# International Students and Determinants of Their Confidence in the Police

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**Abstract**

International students serve as economic drivers and global (international) focal points in the academic institutions of the United States. Their rising numbers and significant economic contributions have led to growing concerns about their needs, resources, safety and security as transit-status individuals living outside the country of their birth. The purpose of this study is (i) to reflect on trends, contributions, needs and characteristics of international students and (ii) to explore the level and determinants of their confidence in the police. A review of literature and analysis of data from the World Value Survey on international students, their demographic factors and their confidence in the polices how that the transit-status of international students makes them a 'distinctive' group that has higher confidence in the police compared to native-born students and adult immigrants from their countries of origin. Furthermore, ethnicity and higher educational levels are key determinants and positively co-related with their level of confidence in the police.

**Keywords:** Expatriates, Transit Resident Status, Global Professionals

**Introduction**

The number of international persons living in a country other than their country of birth reached 244 million in 2015 for the world as a whole. In comparison to the number in 2000, this is an increase of 71 million, or 41%. Nearly two-thirds of all international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). Northern America hosts the third largest number of international migrants (54million), followed by Africa (21million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9million each) and Oceania (8million).Most of these migrants worldwide originate from middle-income countries (157 million in 2015) and live in high-income countries. India has the largest diaspora (16million) in the world, followed by Mexico (12million), Russia (11 million), China (10million), Bangladesh (7million), and Pakistan and Ukraine (6million each).In

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addition to a continuous rise in international mobility, there is a noteworthy shift in foreign-born demographics towards younger and more educated immigration. In 2015, the number of international migrants below age 20 reached 37 million, 15% of the global migrant stock. This trend is associated with the greater flow of Asian origin immigrants, many of whom go outside of Asia on student visas and/or as part of temporary work programs. The world-wide profile of recent increases in those foreign born is more educated and dominated by those of Asian origin, which differs from those of earlier decades and negates the stereotype of uneducated and illegal immigration.

The impact of the rise of educated and younger immigrants has been felt in the US like in any other country of the world. The foreign-born now constitute 13.5% of the U.S. population, up from 12.9% in 2010.For decades, most of the immigrants, 51%, came to the United States from Latin America (including 26% from Mexico) compared to 31% from Asia. However, from 2010-2016, only 28% of immigrants came from Latin America compared to 58% of much younger and more educated immigrants from Asia.

Due to a continuous rise in younger international migrants, in addition to an already significant number of immigrants in the country, scholars started exploring the impact of each constituent group of the immigrant population: men, women and international students. In the past, only adult male migrants captured the attention of scholars and policy makers; however, it has now been realized that in addition to men, women and younger immigrants also have varying immigration and migration tracks, opportunities, experiences and challenges in their countries of origin and destinations. Therefore, it has become imperative to treat each group as distinct to understand and examine them. An additional change in the focus of research also occurred in that previous studies had focused on the integration and assimilation of immigrants' traditions and cultures. In recent studies, scholars have begun to investigate how immigrants view, perceive and evaluate social institutions, especially the criminal justice system. Several questions have surfaced: Do the female and male immigrants and international students view the criminal justice system differently? Does the transit status of international students play any role? How do characteristics of ethnicity, class, age, concerns about safety and security, and memberships in higher educational institutions intersect with confidence in the police? These investigations are important as research has shown that people who have higher confidence in the police feel safer and are more likely to call police for help and to report crime.

Second, it has been assumed that confidence in the criminal justice system may enhance the contributions of expatriates in the development of the society by enhancing their understanding of the law, culture and society. On the other hand, police, as a public service agency of a democracy, are not only expected to perform their responsibilities constitutionally, but to reach out and connect with all the people, groups within larger communities, and consumers of their services for the greater good. In the past the research focus was on the integration of adult male migrants rather than studying each constituent of immigrant populations. Consequently, there are limited numbers of studies to examine immigrants' confidence in the police, and few of those are exclusively devoted to examining international students' confidence in the police. This study fills an existing void in the literature by studying the impact of ethnicity, education level, class, safety and security and transit student status on confidence level in the police.

The specific objectives of the study are to (i) reflection trends, contributions, needs and characteristics of the international students and (ii) to explore the level and determinants of their confidence in the police.

**Literature review:**

With the two specific objectives of this study in mind, an extensive review of the literature was conducted and recorded. Section 1 addresses studies related to the trends, contributions, needs and characteristics of the international students. Section 2 looks into studies that include the socio-demographics of international students and their impact on their confidence in the police.

**Section 1:** According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, international students are those who are not residents of their country of study, or those who received their prior education in another country. Along the same lines, the definition of OECD (2013) used in this research is that international students are those who have crossed borders to study.

**The first group of researchers** focused on contributions of international students to American academic institutions. The Institute of International Education (2010) reported that international students at higher education institutions serve as economic drivers and multicultural providers. Hegarty (2014) and Startz (2017) reported that approximately 1,253,705 international students inject $22 billion into the US economy each year. These students are not only assets to the universities but also to the cities and states. The state of Massachusetts alone, with a dense number

of students, enjoys almost \$1.5 billion in benefits each year, and the thickly international student populated states of New York and California claim \$2.5 billion and \$3.2 billion, respectively. International students subsidize American students because a non-resident pays higher tuition and receives less financial aid. This is especially true at public universities. For example, at the University of California, the world's largest research university system, Californians pay about \$14,000 in yearly tuition and fees. International students pay approximately \$41,000, which is roughly triple. In addition, about one-third of tuition is turned around and spent on financial aid, almost none of which goes to international students. Therefore, the effective price difference is even larger than the list price indicates (Startz 2018).

Almost 62% of institutions have increased their recruitment efforts to ensure the attraction of international students. Over the years the US has not only attracted those professionals trained in other countries but also young minds to fill the void in jobs or in unpopular programs where the native-born are not interested because of low salaries, locations and/or the nature of the job. Brighter international students stayed, while others returned to get better jobs in their countries of origin and at times served as focal points for the United States.

Bevis (2002), Harrison (2002), and Lang (2017) indicate that international students increase diversity, add new perspectives to classroom conversations and improve awareness and appreciation for other countries and cultures.

The research works of Slaughter& Rhoades (2004) show that international students bring knowledge and skills in many fields, mainly in sciences, engineering and technology. International students typically occupy a greater percentage of graduate programs than undergraduate programs, thereby increasing their chances of staying in the U.S. on a long-term basis through employment sponsorships (Chellaraj et.al, 2008).

**The second group of scholars** focused on the trends and rate of mobility of international students. According to Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley (2009) students have become increasingly globally mobile and, in fact, there is currently a global market of students and academic staff.

According to Heckman & LaFontaine (2010), Guruz (2010) and Douglass & Edelstein (2009) although many universities tout the benefits of international students, in the future there will be a decline in the number of students coming to study in the United States.There are numerous reasons for this decline, including countries that want to retain their own students and students going to other countries and the USA

not being the only destination for foreign education.

**The third group of scholars** focused on the needs and characteristics of the international students. Challenges for the international students start once they begin thinking of going outside their country of origin to pursue higher studies. Choosing a country, location and institution, determining expenses, considering the recommendations of family and friends, and the ranking of institutions are all important decisions. Due to the large flow of applications in immigration offices, most students just accept moving if they get an opportunity. Most do not wait to explore information and sometimes their knowledge of the adopted country is purely based on peer information.

Further challenges start when they actually arrive in the adopted country. Even with prior information about what to expect, they still cannot really be ready until they land in their situation after having crossed the barrier of visa processing. International students may feel a deep sense of loss when leaving their families and friends, homesickness, loss of social status, fear, a sense of insignificance, a lack of belonging, alienation, lack of connectedness, etc., while establishing comparable social support systems in the United States (Sandhu, 1995). On arrival in the US, studies have examined the difficulties of international students such as language (Stevens, Emil & Yamashita (2010), Lee & Rice (2007), Mori (2000), Hayes & Ling (1994)); culture, food, customs and social support(Baba and Hosoda (2014), Mallinckrodt & Leong (1992)); financial constraints (Mori (2000), Chen (1999)), and on top of everything, performance in academics by quickly adapting to the new learning techniques and methods (De Wit (2012), Knight & De Wit (1995)). All these issues have led to a concentration of international students in a few institutions, cities and states where those areas are ready to some extent to understand, accommodate and assist international students in their problems.

Bianchi (2013) identifies the provision of two types of services: Core services, which are related to teaching and learning and peripheral services, which are related to the living conditions and the environment of the host country, such as security, cultural and social activities, accommodation, transportation, and visa/entry requirements. Kelo et al. (2010) further added that international students have different types of needs through different stages of their internationalization. He identifies three stages in the process. The first comprises the pre-arrival needs; the second, arrival needs; and the last, needs during their stay. Perez-Encinas and Rodriguez-Pomeda (2018) added one more set of needs related to reintegration, which

were related to the stage when international students return to their countries of origin. Lee and Rice (2007) showed that not all issues international students face can be problematized as matters of adjustment, as is done in much research, but that some of the more serious challenges international students face are due to inadequacies within the host society.

In sum, the available literature shows that international students are a distinct group of migrants with a transit status living in a country other than the country of their birth. International students are moving to many countries including the United States. Studies also show that the countries of birth of international students are trying to retain them, but international students are extremely mobile and becoming part of the global market at a high pace. Studies also show that international students need strong academic as well as city and state receptivity and support to succeed in academics when they are in other countries.

One can contend that international students, because of their transit-status, will have different perceptions about themselves, social institutions, and society at large. Therefore, this study will examine:

**Assumption 1:** International students, because of their unique status, circumstances, needs, and characteristics, are more likely not to have the same perceptions of the police as native-born students and adult immigrants from their countries of origin.

**Part2: Socio-economic demographic characteristics of international students and their confidence in the police:**

Police–community relations scholars developed three models, i.e., the demographic model, contextual model, and police–citizen contact model, to study the determinants of public confidence in the police. These three models are applied by scholars mainly to understand the adult immigrants' and migrants' perceptions in comparison to the native-born. Research works of the scholars are gathered under the three models presented below.

The first group of scholars, Blumer (1958), Carter (1985), Skogan (2009), Weitzer and Tuch (2004), Menjivar and Bejarano (2004), Bobo and Tuan (2006), Hinds and Murphy (2007), Holmes and Smith (2008), Piatkowska (2015), Tyler (1990), and Wu (2014) focused on the **demographic determinants** of confidence in the police. Race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education were discussed as the predominant predictors. However, race received the most attention in the studies, showing that minorities have low confidence in the police. These scholars believe that in a society, group orientation towards social institutions, including the police, springs

from a sense of group position ('group position theory') that involves group identity, out-group stereotyping, preferred group status, and perceived threat. Citizens' own judgements about the degree of fairness and level of respect in treatment ('procedural justice') attract or alienate them from the police.

**The context-level model** included four contextual variables: community disorder, informal collective security, having been victimized, and fear of crime as determinants of public confidence in the police. Cao et al. (1996), Reisig and Giacomazzi (1998), and Sampson and Bartusch (1998) said that citizens are less satisfied with the police when they perceive more crime and higher levels of disorder in the community. Cao et al. (1996) and Skogan (2009) noted that confidence in a neighborhood is a sign of positive association, which leads to confidence in the police. Decker (1981), Koeing (1980), and Parks (1984) found that when people or their significant others become victims of crime, they develop a fear of crime and lose their trust in the police.

**Police-citizen contact model** scholars, including Chu et al. (2005), Bride ball and Jesilow (2008), Correia et al. (1996), and Mastrofski (1981), believe that the connectedness and visibility of the police in communities strongly influence public perceptions, their confidence, and, ultimately, the degree to which they feel the criminal justice is approachable. Focused on the contacts with the police as an indicator of how the public feels about the police, scholars classified police–citizen contacts as voluntary or non-voluntary. Most of the time, voluntary contacts are positive, whereas non-voluntary contacts are less often positive.

In conclusion, scholars have used three models to determine public confidence in the police: Demographic, Contextual, and Police-citizen. Those using demographic models found five variables – ethnicity/race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education – as determinants of confidence. The contextual model included community disorder, collective security, and fear of crime as indicators of confidence in the police. Police-community models focused on positive interactions having a positive impact on police–public confidence. Thus, scholars have studied the interactions, perceptions, and expectations of the public, including immigrants, to determine their confidence in the police. There are some studies focused on male migrants, and the conclusions of those studies were assumed to be applicable to other populations as part of the respective immigrant communities. However, as we know now that international students may not have the same perceptions of the police simply because of their unique placement within their communities, cultures, ethnicities, and

societies.

Thus, recognizing the complex trajectories, outcomes of the migration and distinctiveness of international students in the light of the literature review related to the three models of citizens' confidence in the police, this study will explore the following:

**Assumption 2:** Determining factors such as sense of security, social class, education level, and ethnicity may not have the same impact on international students' confidence in the police as they do for native-born students.

**Methodology:**

**The sample**

To examine international students' perceptions of the police, data from the 2010–12 World Values Survey (WVS) was analyzed. The researchers found the 2010–12 WVS to be an ideal source for the data, as it contains all the information required to compare the level of confidence in the police of international students with that of native-born students. The 2010-12 WVS has also provided good information for exploring the relationship between ethnicity, education, social class, safety of neighborhoods and international students' confidence level in law enforcement.

The WVS shows that 6352students were contacted to participate in the research. Out of the 6241 students who actually participated in the research, 5549 were native-born and 162 were expatriates. Those included 79 born in the U.S. and 8 international students residing in the United States.

The central dependent variable used in the analysis is the respondent's confidence in the police. To measure this concept, the WVS includes the direct question, "How much confidence do you have in the police?" The responses were rated on a 4-point scale: 'a great deal', 'quite a lot', 'not very much,' and 'not at all'. Following previous research (Cao et al., 1996), we collapsed this item into a dichotomized variable (1='great deal' or 'quite a lot' and 2='not very much' or 'not at all').

The major individual-level independent variable is immigrant status. To measure this concept at a nominal level, the WVS includes the question 'Were you born in this country?' The options respondents can select are: 1=I was born in this country and, 2=I am an immigrant to this country.

There are several demographic variables included in the analysis to assess the impact of other individual-level characteristics on confidence in the police: employment, education, ethnicity, socioeconomic status,and the security of the

neighborhood. The first, the employment status of the respondents, was measured by asking the question: 'Are you employed now or not?' Answers are recorded as 'Yes, has paid employment'=1–3 and 'No, no paid employment'=4–8; this category includes both native-born and immigrant students.

The respondents' education is measured with the question: 'What is the highest educational level that you have attained?' Answers are coded on a 9-point scale (1=no education to 9=university degree or higher). Respondents' socioeconomic status is measured using the following question: 'People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or to the upper or lower class. Which class would you describe yourself as belonging to?' The answers were coded as follows: 1=upper class, 2=upper middle class, 3=lower middle class, 4=working class, or 5=lower class. Gender was coded as a binary variable: 1 for females and 0 for males.

Ethnicity variables for the United States were 'Non-Hispanic Whites=1', 'Hispanic Whites=2', 'Asians=3', 'Blacks=4', and 'Others=5'.

**Analysis and Results**: To achieve the objectives of the study, the responses of all the 6241 participants who responded to the question on the confidence level are analyzed and presented in **Table 1:**

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of police confidence among native-born and international students**

| Item that measures confidence in the police | Native-born students (number & percentage) | | International students (Number & percentage) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A great deal/quite a lot | 3064(55.2) | | 105(64.8) | |
| Not very much/not at all | 2485(44.78) | | 57(35.2) | |
| Total | 5549(100) | | 162(100) | |

Table 1 shows that, first; over 55% of native-born students have confidence in the police compared to 64.8% of international students. Second, 44.7% of native-born compared to 35.2% of international students have little or no confidence in the police. Therefore, contingency table analysis comparing confidence levels in the police of

international and native-born populations clearly demonstrate that there is a significant difference in the confidence level in the police. This finding also contradicts the previous research that foreign-born adults have lower confidence in the police compared to the native-born adults.

The objectives of this research required a cross-level interaction between transit status and confidence level, as well as an interaction between ethnicity, social class, sense of security, and education. Table 2 below shows the impact of regressed independent variables on the confidence level of international and native students.

**Table 2: The determinants of confidence in the police**

| Native-born Students | B | SE | SC | Sig. | Zero order | Partial |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnicity | .008 | .044 | .065 | .000*** | .386 | .390 |
| Social Class | .008 | .000 | .015 | .311 | .089 | .027 |
| Highest Education | .008 | .004 | .028 | .05* | .050 | -.040 |
| Sense of Security | .074 | .009 | .121 | .000*** | .001 | -.095 |
| N: 5469 | | | | | | |
| R: .143 | | R Square: .021 | | | Sig. F Change: .000*** | |
| International Students | B | SE | SC | Sig. | Zero order | Partial |
| Ethnicity | .007 | .000 | .212 | .022* | .213 | -.214 |
| Social Class | .049 | .049 | .093 | .317 | .071 | .095 |
| Highest Education | -.064 | .025 | -.227 | .013* | -.251 | -.232 |
| Sense of Security | .013 | .059 | .027 | .821 | .011 | .022 |
| N: 162 | | | | | | |
| R: .330 | | R Square:.109 | | | Sig. F Change:.01** | |

*p≤.05, **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

The multiple regression results indicate, first, that all variables together explain .2% (i.e., R Square=.021) of the variance in police confidence among native-born students compared to .10% (i.e., R Square=.109) among international students. Second, both ethnicity and higher education are significant predictors of confidence in the police among native-born and international students. Third, security in the

neighborhood is also a significant predictor of confidence in police among native-born students.

**Results and implications:** The question of student confidence in the police in the United States has received little attention from both immigrant and police scholars. The success of police work relies on all sections of the public having confidence in the police. Therefore, understanding the determinants of confidence in the police in international students, one of the fastest growing significant sections of society, has relevance for the scholars of both immigrant and police studies. During the study, three major findings emerged.

First, in contrast with earlier studies and our expectations, we find that international students have higher confidence in the police compared to native-born students. We consider this finding to be contradictory to previous research and the conclusions of the many scholars who have argued that immigrants as a whole are more likely to see the police as a symbol of the power of the dominant group or individuals, i.e., the native-born, and thus to hold police in lower regard. By applying this argument, our findings indicate that unlike immigrant adults, international students view the police more favorably than native-born students. This confirms our study assumption that immigrants consist of men, women and millennial (younger people and/students) and each of the constituents may have different perceptions of police.

Second, among native-born and international students, the significant predictors of confidence in the police are ethnicity and education, which indicates that an individual's confidence in the police depends on their social standing within the society. Thus, analysis of the results of this study confirms previous findings of Demographic Model scholars Blumer (1958), Carter (1985), Skogan (2009), Weitzer and Tuch (2004), Menjivar and Bejarano (2004), Bobo and Tuan (2006), Hinds and Murphy (2007), Holmes and Smith (2008), Piatkowska (2015), Tyler (1990), and Wu (2014). Analysis of the results of this study also shows that native-born students' confidence in the police is associated with a sense of security or worries about crime, which confirms the previous findings of Contextual Model scholars, including Huebner et al. (2004), Jackson and Bradford (2009), Jackson and Sunshine (2007), and Weitzer and Tuch (2004).

In summary, the data suggest that international students become less confident in the police as a result of racial/ethnic bias (Demographic Model) and native-born students become less confident in police both because of worries about crime and ethnicity

(mix of Contextual and Demographic Models). This further confirms that international students have different perceptions and determinants of confidence in the police than donative-born students and adults of their own countries.

This study's findings imply a need for efforts by law enforcement to reach out and give special attention to this unique group. Trained professionals serving in community policing and international units could, with a little effort, undergo additional training to understand the needs and concerns of students. This would not only expedite the embedness of the students into society but also involve them in community policing programs to make their surroundings safe for themselves and others in the community. Universities also need to develop tailored provision of services related to each stage of internationalization of students to attract as well as facilitate them as their economic drivers and global connectors.

With increasing numbers of international students entering the international arena, an in-depth understanding of their needs and concerns will be required in the near future to effectively serve them. Nevertheless, the current study satisfied its main purpose by examining the unique status of international students as a fast-growing international professional force and their distinctive contributions, needs, and the determinants of their confidence in the police of their adopted countries.

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