Chapter 8


Zachary S. Ritter
University of Redlands, USA

ABSTRACT

International higher education literature often extols a great deal of intellectual diversity, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and revenue that international students from China, Japan, and Korea bring to the U.S. every year. However, little attention is paid to the racial stereotypes international students bring to the U.S., how this affects campus climate, and what can be done to encourage cross-cultural understanding. Forty-seven interviews with Chinese, Japanese, and Korean graduate and undergraduate international students were conducted at the University of California, Los Angeles, regarding these students’ racial stereotypes and how contact with diverse others challenged or reinforced these stereotypes over time. Results indicated that a majority of students had racial hierarchies, which affected with whom they roomed, befriended, and dated. This research shows that there is a need for policy and programmatic changes at the college level that promote international and domestic student interaction.

INTRODUCTION

The number of international students attending U.S. colleges and universities has more than doubled in the past two decades, from 366,354 in 1988-89 to 886,052 in 2013-14 (Institute of International Education: Open Doors Data, 2014). East Asian students comprise the largest segment of this increase in international students, with Chinese students leading the field. In 2013-2014, Chinese international students numbered 274,439; Indian international students numbered 102,673; South Korean international students numbered 68,047; and Japanese international students numbered 19,334 (Institute of International Education: Open Doors Data, 2014).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9749-2.ch008
Globalization of Racism

The international student enrollment increase on U.S. campuses is explained by the rising economies of China, Korea, and India, which is accompanied with the desire of many middle and upper-class Chinese, Korean, and Indian families to send their children to prestigious American universities, in the hopes of a better life. Another reason for this increase may be explained by active recruitment efforts and growing reputation of U.S. campuses abroad (Institute of International Education, 2011). Of the top 20 universities worldwide that were judged based on 13 performance indicators, 15 of those campuses were found in the U.S. (World University Rankings, 2015). Universities go to great lengths to recruit international students because they bring a level of prestige (Lee, 2010), contribute to campus diversity (Pandit, 2007), encourage domestic students to cultivate cross-cultural competencies (Zhao, 2005), and help advance America's research competitiveness in the STEM fields (Pandit, 2007). Additionally, international students are a lucrative student sector for U.S. campuses, contributing more than $26.8 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2013-14 academic year (NAFSA, 2014).

While international students bring revenue and diversity to U.S. campuses, they also may bring racial stereotypes and prejudice (Kobayashi, 2010; Peng, 2010). These stereotypes and prejudices may lead to racial hate crimes (Littlely, 2010; Sullivan, 1994), racial misunderstandings (Mashhood, 2011), reduced levels of cultural adjustment (Kashima, 2006; Lee, 2004), and international student balkanization (Villalpando, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial Conflicts between International and Domestic Students

There have been incidences of international-domestic student conflicts on several college campuses. At the University of California, Los Angeles, (UCLA), a white student posted a racially insensitive video online, in which she commented on the “hordes” of Asian students speaking too loudly in the library and mocked the Chinese language by saying ‘ching chong wing wong’ (Mashhood & Parkinson-Morgan, 2011). Violence against Indian and Asian international students in Sydney and Melbourne has also risen in recent years (Mercer, 2010). In Adelaide, Australia, three Indian international students’ cars were firebombed by local teenagers (Littlely, 2010). Other incidents have been more bloody, including the stabbing and murder of a 21-year-old Indian international student, by white teenagers in Melbourne, Australia (Owens, 2010). Acts of discrimination and violence have been mostly limited to white students as perpetrators in American and Australian contexts. However, bloody incidences of anti-black racism on Chinese college campuses in the 1980s indicate historical instances of prejudice in China (Johnson 2007; Sautman, 1994).

There was a terrible incident at Hehai University in Nanjing that brought tensions to a head. In 1988, two students from Benin and Liberia studying at the campus were stopped by security guards and asked to sign-in their two Chinese female guests. The African students refused, Chinese students began calling them black devils, a fight broke out, and eleven staff members were injured (Sullivan, 1994). This imbroglio sparked a weeklong conflict. In response to rumors that African students were holding a Chinese female against her will in her apartment, 300 Chinese students stormed the international student dormitories and began fighting with African international students. Subsequent protests from Nanjing and Hehai University students and calls to kill the “Black devils” forced the local government to transport the 60 African students to a safe place (Yizheng) until tensions cooled. The African students
Related Content

Developing Intercultural Awareness Within Teacher Preparation Program
www.igi-global.com/chapter/developing-intercultural-awareness-within-teacher-preparation-program/177461?camid=4v1a

A Need for New Methodological Communication in Comparative Higher Education Research Projects?
Kristin Lofthus Hope (2015). New Voices in Higher Education Research and Scholarship (pp. 70-84).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-need-for-new-methodological-communication-in-comparative-higher-education-research-projects/123673?camid=4v1a

Requisites and Provocations for Admissions in B Schools
Parul Tiwari and Mayank Sharma (2019). New Age Admissions Strategies in Business Schools (pp. 112-133).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/requisites-and-provocations-for-admissions-in-b-schools/226154?camid=4v1a

Value Co-Creation in Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs: A Service-Dominant Logic Approach
Sven Tuzovic (2016). Handbook of Research on Study Abroad Programs and Outbound Mobility (pp. 325-348).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/value-co-creation-in-faculty-led-study-abroad-programs/164124?camid=4v1a