

The Stages of Friendship Formation

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May 1973

Note: [This article was originally published by Sociology Press in Examples of Grounded Theory: A Reader, Chapter 19. It has been lightly edited for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting]

Abstract

Friendship is a highly processual social relationship. As a process, it has a beginning, development, and oftentimes a termination. This paper will touch on the developmental stage of friendship formation under the generative condition when former friendships have been temporarily suspended because of cross-cultural relocating and the individual must thus make new friendships in a new setting.

Keywords: friendship formation, cross-cultural relocation, social matrix, grounded theory



Friendship is a highly processual social relationship. As a process, it has a beginning, development, and oftentimes a termination. This paper will touch on the developmental stage of friendship formation under the generative condition when former friendships have been temporarily suspended because of cross-cultural relocating and the individual must thus make new friendships in a new setting.

Twentieth-century man is man in motion. He is frequently relocating himself from one geographic area to another. Always a major consequence of relocating is the disruption of a familiar social matrix. This social matrix consists of three elements: intimate interpersonal relationships with family members, intimate interpersonal relationships with friends, and casual interpersonal relationships with acquaintances.

After relocating, some connection with the disrupted former social matrix is often retained with friends and family members by means of phone calls and letters. However, when two conditions are operative—the greater the distance of relocation, and the greater the temporal duration of relocation—the loss of intimate relationships with friends and family members is more devastating to the individual.

Of the two elements of the former social matrix, friends and family members, obviously the individual cannot replace family members. However, he can make new friends in the new setting and thereby re-people this element of his social matrix.

Three steps can be delineated in the process of making friends. Two steps occur in the beginning phase: meeting, where one encounters potential friends, and making contact, where one first initiates an interaction, and the step in the developmental stage of maintaining contact.

Meeting

Meeting people must occur in order for an individual to make friends. By “meeting,” the author means encountering a pool of potential friends. The term is not taken to signify here the initial contact. That will be considered in the second stage of friendship formation, making contact.

Meeting potential friends is contingent upon a number of variables. One variable is the predisposition to make friends. Other variables include: the availability of certain resources (e.g., time and energy), and a physical setting conducive to meeting people.

Predisposition

For an individual to make and meet friends, he must desire friends. He must be open to the idea of, that is, predisposed to meeting people.

Individuals have different capacities for having friends and for having specific types of friends. For some individuals, the number of friends or the number of certain types of friends they may desire in their social matrix may be finite. Having several close friends, for example, or having one lover or one marital partner, may be sufficient for an individual. He may, hence, be sated or “saturated” and not desire other friends or specific types of friends. Indeed, some people can “saturate” on the level of





no friends—being satisfied with only their own company (e.g., the recluse, the loner).

The predisposition to meeting people, then, may be affected by the condition that this author terms “friendship saturation.”¹ When this condition is operative, the necessary predisposition for meeting people (or for meeting specific types of people, such as potential lovers or marital partners) will not be present. Under this condition, then, this first necessary step in the process of friendship formation will not occur.

The cross-culturally relocating student, however, is the opposite of the “friendship saturated” individual. This individual has previously often had a full social matrix, but upon relocating is experiencing a social matrix completely devoid of friends. Under the condition of relocating, the loneliness and aloneness generated by the disruption of ties with the former social matrix often operate to promote in the individual a heightened willingness and openness to meeting people. The cross-culturally relocating student, hence, often deeply feels a predisposition to meeting people and to making friends in the new culture. (The importance of loneliness in promoting this predisposition to meeting

people has been recognized by other authors as well).²

In addition to the predisposition to meeting people, another variable, available resources, affects meeting. The individual must be willing to expend the resources necessary for meeting people. Among these resources are time and energy. The individual must have available to him a ready supply of time and energy.

Time

Meeting people takes time. The individual has at his disposal a finite source of time. One-third of his twenty-four-hour day is expended in sleeping time. Obviously, this constitutes a time in which meeting cannot occur. Meeting, however, can occur during most other times, e.g., work time, school time, eating time, free time.³

The individual can, and often does, structure time to optimize the possibility of meeting people. By managing his time, he can place himself in situations where he will be most likely to meet potential friends. That is, he may choose to spend work time, school time, eating time, or free time in situations involving natural opportunities for interaction with others.

¹ The condition of friendship saturation as it affects the predisposition to meeting people for the aged is discussed by Hess (1972). Hess hypothesizes that for the aged, the number, type, and intensity of friendships desired by individuals at this particular period in the life cycle are lessened. Hess and Lopata (1969) also discuss the condition of friendship saturation as it affects widows.

² Nowhere is the importance of loneliness for promoting a predisposition to meeting people as

highlighted as in the “how-to” books for men to meet women. See Harvey (1972) and M (1971).

³ For an excellent discussion of man’s management specifically of work time and leisure time, the reader is referred to the work by De Grazia (1964). This author, however, would question De Grazia’s classification of friendship solely as a leisure time activity. De Grazia seems to ignore here both the existence and importance of friendships in other “times.”





Putting oneself in such situations requires that one plan time. Often extended periods of time are necessary for doing so.

Time may have to be planned for deciding where to go to meet people, in grooming for the meeting, in gaining access to the meeting site, and in waiting in the site.

Meeting potential friends can, of course, occur without planning and after a slight expenditure of time. In many instances the individual does not have to consciously structure time for meetings to occur. Indeed, such accidental unstructured and unplanned meetings occur frequently and are a common experience of anyone who has made friends.

However, for some people and especially for the cross-culturally relocating student, this step in the process may demand excessive expenditures of time. Much time may be spent abortively while the individual tries to meet people but does not succeed. Certain conditions (such as language difficulty, passivity, shyness, a difference in social customs) may result in such abortively-spent meeting time for the cross-culturally relocating individual and will be discussed later.

Often individuals may be “time saturated” and not have at their disposal

available time to meet people. Time saturation most frequently results from the demands of employment and/or parental responsibilities.⁴ Time saturation, like the condition of friendship saturation, may function to minimize the likelihood of meeting potential friends.

The cross-culturally relocating student, however, is not usually time saturated and does have at his disposal available time to meet people. Not being a parent (as most foreign students are single) and not being employed because of visa restrictions, he spends his daily time studying and going to class. Free time is frequently interspersed in these activities. Hence, the cross-culturally relocating student often has an abundant source of available time to meet people.

Energy

Energy is still another resource necessary for meeting people. Just as the individual has a finite source of time, the individual also has a finite source of energy at his disposal. The condition of “energy saturation” too will affect meeting people.

High demands of energy output may be felt by individuals experiencing ill health. Energy demands on emphysema victims, for example, mitigate against meeting because respiratory disability restricts mobility.⁵

⁴ Hess (1972:361) states that the demands of time upon the individual are dependent in part upon a person's age, e.g., higher demands are felt by the young and middle-aged, and especially by those who are parents. In her assertion that the highest demands

of time are felt by those with familial responsibilities, she is supported by Bott (1952:60-9, 180), Nelson (1966), and Udry and Hall (1965).

⁵ See Fagerhaugh (1973) for a discussion of the energy demands on emphysema victims.





In some instances, individuals in poor health may actually have an abundant source of time at their disposal, but may not have sufficient energy available for meeting new people. Such is often the case with multiple sclerosis victims.⁶

The condition of energy saturation that often befalls the cross-culturally relocating student at the beginning period of relocating (“culture fatigue”) has been well documented.⁷ In this initial period, the demands of adjusting are so high that the individual often does not have a supply of available energy for meeting. Only after this period of energy saturation passes does the individual have more energy at his disposal.

However, energy expenditure remains problematic for the cross-culturally relocating student as considerable energy is necessary for him to meet people because of the generative conditions of his situation. Not only is he unfamiliar with his setting, but he is also unfamiliar with the language of his host. Therefore, in addition to the energy normally expended in the actual presentation of self in interaction,⁸ he must also expend

considerable energy in communication during meetings. Energy is required for finding the right words to express his thoughts, in translating his thoughts into words, and in understanding what is being said to him.

Oftentimes, the amount of energy that is required to meet people is unavailable or deemed to be too great to pay for meeting. Under this condition, meeting will not occur because many individuals may in fact structure time to conserve energy by avoiding meeting people through such tactics as going to bed, reading, or simply staying home. Thus it can be seen that just as friendship saturation and time saturation minimize meeting possibilities, so functions the condition of energy saturation.

Other resources often necessary for meeting include: a mobility source, money, and a place to invite people. Automobiles or other sources of transportation may be necessary in order to gain access to pools of potential friends. Walking, of course, is the most common mobility source. Yet, for some individuals, especially the aged and the ill, even this resource may be

⁶ The etiology of the decreased sociability of multiple sclerosis victims is much more complex than the energy saturation discussed above. For further elaboration, see Davis (1970).

⁷ “Culture fatigue” refers to the phenomenon experienced immediately after entry into a new culture. Szanton (1966:49) defines the term as “...the physical and emotional exhaustion that almost invariably results from the infinite series of minute adjustments...” See also Guthrie and McKendry (1963).

⁸ This paper will not discuss the interactional elements of the presentation of self, referring the reader instead to Goffman’s work (1959) on this subject, especially the chapter on “Performances.” It will merely be stated in passing that Goffman notes the expenditure of energy necessary for meeting people (for “projecting one’s social front”) and that the expenditure is greater with individuals with whom we are unfamiliar.





unavailable and may therefore limit opportunities for meeting people.⁹

Similarly, not having available cash may minimize meeting possibilities, if cash is required to gain access to certain meeting sites. In addition, not having a place to invite people may affect meeting in some instances.¹⁰ These resources have been specified here, although not particularly problematic for the cross-culturally relocating student, because they may affect meeting for some individuals.

Setting

In addition to a necessary predisposition and a supply of available time and energy, meeting may also be affected by a physical setting that is conducive to meeting possibilities. Individuals may in fact consciously select settings bearing in mind the need to meet people. The cross-culturally relocating student may choose to live in a dormitory in order to meet people rather than choosing a private apartment. Settings such as college dormitories constitute what Hall terms “sociopetal”¹¹ settings: settings tending to bring people together.

Indeed, certain areas within a setting may be more sociopetal than others because of their physical layout. Meetings in a college dormitory, for example, will be more likely to occur in common lounges, common bathrooms, television rooms, or dining halls.

Similarly, meetings within a large university will be more likely to occur in small seminar-type classes than in large lecture halls. Individuals desiring to meet people can therefore structure and manage their time so as to expend it in these sociopetal areas within certain settings.

Some settings provide opportunities for meeting specific types of people. Individuals can also structure and spend their time in settings that will maximize the possibility of meeting those people possessing specific characteristics they may desire in friends. For example, in the case of the cross-culturally relocating student who desires to meet other relocating individuals, he can, and often does, select settings that highlight his nationality, e.g., native organizations and associations. In these settings, the individual will increase his chances of finding people who talk his language, eat the same type of food, and share the common culture.

Such settings, formed by people who enjoy certain activities or interests and who seek out other people who enjoy the same thing, are termed by this author “cliente-specific” settings. Gay bars and gay baths are examples of such “cliente-specific” settings serving homosexuals wanting to meet members with their own sexual preference who are interested in sexual encounters.¹² Certain bars function similarly for swingers

⁹ Lawton and Simon (1968) have termed the decreasing mobility of the aged “the environmental docility hypothesis,” finding that aged persons deprived of mobility tend to be limited in their opportunities of meeting people.

¹⁰ The necessity of such resources as car, cash, and apartment for meeting has been noted for college freshmen by Gilmour (1962).

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of sociopetal settings, see Hall (1969).

¹² For a discussion of who homosexuals meet in gay baths, the reader is referred to Howard (1973).





who are interested in meeting other couples to “swing with.”¹³ Religious settings similarly provide opportunities for people to meet others of their religious preference. Disability-highlighting settings (such as centers for the deaf, the blind) function similarly to aid handicapped people to meet others like themselves.

The list of “cliente-specific” settings, of course, is endless. The main characteristic of all these settings is, like the native organizations of the cross-culturally relocating student, the settings attract individuals who figuratively talk the same language and share the common culture. Hence, the individual need only discover such settings in order to maximize possibilities of meeting those people he desires to befriend.

The existence of certain social psychological and structural conditions, then, operates to affect the possibility of meeting people. The social psychological condition consists of a predisposition to meet, a predisposition often heightened in cases of intense loneliness or aloneness. The structural conditions include an availability of such resources as time and energy and a physical setting that is conducive to meeting people either because of its sociopetal nature or because of its function to promote meetings for a specific clientele.

Making Contact

After a meeting has occurred, the next step in friendship formation is making contact. In this step, the individual interacts

in an initial encounter with the other whom he desires to befriend.

Making contact in order to be successful has to be a dyadic interaction, a “two-way street,” so to speak. That is, both parties have to be willing to interact. If one party is not willing, the interaction will not proceed beyond a “one-liner.” Once again, we see that a predisposition is a necessary condition for friendship formation.

Time and energy are also essential resources in this stage of the friendship formation process. An available source of time is necessary for the initial contact, e.g. the taking of time to interact with the other. It can be seen that making contact is difficult in such settings as busy city streets or supermarkets precisely because individuals in these settings do not generally have at their disposal the time necessary for interaction.

Energy, too, is necessary for making contact. One often overlooks the amount of energy involved in sheer vocalization. However, for such energy-saturated individuals as emphysema victims, limited energy supplies (because of extreme oxygen shortage) may interfere with vocalization and make this stage of the friendship process problematic. Cross-culturally relocating individuals similarly experience high energy demands for vocalization - not because of any oxygen shortage, but rather because of the high energy output necessary for conversing in a foreign language. (Although vocalization does not constitute the only energy drain for cross-culturally relocating individuals, it is a

¹³ M (1971:56) emphasizes this technique of identifying oneself immediately by occupation,

interests, or income level, so as to manifest one’s qualifications as an “eligible” male.



major contributing factor to their culture fatigue).

Forms of Making Contact

Generally making contact, this initial interaction, is accomplished by means of verbal communication. In order to make contact, the individual needs something to talk about. Oftentimes an "opener" or opening gambit provides this essential element.

Salutations and greetings all serve as such verbal opening gambits.¹⁴ Opening gambits may include other forms, such as: self-introductions, comments or questions about the other, comments or questions about neutral subjects, or comments about an activity that both parties are engaged in.

Self-introductions serve as frequently used opening gambits. A self-introduction may encompass telling the other one's name such as "Hi, my name is Jack." Or, it may also include furnishing additional information about oneself - "Hi, I'm a psychology student here."

Self-introductions may be quite direct, as in the above examples. Or, oftentimes, they may be much more subtle. In some instances the individual may in a covert way present information about himself to the other - information which is intended to make the other aware of his desirable attributes. A humorous example is given in *The Sensuous Man*¹⁵ when after twice stepping purposely

on a woman's foot in a crowded conveyance, the man apologizes, saying: "I'm not usually so clumsy. I'm a bit wobbly today because I just got off the yacht."

Another form of opening gambit is the other-directed comment or question. Questions addressed to the other may include such examples as "Hi, are you new here?" or "What's your name?" Often the other-directed statement may include a compliment. "My, that's a nice dress you're wearing" or "You have such beautiful eyes," are examples of compliments proffered by men intending to make contact with women.

Opening gambits may include comments or questions about neutral subjects. The time and the weather furnish subjects for often used opening gambits.

Opening gambits can also arise from an activity that both parties are currently engaged in. The most common opening gambit at a dance, for example, is "Would you like to dance?" or at a bar, "Would you like a drink?" These opening gambits, like the openers discussed above, function to promote further interaction between the two parties.

Making contact is often problematic for the cross-culturally relocating student. Because he is unfamiliar with the language of his host country, he is hence unfamiliar with the culture's opening gambits. Assuming that the necessary predisposition for making contact is present and the necessary time and

¹⁴ For further elaboration on the decisive importance of the salutation, the reader is referred to Ortega y Gasset's chapter (1957) on "Reflections on the Salutation." Berne's book (1972) is also useful for its pertinent discussion of the salutation (both "hello" and the handshake) in the psychiatric context of physician-patient relationships.

¹⁵ M (1971:56) emphasizes this technique of identifying oneself immediately by occupation, interests or income level, so as to manifest one's qualifications as an "eligible" male.



energy are available, making contact requires a facility with the opening gambits - a facility which often the cross-culturally relocating individual does not possess.

The relocating individual may not be familiar with the phrases used in opening gambits or with the whole gamut of gambits. Only knowing, "hi, how are you?" for example, may mean that the individual is lost if a different opener is "thrown" at him (such as "what's happening, man?"). In addition, the individual may not know whether an answer is required to the opener, whether to simply repeat the opener ("how are you?" - "how are you?") or whether to respond to the opener with a new question entirely ("how are you?" - "how are things with you?"). Oftentimes, he may be puzzled as to whether the opener is meant to be taken literally. Does "how are you?" require a detailed elaboration of one's physical or mental state, for example? This difficulty can be further seen by one student's response to the question "how do you do?" with "how do I so what?"

For many cross-culturally relocating individuals, other elements of the opener sequence may prove problematic. The duration of the opener may puzzle the foreign individual. American opening gambits are often quite brief, last only several seconds. After exchanging salutations, Americans often separate and go their own ways. For some cross-culturally relocating individuals, this brief opener seems unnatural and is often interpreted that the other party does not desire interaction.

Some cross-cultural relocating individuals may be troubled by the absence of physical contact in American openers. Many cross-culturally relocating individuals originate from cultures whose opening sequence includes touch.¹⁶ Openers in many countries, when strangers first make contact, for example, may include a handshake, a touch upon arm, or a playful punch. The absence of physical contact in openers may signify for the foreign individual a lack of warmth or interest on the part of the other.

In addition, the physical distance utilized during American opening gambits may be problematic for cross-culturally relocating individuals. Individuals from Latin American countries, for instance, are more comfortable with less physical distance between the interacting parties than Americans are accustomed to. For individuals from these cultures, the greater physical interaction distance may also signify a lack of warmth or interest on the part of the other.

Another element of the opening sequence may prove problematic for the cross-culturally relocating individual. Not being familiar with the new culture, the individual may share only a limited part of what Schutz terms the culture's "socially distributed knowledge."¹⁷ They may, hence, not be conversant on many topics that arise in the initial contact. As one relocating student explained:

"I didn't know any topics to talk about to Americans when I came.

¹⁶ For a cross-cultural comparative study of physical contact and interaction distance in salutations, the

reader is referred to this author's "A Cross-Cultural Study of Social Interaction" (1971).

¹⁷ For a discussion of the term, see Schutz (1962).





I didn't know anything about Vietnam - about ecology or courses being offered - or football or basketball - or current events. I didn't know anything about these things in the beginning. We don't have football or basketball in my country... It's hard to talk to Americans if you have nothing to talk about.”

Common Denominators

For the cross-culturally relocating student, a “common denominator” often facilitates making contact. This common denominator may serve both as an opener and as a carry-through for a conversation. The most common denominators include: common background, common language, or common status.

A common background or common language eliminates both the problem of the foreign culture’s opening gambits and the problem of the culture’s unfamiliar socially distributed corpus of knowledge. Sharing a common background or language results in both parties being able to converse in a familiar language (with familiar openers) and on familiar topics (which often concern their country).

Similarly, a common status (such as that of student) may also facilitate making contact. The common status provides a conversation topic on a familiar subject, such as the common discipline or common student problems. Like a common background, a common status partially resolves the problem of coping with the culture’s unfamiliar socially distributed corpus of knowledge, as the foreign individual is on somewhat familiar ground (although the individual still

has to function in interaction in an unfamiliar language).

Making contact, however, remains problematic for the cross-culturally relocating student due to several conditions. One such condition is the unfamiliar language. Difficulty with the language of the host country causes interaction strain, as conversations do not proceed smoothly. The foreign individual often has to request that the other slow his conversation pace, that the other repeat statements frequently, or that the other explain statements frequently.

Conversation with more than one other may produce even more strain in interaction for the relocating individual. In this situation, conversation may proceed even more rapidly than in a dyad. The rapidity of the triad interaction may provide less opportunity for the individual to interrupt to request clarification, repetition, or explanation.

Another condition that affects making contact for the cross-culturally relocating student is passivity or shyness. Making contact necessitates a certain amount of aggression, of putting oneself forward. Because of the language difficulty, many cross-culturally relocating students are reluctant to “put themselves forward.” By so doing, their foreignness, their foreign accent, and their difficulty with the language become even more apparent and may cause them considerable embarrassment.

When originating from cultures with different social customs, some cross-culturally relocating students manifest higher degrees of passivity in making contact. The social customs or etiquette of some cultures



(primarily Oriental) dictate that the individual refrain from making contact on his own initiative.¹⁸ Instead, making contact is socially sanctioned only when facilitated by a third party. When passivity in making contact is present because of a difference in social customs, then, making contact is less likely to occur.

It can thus be seen that making contact, this second step in the process of friendship formation, is highly problematic for the cross-culturally relocating student because of the generative conditions of his situation. Such factors as language difficulty, a lack of familiarity with opening gambits and with the culture's socially distributed corpus of knowledge, passivity or shyness, and a difference in social customs operate to make this step difficult for individuals originating from other cultures.

Maintaining Contact

If a relationship, in which the parties have just met and made contact, is to become a friendship, there must be a maintenance of contact. This stage of friendship formation, maintaining contact, involves the largest expenditure of resources. These resources include the aforementioned time, energy, mobility, money, and, in addition, social psychological resources such as caring, sharing, trust, concern, and affection.

Maintaining contact with friends can be accomplished by means of face-to-face interaction and by distant interaction (phone calls, letters). This author would not go as far as saying that "frequent interaction seems to be a necessary condition for a strong and viable relationship," as some authors have argued.¹⁹ The present author would rather assert that oftentimes friendships may be sustained without either of the above forms of maintenance. Friendships, in fact, may often be suspended or "put in storage" to be brought out and renewed at a later date with little effect on the relationship. For the purposes of this paper, however, the author shall limit discussion of maintaining contact in friendship to face-to-face interaction.

Maintaining contact requires a large expenditure of time. Time is expended primarily in exchanging information, such as biographical sketches, present, past, and future problems, and personal feelings and sentiments. Much time is thus expended doing things together. Activities involving both individuals also require large expenditures of time. The phenomenon termed a "strain toward totality"²⁰ signifies not only the inclusion of larger and larger segments of self in the friendship relationship, but also the inclusion of ever-increasing proportions of one's time.

¹⁸ Lopata (1969) also notes that passivity may affect friendship formation for widows upon the death of their spouses, especially if their husbands formerly took the initiative in arranging contact with others.

¹⁹ See McCall and Simmons (1966:189).

²⁰ The term "a strain toward totality" was first used by Simmel in his discussions of friendship and the dyad. McCall (1966, 1970) further elaborates on the

phenomenon in relationships. A citation from the latter work illustrates the phenomenon:

"If interacting with alter is enjoyable, why not interact with him more? If yachting with alter is fun, why not ask him down to the club? In this way, the strain to spend more time with alter gives rise to a strain to include more activities..." (1970:187).



In the maintenance of a friendship, other resources such as energy, mobility, and money are also expended. Just as maintenance is time-taking, so is it energy-taking. Although some amount of energy is required for conversation, the highest demands of energy are required for participation in activities. Under the previously discussed condition of energy saturation, maintenance often proceeds only on the level of conversation. Energy saturation, then (similar to time saturation, of course), will not only affect meeting and making contact, but will also affect maintaining contact.

Mobility is also required for maintaining contact. The individual must have a mobility source for maintenance in order to gain access to the other, or to gain access to activity sites. Decreased mobility functions similarly to energy saturation and time saturation to affect maintenance of contact.

Money may be another resource necessary for maintenance of friendship. Although money is not required for maintenance on the level of conversation, money may be necessary for gaining access to the other or to activity sites.

Maintenance also requires an expenditure of social psychological resources. These resources may include: caring, sharing, trust, concern, and affection. The expenditure of these resources often results in an ever-growing closeness, or intimacy, between the two parties. It could be said that these

resources provide the social psychological glue that cements individuals in the friendship.

Individuals are constantly investing resources in the friendship relationship. They not only invest their time, energy, mobility, and money in the relationship, but also invest large portions of their social psychological resources. The investment of such resources may be likened to an individual's investment in a bank. Just as individuals build up a principal, so do individuals build up closeness in a friendship. Because of the "deposit" of these valuable resources, relationships are not easily disposed of, as can be seen in the case of marital relationships.

Extending the banking analogy, because of the high degree of investment in the relationship, individuals expect returns, e.g., reciprocity. These returns may include: dependability, caring, support (financial and/or emotional), trust, companionship, and often sexual exclusivity. This expectation of returns may be termed the "norm of reciprocity."²¹

When returns are not forthcoming or are deemed insufficient, the maintenance of the friendship may be affected. Maintenance can also be affected, of course, by other conditions. These conditions may include death or relocating. Unlike death, which terminates a friendship, relocating only necessitates the suspension of the relationship.

²¹ For a discussion of the normative standards of reciprocity involved in relationships, see Gouldner (1960).





Thus, in summary, for the relocating individual, meeting friends, making contact, and maintaining contact are stages of a process that begins upon arrival in the new culture. Upon departure from the culture, maintaining contact often continues with the new-found friends through letters. Upon arrival in the home culture, the process comes full circle.

The social matrix formed in the new country has now been disrupted, and friendships at home that had formerly been suspended will be reactivated and maintained through face-to-face interaction. And often, in the home country, the friendship process begins once again after relocating: meeting new friends, making contact, and maintaining contact.

Conclusion

The process developed in this paper has significance, of course, for the cross-culturally relocating student. Although specifically valuable for this population, the foregoing study also has import for many other individuals for whom friendship formation becomes problematic because of the disruption of their normal social matrices. Such individuals to whom this study might be especially relevant include: the recently widowed, newly relocated businessmen and their families, relocated college students, the military and their families, prisoners, people seeking distant medical treatment, and institutionalized mental patients. In addition, this information would also unquestionably be valuable to those individuals who are involved with the preceding populations in providing them with assistance and counseling.

From a survey of the foreign student literature and the literature concerning friendship, it was apparent to this author that scant attention has been paid to the interactional difficulties experienced therein specifically by cross-culturally relocating students. A recognition of these interactional difficulties would not only be an important contribution to the literature, but it might also aid in making the friendship formation process less problematic for these individuals by highlighting their dilemma for foreign student advisors who assist these individuals.

Further studies would certainly be valuable to verify, modify, or elaborate the concepts developed here and to explore their significance in relationship to other populations. Hopefully, such research would generate additional useful interactional conceptual models.

Appendix: Methodology

Data for this study consisted of informal interviews with foreign students and foreign student advisers and field observations. Interviews were conducted over a fourteen-month period during 1971-72 in two settings: the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center, and the International ("I") House of the University of California at Berkeley.

The sample contained 20 foreign students enrolled on the San Francisco and Berkeley campuses. The students, 10 males and 10 females, were between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. The median age was 25. The majority of foreign students interviewed were living in university residence halls.

Nationals from the following



countries were included in the sample population: China (Hong Kong and Taiwan), Cuba, Finland, France, India (3), Italy, Korea, Nigeria, Pakistan (2), Peru, Sweden (2), Thailand (2), Turkey, and Vietnam. Students represented a variety of academic disciplines: anthropology, biochemistry, business administration, chemistry, chemical engineering, civil engineering, finance, mathematics, mechanical engineering, medical technology, nursing, operations research, pharmacy, and pharmaceutical chemistry. One-half of the students were studying on the graduate level; one-half on the undergraduate level. The duration of the students' study sojourn in the United States ranged from one to five years.

Respondents, with two exceptions, were unmarried. Most (18 students) had traveled alone to the United States and settled alone without other family members.

All students had prior training in English before coming to the United States. The average period of prior study was six years. However, language ability in terms of speaking and understanding (according to estimations of the researcher) varied from poor to excellent.

Field work consisted of several stages. First, interview data with foreign students

were collected. The interviews were predominantly informally structured. Formal structure comprised only the first few moments of each interview, e.g., obtaining preliminary background data (age, sex, country, academic discipline, residential location, and prior English training). Informal structure then prevailed.

In the initial period of interviewing, students were asked to discuss all problematic areas of adjustment. Responses ranged from eating, sleeping, financial, and interpersonal problems to problems of climate, language, and etiquette. Later, the interpersonal area emerged as the most frequently mentioned and the most problematic area of adjustment (as specified by the majority of respondents). Interviews then focused exclusively on this aspect.

Participant observations of foreign students' activities proceeded concurrently with the interviewing stage. Observations focused on foreign students' activities and interactions within the two residential settings of Millberry Union (University of California, San Francisco) and International House (Berkeley). In the final stages of research, the data were coded and analyzed, based on the constant comparative methods of grounded theory.²²

²² See Glaser and Strauss (1967).

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