



Cosmopolitan agency and meaningful intercultural interactions between international and domestic students: An ecological conceptualisation

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Background

- Domestic–international student relationships difficult to develop
- ‘(Critical) cosmopolitan agency’ as ...
 - A hallmark of meaningful intercultural relationships (Kudo et al., 2019, 2020)
 - A disposition/ability to act with a critical and moral spin (Oikonomidoy, 2019)
- Yet, the literature has not established the conditions necessary for the emergence of cosmopolitan agency

Aim and structure of this presentation

Propose an ecological conceptual framework of cosmopolitan agency that emerges in interactions between international and domestic students.

1. Cosmopolitan agency defined
2. Ecological conceptual framework of cosmopolitan agency
3. Four states of cosmopolitan agency
4. Directions for future research

Defining cosmopolitan agency as ...

A reflexive expression of openness, inclusion and morality beyond cultural and personal difference towards a better future (cf. Kudo et al., 2019, 2020)

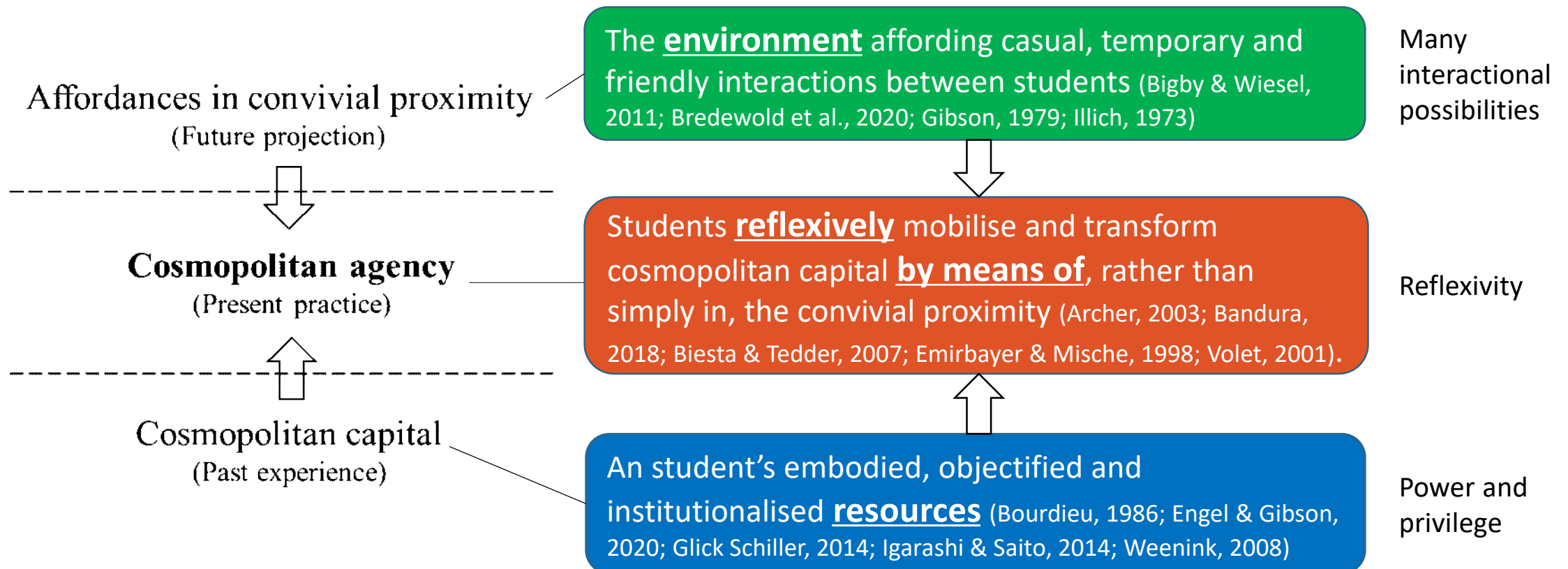
- ‘Cosmopolitanism as a utopia’: a reflexive method for imagining a better way of being and living together (Lettevall, 2020)

Two characteristics:

1. Emergent practice/performance in ever-changing social relationships and spatio-temporal contexts (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Plage et al., 2017)
2. Ethical and moral engagement rendered through continuous reflexivity (Archer, 2003, 2012; Oikonomidou, 2019)

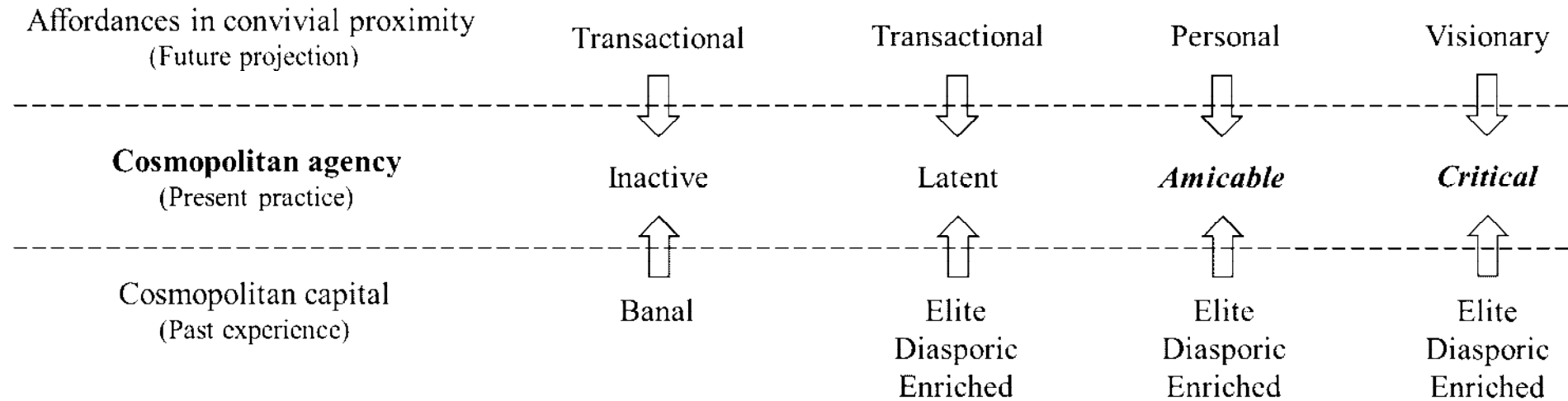
Ecological conceptual framework

Main proposal: *Cosmopolitan agency emerges at the dynamic experiential interface between cosmopolitan capital and affordances in convivial proximity.*



Four states of cosmopolitan agency:

(1) Amicable, (2) critical, (3) latent and (4) inactive



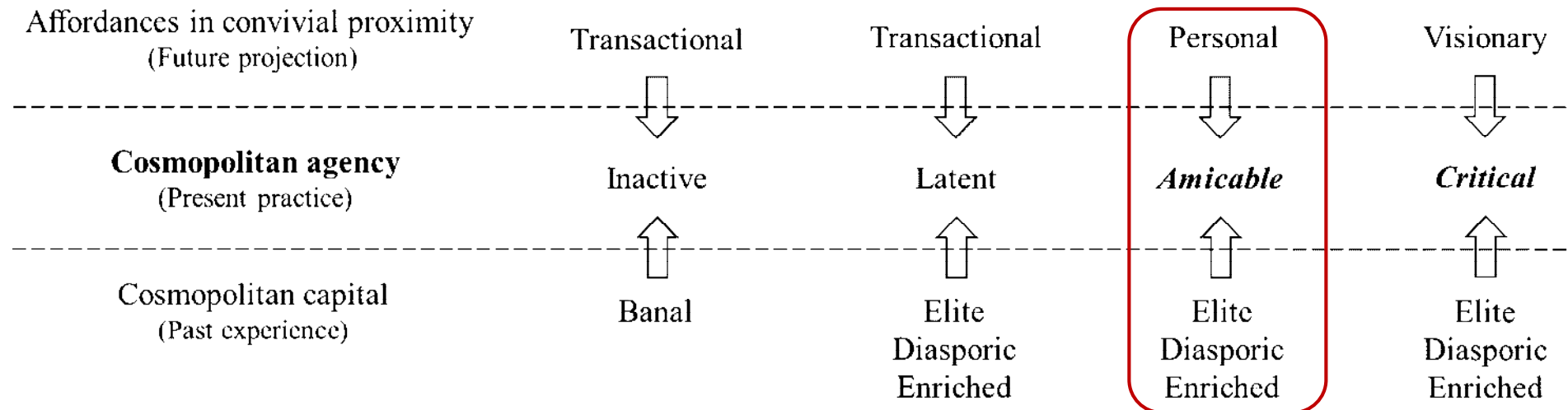
- The four states do not emerge in temporal linearity and can emerge at any moment and even simultaneously.
- Illustration by interview data
 - 21 international and 21 domestic undergraduates
 - Two Japanese universities with contrastive degrees of internationalisation (e.g. vision, curriculum, international student enrolment and languages of instruction)

(1) Amicable cosmopolitan agency

*‘I have a qualification for teaching Japanese. ... and I offered to tutor an international student in Japanese. ... when I have some questions about English, I can easily ask her in return’
(Takeshi using elite cosmopolitan capital).*

‘In some ways I have the feeling that I want to be with international students because I feel like I am one of them’ (Patricia using diasporic cc).

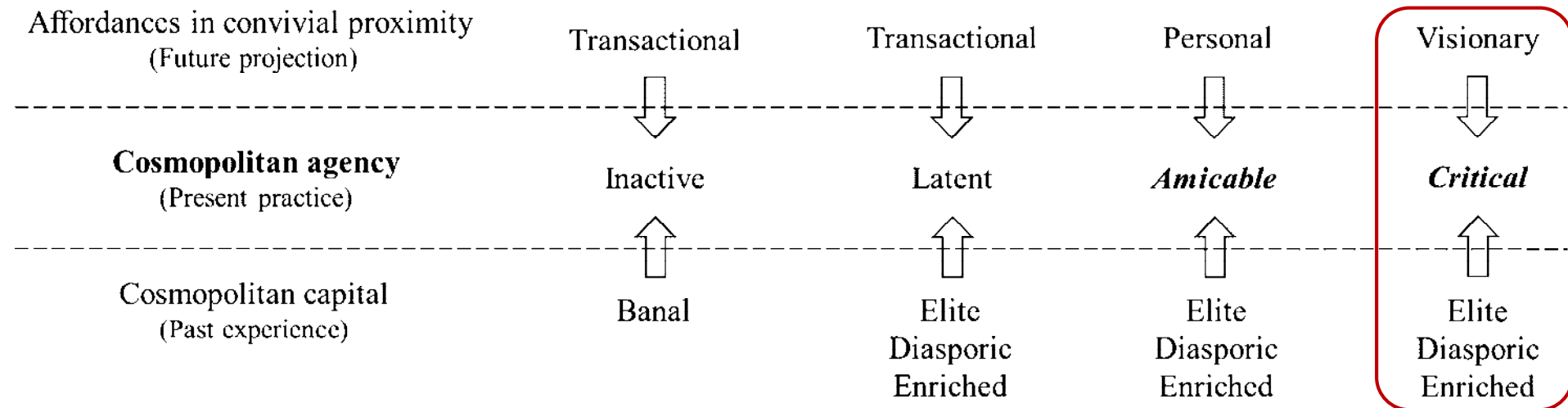
‘It is true that different countries have different cultures, but we both care about each other. ... it’s a very warm feeling’ (Fung using enriched cc).



(2) Critical cosmopolitan agency

‘[I want to] help international students as much as I can, using my multilingual skills [acquired before by studying abroad]’ (Yuko using elite cc)

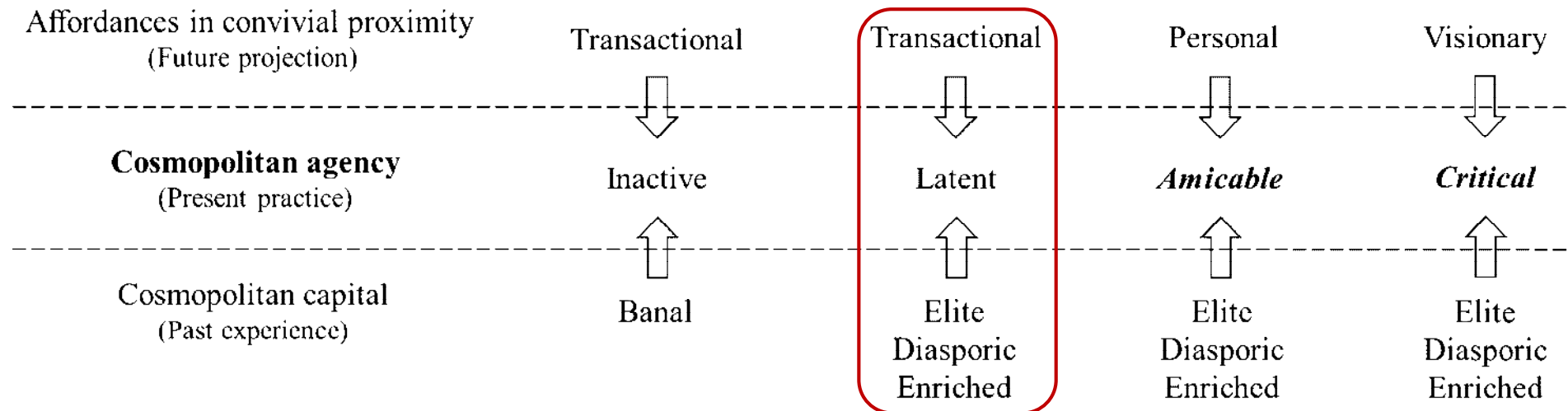
‘The day after the big earthquake hit Nepal, Nepalese students got together. ... my friends and I went to hear what we Japanese could do. At that time, we heard about what they wanted Japanese people to do, so we gathered Japanese people and did various things such as fundraising and making T-shirts. Nepal may be very far away from here, but my friend is from that country, so I helped her because she was in trouble’ (Ayako using elite and enriched cc).



(3) Latent cosmopolitan agency

*‘There is a little distance between him and me. He does not show me what he really thinks’
(Cheng using enriched cc).*

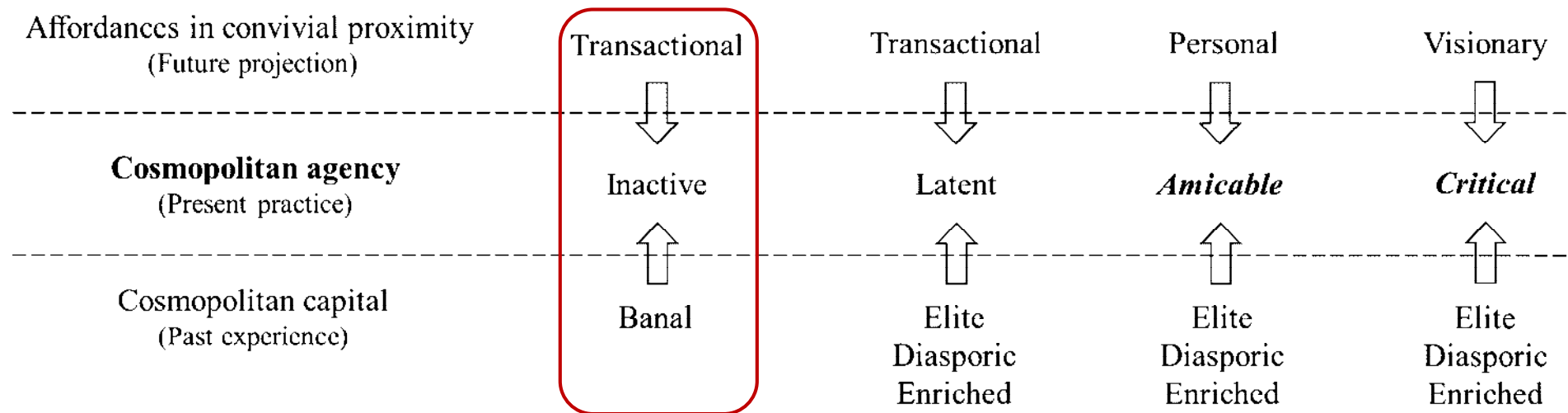
‘Before I went abroad to study (at a US university for one year as an exchange student), I was really interested in making friends with international students. But since I came back, I have been able to get to know such people almost naturally’ (Hikari using elite cc).



(4) Inactive cosmopolitan agency

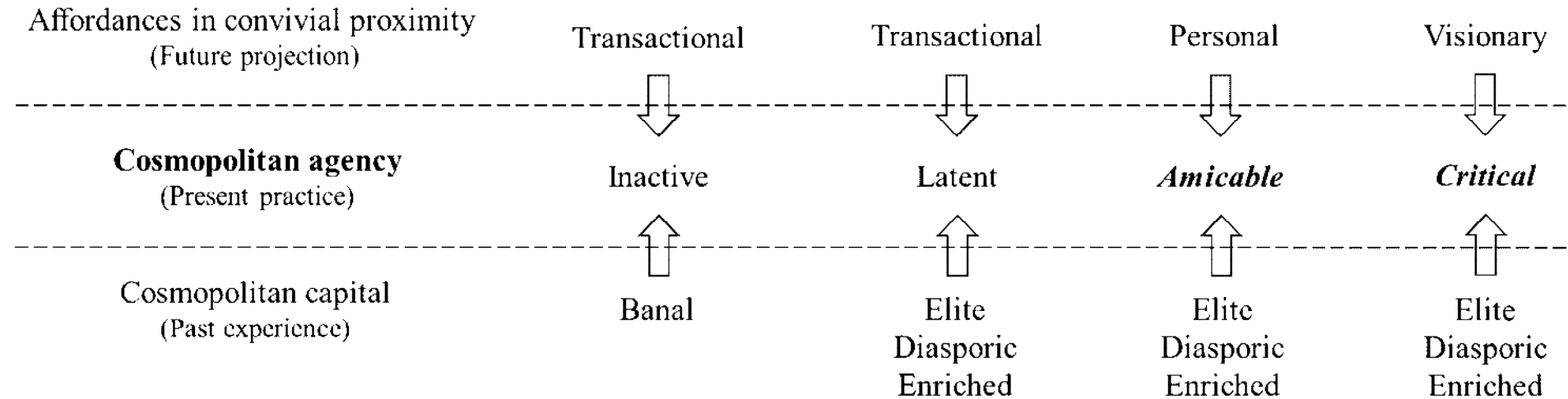
‘[when I entered the university,] I wanted to have Caucasian friends. I wanted to make friends with them, so I communicated with them in a one-sided way, which they might not have liked’ (Koji using banal cc).

‘I live together, take classes together and do group work together with international students. I no longer have the feeling that I am surrounded by foreigners. I have the feeling that I am just a human being. I don’t feel like there is a barrier of nationality. I no longer feel like making international friends on purpose or anything like that’ (Koji having enriched cc).



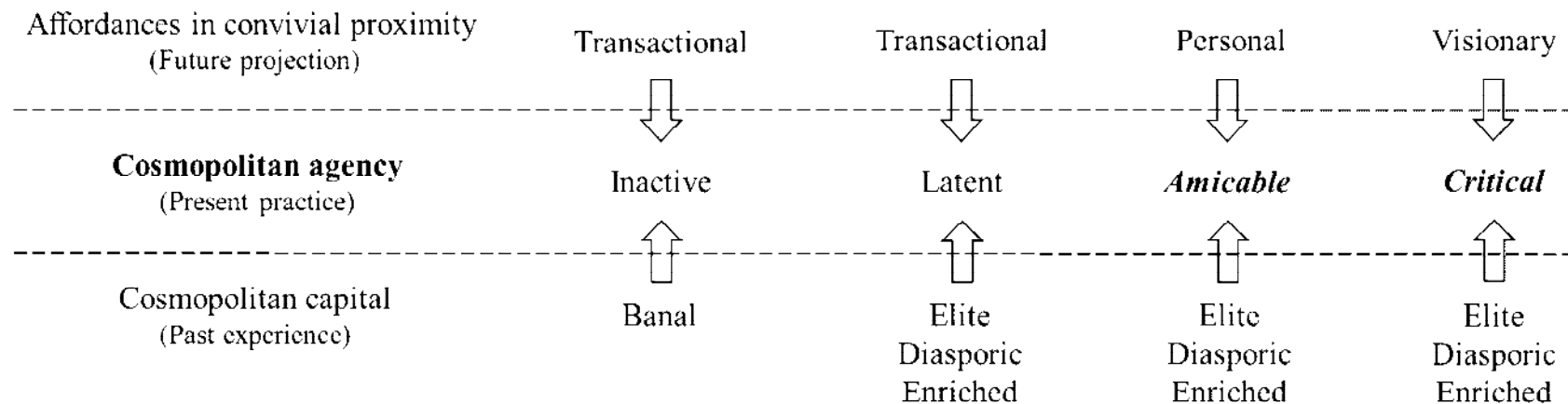
Three distinct contributions of the framework

1. Dynamic perspective of power and privilege in intercultural student interactions
2. A third option between passive presence and fully-fledged intercultural relationships
3. The role of students' reflexivity in their (dis)engagement into intercultural interactions



Directions for future research

1. Learnable components of cosmopolitan capital (e.g. English proficiency)
2. Concrete conditions for forging the creation of convivial proximity with amicable and visionary focus
3. The trajectory of individual and collective reflexivity
4. Applicability of the four states of cosmopolitan agency in different national, sociocultural, institutional and situational, including online, contexts
5. Other states of cosmopolitan agency, such as proxy agency (Bandura, 2018)
6. The role of students' cosmopolitan agency in the structural change of the university



‘... our human powers of
reflexivity have causal efficacy –
towards ourselves, our society
and relations between them’.

~ Archer (2003, p.9)

Thank you for listening!

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