Enriched or latent cosmopolitanism? Identity negotiations of female international students from Japan in the U.S.

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Purpose
The purpose of this study was to examine how female international students from Japan navigate through their new social and academic environment and how their experiences could relate to the development of a cosmopolitan self.

The Article
This paper begins with an introduction to the challenges and possibilities that relocation across national borders poses for individuals. International students utilize available opportunities and resources in their new country in order to integrate to the academic and social context. The authors provide a history of the limited studies that have focused on the social experiences of international students, in the U.S. and particularly of those from Japan. They then describe the methodology of the study stating that a qualitative interpretive design was used and individual interviews were conducted to examine the students’ perspectives. The study was conducted in a mid-sized university in the Western part of the U.S. with the focal population being international students from Japan, which represented approximately 15% of the total population of international students. In the findings section, the students’ challenges and ways of learning how to navigate through them in their new host country are offered first. The students’ relations to their home country are presented next with a discussion about the changing character of the participants’ ethnic affiliations and the presence of enriched or latent cosmopolitanism in their views.

What this Means for the Field
This study indicates the need to be mindful of the many facets that characterizes the lives of international students and the need to recognize that their future lives can go in numerous directions. If the cultivation of cosmopolitan trends is important in the lives of international students then university officials may want to consider this to be the direction in which their learning should go. Overall, it is suggested that concentrated efforts are needed within colleges and universities so that to create approaches that could facilitate the successful integration of international students.

Citation

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