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**Homework four: Theories of Culture, Groupness, and Intercultural
Communication**

(1) Interculturality is the interaction between cultures; it is the process of communication between different human groups with different customs. This process is normally based on respect for diversity, integration, and the growth of cultures equally, but it is not free of possible conflicts. I was born in Peru and lived there for twenty years, so when I was accepted at Nyack College and had to move in a matter of weeks to a country totally different from my own, I had to face constant cultural interactions. I remember very well that when I arrived, language was a factor that impacted the interactions a lot; even though I knew how to speak English, what I had been taught in school was very neat and tidy, and when I arrived and heard everyone speaking in slang, I got very confused. Also, having to try to understand people who spoke English at a thousand miles an hour was very complicated, which made me go from being a social person to a very quiet and reserved person because I felt that what I was saying was not understood and what my friends were talking about did not make sense. Also, the cultural differences were big; as a Latina, I consider myself a passionate person who always needs to be doing something constantly, while my roommates who were from the United States lived a more relaxed life, something that I could not understand the first few weeks I lived here. When I read what Stella Ting-Toomey said about the face-negotiation theory of conflict, I felt very identified; being a South American, I feel that we should do everything as a team, while here, many people prefer to do everything individually, which may be a

problem in some situations, but in general, has not hurt anyone; another thing I agree with is that as a South American, I try to avoid conflict and not talk about what bothers me, while my German friends who live in the residence tend to be very direct when there is a situation like that. Anyway, despite the cultural differences, we have always found a way to be able to connect and get to know each other, which I am very grateful for because now I have friends all over the world, and we get along well and know how to carry our relationships even when we know we are totally different.

(2) When I saw the second question, only one group came to mind: my lacrosse team. A year ago, I committed to play lacrosse for college; to this day, I think it was one of the best decisions of my life. I had never felt part of a group before until I joined this team; I met 11 girls who quickly won my heart, and no matter how little I knew about the sport, they supported and encouraged me throughout my entire process. Our motto phrase is "Better together" it was Tracy, my coach's wife, who chose that phrase for us. At first, it was just a phrase we repeated every week, but by the end of the season, we realized it had great meaning; we really did everything better if we were together. It doesn't matter how much we lose or how bad a mood we are in, but if we are together, we support each other and look to encourage each other until we achieve our goal. The very fact that we have lacrosse practice every day, this group of girls is on my mind all the time; on top of that, we have to spend time together in the gym and in study halls because it is a mandatory part of the team and definitely marks part of my identity today; without them, I wouldn't consider myself Hanna. The other people in the Jersey City dorm know that we are part of a team, maybe because we are always together or because we

always wear our shirts that say lacrosse, but I'm pretty sure we are identifiable. We are a great team; again, it's a decision I would never regret making.

(3) Maybe this sounds a little strange, but one of the groups that feel the least listened to in the Jersey City residence are those people who are not athletes. This residence has 90% athletes from different cultures and countries; the other 10% is made up of people who have nothing to do with any sport. Every time someone enters the cafeteria, every table is reserved by some group of athletes, but you almost never meet the non-athletes. A year ago, I started a job as a Resident Assistant, and something my residents, who make up this 10% told me is that they feel they have no opportunity to socialize here because everyone is already part of a group, and if you are not part of that sport, you are not invited to be part of them, even if you live in the same room they would rather ignore you than include you. This has a huge impact on the lives of the residents, as for obvious reasons, they tend to isolate themselves more from the world, and we have seen cases where they have even wanted to drop out of school for lack of genuine friendships. I feel that as athletes, we have a responsibility to be able to integrate non-athletes, but at the same time, it is a bit impossible because the housing area always puts athletes together with other athletes and prevents different relationships. I think the co-cultural behavior that this 10% is adopting is that of accommodation; every day, I see more and more people who are not part of any sports spending time together, and among them, they are getting to know each other and forming friendships. Lacrosse's motto, "better together," is also having an effect on them, and instead of wanting to transfer to another school, they are looking for solutions among themselves. They are creating a

solid group of genuine friendships that each of them appreciates because they feel included in something.