussed in this study, I would like to have learned the myriad ways international students would respond to the literatures that represent them as a problem, as individuals in

deficit, as temporary, etc. If in fact I mean what I say when I contend that internationals' voices are to be privileged, in large part to disrupt the problematic scholarship, I should also enable them to comment, directly, on this scholarship.

### **Final Words**

I have argued that framing international students as commodities and as exotic Others is problematic at best and there is nothing admirable about the “presence” of a large international student population on a richly diverse yet fractured campus. The sea change of the sort for which I advocate in this dissertation, then, only emboldens the notion – and a believable one, I think – that it is an exciting time for higher education. Opportunities are rife for all students to benefit from knowledges, relationships, travels, and intellectual collaborations that connect them to people, places, ideas, and possibilities around the globe. Internationalization and diversification can and, in some cases, do enable the expansion of minds, a growth in circles of influence, and the seizure of unexpected career prospects after graduation. Having listened – I, to my participants, and you, to the resonances through these pages of participants' perspectives – what we do now is acknowledge that the Horace College story, one among many, is still incomplete. By engaging international students – like Anna's, whose words open this chapter – and embracing the chaos, so to speak, of the complexity of their experiences on campuses across the country, and around the world, do we qualitatively, necessarily, and constructively change the discourse about international students. In learning from and about international students, we can more clearly recognize many of the problematic contours of globalized tertiary education as well as work to ensure that international study, and international education of all kinds, is the positively transformative experience it very much has the potential to be.

## Appendices

### Appendix I: International Student and Participant Demographics, Horace College (2013-2014)

#### International Students (206)\*

<i>Total Countries:</i> (50)	<i>Regional Breakdown:</i> Asia (123) Europe (30) Middle East (2) Africa (26) Americas (17) Caribbean (8)	<i>Gender Breakdown:</i> Male (101) Female (105)	<i>Grade Breakdown:</i> Seniors (48) Juniors (40) Sophomores (55) Freshmen (63)
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\*Demographic information provided by the ISAO is from fall 2013 semester. Student demographics changed during the spring semester due primarily to December graduations and students choosing to transfer to another institution.

#### International Student Participants (29)

<i>Total Countries:</i> (22)*	<i>Regional Breakdown:</i> Asia (9) Europe (4) Middle East (2) Africa (5) Americas (1) Caribbean (1)	<i>Gender Breakdown:</i> Male (13) Female (16)	<i>Grade Breakdown:</i> Seniors (9) Juniors (3) Sophomores (12) Freshmen (5)
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\* Further demographic information, most notably specific home countries, is not noted in this study in order to protect the identities of participants.

#### International Student Alum Participants (2)

<i>Total Countries:</i> (2)	<i>Regional Breakdown:</i> Europe (2)	<i>Gender Breakdown:</i> Male (2)	<i>Grade Breakdown:</i> N/A*
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\* Year of graduation is not noted in this study in order to protect the identities of participants.

#### Domestic Student Participants (5)

<i>Total Countries:</i> (1)	<i>Regional Breakdown:</i> East Coast (2) West Coast (1) Midwest (2)	<i>Gender Breakdown:</i> Male (4) Female (1)	<i>Grade Breakdown:</i> Seniors (3) Juniors (1) Sophomores (1) Freshman (-)
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## Appendix II: Dissertation Methods and Procedures

### Recruitment of Participants Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

#### 1. *International Student Interviews* (mostly Fall 2013, and a few in Spring 2014)

1. Lunch with ISO and POFIS leadership teams
2. ISAO FYI: "Dissertation Research About YOU!"
3. Personal emails from Elizabeth to potential participants
4. Face-to-face meetings with potential participants
5. Participant observations (x2)
  - a. ISO member meeting
  - b. ISO Ice Cream Social

#### 2. *International and American Student Focus Groups*

##### *International Students* (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014)

1. Recommendations from Elizabeth and ISAO FYI
2. Face-to-face meetings
3. Personal email from me to potential participants

##### *American Students* (Spring 2014)

1. Recommendations from international student interview participants
2. Recommendations from SGA
3. Personal email from me to potential participants

#### 3. *International Alumni Interviews* (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014)

1. Recommendations from Elizabeth
2. Personal email from me to potential participants

#### 4. *Non-Student Interviews* (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014)

1. Recommendations from Elizabeth
2. Personal email from me to potential participants

### Interviews and Focus Groups Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

<i>Intl Sts (Fall)</i>	<i>Intl Sts (Spring)</i>	<i>Intl Alums</i>	<i>Focus Groups</i>	<i>Non-Students</i>
<b>1f</b> -Anna 8Oct13	<b>1s</b> -Brenda 28Jan14	<b>1f</b> -Andrei 27Nov13	<b>1f-Intl Sts</b> Alya	<b>1f</b> -Pat 19Nov13
<b>2f</b> -Brenda 9Oct13	<b>2s</b> -Anna 30Jan14	<b>1s</b> -Dmitri 18Mar14	Rinchen Sun	<b>2f</b> -Lynn 3Dec13
<b>3f</b> -Anand 10Oct13	<b>3s</b> -Jose 4Feb14		Weiguang Yinan	<b>3f</b> -Doug 4Dec13
<b>4f</b> -Jose 16Oct13	<b>4s</b> -Anand 6Feb14		Maurice 10Oct13	<b>4f</b> -Mary 5Dec13
<b>5f</b> -Mirza 17Oct13	<b>5s</b> -Sun 10Feb14		<b>2f-Intl Sts</b> Soufien	<b>5f</b> -Elizabeth 5Dec13
<b>6f</b> -Sun	<b>6s</b> -Mirza		Tim	<b>6f</b> -Nik



22Oct13	11Feb14	Kusturie	10Dec13
7f-Alya	7s-Alya	Hanh	7f-HFCs
24Oct13	13Feb14	Xiaonan	Donna
8f-Sara	8s-Yinan	Danushka	Molly
25Oct13	17Feb14	20Oct13	Jackie
9f-Yinan	9s-Sara	1s-Intl Sts	12Dec13
29Oct13	25Feb14	Danushka	1s-Amardo
10f-Vincci	10s-Vincci	Joonsik	15Jan14
30Oct13	27Feb14	Zhenya	2s-Helen &
11f-Mahdee	11s-Mahdee	17Apr14	Kanak
5Nov13	3Mar14	2s-Intl Sts	1Apr14
12f-Ban	12s-Weiguang	Soufien	3s-Jill
6Nov13	6Mar14	Kusturie	2Apr14
13f-Weiguang	13s-Ban	Ashwini	4s-Tom
7Nov13	11Mar14	Yating	2Apr14
14f-Xiaonan	14s-Zawadiye	Ndaba	5s-Harold
13Nov13	14Mar14	Laura	8Apr14
15f-Sabith	15s-Xiaonan	15Apr14	6s-Darlene
14Nov13	20Mar14	1s-Am Sts	8Apr14
16f-Zawadiye	16s-Sabith	April	7s-Judy
20Nov13	3Apr14	Lucy	9Apr14
		Mona	8s-Elizabeth
		Macy	26Apr14
		Ron	9s-Jeri
		10Apr14	21May14

### Participant Observations Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

#### *Fall 2013*

1f-Horace College Town Hall Meeting  
24Sep13  
2f-ISO Ice Cream Social  
27Sep13  
3f-ISO Barbeque  
28Oct13  
4f-ISAO F-1 Senior Meeting  
31Oct13  
5f-“Raised in Conflict”  
7Nov13  
6f-ISO Food Bazaar  
17Nov17

#### *Spring 2014*

1f-Host Family Potluck Dinner  
16Feb14  
2f-Town Hall Meeting #1  
25Feb14  
3f-Town Hall Meeting #2  
25Feb14  
4f-Postcard Signing Event  
12Mar14  
5f-ISO Cultural Evening  
25Apr14

### Document Collection and Analysis Fall and Spring 2014

*Preliminary Document Analysis (Pre-data collection)*  
*Spring 2013*

1. 2011 ISAO assessment and review report
2. Two articles written by Elizabeth (one about international students at Horace and the other about liberal arts colleges)
3. Elizabeth's 2013 NAFSA conference presentation notes with two colleagues (entitled "Liberal Arts Institutions and the International Student Experience")
4. 2011-2012 IES National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator report on Horace College
5. Horace College website (particularly the "Global Horace" webpages)
6. *U.S. News and World Report* website for most international at liberal arts colleges

***Document Analysis (Concurrent with data collection, fall 2013 and spring 2014)***  
***Fall 2013***

1. 11 ISO "Mosaic" (semesterly student magazine) online publications
2. 102 digital personal, official, and popular culture documents
3. 74 paper personal, official, and popular culture documents

***Spring 2014***

1. 1 ISO "Mosaic" (semesterly student magazine) online publication
2. 27 digital personal, official, and popular culture documents
3. 4 paper personal, official, and popular culture documents

**Data Analysis**  
**Winter 2013-14 and Spring 2014**

***Between fall and spring semesters, December 2013-January 2014***

1. Re-read 16 international student interview transcriptions
2. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
3. Composed preliminary list of codes
4. Composed questions for second-round interviews in spring 2014

***Post-data collection, April-May 2014***

1. Re-read 32 international student fall 2013 and spring 2014 interview transcriptions
  - a. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
  - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
  - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
  - d. Added marginal notes throughout
2. Re-read 4 international student fall 2013 and spring 2014 focus group transcriptions
  - a. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
  - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
  - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
  - d. Added marginal notes throughout
3. Re-read 2 international alumni fall 2013 and spring 2014 interview transcriptions
  - a. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
  - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
  - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
  - d. Added marginal notes throughout
4. Re-read 1 domestic student fall 2013 and spring 2014 focus group transcription

- a. Composed memo with notes this transcription
  - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
  - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
  - d. Added marginal notes throughout
5. Re-read 16 non-student fall 2013 and spring 2014 interview transcriptions
    - a. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
    - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
    - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
    - d. Added marginal notes throughout
  6. Re-read 11 fall 2013 and spring 2014 participant observation field notes sets
    - a. Composed memo with notes for each transcription
    - b. Added colored post-it sticky notes to transcription pages for coding
    - c. Highlighted important lines in yellow and questions asked in blue
    - d. Added marginal notes throughout
  7. Re-read all additional collected documents and additional notes to self
  8. Composed code lists for each of 6 data set types
  9. Composed master list of codes while re-reading transcriptions and field notes
  10. Composed memos and notes throughout
  11. Composed several “Student Profile Comparisons” Xcel documents

## Appendix III: Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching, ISAO, Horace College

### Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching

#### *Regarding Scholarship, Academic Culture and Academic Honesty among International Students*

Elizabeth Gardner, Associate Dean & Director of International Student Affairs 12/17/12

Most international students identify significant differences when comparing the academic expectations in their secondary school with their Horace College experience, including, but not limited to, the topic of academic honesty. Culture does impact the academic experience, as does the type of secondary school the student attended.

As a result of a recent study of Horace's international students, as well as additional reading on the topic of academic adjustment for students from abroad, we recommend the following 'best practices' for inclusive teaching:

- **Ways to actively teach about Academic Honesty:**
  - a. Present clear expectations regarding Academic Honesty in **all course syllabi** (regardless of course level).
  - b. Tutorial instructors should incorporate the topic of academic honesty **early** in the term, and treat the topic with the seriousness and depth it deserves. Sharing examples and active practice (especially for paraphrasing and citation methods) are particularly useful.
  - c. In conversations about academic honesty, articulate the wide **variety of potential violations** (copying, citation practices, group work, facilitating or witnessing dishonesty etc.); clarify **potential consequences** of any violation; and **provide resources/referrals** for students who need additional help with this topic.
    - i. The role of **collaboration vs. competition** deserves emphasis. Many students come from systems that emphasize the latter over the former, so group work can be particularly challenging and clear guidelines about this learning method are especially useful.
    - ii. **Research and citation methods** differ around the world. Some students have never needed to cite, or may have been taught that paraphrasing is disrespectful to the author.
    - iii. **Consequences** matter and can provide a valuable deterrent to committing academic dishonesty. Understanding the rules is step one, but understanding that we take the rules seriously is also important (and new to many).
    - iv. Consider the use of **drafts** as part of the paper writing process. This allows for review and feedback, and clarity of the instructor's expectations.
  - d. Consider methods to actively teach/discuss Academic Honesty issues that are unique to a specific **discipline**. Do not assume that this was sufficiently

covered in Tutorial.

- **Ways to teach/advise, considering broad themes of academic adjustment for students from abroad:**
  - a. Most international students are used to following a prescribed curriculum, rather than designing their own **course sequence**. Taking courses outside one's area of interest in order to obtain a **liberal education** is also new to many.
  - b. When reviewing a student's advising file, consider the **secondary institution attended** along with country of origin and test scores (SAT, TOEFL).
  - c. Recommend **Writing Center** and/or **Reading Center** for first years who are non-native speakers. \**TOEFL scores break down by Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing*: [www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/scores/understand)
  - d. In addition to listing office hours on the syllabus, **verbalize** your availability to students and provide examples of how students might use that time with you – considering that international students have a variety of experiences navigating student-teacher relationships and they may expect greater power-distance with figures of authority.
  - e. List clear expectations regarding **class participation** in the course syllabus and verbalize this expectation to reinforce the message. Many international students come from systems with a teacher centered approach, placing less value on student engagement and perhaps even discouraging students from speaking in class.
  - f. Because **grading systems** differ around the world, many students will be unfamiliar with course credits, percentages, grading, testing, and how to calculate a GPA. When listing a % on an assignment, for example, also include the relative letter grade for clarity. In addition, consider that assessment in many systems is based solely on final exams, rather than on participation, or on frequent assignments or quizzes throughout the term.

## Appendix IV: Advising International Students, ISAO, Horace College

### Advising International Students

As a faculty adviser, you will at some point advise international students who bring diverse cultures, perspectives, and goals to the advising conversation. Because of US government regulations, most international students also have special academically-related considerations, even *constraints*. Although you typically will not know an advisee's immigration status, many of our students have the same classification, thus we're providing information below that should be generally helpful in your role as adviser. Please refer students to the [International Student Affairs Office](#) (ISAO) for regulatory advising. You may also call us for clarification.

Most of our non-immigrant students (180+) hold [F-1 status](#)<sup>1</sup> and are subject to reporting through [SEVIS](#)<sup>2</sup>. The following issues will impact academic decisions F-1 students make:

1. A student's declared **major will impact employment options after graduation**, if the student elects to stay in the US. For example, pre and post-completion employment options for F-1 students are limited to **work directly related to the student's major**. In addition, students with [S.T.E.M.](#)<sup>3</sup> majors benefit from access to a longer post-completion employment benefits (17 additional months, subject to specific conditions). Visa renewal can also be impacted by a student's major field of study, depending on their home country and U.S. relations with that nation.
2. F-1 students must **maintain full-time enrollment** (a minimum of 12 credits) with limited exceptions. Any drop below full-course-load must be documented and approved by the ISAO (and entered into SEVIS) prior to the reduction of courses. *Potential exceptions include: academic / linguistic difficulties in the first term; mis-advising; documented medical conditions; or if fewer courses are needed during the final academic term.*
3. F-1 students must make **'normal progress' toward degree completion**. A program extension requires regulatory approval, processed through the ISAO.
4. F-1 students may typically participate in **off-campus study** or **internships abroad**. There may be unique visa and employment issues to consider, so advanced planning is very important.
5. F-1 students may hold an **on-campus job**, working up to 20 hours per week during the school year. They may work "full time" on-campus during breaks or over the summer. They may not hold a student employment position during the summer following their commencement. (*note: There are some international students, holding other visa classifications, who are not allowed campus employment.*)
6. F-1 students may not accept employment (**internships or research**) that results in payment (wages, stipends, fellowships, housing, etc) from a source other than Horace College, without first securing employment authorization. The primary options are **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**<sup>4</sup> or **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**<sup>5</sup>. Both require that the employment be "directly related to the student's major area." Students must consult with the ISAO well in advance of needing employment authorization. Summer internships that are funded entirely through [Horacelink](#) or Horace's [grant funding](#) are ideal for our F-1 students, since the stipends for most of these educational experiences comes solely from the College and Employment Authorization will not usually be required. **Unpaid** experiences (with no wage, stipend, housing, etc) may not require Employment Authorization, however, the work-site may have a different interpretation of this scenario. Working closely with the ISAO is advised.
7. **All F-1 students are required to file a Federal Tax Return**, even if they don't have taxable income. The ISAO provides basic support (or referral) for students to comply with this immigration regulation.
8. **Criminal arrests**, even misdemeanor charges, can have very serious consequences for non-immigrant visitors. The ISAO can advise students on these matters, or can refer them for consultation with area attorneys who specialize in immigration and/or criminal law. We also caution non-immigrant students about participation in political activism.

9. **F-1 Seniors** receive guidance from the ISAO about their next steps through a *Senior Packet*, group information sessions, and individual appointments. They typically have the following options: 1) “transfer” their SEVIS record to a graduate program in the US; 2) apply for employment authorization through *Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)*; or 3) leave the US within an authorized grace period (60 days). F-1 students who remain in the US for OPT or for the 17 month STEM Extension maintain F-1 status and are required to report through the ISAO during the post-completion employment period. We provide handouts on these options, tips on presenting their status during employment interviews, basic information about the [H-1B<sup>6</sup>](#) petition, and we also speak about *Re-Entry Shock Theory* for those who will return home.

If you receive related questions from students, please refer them to the [ISAO](#) (specifically they may wish to speak with [Lynn](#) or [Elizabeth](#) or call ext. 3703). Faculty should feel free to contact us as well!

## Appendix V: International Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Advisors

International students generally described very positive relationships with their advisors. Brenda (F, Sr, E Africa) reported that she has “a very good relationship with my advisor.” She explained, “last semester I had most of those, like, life moments, of I’d like run to him and be like, [*Chuckling*] “Okay, this week isn’t going to well. Like what’s up?!”

(28Jan14). Brenda notes that her advisor reassured her by saying,

“For most of my, uh, mentees who’ve gone on to, you know, gone on after Horace always say this was the hardest preparation that they [*Taps her fingers on the table several times*] ever had to deal with, you know, for anything they’ve taken”. And he’s like, “Don’t even worry about it”. Like, “You might, you know, this might feel like the worst thing that’s happening, but then whenever you’re faced with anything else you should be able to like *at least* tackle it with some form of like, you know, dignity.”

Jose (M, Sr, S America) also explains that he had a close relationship with his advisor, who was not only very helpful in helping him complete his applications to graduate schools but who “kinda showed me like philosophy and that’s why I started liking it” and was a constant source of confidence building and support over the course of his four years at Horace (4 Feb14). Xiaonan (F, So, SE Asia) noted that her advisor, a biology-chemistry professor, with whom she took her requisite first year seminar course, was helpful when Xiaonan decided to switch majors: “originally I talked with her about bio-chem major. [*Chuckles*] And then I shifted to talk about econ and history major. So she was surprised. But she’s really supportive in terms of me taking, um, taking more history class” (20Mar14).

Other internationals gave examples of when their advisors had to be the bearers of realistic academic expectations at Horace. Ban (F, Sr, Middle East) describes when an art course did not go well for her. She explained that her advisor said, “You, you underestimate how difficult the study of art is and you thought it was gonna be easier and less time consuming,” to which Ban conceded to me, “Which she’s right. I thought it was not gonna take 10 hours of my day to finish sketches” (11Mar14). Though she ultimately dropped the



course for other reasons and despite the memory still being sour for her, this practical advice helped Ban realize that she needed to shift her expectations of Horace art classes (a subject with which Ban was very familiar back home and once found personally satisfying). In another case, Anna (F, Fr, E Europe) describes her first meeting with her advisor when she presented her full four-year academic course plan, which she had composed reviewing her options online before arriving.

Um, so my first semester plan was, um, Tutorial, history, poli sci, and French. She looked at me and she said, [*Whispers*] “No.” And [*Long exhale*] I knew that it was gonna happen. I was hoping that it wasn’t. She said, [*Smiling*] “You are gonna pick a science right now.” And I was terrified. I cannot count. But I tell you, I cannot count. I, oh my god, I hate numbers. Um, and so she said, “How about psych?” And I was like, “Does that have a lab?” You see, like another counting class. I don’t want this. [*Chuckling*] I was like, “Please, no.” And she was like, [*Said supportively*] “Just, just take psych. Just, just do it.” And right now I, I’m thinking of, um, . . . taking another social psych course and a Behavioral Psych course and, oh!, I’m so glad, so glad she made me do that (30Jan14).

Anna explained the lesson she later learned from her advisor: “when you choose, um, such an exclusive program for yourself in a way you’re telling yourself, ‘You’re not really capable of doing this. You’re not capable of physics. You know, you, you can’t.’” Instead of submitting to this narrative of self-incapability, Anna took the psychology lab course and learned that she can in fact do lab classes: “it was such an empowering process.”

Internationals seemed, for the most part, to agree that their relationships with advisors were high points of their academic experience at Horace. Furthermore, they did not mention any failure on the part of their advisors to meet their unique needs as international students. These professors made extra time during office hours and in off-hours, they connected on personal levels with their advises, and they had reasonable and equitable academic expectations of all students. And as the examples above demonstrate, advisors have helped international students navigate well the Horace academic world. Moreover, as

Mirza (M, Fr, E Europe) shared, advisors treat all students fairly; they have “the same relationship with each student no matter what, where is he coming from” (11Feb14).

## Appendix VI: Trial Promise Statement, Crane MetaMarketing Ltd. for Horace College

Horace College Institutional Identity Review and Reflection Paper  
5 March 2014

By Crane MetaMarketing Ltd.  
(Transformative brandwork for education and non-profits)

### **Trial Promise Statement:**

Horace is the national liberal arts college where *thinking otherwise* defines the once-in-a-lifetime intellectual discourse that catalyzes original scholarship, spurs global endeavors, galvanizes internships and fellowships, inspires social justice pursuits, and sets the tone for each student's ongoing personal and professional transformation into an incisively prepared, critically thinking, and socially conscious human being: a *Horacian*.

Students arrive at Horace's intentional community on the prairie predisposed to independent thought, and quickly establish close relationships with Horace's internationally proven, directly accessible professors. Devoting themselves to undergraduate education and the special demands of the individually advised curriculum, Horace faculty members lead students on exciting and relevant intellectual journeys through recurrent curricular coaching, graduate-level research projects, and frequent informal interaction.

Horace's campus life hums at its own idiosyncratic frequency, as insightful staff mentors inspire students to test their limits, take on new responsibilities, and grow in self-knowledge by navigating and shaping the college's unique self-governing culture.

Students from around the world come to view the expansive, subtly beautiful prairie as their place to build academic stamina, make close connections, and engage in authentic self-reflection: here, they full leverage Horace's astounding resources and engage with a passionate, supportive campus community to embark upon boundary-crossing, perspective-shifting, and career-building experiences across the country and the globe.

Horacians emerge from the intellect-sharpening gauntlet exceptionally well-prepared for both graduate school and careers, their nascent *thinking-alternatively* natures now thoroughly tested, refined, and honed into razor-edged minds and generous, emphatic spirits which they use in concert to interpret, navigate, and influence the world.

### **Horace College is . . .**

Category of One

The national liberal arts college where thinking otherwise defines the once- in-a-lifetime intellectual discourse that defines each student's ongoing personal and professional transformation.

Transformative outcome	Horacians: incisively prepared, critically thinking, and socially conscious human beings who use their well-honed thinking-otherwise nature to interpret, navigate, and influence the world.
Unique mechanisms	Close relationships with Horace's internationally proven, directly accessible professors; individually advised curriculum; intellectual journeys through recurrent curricular coaching, graduate-level research projects, and frequent informal interaction; unique self-governing culture; passionate, supportive campus community; boundary-crossing, perspective-shifting, and career-building experiences
Distinctive values	A thinking-otherwise ethos; a self-governing culture; a social justice ethic; a prairie kinship; an outlier mentality; need-blind admission; a commitment to autonomy; the transformative power of a liberal arts education; authenticity; self-definition that leads to meaningful change.

## Appendix VII: Participant Recommendations for Horace College

While acknowledging that the College was globally-focused and welcoming to and supportive of all students, international students, staff, and faculty at Horace offered recommendations on a variety of topics throughout the course of data collection because, as they noted, at a forward thinking, international student friendly institution like Horace College there is always more to be done to make the campus climate better and there are always more ways to improve the collegiate experience for internationals. Below, I outline the seven recommendations that participants offered.

### 1. *Give special attention to revising the structure and goals of the Pre-Orientation for International Students (POFIS).*

Participants frequently made recommendations about the need to consider making changes to the design of the annual POFIS. Among internationals, the primary point of contention was that program does not adequately prepare or encourage international students to meet and befriend American students at Horace College. As one student told me, regardless of the fact that the ISAO staff warmly and intentionally invited internationals to make domestic friends, POFIS is “detrimental” to international-domestic relationships:

it allowed us to have this group of [international student] friends – and, you know, especially the first year when it’s harder for you to like connect to American people. But at the same time, I felt like just like being able to be close to them like kinda made it easier to not try to reach out.

As another student shared, “Then NSO hits: New Student Orientation. And we’ve already all made friends. By the time that I was here three days, I had met the people who were going to be my best friends for the next two years, pretty much.” Though certainly not a consensus among informants, this narrative, I was repeatedly told, is an unintended and inevitable consequence of the timing of the pre-orientation coupled with the intensity of the experience of the first few days of being on campus, and, for most, being in a new country.

The research consultant team from a nearby in-state public university Horace College hired in 2006 to examine its internationalization efforts<sup>106</sup> also presented this same finding. In their report, the team wrote that the Horace should “[t]ry to get more domestic students involved in international student orientation” because “this is where relationships are formed” (Benjamin et al, 2006, p. 35). They added,

[o]ne of the challenges the College faces is that international students participate in an orientation earlier in the academic calendar than domestic students. During this period of time they form friendships, develop support groups and so on. The development of such relationships appears to inhibit interaction with domestic students. By bringing domestic and international students together in a different way, great potential exists for relationships to develop more quickly than currently is the case.

That such concerns persist eight years later suggests that more should be done to take better advantage of the POFIS and NSO programs. As one possibility, Horace College would do well, as the consultants offered, to “integrate” these orientation programs and to involve more domestic students.

Participants in this dissertation study offered other recommendations. During two separate focus groups, students suggested that sessions currently run during POFIS and NSO could be extended into the first semester, and, possibly, the second semester as well. Each focus group also recommended that American students be given a kind of pre-orientation seminar about cross-cultural exchange and living on an internationally diverse campus during NSO, or, more preferably, into the first semester to ensure, as one informant put it, “that they know what international students are about. And, um, so that they can interact with them maybe. Or how to interact with them.” One international participant suggested that despite the U.S.’s diverse society, “some never had an interaction with an international student. So they just have that idea of like TV or whatever they read in the

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<sup>106</sup> For further discussion of this ACE-funded internationalization project, see Chapter IV, page 136.

news.” On the other hand, a staff member recommended that a few NSO sessions specifically for international students could replace POFIS and that NSO could include, for example, a two-hour mixer where internationals and domestic students could mingle<sup>107</sup>.

Considering the tensions discussed in Chapter V between international and American students and the considerable number of participants who agreed that POFIS too often works to initiate the divisions between these students, there is good reason to invest more time and energy into designing POFIS and NSO formats that pave the way to greater opportunities for friendships to develop between international and domestic students.

2. *Give special attention to how the Career Center supports internationals, namely hiring a staffer who focuses on international student needs.*

As discussed in Chapter IV, many participants expressed considerable concern over their perceived lack of adequate support for international students in the Career Center. First and foremost, these many participants cited that this is due to the fact that the office does not have an individual whose primary responsibilities, among others, is expertise in immigration issues and the specific needs of students not from the U.S. All too often, informants shared, internationals must either consult the ISAO or rely on themselves to learn about internship and post-graduation career options (of which there are currently far too few), and to secure these opportunities. Acquiring this kind of specialist should be a

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<sup>107</sup> Elizabeth was firm in her opposition to doing away with POFIS, saying, “it’s a *pre-orientation* program with intentionality” and “I *cannot* imagine the idea of not having a pre-orientation for international students” (28Apr14). As for the critiques of POFIS, Elizabeth stated, to say that “four days dictates your social life for four years is a little shortsighted” and “we do lots of things during POFIS to help people trampoline into NSO.” She noted that during POFIS the ISAO works hard to encourage and to “set specific challenges” for internationals to meet and mingle with American students. In addition, and for the first time, the 2015 student leadership of the many pre-orientations and of NSO were given training about how to bridge the different programs. By nature, Elizabeth said, affinity groups both segregate the larger group and unify within smaller ones. Moreover, she noted, “for some reason, we kind of point to the, maybe the visible minorities more.”

priority for the College, especially considering the continual growth to the international population<sup>108</sup>.

In addition, participants cited the desire for the Career Center to bring more career recruiters to the campus in order to help level the competitive playing field with other students at institutions in larger metropolitan areas. Furthermore, international student and non-student participants noted the importance of creating a network of international student alumni. One international student expressed that with such a network a database could be created to assist current internationals seeking contacts for employment and other post-graduation opportunities. As one staff informant pointed out, “we do that kind of stuff for domestic grads all the time, right?” Profiles of these graduates for current students, I was told by an international student, could also help guide students how to best utilize their Horace degree, as well as their personalities, skills, and talents.

### *3. Increase the number of tenure-track international faculty.*

A few times, international students noted that there is a lack of international professors on campus. Not only would having more foreign-born faculty at Horace potentially increase the number of classes that have a global focus, informants noted, but internationals would have more mentors like themselves to seek counsel from and to look up to. While she recognized that Horace College is an American institution, one participant found a disparity in the large, and growing, international student population and the relatively small cadre of international faculty. (Note: this student was not including short-

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<sup>108</sup> Several non-student participants shared that the growth in the international student population has not been accompanied by an increase in staffing to do the kinds of programming and outreach that could more fully meet the needs of internationals. Budget constraints inhibit responses to, and, more importantly, preemption of problems related to: mental health; stress management; English speaking, writing and reading; and other services to help meet the unique needs of internationals. The College must do its part to assist offices by providing the funding needed to support their student-clients. The ISAO, for example, recently was able to hire a third, full-time staff member. More such hirings would be prudent. While all institutions must responsibly manage budgets and staffing needs and make the according, often difficult, business decisions, to increase the international student population and not the individuals necessary to ensure their undergraduate success and satisfaction is tantamount to engendering the commodification of this student group.



term faculty sponsored by the CIS). Generally speaking, international informants were very happy with the quality of their instructors and the variety of backgrounds and personalities among them; however, I registered in my non-domestic participants a noticeable excitement about and affinity for international professors whenever they arose in conversation.

4. *Enable more opportunities for international students to share their lives, stories, and perspectives to the campus and community in various platforms.*

A few international participants mentioned their appreciation for opportunities to speak about their home countries and personal experiences. A couple noted, however, that there were not enough such opportunities focused on the lives of international students or events that gave these students platforms to discuss with fellow students, faculty, staff, and/or community members various topics related to personal histories and the ways in which home nation issues have shaped their lives and/or happenings in the larger global community. A notable example of the kind of events internationals seek is the “Raised on Conflict” presentation given by three internationals during the fall 2013 – one from Eastern Europe, one from East Africa (Zawadiye), and one from the Middle East (Ban) – who shared with a large audience what it was/is like to grow up in a war-torn country or a nation in which post-war or post-genocide societies have shaped present day realities. These kinds of events not only provide international students the opportunity to share their own stories, but they enable the wider Horace community the chance to learn about people and nations around the world from the first-hand vantage point of Horace students from those countries. Moreover, the sensitive and difficult topics covered in a session such as “Raised in Conflict” contribute to the College’s mission of preparing critical thinking and engaged students knowledgeable about the complex and uneven world beyond Horace’s campus. A “Raised in Conflict” presentation, though, could also take place during classes. Finally, creating opportunities for these kinds of speaking engagements, modified for particular

audiences in local schools or retirement homes, could also help connect internationals to the Horace town community and visa versa.

5. *Develop additional course options for international students to support English language learning for international students.*

One international participant in the study recalled her anxieties during her first year at Horace in trying to learn and keep up with the high expectations of academic (and social) English at the College. While informants of all stations agreed that Horace has equal expectations of and requirements for each its students regardless of nation of origin, many noted that the mental labor of translating ideas and thoughts into English from other, native languages is both time-consuming and exhausting. Several students told me that high scores on TOEFL or SAT exams are not necessarily indicators of fluency with English once at Horace. While it is a smaller institution, and therefore without some of the programmatic options of larger universities, Horace College would only bolster its purported “international student friendly” orientation to internationalization by offering additional, credit-bearing courses pairing intellectual engagement with second language acquisition<sup>109</sup>. The Writing Center, Reading Center, and other student resource centers are well used options for the international students who participated in the study; however, in many cases, I was told that the anxieties and stressors associated with learning and applying English academically and socially merit a reconsideration of the ways in which the College can assist its international students who are in need of more instruction. Ultimately, a Horace student’s inability to use English language fluently is not a reflection of her/his intelligence, preparation for college in the U.S., or aptitude for high-level learning such as the Horace curriculum. These students

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<sup>109</sup> These courses could also potentially help address the College’s concerns over academic honesty and the disproportionate number of violations incurred annually by international students.

should not be penalized, or slowed in their progression to graduation, for seeking courses that blend high-level discipline- and language-based learning.

6. *Create a buddy program for international students to connect with other international and domestic students.*

In light of the first recommendation above, participants offered two different variations of a program pairing students together. In the first, international and domestic students could volunteer to be paired with one another, in the hopes of breaking down the social divisions between international and domestic students. One participant even suggested that such a program could do well to mix up friend groups of upperclassmen, students who have settled into comfort zones and have grown disinterested in spending time with and befriending others on the diversity-rich campus. In the second variation, first year internationals could be paired, similarly to the way in which these students are with host families, with older international students. Such a mentor program would enable freshman to have a person on campus to reach out to or check in with after POFIS should, for example, the anxieties of language learning and social inclusion be overwhelming and/or discomfoting. Such a program could open up avenues for more relationships to be developed and established friend groups to be penetrated.

7. *Ensure all College documentation includes options for internationals.*

As I discussed in Chapter V, one international student shared that the form the College that uses to document students who seek transportation beyond Horace only has the option to list a person's home state in the U.S. While describing the particulars of signing a transportation form as "silly," this participant explained that the absence of a box or space for her home country affirmed her belief that "sometimes people just forget that international students exist." As a part of the official needs assessments that Horace offices conduct, to avoid having students feel that they do not "exist," and to further become an

“international student friendly” campus, all documentation requiring a student’s home information should be revised to include an option for international students to note their home country.

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### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

**PhD in Cultural Foundations of Education**, Syracuse University, School of Education, Syracuse, NY – Dissertation Title: *“We’re all Horacians”: Listening to international students at an American liberal arts college*

**Master of Arts in English**, University of Northern Colorado, Department of English, Greeley, CO – May 2006

**Bachelor of Arts in English**, Ripon College, English Department, Ripon, WI – May 2002

**Semester Abroad**, Lawrence London Center, Lawrence University, London, England – October-December 2000

### PROFESSIONAL/UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

*Graduate Assistant, Dr. Elane Granger*, Slutzker Center for International Services, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Spring 2011–Summer 2013

- As Co-Facilitator for the Orange Dialogue for Peace program with Dr. Granger, guided weekend retreats in Upstate New York camp and recreation areas between international and domestic undergraduate and graduate students on topics of peace, conflict and cross-cultural exchange focusing on personal experience. Both led and participated with undergraduate and graduate students in team building activities, building friendships and establishing trust between individuals from countries, cultures and ideologies from around the world.
- As Co-Facilitator of the Mix It Up program with Dr. Granger, designed and led weekly, informal social sessions on Syracuse University campus between international and domestic undergraduate and graduate students on topics such as cross-cultural exchange and understanding, social issues, and local cultures focusing on personal experience.
- As Group Leader in the English Conversation Program, was instructional leader for small groups of international students seeking extended English language practice. Designed and implemented creative language learning lessons and activities.

*Teaching Assistant, EDU 603 – Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, Dr. Elizabeth Payne*, Cultural Foundations of Education Department, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Fall 2012–Spring 2013

- Taught graduate-level lessons on qualitative research methods and theories in the absence of course professor.
- Responsible for all grading, advising of students, assisting with course design, and

- maintenance of course Blackboard page.
- Helped manage unexpected transition of course from one professor to another during fall 2012 semester.

***Instructor, CAS 102 – SummerStart Seminar***, University College, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Summer 2012

- Led section of, designed and taught lessons for, and supervised informational sessions of group of 15 diverse domestic pre-freshman students enrolled in program purposed with exposing new students to expectations, realities and rigors of college life and academics.
- Regularly met with students for counseling and mentoring related to issues of acclimation; course assignments, projects, grades, and personal struggles.

***Teaching Assistant, CLS 105 – College Learning Strategies, Dr. Marlene Blumin***, Reading and Language Arts Department, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Fall 2011–Spring 2012

- Responsible for the grading, advising and mentoring of 20-25 students of 100-student College Learning Skills course.
- Tailored lessons designed to teach students strategies how to improve study efficiency and personal and academic confidence.
- Met bi-weekly with students one-on-one and co-managed course Blackboard page.
- Worked as one in a team of five teaching assistants assisting the course professor to design and adapt lessons to respond to student needs.

***Graduate Assistant, Huntington School Summer Camp, Rhoda Smith***, Say Yes to Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Summer 2011

- Oversaw staff of fifteen undergraduates teaching elementary students.
- Assisted on-site program director to oversee day-to-day arrival, dismissal, and busing procedures and daily student activities.
- Observed lessons and followed up with undergraduate staff about teaching methods and curriculum design and implementation.

***Graduate Assistant, EDU 303 – Teaching and Learning for Inclusive Schooling, Dr. Eunjoo Jung***, Teaching and Leadership Department, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York – Spring 2011

- Chosen as supervisor of undergraduate students who serve as tutors at Elmwood School in Syracuse, NY.
- Oversaw tutoring interactions between Syracuse University students and Elmwood elementary students.
- Coordinated with course professor to improve processes and content of EDU 303 – Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Schooling course, a new Say Yes to Education and Syracuse University joint program.
- Graded required undergraduate assignments relating to tutoring portion of course and co-managed course Blackboard page.

***English Instructor***, English Department, Aims Community College, Greeley, Colorado – Fall 2009 – Summer 2010

- Hired to teach introductory composition courses to a diverse population, including

- all responsibilities of course planning, preparation and design.
- Developed lessons centered on the improvement of communication and critical thinking skills.
- Redesigned course syllabi to meet the changed needs of students struggling to understand essay writing.
- Observed lessons and followed up by conducting one-on-one methodology and pedagogy meetings with teachers.

*English Instructor/Peace Corps Volunteer*, Darkhan School of Technology, Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Darkhan, Mongolia – June 2007–August 2009

- Selected to serve abroad as university education volunteer focusing on teaching students, building counterpart capacity and working on sustainable projects both at university and in Darkhan community.
- Courses taught: Grammar and Vocabulary I and II, American and British Literature, American Culture, Spoken English I and II and General English I and II.
- Developed English and critical thinking skills of students in both General English courses and students majoring in English.
- Team-taught with Mongolian English teachers, integrating new teaching methods to increase teacher use of English language, and strengthen long-term student learning.
- Observed lessons and facilitated feedback sessions of Mongolian English teachers to increase sustainable methodologies and pedagogies.
- Re-designed English department bachelor's thesis project plan in effort to improve teacher advising and student production.
- Advised five students writing and presenting bachelor's thesis work.
- Wrote proposals and worked with administration to implement new university early semester attendance and tuition payment policies.
- Twice chosen as TEFL trainer to teach new Peace Corps teachers and Mongolian English teachers to teach in Mongolian English classrooms.
- Led multiple seminars to improve English and non-English teachers' English capacities and to promote English use in all fields of instruction.
- Planned, organized and ran university and community-based TOEFL preparation courses for students and for teachers.

*Teaching Assistant*, English Department, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado – Fall 2004–Spring 2006

- Chosen as junior faculty member in English Department to instruct collegiate level introductory composition courses including all responsibilities.
- Established successful track record of developing strong, student-beneficial courses for which received Excellence in Teaching award.
- Gained understanding of professional and educational development by learning from and working with new instructors and established professors.
- Chosen as representative on university panel to enhance new instructor first-year experiences.
- Chosen as representative on university panel to decide Faculty, TA/GA and Student of the Year award recipients.

## **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

*Volunteer*, AmeriCorps NCCC, Perry Point, Maryland – January–November 2003

- Selected to serve on diverse 12-member team in national service program focusing on education, unmet human needs, environment, public safety & disaster relief.
- Served as teacher's aid in fourth grade classroom in Wilmington, Delaware
- Served as Assistant Team Leader with responsibilities critical to team stability and day-to-day functioning.
- Chosen as Team Leader on special 22-member group assigned to help run youth leadership conference in Washington, D. C.
- Aided in American Red Cross flooding disaster relief effort in Kentucky.
- Teamed with YMCA camp in Massachusetts to educate children about team building and leadership.

*ESL Tutor*, Fox Valley Literacy Coalition, Appleton, Wisconsin – June–September 2002

- Volunteered for non-profit organization providing free, confidential literary services to area adult residents working to meet the diverse needs of basic education and ESL instruction.
- Tailored lesson plans and teaching approaches for understanding, translating and applying grammar and language for to practical, daily use.
- Gained skill in relating to, instructing and also learning from people of non-English-speaking cultures, in order to help them meet social and economical requirements and expectations.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Gerlach, P. (2017, Forthcoming). What is an 'international student'?: An exploration of international students' perceptions of self and international study. *New Directions for Student Services*, 159.

## **PAPER PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL SESSIONS GIVEN**

Gerlach, P. (20 April 2015, Forthcoming). *Doing Something About How International Students Are Represented*. Paper Presented at NAFSA Iowa International Education Conference, Cedar Falls, IA.

Edwards K. & Gerlach, P. (25 April 2014). *International Student Friendliness: Listening to Student Voices*. Paper presented at NAFSA Iowa International Education Conference, Iowa City, IA.  
Gerlach, P. (25 March 2011). *The Problem of Transnational Intercultural Space in the United States*. NYU International Education Conference, New York, NY.

Gerlach, P. (9 April 2010). *Teaching English as a Second Language in Mongolia*. Paper presented at the Aims Community College Conference on Composition, Greeley, CO.

## **FELLOWSHIPS**

TEACH Fellowship, Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Doha, Qatar and Manama, Bahrain – May–June 2011

- Chosen from national application pool to travel to Middle Eastern nations Bahrain and Qatar with 15 other U.S. educators to experience local culture and to share and

exchange educational philosophies and practices with local teachers, professors and business professionals associated with education.

## **LANGUAGES**

- Mongolian (Intermediate)

## **HONORS AND RECOGNITION**

- International Student Leadership Award, International Center of Syracuse – 2012
- Best Teacher of Darkhan Province, Darkhan-Uul Provincial Government – 2009
- Honored Teacher, Darkhan-Uul Provincial Government – 2009
- Excellence in Teaching, University of Northern Colorado – 2005

## **COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIPS**

- Member, NAFSA: Association of International Educators – 2013–Present
- Member, Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society for International Scholars – 2012–Present
- Member, The Mongolia Society – 2011–Present
- Member, The American Center for Mongolian Studies – 2011–Present
- Member, Brown Bag Committee, Cultural Foundations of Education, Syracuse University – Fall 2010–Spring 2011
- Vice President, Literati Club, English Department, University of Northern Colorado – Fall 2005–Spring 2006
- Member, Sigma Tau Delta, English Honor Society, Ripon College – Fall 2001–Spring 2002

## **CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS**

- Project Design Management, United States Peace Corps – October 2008
- Cross Culture Training, United States Peace Corps – June–August 2007
- Teaching English as a Foreign Language, United States Peace Corps – June–August 2007
- Diversity Awareness/Conflict Management, AmeriCorps NCCC – January 2003
- First Aid/Disaster Relief, American Red Cross – January 2003