**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

# Chinese International Secondary Students' Experiences with Racism: "It was the same before and after COVID… It was just something really normal."

Helen Liu
York University
hliu566@yorku.ca

Roopa Desai-Trilokekar
York University
rdesaitrilokekar@edu.yorku.ca[1]

## ABSTRACT

The number of international students enrolled in Canadian K-12 schools has grown tremendously, but there remains limited research available that provides insights into the unique perspectives and challenges of this population. Through in-depth interviews with five Chinese international secondary school students and using Critical Race Theory (CRT), neo-racism and Asian Critical Theory (AsianCrit), this

1 The first author is the primary researcher while the second author has worked collaboratively with the first author in research design, data analysis and the writing process.

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

study identifies four key themes that help explore their experiences during the COVID-19 period with anti-Asian sentiments and racism in GTA schools. The article highlights both the strengths and limitations of CRT and AsianCrit and the contributions of Neo-racism in fully accounting for the racist experiences of Chinese international secondary students. It suggests the importance of exploring newer frames such as neo-racism, but also co-ethnic racism and new geopolitics to analyze what shapes and defines international students' experiences. Finally, the article stresses the need for K-12 schools to confront their problematic institutional cultures and make a sincere and concerted effort to establish an inclusive and supportive environment for international students.

## Introduction

There had been a total of 1,150 incidents of anti-Asian racism reported across Canada (March 2020 - February 2021) following the outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Verbal abuse and harassment transpire in 65% of all incidents, while 30% involved assault (Chinese Canadian National Council, 2020; Nicholson, 2021). Furthermore Toronto, Canada's largest and most multicultural city, had the second-highest reports of anti-Asian hate crimes after Vancouver (Chinese Canadian National Council, 2020). This article examines the experiences of an often neglected population; the Chinese international secondary school students in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)[2] during the COVID-19 period. It is important to study the experiences of K-12 Chinese international students, given the dramatic growth in the numbers of Asian international students within the K-12 system. The key questions to consider include: How were these students affected by the rise of anti-

2 Greater Toronto Area, commonly referred to as GTA includes the city of Toronto and regional municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York Region. It is one of the largest and most densely populated regions in Canada.

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

Asian sentiments across Canada during the pandemic? Specifically, what was their experience within GTA schools? Did they experience any changes in their relationships and interactions with domestic students[3] and school staff? What was their perspective on the overall school environment during this period?

## Review of Literature

The Canadian K-12 education sector experienced the largest growth in the number of international students enrolled across all study levels in 2022, with more students approved for primary and secondary study permits than ever before (ApplyBoard, 2023). From 2016 to 2022, there was a dramatic increase of over 100% of permit approvals, except for 2020 when there was a dip in numbers due to the pandemic (ApplyBoard, 2023). However, these numbers have rebounded to 80% as of 2022 (Amberstudent, 2023). The leading source of international students at the K-12 level is China at 10,865 students in 2022, followed by South Korea at 2,955 (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2023). Despite this rapid growth, there remains limited research examining the experiences of international students in secondary schools compared to research focusing on international students in post-secondary institutions (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Popadiuk, 2009; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011).

The growing "middle class" in China over the past few decades has been identified as a significant factor explaining the push for Chinese students choosing to study overseas (Cheng, 2019; Farrugia, 2014). This significant social shift within Chinese society has ushered in a new era when Chinese youths choose to leave their home

3 This study refers to "domestic students" to indicate students with Canadian residency or citizenship and includes white and non-white students. This study focuses on how domestic students perceive Chinese international students.

countries and families at even younger ages than before to independently gain an education across the globe (Cheng, 2019; Choudaha & Chang, 2012; Mok, 2015). Education abroad, particularly at the K-12 level, is considered a strategy to ensure admission into a reputed post-secondary institution and thereby ensure a sense of security and future success (Tamtik, 2019; Trilokekar & Tamtik, 2020). Canada has a positive image and reputation in China, having had a history of educational exchanges (Hayhoe & Zha, 2016), enabling this movement of Chinese students to China.

To date, research in Canada that has focused on examining the challenges of Chinese international secondary students is limited and has been mainly conducted in large metropolitan cities. A few studies have also been conducted in the U.S.A. The literature shows that language challenges and the ability to communicate effectively in English has a significant impact on students' successful adjustment (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Researchers report how East Asian international students' sense of self gets mediated through language and can cause low self-esteem and reduced interpersonal interactions with domestic students and staff (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Students struggle while communicating with their teachers, and express feeling "really embarrassed and scared" (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011, p. 230) or simply "giv[ing] up" (p. 230) on their attempts to communicate and be understood.

Studies also point to how students face immense pressure to achieve high academic performance (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Cheng (2019) reported that Chinese secondary students say that "one of the biggest myths" (p. 9) in China is that Western education is easy. The reality is that they are constantly plagued with the pressure for high academic performance and the amount of work in Canada was equivalent or in some cases higher than what they faced in China. Students also feel immense pressure from families as their education is "an investment or even sacrifice by their parents" (Tsong et al., 2021, p. 156, see also Wu and Tarc, 2021). A

student expressed how "nobody could understand my pressure. My parents, relatives and friends always talk about my success [...] I feel so tired and truly have nobody to share my daily worries and pressures" (p. 15).

The lack of interactions between Chinese international students and domestic students is another challenge identified. Cheng's (2019) study highlights Chinese students' interactions with domestic students as mainly surface level due to the lack of interest domestic students show towards them, and how difficult it is to form long-lasting meaningful friendships with them. As such, many students develop friendships with other Chinese international students, leading to a perception that they "rarely step out of the comfort zone of their Chinese friends' circle" (p. 10).

Research also demonstrates that not all international students are equally welcomed, as there is an immeasurable difference between the level of discrimination White international students face in comparison to students of colour from non-Western countries (Lee & Rice, 2007). According to Cheng (2019), Chinese international students report being mocked by domestic students due to their accent, facing prejudices and stereotypes being an "ESL student," and being attacked by simple "jokes" to even facing ignorant and malevolent prejudice. One student had a domestic student shout "go back to your communist country" at him (Cheng, 2019, p. 8). Another shared how local peers accused him of cheating on an English test due to his high academic scores. The international student reflected, "[but] what can I do? I can't really argue with them" (p. 8). Experiences like these can lead to many students feeling a sense of hostility from their domestic peers and yet limited in their capability to rebut or defend themselves. This furthers a sense of alienation and greater reluctance to associate with domestic students.

Zheng's (2014) study on international secondary students from Toronto District School Boards (TDSB) revealed that almost half of 3,990 students (49%) declared

they sometimes or rarely/never felt comfortable in discussing problems with their teachers. More than half of these international students (53%) felt even less comfortable discussing their issues with guidance counsellors, and with the greatest number of international students (69%) feeling uncomfortable reaching out to principals and vice-principals to discuss their problems. Thus, while research on international secondary students is limited, what we do know about this population is of concern. In particular, and of relevance to our study, is research that suggests that international students face racism and experience a sense of hostility from their domestic peers and school staff (Cheng, 2019).

## Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical framework chosen was Critical Race Theory (CRT), specifically Asian Critical Theory (AsianCrit), and the newer frame of neo-racism.

### Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was chosen because it applies a comprehensive approach to understanding race, racism, and the idealistic notions prevalent within institutional efforts to achieve diversity and inclusivity that can overlook racial realities (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993; Hiraldo, 2010). A core tenet within CRT is Whiteness as property, coined by Harris (1993), which is the notion that racism is entrenched within all aspects of society, and Whiteness can be "considered a property interest" (Hiraldo, 2010, p. 55) that is an asset that only White individuals can hold. This system of whiteness as property can further strengthen and perpetuate the system of White supremacy, which is the belief that structural and societal systems privilege White people. White people are continually positioned as the dominant centre, and assumed as the "norm" in society, allowing them to benefit from these rights and privileges (Hiraldo, 2010; Gillborn, 2006).


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

Practices and knowledge structures within education often stem from the system of Whiteness, where teaching practices and strategies are shaped by White supremacy (Pechenkina & Liu, 2018). Furthermore, most individuals in power and leadership in educational spaces, like faculty members or administration in K-12 and post-secondary are White, which establishes "an understanding that being White has more status and power" (Bondi, 2012, p. 399). This results in leaders unable to recognize or understand how their White privilege informs their leadership, and how they benefit from this system (Shah, 2018). Failure to address of the system of Whiteness in educational administration allows for the prioritization of this dominant perspective ultimately sustaining a cycle of discriminatory administrative actions and structures that disadvantage minoritized groups. CRT thus contributes greatly to unsettling the dominant status of Whiteness and revealing how surface level goals like achieving diversity through increased enrolment of students of colour can ultimately serve to perpetuate a system of oppression and privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hiraldo, 2010).

## Neo-Racism

In the last decade, a handful of researchers have attempted to employ CRT to examine international student populations and their interactions in host countries, particularly in the West. Lee (2007) and Yao's (2018) research suggests the use of neo-racism as a more appropriate framework that augments the use of CRT when examining the experiences of international students. This is because neo-racism helps analyze the specific discrimination against international students, as according to the framework non-English-speaking international students from non-Western countries frequently face racism, discrimination, and prejudice during their studies in their host countries in comparison to peers from Western countries (Koo et al., 2021; Liu, 2023; Long, 2022; Yao, 2018; Zheng et al., 2020). Their experiences reflect the cultural hierarchy present among countries largely as a result of colonization and colonial histories that get reflected in the negative

experiences of racialized students from the developing world. Thus, neo-racism describes how discrimination get founded on cultural distinctions and national order, rather than simple on skin colour or hereditary characteristics (Balibar, 1991; Lee & Rice, 2007). Thus, international students from non-Western cultures get perceived as "inferior" and are more at risk to facing challenges in the social and academic domains of their lives, negatively impacting their sense of belonging with their communities and the host country.

## Asian Critical Theory (AsianCrit)

Grounded in CRT, AsianCrit was developed by Museus and Ifitkar (2014) to provide a deeper understanding of how race and racism impact Asian Americans in society. AsianCrit framework therefore prioritizes Asian identity and their experiences with racism, recognizing the various perspectives, representation, and voices of Asian individuals in order to comprehend how these prevailing systems of oppression have impacted their lives. Within the AsianCrit framework, Museus and Iftikar (2014) identify seven interconnected principles that help understand how White supremacy shapes the experiences of Asian Americans.[4] The *model minority myth* is a racial stereotype that is commonly associated with the narrative and perception of Asian individuals, defining them as a monolithic group of hard-working, successful minorities who have accomplished "universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success" (Museus & Kiang, 2009, p. 5). While this myth first appears harmless and positive, on the contrary, it is associated with many negative implications as it is often cited as a factor for the invisibility Asian

4 These principles include Asianization, Transnational Contexts, (Re)constructive History, Strategic (Anti)essentialism, Intersectionality, Story, Theory, and Praxis, and Social Justice.


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 
http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/JCIE

individuals face with their struggles, challenges, and experiences with anti-Asian racism disregarded and unacknowledged (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Poon et al., 2016).

Using AsianCrit as a framework was essential given the purposes of my study, to examine the experiences of Chinese international students during COVID-19, a time when continuing stereotypes against the Chinese population came to the surface in Canadian society. Drawing inspiration from Yao and Mwangi's (2022) research, who are among the first scholars to examine how tenets of AsianCrit are applicable in examining the experiences of international student students, we were able to more carefully analyze ways that Chinese international students were racialized in their academic, social, and domestic domains, and the forms of discriminatory policies or unclear boundaries they experience studying abroad (Museus & Ifitkar, 2014). AsianCrit contributed by analyzing useful concepts like the model minority myth that ultimately seek to maintain white supremacy in our educational institutions and broader society. AsianCrit was especially valuable in examining the unique barriers faced by Chinese international students in the realm of language, social relationships, attitudes faced by schoolteachers and administrators and ultimately how historical and political relations of the Chinese community in Canada shaped and challenged their acceptance in our schooling system (Cheng, 2019; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Wong et al., 2010).

## Research Methodology

Given these critical frames used for this study, a qualitative research approach was essential to establish more comprehensive interpretations and accounts of the social phenomena under study (Creswell, 2014; Fischer & Guzel, 2022; Lim, 2024; Naeem et al., 2023). A qualitative approach is often used by researchers as it aims to reveal the nuances of human interaction and behaviour and develops a "human-centered understanding" (Lim, 2024, p. 3) of complex social contexts. This approach was essential to this study given its focus on how Chinese international secondary students experienced racism and discrimination during the COVID-19


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 

period. For the interviews, a narrative interview approach was adopted. In narrative interviews, the narrator is positioned to be the center of the study with their perspectives prioritized for study and analysis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Narrative interviews also align with counter-story, which is a tenet of CRT and a technique that allows marginalized individuals to communicate their experiences, and center students of colour and their silenced or untold stories (Sólorzano & Yosso, 2001). Counter-stories within narrative interviews can challenge perceived notions or assumed beliefs regarding Chinese international secondary school students while shedding light on the voices and perspectives of these vulnerable populations.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were recruited through the Immigrant Youth Centre (IYC), which is part of the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS) that is funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Due to pandemic restrictions, external research with school boards and any organizations associated with schools was no longer permitted. As such, the study collaborated with IYC as the centre was located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and numerous Chinese international students who were enrolled in GTA secondary schools visited and utilized their resources. The mission of the IYC is to enhance a sense of community for immigrant and international youth in an inclusive, supportive, and diverse environment (Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, n.d). The primary researcher reached out to the program manager at IYC initially. Subsequently, they were connected with the youth program coordinator who assisted with the recruitment of participants by creating social media announcements informing potential participants about the study. Interested participants connected directly with the primary researcher to arrange for interviews. The full research process was pre-approved by the institutional ethics committee and the ethics protocol was followed.


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 
http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/JCIE

The informed consent form was explained in detail to the participants, outlining the purpose of the research study, what was involved in the study, potential risks and benefits, and information on confidentiality was given before consent was sought. Narrative interviews were conducted with five Chinese international secondary school students, the selection criteria being that the period of study in Canada had to be six years or less and they had to be age 16 years or over. Based on the researcher's institutional guidelines, participants aged 16 or 17 were not required to have parental consent to participate in minimal risk research activities. Restricting years of stay in Canada enabled inclusion of more current perspectives on the experiences of international students, both pre- and post-pandemic. Table 1 outlines the demographic information for all participants below.

All interviews ranged from one to one and a half hours and were conducted with audio recording on an online video conferencing platform, Zoom, to meet the health and safety research protocols during the pandemic in 2022. All interviews were conducted in English to avoid potential issues with translation. Also student participant expressed a preference to do their interviews in English. However, given that there were still moments when participants faced some difficulty in expressing their experiences or finding the correct word to describe their feelings, they were in a position to communicate in their first language. The primary researcher was a Mandarin speaker and relayed her understanding of their responses in English to check for understanding. The linguistic and cultural affinity between the researcher and the students eventually helped foster rapport and an environment of trust and comfort (Mizock et al., 2011).

**TABLE 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (STUDENTS)**

| Participant | Age | Grade | International Student in Canada | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ellie* | 18 | 12 | One and a half years | Female |
| Jacob | 16 | 11 | One and a half years | Male |
| Charlotte | 16 | 11 | 6 months | Female |
| Lucas | 16 | 12 | 6 years | Male |
| Theo | 17 | 11 | 3 years | Male |

*Pseudonyms

Following general background questions, students were asked specific questions regarding how COVID-19 had impacted their lives, and if there were any signs or experiences with anti-Asian hate, racism, or discrimination faced during this time (e.g., Have you ever felt any discrimination or racism before COVID-19? Can you describe your experiences if any?; Have these experiences changed after COVID-19? Do you feel safe during your stay in Canada? Do you think there is enough support available for you?). Interview data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed in Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. Once transcribed, participants were given an opportunity to read their transcribed interviews and determine the accuracy of their accounts (Creswell, 2014). Member checking allows participants to play a critical role in the data analysis process; they could confirm representation of their experiences and beliefs (Creswell, 2014). Once member checks were conducted, the interview data was coded and analyzed to develop core themes that best described the commonality of their shared experiences.

## Research Findings

All five students were asked about their experiences in school during the COVID-19 period. Student participants were asked whether they experienced any signs of anti-Asian hate, racism, or forms of discrimination because of COVID-19. Student participants were not given specific definitions of these terms, rather they were allowed to interpret them on their own as they responded to the questions. Three student participants revealed they had faced different forms of discrimination and

racism as international students in Canada, but not all experiences were a result of COVID-19. While two students at first suggested that they did not experience racism, as the interview progressed, their responses revealed incidents of racism they faced, both prior and following the pandemic. We noticed that students who had stayed longer in Canada were quicker to identify and label their experiences as representing racism. More female participants were willing to go in-depth and share their experiences of racism, facing stereotypes and discrimination. Male participants took a longer time to either reveal or minimized their experiences with racism.

All participants agreed that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their overall experience as international students in Canada. Ellie shared how the pandemic changed every aspect of her life, not only concerning school, but other activities and opportunities that were no longer available to her. Several students expressed frustration with online learning, lack of social contact and financial challenges during this difficult period. In our data analysis, we focus on student experiences of racism and discrimination since their arrival in Canada and especially during the COVID -19 pandemic. Four overarching themes were evident through the coding of the five student interviews: 1. being "othered," 2. stereotyped as "Asian or Chinese," 3. beware of China/Chinese, and 4. school as an unsafe and unsupportive space.

## Being "Othered"

Charlotte shared how her teachers constantly reminded her of her cultural difference as an international student. She explained that many of her teachers were reluctant to provide her with any additional assistance in her courses. Speaking of her teachers she said, "when I ask them questions about the course or maybe the culminating works, they are really impatient, really impatient and make me feel embarrassed in front of the whole class." She goes on to say:

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

> I have PE[5] class last semester and my PE teacher is impatient because I have a lot of sports problems because in China we just have running and basketball. Nothing else. So here there are a lot of sports that I don't know and never played before [...] It is a little embarrassing. I'm [feel] really distant with the native[6] students. I was surprised how unsupportive the teachers are in Canada.

Speaking of domestic students, Charlotte speaks of how they often do not understand international students because of what they perceive to be "weird actions because of their country [of origin]... They can't understand so I think there's a culture gap," leading to Theo suggesting that "local students tend to stick together."

Othering is defined as "that process which serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself" (Weis, 1995, p. 17), and is used by the dominant group to separate from and suppress the non-dominant outsider group (Yao et al., 2018). Through their experiences in Canadian schools, international students clearly express feelings of being othered. They speak of how their difference in cultural understanding is often made apparent through their interactions with their teachers and other fellow Canadian students. They express feelings of being made uncomfortable, embarrassed, and out of place by the dominant group.

Othering leads international students, including Peter, to disengage from domestic students because, "it is easier to make friends with other international students because [we] guys are in the same boat. It's just like so many things we experience

5 Physical Education
6 Native student refers to domestic Canadian student

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

that domestic students would be like what are you talking about?" Interestingly, this was in sharp contrast to participants' earlier desire to make many domestic friends upon arriving on campus. In describing her challenges interacting with domestic students, Charlotte goes on to say, "They just treat me differently than the other students."

## Stereotyped as "Asian or Chinese"

Ellie states, "like some people just think you're Asian and they have stereotypes about you, especially local students." Ellie went on to say, domestic students ask absurd questions about what Chinese people do, sharing how "It's really funny they think that the government controls everything and they think that we cannot think in some certain way, it is actually funny to learn that that's the way they think." She went on to express that there are, "definitely moments like that and it's definitely uncomfortable. Like, yeah I'm different, but like they took it really literally." Lucas states how he is often stereotyped by his classmates or friends, "Chinese people are good at math, but bad at sports." Ellie spoke about how, "they [domestic students] really don't know a lot about our culture and [how] some people make jokes [about China and Chinese people]. Theo mentioned during his attempts to interact with domestic students that, "sometimes when I try to talk to local students they will say they are surprised I am so talkative with them. I guess they expected me to be quiet because a lot of Chinese international kids are, or [maybe] they don't try to talk to them."

All students spoke about derogatory remarks they hear about Chinese international students. Lucas describes experiences with teachers even prior to COVID-19. He speaks of a physical education teacher whom he perceived as "only ever yell[ing] at us Chinese students and was really mean to us and would not act that way to the other students in the class" but quickly added, "I don't know if I'm being too sensitive or something... but I still remember that time." Theo expresses that there

can be an exception to this experience, "because we had so many Chinese students I think that helped with the school environment, like less prejudice and less discrimination [...] There's no point in doing that because it's full of Chinese students [...] It's really weird."

## Beware of China/Chinese

International students spoke about the racist and discriminatory experiences they and their friends faced as a result of jokes that increasingly associated Chinese individuals and COVID-19. Lucas shared that following COVID-19, he frequently experienced racism in online environments with other players on video games. Once other players would find out that he was a Chinese international student, they would make comments to him like "Oh thank you, Chinese Virus" or "Thanks for giving us the virus" which Lucas described as "not really a fun experience." Students spoke about jokes their domestic Chinese peers engaged in regarding COVID-19, with Theo sharing that even Chinese domestic students made comments like "Oh, China, they did this or they did something bad, they spread the coronavirus to us." Jacob revealed that an ESL teacher had "said some bad words about China and [according to him] gives less help to the Chinese international students...Maybe she don't like China and she said some bad words about China." Theo reflected upon his Chinese international friends' experiences in their schools and said, "my friends even said that some of their teachers make jokes about China and the coronavirus which I was surprised about because it's a teacher you know. They are supposed to be nice and care."

Anti-China sentiments were true in other parts of the world as well with the increasing criminalization of China amplified during COVID-19. In the U.S., the virus was being "politically framed as an existential danger coming from outside domestic borders" (Lee, 2020, p. iv) with China incurring the blame (Ma & Miller, 2021). However, the rising geopolitical tensions between China and Canada prior to

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

the pandemic[7] and the subsequent media articles, further negatively impacted the perception of Chinese international students studying in Canada. Chinese international students were increasingly considered a threat to academic freedom and a risk to national security, while at the same time being both valued and critiqued for their potential economic contributions (Trilokekar et al., 2021).

## School as an Unsafe and Unsupportive Space

Theo speaks about how experiences with racism and discrimination are distinctly different in schools where the student population was predominately White. As such, when this is the case, there would be, "lots of discrimination from white dudes being a Chinese international student," where they would frequently experience "jokes" made about Chinese international students. Theo went on to share that, "there were some people who are more aggressive and was more severe, but eventually they got punished. But that's how the situation goes." What was most puzzling to students was the attitude they got from Chinese domestic students who made "jokes" that negatively associated China with the virus to him. When "people joking are also Chinese and their parents are from China. So there's no way for them to like be aggressive about the Corona thing or China" resulting in Theo asking, "the attitude and tone is different when it's a Chinese person whose

7 The arrest of Meng Wanzhou, deputy chairwoman of the board and chief financial officer of China's telecom giant Huawei, in Vancouver on December 1st, 2018 resulted in diplomatic tensions between Canada and China. For further details and impact on the educational sector see, Trilokekar, R. D., El Masri, A. & El Masry, H. (2021). Power, politics, and education: Canadian universities and international education (IE) in an era of new geopolitics. Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 50 (3), 79–95.

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

parents are also immigrants joking about this compared to maybe like a white person? Where you might feel like I don't know if you're really joking?"

Theo goes on to mention a teaching experience he had during his online classes where his grades differed greatly from students who attended school in person. He shared, "students who are online got really bad marks and most of the online students was us international students... we're doing the same thing, but like they have like labs and materials provided from the school." He went on to say that their teacher "didn't really do anything more for us. So that I think was an unfair thing. I don't know if it had to do with us mostly being Chinese international students online but the way she talked with us... it felt different too." Charlotte mentioned that when she attempted to seek support from her guidance teachers, she did not feel supported at all and instead, she shared, "I'm really sad because my school don't have really much support to international students... Like I have a lot of problems... I don't think they care about us or know what to do." Theo shared his experience of trying to receive support from guidance teachers. When he asked for support, "they have no answers. They don't really know what to say...They just tell me to 'talk with my parents,' but my parents don't know either? And what if you are here by yourself like my other friends? They just don't understand us and you know they can't really help you with anything else." What is most striking is Ellie's comment on racism in school, "I think it was the same before and after COVID... It was just something really normal and in life you can't control what others saying."

## Discussion

In our discussion below, we analyze the strengths and limitations of the different theoretical frameworks and constructs used in unpacking the experiences of racism for Chinese international students.

Critical race theory provides a useful framework to understand why even though GTA schools pride themselves for their multiculturalism and the wide diversity of

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

their student populations[8] they continue to enact "Whiteness" through their staff, school regulations and overall institutional culture. Clearly, Chinese international students experience being "othered" because they do share the same dominant norms of whiteness, when it comes to their language ability/accents, academic behaviour, forms of communication, and even relations with parents.

For example, Charlotte expressed how her teacher demonstrated impatience in her lack of understanding in PE for many sports that were new to her. Teachers may not consider how the dominant culture can inform our understanding and sustain a cycle that disadvantages international students by benefitting Western knowledge and engraining the notion that whiteness is absolute (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Ortega, 2021; Tavares, 2021). Chinese international students speak of the frequent impatience exhibited by their teachers presumably because they do not adhere to the norms of the Canadian classroom/school system.

Interestingly, even teachers who are Canadian but non-white[9], enact Whiteness in educational spaces, perhaps having imbibed "an understanding that being White has more status and power" (Bondi, 2012, p. 399). Traynham (2020) explains how African American educators often adopt, "white ways of being as a means to access the limited but real privileges whiteness grants to them by mimicking white culture and white ways of being" (p. 118) thus further centering whiteness and devaluing non-white cultural norms. Through teacher practices, values, and curriculum,

8 See for example, TDSB (n.d.) stated they are "the largest and most diverse public school district in Canada" (p. 2) and that "international students will learn about other diverse cultures, gain new perspectives and meet new friends while getting a first rate education" (p. 7).
9 In our conversation with student participants, they have discussed how their teachers are non-white as they have made reference to their teachers that were of Chinese and other Asian descent.

whiteness and Western superiority are perpetuated (Carroll, 2014), which was also reflective in the student narratives.

Theo speaks about how there was a lack of accommodation for international students studying on line during COVID-19, while supports were made available for domestic students. His comments suggest a lack of understanding and/or appreciation of challenges faced by international students during the pandemic. Charlotte speaks about teachers' impatience with her and how their actions constantly remind her of her cultural differences and cause her embarrassment. In this context, the teacher is positioning the student as the "Other," with otherness often "socially constructed in relation to the category of Western student" that engages in Western forms of pedagogy, skills, and knowledge (Doherty & Singh, 2005, p. 53). Rather than being self-reflective, the teacher projects their lack of knowledge and awareness, viewing the student through a negative and deficit lens who is unable to meet the Western standards of success. Both Charlotte and Theo express surprise at these teacher behaviours and the overall lack of support they receive within school environments. CRT also helps explain why Chinese international students feel hopeless and helpless in combatting racist comments/racism, leading to circumstances where Lucas questions if perhaps he was being "too sensitive" about how he felt about racism, discrimination and being "othered" or Ellie suggests that, "you can't control what others [are] saying." As Miller et al. (2023) explain, in the context of racism, "gaslighting works to deny the racial realities of people of colour, even leading people of colour to question their own experiences," (p. 145) thus minimizing and dismissing racist experiences. Racism becomes normative as stated by Ellie, "I think it was the same before and after COVID...It was just something really normal", a fact that is to be accepted, and according to Sue et al. (2007) becomes common everyday experience for Asians, where their experiences with racism are overlooked or disregarded due to structures of the model minority myth. Furthermore, as part of this minimization of experience, many encounters of racism from an individual's friends or peers can

lead victims to make excuses for them. This was apparent in Theo's experience, where he rationalizes that racism faced by white students is somehow different from that faced by Chinese Canadian students. He suggests that because their parents immigrated from China, Chinese Canadian jokes and criticisms felt different, perhaps not as severe because he assumes that they too feel different and also engage in jokes about America and Europe. By minimizing and rationalizing the severity of these statements, especially in circumstances where the perpetrator is a friend or peer, victims do not want to be judged as unable to handle jokes (França et al., 2022). This can lead to victims making excuses for them by "rationalizing away their biases and by denying their own racial reality" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 78), potentially leading to internalizing racism as a norm. These sentiments highlight how invisibility of Asian individuals' experiences with racism are maintained, as students may begin to accept their circumstances in silence, often by rationalizing stereotypes on themselves and demonstrating how the model minority myth, neo-racism, and Whiteness as the dominant culture function as silencing mechanisms (Sue et al., 2007).

As stated above, CRT helps frame why Chinese international students in our study speak of racism, not directly connected to COVID-19, but as a part of their normal experience in Canadian schools. CRT demonstrates as James (2001) poignantly states just how practices and programs in Canadian educational systems continue to perpetuate a Eurocentric curriculum, teaching approaches, and assessment tools aimed to assimilate students to Anglo-Canadian standards and customs, thus maintaining and reifying a White supremacist system. Scholars explain how perpetuating Western attitudes of White supremacy towards minority groups, inflicts long-term consequences on their physical and psychological well-being, identity, and overall quality of life (Sue et al., 2007). Charlotte expressed feelings of embarrassment being constantly reminded of her cultural gap/difference, which leads to her feeling a lack of belonging and ultimately a poor sense of self.

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

AsianCrit as a framework provides a finer understanding of how White supremacy shapes the experiences of Asian Americans. In the case of our study, the third principle of *(Re)constructive History*, which is grounded in the belief that Asian communities have generally been disregarded and remained invisible within North American history is particularly helpful. Although, Asian individuals have been depicted as yellow peril in Canadian history (Padgett et al., 2020), as perpetual foreigners who represent a safety hazard and threat to society (Chen, 2019), this problematic history is often lost on the public that are quick to fall prey to racism against Asian populations. Many media outlets fed into this racial bias and discrimination as they began to use and popularize the term "Chinese virus" to describe COVID-19, innately binding the virus with race (Wang et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2020) leading to immense negative perceptions regarding Chinese or Asian individuals being associated with the virus. Chinese international students were victims of this discrimination, as they faced negative comments about their home country and were associated with the cause and the spread of the virus. For example, Lucas spoke about facing such derogatory comments from other students both on and offline.

The fourth principle of Asian Crit, "Strategic (Anti)essentialism," acknowledges how White supremacy racializes Asian communities as one homogenous group. The model minority myth is a racial stereotype that is commonly associated with the narrative and perception of Asian individuals, defining them as a monolithic group of hard-working, successful minorities who have accomplished "universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success" (Museus & Kiang, 2009, p. 5). The Chinese international student narratives in our study do not reflect these same principles. From their narratives, it does not seem as though they experience being part of one homogenous group as they report, as mentioned earlier, facing discrimination and prejudice from other Canadian students of Chinese descent. Also, they rarely report being viewed as a model minority; rather their experiences reflect that they are overwhelmingly viewed through a deficit lens. What we are

attempting to say here is that there is a nuanced difference between the racialization and discrimination faced by Canadian Asians and Chinese international students.

We believe these nuanced differences have to do with the international status of these students, which lead us to consider the very useful construct of neo-racism introduced by Lee and Rice (2007). Just as CRT rejects a historical and a-contextual lens (Delgado & Stefancic 2017), Lee and Rice remind us of the importance of considering the home country that the international student is coming from as well as that country's historical, political, economic, and cultural context. There is "a hierarchy of superiority of nation states" (Squire et al., 2023, p. 4), where Western countries with White-European centric culture are often perceived as superior compared to non-Western countries with people of colour (Lee & Rice, 2007; Long, 2022). This results in Western world viewing and situating the "Orient", including the Middle East, Asia, and northern Africa) as backward and undeveloped (Said, 1978).

Due to neo-racism, international students from non-Western cultures are perceived as "inferior," negatively impacting their sense of belonging with their communities and the host country, eventually affecting their feelings of connection to domestic students, teachers and staff. As Yao (2018) suggests, "this divides [school] classrooms into 'us' (domestic students) and 'them' (international students)" (p. 90), thus leading to further tensions and disinterest between the two groups. Neo-racism explains why Ellie, Charlotte, and Theo experience being treated as "backward," coming from an "underdeveloped" country through the absurd questions about China and Chinese people they get asked. Studies often characterize Chinese students as the opposite of their Western peers, with dominating depictions of Chinese students as passive and obedient learners, and with much criticism on their rote learning styles and approaches (Henze & Zhu, 2012). Neo-racism also helps explain why domestic students are not interested in


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 

making friendships with Chinese international students. They do not see value in this relationship, particularly if they view Chinese international students through the same deficit lens.

Neo-racism is also represented in the attitudes of Canadian students of Chinese descent, i.e., first- and second-generation Chinese Canadians, who hold equally negative perceptions and attitudes towards Chinese international students. While Theo spoke of his experience with racist jokes from Chinese domestic students claiming, "the attitude and tone is different," it is important to note that these domestic students drew a distinct line of difference between their national identities. These interactions highlight a racial hierarchy, as despite shared similar cultural identities with international students, there is a difference of value and worth assigned as the domestic students ultimately highlighted distinction between their culture and their nationality.

The construct of co-ethnic racism, discussed by Tsuda (2022) has parallels to neo-racism. Ethnic return migrants often experience co-ethnic racism because their cultural traits are based on "national differences that are determined by birth (analogous to racial differences). As a result, despite their lack of racial visibility, their cultural differences are essentialized as inferior just as much as those of immigrants who look racially different from the host populace, subjecting them to racist subordination" (Tsuda, 2022, p. 598). Tsuda (2022) argues that co-ethnic racism is just as racist and therefore suggests that scholars need to examine the "emergence and persistence of racist-like, social class inequalities among co-ethnics who look racially the same, but are marked by cultural and national differences that are deemed less worthy" (p. 612). As stated prior, having Chinese domestic peers engage in jokes regarding how "China did something bad, they spread the coronavirus to us," demonstrates that despite similar racial visibility, domestic Chinese students are unconsciously or consciously presenting a hierarchy


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 

where they think that their country or the dominant Western culture is superior or greater (Long, 2022).

Both CRT and neo-racism highlight the central relevance of global history in particular colonialism in explaining experiences of international students from the Global South (Joshi, 2022). However, we would venture to suggest that in the case of Chinese international students, an additional factor accounts for the racism and discrimination they face in Canada. We explain this in the context of new geopolitical relations. While this new geopolitics has yet to fully take form, there is recognition of new realities and power dynamics between for example the Global North and South (Lee, 2020). New geopolitics thus shifts relations between countries, the recent political spars between Canada and Saudi Arabia as well as China being prime examples. These shifts in turn influence public opinion, media being a powerful actor in framing discourses as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic (El Masri, 2020), influencing relations between nationals of specific countries.

China a fast-growing global power is seen as an increasing threat to Canada's power and hegemony as part of the western world (Lee, 2020; Trilokekar et al., 2020). Emanating from fears of national security that got heightened during the COVID-19 period, there have been signs of Sinophobia where Chinese students (and Canadian Chinese nationals) reported racism and anti-Asian sentiments in Canadian universities and in broader society (Moir, 2020; Leach, 2020). Trilokekar et al. (2020) identified how media reported rising suspicions towards the Chinese government influencing the experiences of Chinese international students on Canadian campuses. Jacob and Theo refer to comments made by both teachers and students against China, how they or their peers experience being treated badly because they are from China, and Lucas voiced how COVID-19 made this context worse. They reference experiences of mockery or jokes, to prejudice, to facing hostility from their domestic peers. What this suggests is that accounting for

shifting geopolitics can add another nuanced lens to understanding how neo-racism operates in structuring the experiences of international students.

It is extremely disconcerting that Chinese international students speak of how the school environment is not one that shows care towards them, and that as Theo experiences, is a space where teachers and counsellors do not understand or want to understand them, and often do not know what to say or what to do. All our frameworks suggest that while there is a clear expectation that its international students who need to and will benefit from assimilation and integration, there is very little if any reflection on changes that need to be made within school institutional structures to better accommodate the needs of international students (Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015; Yao 2015, 2018). Martin et al. (2017) encourage critical self-reflexivity among teachers on how they view schooling culture and their roles, identities, and positions in the context of global/local histories, structures and systems of inequalities and power relations. However, student participants in our study experience teachers who unfortunately engage in a dominant discourse of deficit while interacting with international students (similar observations are made by Adrian-Taylor et al., 2007; Heng, 2017). While professional development, including cultural sensitivity and anti-racism training is offered in schools, there is clearly need to build a better understanding among staff about who international students are, and how and why we view them from the lens of western superiority. Discussions on equity, diversity and inclusion need to be broadened from an international lens, keeping in mind how histories of colonization, interracial relations and current geopolitics shape our approaches to education. It is only when school cultures and teacher attitudes towards international students alter that there will be quality and meaningful interactions between domestic and international students, achieving the ultimate goal of international education.


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 
http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/JCIE

**Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education**
Vol. 20, no. 1, 2025, Regular Issue
https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29703

## Conclusion

CRT and AsianCrit offer several strengths to understanding the experiences of Chinese international students pre and post COVID-19, several of these experiences linked to the rise of anti-Asian sentiments across Canada during the pandemic. However, both theories also hold limitations in fully capturing the nuanced racism and discrimination faced by Chinese international students. In conclusion, we agree with Yao et al. (2018) that CRT must move beyond the U.S. limits, or in our case Canadian borders, and broaden its scope to consider how transnationalism plays a role to the application and development of this theory. Neo-racism, co-ethnic racism and new geopolitics offer additional lenses to analyze what shapes and defines international students' experiences.

While the pandemic certainly challenged Chinese international student experiences, it is pretty significant that in speaking about racism they spoke about it as an aspect of their "normal" experience within GTA schools. With a growing population of international students within Canadian K-12 schools, we need more research and scholarship, but perhaps more importantly we need to put greater pressure on our educational institutions to acknowledge and address the systemic racism faced by international students. While there have been some action and changes from the Ontario government, like creating educational resources to combat and address anti-Asian racism and discrimination within schools following the rise of hate crimes (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario & Toronto District School Board, 2020; Reid & Eizadirad, 2023), this highlights how very little consideration was given to Asian populations prior to COVID-19 (Ontario Newsroom, 2021). It is important that education policies continue to highlight Asian communities following COVID-19, as these communities have received very little attention prior to the pandemic within the discourse of education policy and strategy, primarily due to stereotypes rooted in the "model minority myth" (Cui & Kelly, 2013; Liu, 2023; Jang, 2022; Teranishi & Nguyen, 2012; Wing, 2007; Yu, 2006). If institutions wish to continue recruiting international students, they must

consider and reflect on various geopolitical, international and anticolonial factors, social, and structural components of our society and educational systems/institutional cultures if, as Yao (2018) suggests, they aim to make a genuine and concerted effort to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for international students.

With the new federal legislation that includes a cap on international student enrolment for higher education, it would be beneficial to further explore the experiences of Chinese international secondary students, as there is likely to be a potential increase in the recruitment of this population. Future research would benefit from examining how the experiences of international secondary school students shape their future experiences in Canadian post-secondary institutions? It could also consider if and how China's changing geopolitical power will impact the experiences of Chinese international students? Will neo-racism look different in such a context? How will it influence the relationship between Chinese international students and Chinese Canadian domestic students? How could future research assess the impact and the effectiveness of anti-racist strategies, policies, and practices within Canadian schools? There are many interesting and important research questions to explore in building our understanding of how transnationalism, shifting geopolitics and continued racism operates in shaping international students' experiences within our educational institutions.

## REFERENCES

Adrian-Taylor, S. R., Noels, K. A., & Tischler, K. (2007). Conflict between international graduate students and faculty supervisors: Toward effective conflict prevention and management strategies. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *11*(1), 90–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306286313

Amberstudent. (2023). Factor contributing to increased international enrollment in Canadian K-12 education system in 2022/23. *Amber news*.


2025, 20(1), pp. 40-75. 
http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/JCIE

https://amberstudent.com/news/post/factor-contributing-to-increased-international-enrollment-in-canadian-k-12-education-system-in-2022-23

Anderson, C., & Kirkpatrick, S. (2016). Narrative interviewing. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, *38*(3), 631–634. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-015-0222-0

ApplyBoard. (2023). Growing number of primary international students boost K-12 school approvals across Canada. *Applyinsights*. https://www.applyboard.com/applyinsights-article/growing-number-of-primary-international-students-boost-k-12-school-approvals-across-canada#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20more%20than%2065%2C200,their%20education%20in%20recent%20years.

Balibar, E. (1991). Is there a "neo-racism"?. In E. Balibar & I. Wallerstein (Eds.), *Race, nation, class: Ambiguous identities* (pp. 17–28). Verso.

Bondi, S. (2012). Students and institutions protecting Whiteness as property: A critical race theory analysis of student affairs preparation. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *49*(4), 397–414. https://doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2012-6381

Canadian Bureau for International Education. (2023). *International Students in Canada*. https://cbie.ca/infographic/

Carroll, S. (2014). The construction and perpetuation of whiteness. *Journal of Unschooling & Alternative Learning*, *8*(15), 92-116.

Centre for Immigrant and Community Services. (n.d.). *About IYC*. https://www.cicsiyc.org/about

Cheng, B. (2019). Sociocultural adaptation of "parachute kids" from mainland China. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *48*(6), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2019.1643006

Chinese Canadian National Council. (2020). *More anti-Asian racist incidents reported per capita in Canada than US according to first national report*. Chinese Canadian National Council. https://ccncsj.ca/more-anti-asian-racist-incidents-reported-per-capita-in-canada-than-us-according-to-first-national-report/

 

Choudaha, R., & Chang, L. (2012). Not all international students are the same: Understanding the segments, mapping behavior. *World Education News and Reviews*, *25*(2), 1–5.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). A concise introduction to mixed methods research. Sage.

El Masri, A. (2020). Who speaks for international education? An Ontario case study. In R. Trilokekar, M. Tamtik, & G. Jones (Eds.), *International education as public policy in Canada* (pp. 358–383). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York University Press.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (1993). Critical race theory: An annotated bibliography. *Virginia Law Review*, *79*(2), 461–516. https://doi.org/10.2307/1073418

Doherty, C., & Singh, P. (2005). How the West is done: Simulating Western pedagogy in a curriculum for Asian international students. In Peter Ninnes & Meeri Hellstén (Eds.), *Internationalizing higher education: Critical explorations of pedagogy and policy* (pp. 53–73). Springer Netherlands.

Farrugia, C. (2014). *Globally mobile youth: Trends in international secondary students in the United States, 2013–2016*. Institute of International Education. http://p.widencdn.net/x0yjyb/Globally-Mobile-Youth-Trends-in-International-SecondaryStudents-in-the-United-States-2013-2016

Fischer, E., & Guzel, G. T. (2023). The case for qualitative research. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *33*(1), 259–272. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1300

Gillborn, D. (2006). Rethinking white supremacy: Who counts in "WhiteWorld". *Ethnicities*, *6*(3), 318–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796806068323

Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *The Harvard Law Review Association*, *106*(8), 1707–1791. https://doi.org/10.2307/1341787

Hayhoe, R., Pan, J., & Zha, Q. (2016). *Canadian universities in China's transformation: An untold story*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.

 

Heng, T. T. (2017). Voices of Chinese international students in USA colleges: "I want to tell them that...". *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(5), 833–850. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293873

Henze, J., & Zhu, J. (2012). Current research on Chinese students studying abroad. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 7(1), 90–104. https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2012.7.1.90

Hiraldo, P. (2010). The role of critical race theory in higher education. *The Vermont Connection*, *31*(1), 7.

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2008). The free association narrative interview method. In: L. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 296–315). Sage.

Iftikar, J. S., & Museus, S. D. (2018). On the utility of Asian critical (AsianCrit) theory in the field of education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *31*(10), 935–949. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2018.1522008

James, C. E. (2001). Multiculturalism, diversity, and education in the Canadian context: The search for an inclusive pedagogy. In C. A. Grant & J. L. Lei (Eds.), *Global constructions of multicultural education: Theories and realities* (pp. 169–200). Routledge.

Joshi, S. (2022). North–South relations: colonialism, empire and international order. In P. G. Harris (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of global environmental politics* (pp. 309–321). Routledge.

Kaźmierska, K. A. J. A. (2004). Narrative interview as a method of biographical analysis. In J. Fikfak, F. Adam, & D. Garz (Eds.), *Qualitative research: Different perspectives - emerging trends* (pp. 153–171). ZRC Publishing.

Koo, K. K., Yao, C. W., & Gong, H. J. (2021). "It is not my fault": Exploring experiences and perceptions of racism among international students of color during COVID-19. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000343

Kuo, B. C. H., & Roysircar, G. (2004). Predictors of acculturation for Chinese adolescents in Canada: Age of arrival, length of stay, social class, and English reading ability. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, *32*(3), 143–154. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2004.tb00367

Leach, J. (2020, May 14). From SARS to COVID-19: Putting the spotlight on anti-Asian racism. *Ryerson Today.* https://www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2020/05/from-sars-to-covid-19-putting-thespotlight-on-anti-asian-racism/

Lee, J. J. (2007). Neo-Racism toward International Students: A Critical Need for Change. *About Campus*, *11*(6), 28–30. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.194.

Lee, J. J. (2020). Neo-racism and the criminalization of China. *Journal of International Students, 10*(4), i-vi. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i4.2929

Lee, J. J., & Rice, C. (2007). Welcome to America? International student perceptions of discrimination. *Higher Education*, *53*(3), 381–409. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-005-4508-3

Leonardo, Z. (2013). Race frameworks: A multidimensional theory of racism and education. Teachers College Press.

Levine-Rasky, C. (2000). The practice of whiteness among teacher candidates. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *10*(3), 263–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210000200060

Lim, W. M. (2024). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/144135822412

Liu, H. (2023). From model minority to yellow peril: The shifting narratives of Asian international students. *Journal of International Students*, *13*(1), 79–84. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v13i1.4686

Long, F. (2022). The mystery of national identity of Chinese international students amid the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of western neo-racism and Chinese nationalism. *Studies in Social Justice*, *16*(1), 162–181. https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v16i1.2551

Ma, H., & Miller, C. (2021). Trapped in a double bind: Chinese overseas student anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Communication*, *36*(13), 1598–1605. https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1775439

Martin, F; Pirbhai-Illich, F & Pete, S. (2017). Beyond culturally responsive pedagogy: Decolonizing teacher education. In F. Pirbhai-Illich, S. Pete, &

F. Martin (Eds.), *Culturally responsive pedagogy: working towards decolonization, indigeneity and interculturalism* (pp. 235–255). Palgrave Macmillan.

Miller, R., Liu, K., & Ball, A. F. (2023). Misunderstanding the campaign against CRT: Absurdity and white supremacy in attacks on teaching and teacher education. *Thresholds in Education*, *46*(1), 139–156.

Mizock, L., Harkins, D., & Morant, R. (2011). Researcher interjecting in qualitative race research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *12*(2), 1–16.

Moir, M (2020, May 27). Despite hesitations, these Chinese students say they still plan to study in Canada. *University Affairs.* https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/despite-hesitations-these-chinese-students-say-they-still-plan-to-study-in-canada/

Mok, T. A. (2015). A long-term therapeutic journey with an Asian "parachute kid." *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *6*(3), 281-288. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039378

Museus, S. D., & Kiang, P. N. (2009). Deconstructing the model minority myth and how it contributes to the invisible minority reality in higher education research. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *2009*(142), 5–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.292

Museus, S. D. & Iftikar, J. (2014). An Asian critical theory (AsianCrit) framework. In S. D. Museus (Ed.), *Asian American Students in Higher Education* (pp. 95–98). Routledge.

Mwangi, C. A. G., & Fries–Britt, S. (2015). Black within Black: The perceptions of Black immigrant collegians and their US college experience. *About Campus*, *20*(2), 16–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.21187

Nicholson, K. (2021, March 23). Surveys find more than 1,000 self-reported incidents of anti-Asian racism since start of pandemic: report. *CBC.* https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/asian-racism-hate-canada-pandemic-1.5959788

Ortega, Y. (2021). "I wanted to be white": understanding power asymmetries of whiteness and racialisation. *Whiteness and Education*, *6*(2), 147–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2021.1920046

Pechenkina, E., & Liu, H. (2018). Instruments of white supremacy: People of colour resisting white domination in higher education. *Whiteness and Education*, *3*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2017.1423242

Poon, O., Squire, D., Kodama, C., Byrd, A., Chan, J., Manzano, L., Furr, S., & Bishundat, D. (2016). A critical review of the model minority myth in selected literature on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in higher education. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(2), 469–502. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315612205

Popadiuk, N. E. (2009). Unaccompanied Asian secondary students studying in Canada. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, *31*(4), 229–243. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-009-9080-6

Popadiuk, N. E., & Marshall, S. (2011). East Asian international student experiences as learners of English as an additional language: Implications for school counsellors. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *45*(3), 220–239.

Shah, V. (2018). Leadership for social justice through the lens of self-identified, racially and other-privileged leaders. *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, *6*(1), 1–41.

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity*, *48*(3), 1291–1303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3

Squire, D., Yao, C. W., & Zenner, K. (2023). Neo-Racism, academic advisor intercultural (in) competence, and the hindering of international student success. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2022.2147014

Smith, L. (2006). Introduction. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *19*(5), 549–552. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390600886197

Smith, R. A., & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *35*(6), 699–713. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.08.004

Sólorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(4), 471–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110063365

Subreenduth, S. (2008). Deconstructing the politics of a differently colored transnational identity. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *11*(1), 41–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320701845780

Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. C. (2007). Racial microaggressions and the Asian American experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *13*(1), 72–81. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.13.1.72

Tamtik, M. (2019). School-aged children and decisions for studying abroad in Canada. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *33*(5), 1052–1064. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-05-2018-0156

Tavares, V. (2021). Feeling excluded: international students experience equity, diversity and inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.2008536

Toronto District School Board. (n.d.). *Toronto international student programs* [Brochure]. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/International/docs/TISPBrochure.pdf

Traynham, M. A. (2020). Adopting whiteness: How African Americans participate in perpetuating and sustaining racial dominance and institutional racism [Doctoral dissertation, Lewis and Clark College].

Trilokekar, R. D., & Tamtik, M. (2020). A comparative analysis of K-12 international education policies of Ontario and Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, *193*, 32–48.

Tsuda, T. (2022). Racism without racial difference? Co-ethnic racism and national hierarchies among Nikkeijin ethnic return migrants in Japan. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *45*(4), 595–615. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1993296

Wang, M. T., Kiuru, N., Degol, J. L., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2018). Friends, academic achievement, and school engagement during adolescence: A social network

approach to peer influence and selection effects. *Learning and Instruction*, *58*, 148–160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.06.003

Weis, L. (1995). Identity formation and the processes of "othering": Unraveling sexual threads. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, *9*(1), 17–33.

Wu, X., & Tarc, P. (2021). Chinese international secondary school students as flexible citizens: toward cosmopolitan learning. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2021.1904382

Yao, C.W. (2018). "They don't care about you": First-year Chinese international students' experiences with neo-racism and othering on a US campus. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 30*(1), 87–101.

Yao, C.W. (2015). Sense Of belonging in international students: Making the case against integration to U.S. institutions of higher education. *Comparative and International Higher Education*, *7*(1), 6–10.

Yao, C. W., Mwangi, G.C.A., & Brown, M.V.K. (2018). Exploring the intersection of transnationalism and critical race theory: A critical race analysis of international student experiences in the United States. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *22*(1), 38–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1497968

Zheng, S. (2014). Academic achievement, school engagement, and well-being of international/visa students in the Toronto District School Board's secondary school. Toronto District School Board. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/reports/InternationalVisaStudents2005-06%20to%202012-13.pdf

Zheng, Y., Goh, E., & Wen, J. (2020). The effects of misleading media reports about COVID-19 on Chinese tourists' mental health: a perspective article. *Anatolia*, *31*(2), 337–340. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2020.1747208

 