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RESISTING THE VICTIMIZATION:
EXAMINING IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS OF
RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND
TRANSNATIONALITY AMONG FIRST-
GENERATION CHINESE MIGRANT
WOMEN IN U.S. ACADEMIA

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**RESISTING THE VICTIMIZATION: EXAMINING
IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS OF RACE, GENDER,
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GENERATION CHINESE MIGRANT WOMEN IN U.S.
ACADEMIA**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Communication**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Liang Yuan 梁原 (1954-2011). Her death struck me and kicked me out of my comfort shell. Her daily negotiations and struggles as a woman through China's deeply rooted patriarchy-structured family relations, and cultural, political, and economic system contribute very strongly to my understanding of feminism. Her story inspired my academic career and continuously encourages me to be a brave, independent, and free woman.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my 11 interviewees, whose trust and dedication made this project happen. Their struggles as migrant professional women through transnational white heteronormative patriarchy-structured family relations and the U.S. capitalist, liberal, and imperialist system contribute to my understanding of feminism in another way. Their stories and my self-reflection co-constructed this project and keep pushing me to think more critically about race, gender, and sexuality.

This dissertation is finally dedicated to all of the Chinese migrant women who continue to experience, negotiate, and fight discriminative treatments from their family, workplace, and social life because of their race, gender, and sexuality.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explored the daily experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and/or work in universities and colleges in the United States of America. Drawing on previous scholarship on whiteness studies and Asian American gender and sexuality studies with femiqueer perspectives, the primary goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of these Chinese migrant women's daily experiences and negotiations with power relations concerning race, gender, and sexuality, and to challenge the dominant perceptions and constructions of Chinese/Asian women. By analyzing their narratives of everyday experiences, I found that white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies have been globally promoted, normalized, and disseminated along with the internationalization of U.S. nationalism and imperialism. These ideologies instructed and influenced these Chinese women's notions of race, gender, sexuality, and their transnational relations. These ideologies also otherized these women through their

relational experiences with family, academia, and social life because of their race, gender, and sexuality. However, simultaneously, these women's daily negotiations and engagement with power hierarchy and their survival in U.S. academia and the society reinforced, shaped, interrupted, and challenged the existing power hierarchy and the racial formation of Asian America.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement	1
Historical Background.....	5
U.S. Academia.....	11
Significance and Goals of the Study	14
Research Questions	17
PREVIEW	18
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	22
Whiteness	22
Whiteness studied as location and standpoint of Whites.....	25
Whiteness studied in historical and intersectional contexts.	27
Whiteness studied as discursive practices and transnational ideologies.	29
Situating whiteness in my study.	31
(Racialized) Gender and Sexuality.....	33
Racialized gender and feminist perspectives.....	36
Racialized sexuality and queerness.	43
Femiqueer Perspectives.....	50
SUMMARY	52

CHAPTER III: METHOD	53
Data Collection.....	53
Interview.....	53
Interviewees.....	57
Positionality and Reflexivity.....	60
Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	64
SUMMARY	67
CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS	68
Rethinking Positionality.....	68
Rethinking racialization.....	69
Rethinking racialized gender and sexuality.....	78
Summary and reflection.....	92
Exploring the <i>Otherness</i> in U.S. Academia: “You Don’t Belong.”.....	99
You don’t belong to the classroom.....	100
You don’t belong to the research area.....	104
You don’t belong to the social-capital network.....	107
Summary and reflection.....	115
Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance.....	120
Participating as an act of resistance.....	122
Everyday negotiations for resistance.....	129

Summary and reflection.....	137
SUMMARY	142
CHAPTER V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	144
Theoretical Implications.....	149
Whiteness studies.	149
Femiqueer perspectives	151
Critical Intercultural Communication.....	153
Methodological Reflections	155
Challenges in interviews.....	155
Challenges with analysis.	157
Limitations and Future Research.....	159
Conclusion.....	161
Appendix A IRB Approval.....	164
Appendix B Consent Form	167
Appendix C Invitation Email Letter	169
Appendix D Interview Guide.....	171
REFERENCES	173

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Together with migrants from East Asian countries such as South Korea and Japan, Chinese migrants are today assumed to be “successful,” “doing well,” and “model minority” as they are integrated into the U.S. economy (e.g., Kawai, 2005; Osajima, 1998; Sun & Starosta, 2006). However, they have been simultaneously marginalized and demarcated by immigration restriction and cultural exclusion as “foreign others” and/or “yellow peril,” according to the various historical/political eras (e.g., Eguchi & Ding, 2017; Ono, 2005). Accordingly, everyday lived-experiences of Chinese migrants continue to explicate, elucidate, and elaborate the legacy of anti-Asian migration discourse of exclusion. Such migration policy and legislation explicated the historical continuum of racist, sexist, and capitalist foundation of the United States (e.g., Mohanty, 1991, Tuan, 1999). The institution did not legally allow the naturalization of Chinese migrants to become full U.S. American citizens in order to center and maintain White supremacy. Migrants from Asia were strictly limited from entering the United States until 1965 (Kawai, 2005).

Chinese migrants have historically been suffering from exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization due to race-based and gender/sex-based immigration policies shaped by ideologies of whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and capitalism. They are also greatly exploited racially and sexually to meet the needs of economic development and heterosexist patriarchy. At the same time, they are forced to be silent to serve, conform to, and to survive the structural and ideological domination. Thus, to study Chinese migrants, Nakayama (2004) suggests that scholars situate their experiences in both domestic (China

and U.S.) and international contexts. However, little is known about how Chinese migrants, especially Chinese migrant women, experience power relations and power hierarchies regarding their race, gender, and sexuality in the United States.

My dissertation project explores lived-experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and/or work in universities and colleges in the United States, particularly considering race, gender, and sexuality. I define first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia as those who were born in mainland China and later came to the United States as migrants, studying in a U.S. doctoral program and/or working in U.S. academia. Mainland China continues to be one of top sending countries of academic students and scholars to the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Despite the large number of Chinese academics migrating to the United States, their lived experiences in intersecting contexts of home, workplace, and social life remain often overlooked. Thus, this study focuses on exploring everyday experiences of Chinese migrant women who were from mainland China. Moreover, I specifically use “first-generation” to define these women who were Chinese born to differentiate them from first-generation migrants’ children who were born in the United States, often called as “second-generation” or American-born Chinese (Yung, 1999). The reason of emphasizing on the first-generation is to more precisely define the research subjects and to pay attention to their transnational embodied experiences of race, gender, and sexuality, implicating often invisible power relations rooted in whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and capitalism. A number of researches have studied on Chinese migrant women, yet a lack of studies has examined their nuanced everyday experiences.

Existing literature about Chinese migrant women (e.g., Chen, 2004; King, 1999; Lee, 1998; Nemoto, 2006; Shi, 2009) often highlight on Chinese women's names, the anti-footbinding¹ discourse, Chinese migrant female workers, and Chinese women's interracial relationships (often discussed within the category of Asian American women), as well as their cross-cultural identities. Furthermore, existing literature about foreign-born scholars (e.g., Chen, 2014; Foote, Li, Monk, & Theobald, 2008; Kim, Wolf-Wendel, & Twombly, 2011) often focus on experiences of their academic life, productivity, cultural identities, and institutional oppressions. Although these studies have collectively challenged the common perceptions of Chinese female scholars and oppressions that they have been facing, additional studies are needed to present their heterogeneous identities, transnational experiences, and actions.

In some mainstream whiteness studies and feminist studies, Chinese and Chinese American women have often been portrayed as a homogenous group and categorized with women from other Asian ethnic groups under the umbrella term "Asian/Asian American women." They are also often positioned as one-dimensional, passive, and oppressed victims of racism and sexism, as well as voiceless research objects who have no agency and do not take resistant actions. As Lorde (2015) asserts, white women's history and struggles are often assumed to be the only legitimate experiences that can represent all women. At the same time, non-white women and their histories are

¹ Foot binding was an outdated custom in China in which young girls' feet were tightly bound. The intent was to modify the young girls' feet to meet the contemporary beauty standard. It was practiced beginning in the Song dynasty and was eliminated in the early 20th century.

noticeable only as “decorations or examples of female victimization” (p. 92).

Furthermore, these Chinese women’s sexuality is rarely discussed in related scholarship, due to the historical alienation of sexuality from women and the matrix of oppressions these women encounter (Lowe, 1996). This study focuses on Chinese women in U.S. academia because they are a unique group. More specifically, their experiences demonstrate an on-going interplay of paradox between privilege and marginalization. These women who are studying in a doctoral program and/or working at colleges and universities in the United States, are constructed as elites because of their global mobility, cultural capital, and economic privilege. Simultaneously, they are also marginalized in the U.S. society and U.S. academia due to the anti-Chinese racism intersecting with stereotypical images of Chinese women. Thus, more studies about first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia and their first-hand narratives of their experiences based on race, gender, and sexuality are rather necessary.

I situate this study within the theoretical lens of whiteness studies (e.g., Nakayama & Krizek, 1995; Shome 1996), gender, and sexuality studies (e.g., Eguchi, 2017; Eng, 2001, 2010; Shimizu, 2007) with femiqueer perspectives (e.g., Calafell, 2012; Lee, 2014; Yep; 2013). My study focuses on the narratives of lived-experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia that are influenced by existing power relations embedded in ideologies of whiteness, heteronormativity, and patriarchy, in order to destabilize historical legacies of racialized and sexualized constructions of these women as being inferior, quiet, submissive, and passive. The study also explores their negotiations and interruptions of heteropatriarchal and racial structures as they live

through family life, workplace relations, and public interactions, as well as through how they construct their subjectivities.

Historical Background

In order to examine lived-experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia and how their narratives contest relations of power, it is imperative to provide background information about their migrant journeys under race-, sex-, gender-based discriminations. Chinese migrant women are heavily influenced by systemic exclusions, discriminations, and oppressions, but they also constitute a significant part to negotiate these struggles. Migration policies during the pre-World War II period barred entry into the United States of most Asian women. One factor was that families were viewed as a threat to the efficiency and exploitability of Asian male labors (e.g., Eng, 2001; Espiritu, 2008; Mohanty, 1991). The U.S. capitalist economy was designed to ensure maximum profitability from its workforce and the minimum of the costs of reproduction. Hence, Asian women were deemed to be “nonproductive” family members and thus were excluded from immigration (Espiritu, 2008). Asian women also were rejected because of their capability of reproduction (Espiritu, 2008). The United States did not want Asian children who could claim U.S. citizenship if they were born in the United States. The Page Act of 1875 restricted Asian women’s immigration to the United States (Chan, 1991). The law targeted Chinese female prostitutes and considered all Chinese women as prostitutes. Singling out Chinese prostitutes among the general population of prostitutes exposed the realities of heterosexism and racism in U.S. immigration laws (Mohanty, 1991). To legitimize the exclusion of Chinese, the law deemed the sexuality of Chinese women as immoral and inferior to that of White women

and claimed that Chinese as a race were fundamentally unqualified for the U.S. citizenship. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 deferred the entry of Chinese laborers but exempted merchants, diplomats, travelers, students, and teachers (Chan, 1991). The law did not have specific explanations on women. Laborers' wives were similarly denied entry as their husbands. Most of Chinese migrant women at that time came as wives of merchants or of U.S. citizens. The racist and gendered immigration laws targeting Chinese, especially Chinese women, also illustrate that Chinese women have historically been excluded and discriminated due to their race intersecting with sexuality and gender (Mohanty, 1991).

Many Chinese male laborers immigrated prior to the Chinese Exclusion Act were not single, but due to immigration laws, their wives were denied entry into the United States. Many of these men had married prior to going abroad, but left their wives and children in China (Chan, 1991). Many of such left-behind families in China relied on the remittances of their laboring men in the U.S. However, the remittances were always sent directly to the kin of the husbands, not to their wives, to try to ensure that the wives would remain loyal and dependent on their husband (Espiritu, 2008). Such a transnational, split-household arrangement enforced and maintained by racist and gendered U.S. immigration policies maximized the exploitation of male workers and even of their wives in China (Espiritu, 2008). Because the most of their next generation was born in China, the cost of having and taking care of the next generation happened in China, and the labor of male workers could be brought into the U.S. relatively cheaper. Therefore, women left behind in China played the role of producing the next generation of low-cost male labor for the industrial development of the capitalist and industrialized U.S. economy.

For Chinese women who had arrived in the United States, their reproductive powers and productive powers ensured their physical and material survival overseas (Chan, 1991). However, due to their racialized and sexualized images, Chinese women seldom found work outside of the Chinatown. Many of them were even lured or forced into prostitution by men (Chan, 1991). Although migrating to the United States attracted some Chinese women, it also gave men more opportunity to exploit and control them (Espiritu, 2008). Moreover, due to the skewed ratio of large numbers of Chinese men versus smaller numbers of Chinese women and to the racialized and sexualized immigration policies and labor conditions, Chinese men were forced into “feminized” jobs such as domestic service, restaurant work, and laundry work. Such limited employment options reconfirmed their inferior socioeconomic positions compared to that of White men and White women (Eng, 2001). To reassert their lost patriarchal power in the United States, many Chinese men deprived their wives or female employees of joy and freedom at home and in the workplace (Nguyen, 2014).

World War II brought a significant change to Chinese migrants. Compared to Japanese migrants and Japanese Americans who were constructed as enemy and interned in U.S. American concentration camps during the wartime, the lives of Chinese improved because China was an ally of the United States (Kawai, 2005). Many Chinese men joined and served in the U.S. military, which helped reduce racism toward them to some extent. Also, the pass of the War Brides Act of 1945 brought a large number of Chinese migrant women to the United States (Espiritu, 2008). The law allowed wives and children of Chinese U.S. servicemen to come to the United States as nonquota immigrants. Thus, unlike previous flows of immigration, during the war, Chinese immigration was made up

predominantly women (Chan, 1991). But for those who came with nonquota immigration status, these Chinese women continued to be harassed and threatened with deportation at the point of entry until 1948 when resistance and strikes took place. Entering the United States under the war immigration law, although it opened more job opportunities to them, many Chinese wives struggled with their new life and new environment (Yung, 1986). Language barriers, cultural differences, limited occupational choices, and often separated for long periods from their husbands, these Chinese women had to renegotiate and readjust to their roles at home, at the racist and gendered labor market, and in U.S. society in general. Thus, these Chinese women found that they were considered inferior both at home and in the United States. The occupational progress brought by the war paused during the “cold war.” The United States saw Communist China as a despised enemy. Yet despite the political change, Chinese men and women still managed to steadily make achievements (Chan, 1991).

The passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act aimed to assist the progress of family reunification and to admit to the United States skilled workers and white-collar professionals (Okihiro, 1994). Among Chinese migrants, Chinese women constituted the majority of the population. Unlike previous decades when Chinese women were sexually depicted as “yellow peril,” the representations of Chinese migrant women gradually transformed to a seemingly positive model minority stereotype (e.g., Eguchi, 2013; Kawai, 2005; Osajima, 1988). However, they continue to be racially gendered and sexualized under the model minority discourse, to serve social, political, and economic needs in the United States. Similar to other East Asian women, Chinese women are depicted as being desirable because they are considered to be China-doll like cute, quiet,

submissive, and non-threatening, unlike “liberated” U.S. American (White) women (Kawai, 2005). This image has been promoted and used in the mail-order bride industry, to assist U.S. American men in finding and buying the ideally non-liberated Asian brides who they cannot find in the United States. (Lai, 1992). The model minority stereotypes also contribute to super-exploit Chinese women workers. Many businesses purposely look for these migrant female workers due to the perception they are subservient, docile, and dexterity (Lai, 1992). These women continue to be hired mainly in low-wage, low-status, low-security occupations (Woo, 2000). They suffer much more sexual harassment than their White counterparts due to “racialized ascription that depicts them as politically passive and sexually exotic and submissive” (Espiritu, 2008, p. 81). They also typically are paid lower wages and are more likely to remain marginalized in institutions, to face a glass ceiling, and even to be removed from employment (Chai, 1987). Many Chinese women have to extend their labor longer and harder for the benefit of their men who are their husband, father, son, and employer.

With Chinese women constituting a significant part of Chinese immigration, many Chinese men come to the United States as a legal dependent of their wife, which is the opposite of the previous immigration pattern. These Chinese men often experience downward occupational mobility in the United States while their wives maintain their professional status (Espiritu, 2008). However, although the status of Chinese women seems to be improving in their homes and communities, due to the heavy influence of Confucianism, which emphasizes Chinese women’s kinship roles, Chinese women are still generally considered to be inferior to men, and their living purposes are assumed to serve their men. While their transnational experiences have modified some of those

notions, Chinese women still suffer from heteropatriarchy. Their negotiations and resistances usually are wrongly seen as a denial of their ethnic identities (Woo, 2015). Heteropatriarchy and homophobia regulate Chinese women's desires, pleasant, and choices.

Historically (past and present) living in multiple systems of oppression, Chinese and Chinese American women adopt diverse ways to challenge and resist (Lai, 1992; Woo, 2015). For example, labor rallies led by Chinese American garment workers in the 1980s addressed inferior and insecure working conditions. However, their efforts and significance have not been recognized by women's movements, because mainstream (White) feminism primarily concerns with oppressions based on gender (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). While Chinese/Chinese American women were fighting for basic rights in the workplace, they were also struggling to survive oppressions via larger systemic and structural issues related to race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Chinese migrants in the United States continue to live within the model minority discourse most of the time. However, anti-Chinese sentiments still affect their lives in the United States (Zhang, 2010). China is still seen as a threat regarding ideology, economy, and the military. "Sharp power," as coined by the National Endowment for Democracy, a Washington-based foundation and think-tank, refers to "the information warfare being waged by today's authoritarian powers, particularly China and Russia" (Nye, 2018, para.1). The organization contrasts "sharp power," which shapes public opinions and behaviors in targeted countries, with "soft power," which is the "allure of culture and values to enhance a country's strength" (Nye, 2018, para. 2). It claims that democracies must take assertive positions to defend their principles. In this most recently created

discourse, China again is positioned as the opposite of the U.S./Western countries and is demarcated as a threat to “democratic” perceptions and behaviors. Moreover, the Trump administration is considering restricting visas of Chinese students, who constitute a significant segment of the Chinese migration and represent the largest number of international students in the United States (Weaver, 2018). Although Chinese students bring social, economic, and political benefits to the United States, they are still framed as “threat” and “thief” who could steal opportunities and resources from “Americans.” Along with the same logic, the Trump administration also threatens to wage a trade war by slapping heavy tariffs on Chinese exports (Shane, 2018). With heated debates and discussions about the trade war, China and Chinese migrants are again constructed as “yellow peril” that stealthily steals prosperity from the United States and threatens its economic, political, and cultural dominance in the world. Such historical racialized, gendered, and sexualized construction of Chinese migrants, especially Chinese women also deeply influences and shapes experiences of Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia.

U.S. Academia

In recent decades, the number of Chinese migrant women, together with other academic migrants, has grown rapidly at U.S. universities and colleges (Chen, 2014). Along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism and imperialism, as well as with the globalization of U.S. higher education, which promotes liberalism, meritocracy, and capitalism, U.S. higher education has become the most advanced form of education (Ghabra & Calafell, 2018). Earning a degree at a U.S. university or college and/or working in U.S. academia is always assumed to be more valuable and glorious than

studying and/or working elsewhere. Therefore, many international students and scholars, especially those from less developed countries such as Chinese migrant women, have been pulled into the academic migration.

With this educational migrant trend in the United States, more researchers are delving into examinations of migrant faculty of color (e.g., Chen, 2014, Eguchi & Spieldnner, 2015; Ghabra & Calafell, 2018). Many of these studies look at how migrant faculty of color experience, navigate, negotiate, and engage power relations and hierarchies in U.S. academia that has been promoting, normalizing, circulating, and reinforcing the U.S. dominant global ideologies of liberalism, meritocracy, and capitalism. The liberalism in U.S. higher education relies on individualism and the progressive discourse, in which certain behaviors and bodies are rewarded and privileged as “advanced” and “civilized,” while others are regulated and excluded (Calafell, 2012). As Eguchi and Spieldnner (2015) reflect, students and faculty of color remain to be silenced and marginalized in the U.S. higher educational system due to their non-normative race, gender, and sexuality. They are not perceived as traditionally authentic U.S. academics who are white heterosexual cis-gendered men. Their bodies are marked as cultural outsiders in U.S. academia in which ideologies of whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, U.S. citizenship, English, age, ableism, and capitalism are reinforced (Chen, 2014).

Furthermore, informed by liberalism, individualism and meritocracy, U.S. academia embraces colorblind ideologies that are rooted in the post-racial assumptions that claim that racism has been overcome and that there is no need to discuss race-related issues (Ahmed, 2017). Colorblind discourse that is deeply embedded in U.S. academia

often denies racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences of migrant academics of color and erases conversations regarding discriminations. Non-white (migrant) academics' bodies and behaviors are racially, gendered, and sexually regulated to maintain dominant ideologies and power hierarchy in academia. As for Asian/Asian American students and scholars, they are confined and otherized by the seemingly positive construct of model minority. As Eguchi (2015) reflects, U.S. academia supervises his everyday performances. Although U.S. liberal discourse encourages its people to speak up against unfair treatments, Asian/Asian Americans are expected to always be the soft, quiet, nonthreatening, and nice model minority. If they fail to do so, these Asian/Asian Americans will be constructed as threatening and negative troublemakers. In the similar vein, Calafell (2012) reflects that women of color in U.S. academia are marked as monstrous others when they do not adhere to the dominant definition of femininity and its "acceptable" behaviors. Discriminatory regulations and representations of women of color serve the post-racial academic discourse in which racism, sexism, and homophobia do not exist.

The studies cited above have explored the experiences and negotiations of migrant academics of color in U.S. academia and have provided valuable knowledge and critiques of U.S. academia to inform my study. Built upon their arguments, my research extends its scope to examine everyday experiences of Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia through their home, academic, and social lives. Research is scarce that focuses on experiences and negotiations of female academics of color in intersecting contexts. Based on the review of the historical background in the previous section, in addition to the struggles and negotiations with power relations in U.S. academia, Chinese migrant

women who study and/or work in U.S. academia also face obstacles in their racialized, gendered, and sexualized transnational experiences at home and in social contexts. Therefore, my research explores everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and/or work in U.S. universities or colleges make sense of, navigate, and engage with power relations embedded in ideologies of whiteness, patriarchy, and heteronormativity through their home, academic, and social lives.

Significance and Goals of the Study

Informed by race, gender, and sexuality studies, this research locates itself in critical intercultural communication. According to Halualani and Nakayama (2013), critical intercultural communication focuses on issues of power, context, socioeconomic relations, and historical/structural forces that form and influence intercultural communication practices, cultures, relationships, and contexts. A critical perspective to intercultural communication seeks to address issues of “macro contexts (historical, social, and political level), power, relevance, and the hidden and destabilizing aspects of culture” (p. 2). In addition, the critical perspective seeks to gain understandings of how historical contexts, social norms, and political forces constitute and inform identities and relationships, and how intercultural communication relations are enabled and constrained by ideologies, hierarchies, histories, institutions, and economy. More precisely, a critical orientation to intercultural communication aligns with my research goals that I seek to explore and uncover how power relations of race, gender, and sexuality form and are influenced by first-generation Chinese academic women’s daily experiences.

Furthermore, critical intercultural communication highlights the importance of investigating historical contexts, to unmask the legacies and continuity of colonization

and U.S. imperialism and their links to current globalized dominant discourses of race, gender, sexuality, and relationality (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). History plays “a foundational and yet nuanced role in shaping the assumptions, meaning-making processes and actions in the intercultural interactions” (Sorrells, 2013, p. 180). Examining historical contexts in this intercultural communication research enables me to reveal power relations rooted in whiteness, colonial modes of thinking, and imperial knowledge production and consumption (Mendoza, 2005). Particularly, I am able to investigate the historical and continuous exclusion and discrimination of Chinese women through U.S. immigrant laws, representations, social hierarchies, and transnational ideologies, and how such historical and experiential knowledge constitutes and influences the interviewed first-generation Chinese migrant women’s transnational racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences.

This research project also focuses on micro-level negotiations of relational experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia and explores how these negotiations through interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational relationships connect to the larger macro structures in which these women live. Shome and Hegde (2002) stress the significance of paying attention to the micro-level of communication, because it is a product of macro structures. Thus, examining these Chinese migrant women’s daily negotiations, navigations, and engagement with power relations enables this research to explore how micro-level of relational experiences emerge from power relations informed by racial, gendered, sexualized ideologies and how micro-level intercultural communications reproduce, inform, interrupt, and challenge macro power structures. Overall, situating my research project in critical intercultural communication is highly relevant and informative to my research goal of

better understanding the mutual influences between the micro-level relational experiences and macro-level power structures.

Therefore, I examine the complicated and diverse ways in which these women embody race, gender, and sexuality in historical, transnational, and ideological contexts, for the following reasons. First, documenting and exploring these women's daily experiences expose the complexities, nuances and intersectional positions among Asians and Asian Americans. The study discusses and unravels heterogeneous identities, transnational experiences, historical backgrounds, and nuanced local/regional/international power relations. Next, it underscores and troubles the reinforced construction of "Othered" Chinese women in many whiteness and feminist studies that have one-dimensionally depicted Chinese migrant women as submissive, oppressed, silent victims suffering from racism and sexism. This study explores these women's active roles in explicating, reconstituting, and/or disrupting the logics of whiteness that intersects with patriarchy, heteronormativity, and capitalism. By doing so, lastly, this study recognizes and acknowledges efforts and achievements of alternative tactics of negotiations and resistances that contribute to promote social justice. In other words, this study historicizes and politicizes transnational and intercultural negotiations of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia to unmask Western/U.S.-centered intellectual notions of agency and resistance, in order to problematize the normative knowledge (re)production, consumption, and circulation, as well as the ways of studying Chinese migrant women.

The overarching goals of this project are the following. First, the project is to gain knowledge of how these first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia

navigate their everyday experiences, which are influenced by often invisible power relations rooted in whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and capitalism. Focusing on their lived-experiences, also informs how these women reify, interrupt, and/or shift such power relations related to race, gender, and sexuality. Second, the project intends to complicate analyzing their intercultural experiences by accounting for the ways in which these Chinese women live in transnational and transcultural spaces. Lastly, I expect the project to challenge many existing studies on race, gender, and sexuality that have been reinforcing stereotypical constructions of first-generation Chinese migrants. By unpacking their narratives of daily lived-experiences, I intend to create a platform to reconsider what politics of resistance mean for these Chinese women. To achieve these research goals, I propose the following research questions that guide the research inquiry of this dissertation project.

Research Questions

The central problem addressed in this project is how narratives of everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and/or work in universities or colleges in the United States make sense of, navigate themselves in, and engage with power relations embedded in ideologies of whiteness, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. According to Riessman (2008), narratives can refer to texts at several levels of meanings: stories told by interviewees, interpretive stories developed by the researcher based on interviews, and narratives constructed by readers after interpreting the interviewees' and the investigator's narratives.

As for this study, the narratives of the everyday experiences of the Chinese migrant women I interviewed can be defined by Riessman's first two levels of meanings.

First, narratives refer to stories told by these Chinese migrant academic female participants and their interpretations of their lived-experiences. Second, narratives of these Chinese migrant women refer to my stories and interpretations based on the interviewees' narratives, to explore the link between their experiences and systemic structures. The research questions guiding the inquiry of this study are:

1. How do interviewees' accounts of their experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in U.S. academia make sense of interlocking power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social life?
2. How do interviewees navigate themselves in power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia?
3. How do interviewees engage with power relations to resist discriminations?

These research questions guide the research inquiry of this project and the development of the following chapters. By answering these research questions, the overall goal of this dissertation is to expose the complexities and nuances of these Chinese migrant women's daily experiences; problematize the "Othered" construction considering their race, gender, and sexuality; and recognize and acknowledge efforts and achievements of their alternative tactics of negotiations and resistances.

PREVIEW

The remainder of this dissertation includes four chapters. Chapter Two Theoretical Foundations introduces my theoretical orientation. To answer these research questions proposed above, I introduce previous literature on Chinese women in relation to their heterogeneous identities and their perceptions and experiences of race, gender,

and sexuality. More specifically, to complicate my exploration of Chinese women and their experiences in the U.S. academia, I use a theoretical framework that brings together theories of whiteness studies and Asian American gender and sexuality studies with femiqueer perspectives. This framework enables me to situate my research in the current discussions about race, gender, and sexuality, as well as to explore my research inquiries concerning how gender and sexuality of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia are constructed and operated in the U.S. racial hierarchy. Thus, this project recentralizes whiteness and femiqueer critiques as conceptual lens.

In Chapter Three Methods, I explain the qualitative approaches that I utilize to assemble interviewees and analyze their stories. I use criterion sampling and snowball sampling to recruit interviewees because the study is not to generalize to the population but to interpret the meaning and function of stories embedded in interviews conducted with first-generation Chinese migrant women studying and/or working in U.S. colleges and universities. Then, adopting in-depth interview and narrative analysis as my methods, together with my theoretical framework of whiteness and femiqueer critiques, I explore the emerged themes from the interview texts. In-depth interview allows me to access to the rich, intensive, and nuanced embodied experiences of these Chinese migrant female interviewees. Narrative analysis is story centered, so as I approach to the interview data, I uses story as the unit of analysis to interpret interviewees' narratives. Accordingly, Chapter Four Analysis presents my analysis of the narratives of first-generation Chinese migrant female interviewees' experiences.

In this chapter, through using theoretical lens of whiteness and femiqueer, I describe and analyze the way in which the interviewees learn and experience racialization

of Asian and racialized gender and sexuality in their transnational relations at home, academia, and social contexts. Three major themes emerge from this methodological process. The first theme as *Rethinking Positionality* reveals perceptions and experiences of the interviewees on power relations embedded in ideologies concerning race, gender, and sexuality through their daily embodied experiences at home, in academia, and in social context. The second theme *Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia*, examines the ways in which Chinese migrant female academics navigate their marginalized and othered race, gender, and sexuality in U.S. academia through their teaching, doing research, and building networks. The third theme *Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance*, explores the interviewees' daily efforts of engaging with power relations to negotiate discriminations and social capitals, in order to survive in U.S. academia and U.S. society. This theme also attempts to problematize the globalizing U.S. dominant notions of resistance and to interrupt stereotypical assumptions in the resistance discourse. At the end of each analysis of the theme, I offer self-reflection based on my interview experiences and analysis. These reflections speak back to each theme. Through exploring these three themes, I analyze narratives of everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia. By examining their relational experiences in home, academia, and social contexts, I explain the ways in which power relations and ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality shape, regulate, and marginalize these women. I also interrogate the ways in which these women engage and interrupt the existing power hierarchy.

I conclude this dissertation with Chapter Five Conclusion and Discussion that reviews previous chapters and discusses theoretical and methodological implications.

More specifically, I restate the significance of using whiteness and femiqueer critiques to approach these Chinese migrant women's everyday experiences. I also point out the contribution of this study by using whiteness and femiqueer critiques to critical intercultural communication field. Based on a reflection of some limitations in this study, I suggest a few directions for future research. In so doing, this chapter concludes the project and further reflects its limitations and potentialities.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

My framework for investigating lived-experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia is grounded within whiteness studies (e.g., Eguchi, 2015; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995; Shome 1996), Asian American gender and sexuality studies (e.g., Eguchi, 2014, 2017; Eng, 2001, 2010; Shimizu, 2007), with femiqueer perspectives (e.g., Calafell, 2012; Lee, 2014; Yep & Lescure, 2014). In this project, through everyday lived-experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women, I explore their intersecting positionalities in relation to surrounding hegemonic ideologies informed by historical contexts, whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and capitalism. I also investigate issues of power, context, material relations, and historical/structural forces as enabling, shaping, and constraining these women' subjectivities and levels of agencies, and their intercultural and transnational communication encounters, relationships, and contexts.

Whiteness

In this study, I examine and unmask how whiteness ideologies emerge from first-generation Chinese migrant women's daily lived-experiences. In addition, I investigate how the logics of whiteness intersect with other positionalities, such as race, gender, and sexuality, and how they shape and are informed by their transnational and intercultural practices, as well as how these women elucidate, reconstitute, and/or disrupt power relations embedded with whiteness ideologies.

White supremacy and domination have been a consistent part of U.S. society, culture, and politics, dating to the birth of the country (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Whiteness refers to a set of discursive practices of historical, systemic, structural, race-based

superiority (Nakayama & Martin, 1999). Throughout history, whiteness has been a discursive practice that has organized law, politics, religion, and education (Omi & Winant, 2015). Whiteness has been overtly and violently practiced and protected, mostly by White people, who are attached to the social, political, and material benefits brought by whiteness. With the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s that intended to bring colorblindness into social and political practices, and later when the election of Barack Obama marked the historic success of the first African American to win the presidency, white domination and racism seemingly were eliminated (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). The United States thus seemingly entered a post-racial era signified by a multiracial and multicultural American under the Obama presidency (Chen, Simmons, & Kang, 2015). This new era has been teaching its people to not to talk about race and that race has nothing to do with their life choices and social positions, although people are still racially positioned and social, political, and material resources continue to be distributed unevenly based on racial positions.

During the past few decades, the study of whiteness has begun to proliferate. Scholars from various disciplines, such as cultural studies, sociology, history, media studies, and education have delved into the everyday space of whiteness, in order to expose how whiteness is socially constructed and maintained (e.g., Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 2009; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Whiteness today is also hidden beneath liberal ideologies (Eng, 2010; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Liberalism has been using ideologies of whiteness to “prove” that the United States has already achieved advanced progress in issues related to race, gender, and sexuality. However, Eng (2010) criticizes that such ideologies of liberalism insist on avoiding discussions of race and

resist acknowledging racial differences and its intersectionality with gender and sexuality. They are to mask and maintain whiteness and heteropatriarchy.

Therefore, instead of focusing on overt, identifiable forms of whiteness, such as the KKK, and other hate groups, most studies of whiteness recognize it as an institutional and systemic problem, that is maintained, (re)produced, and masked by strategic, everyday discursive practices. Whiteness functions as social norms that often make it invisible, and it normalizes and consolidates the power hierarchy and racial formations in the United States. Therefore, it has been a challenge to be aware of and to recognize whiteness, especially for Chinese migrants (and Asian/Asian Americans in general) who have contemporarily been portrayed as “almost Whites” (e.g., Eguchi & Ding, 2017). “Almost Whites,” is a post-racial and neoliberal construct for people of color through which economic and cultural capital allows them to envision their proximity to the center maintained by whiteness. This construct strategically masks the white supremacy and secures the current U.S. racial formation. In addition, the rhetoric of raceless, ideologies of colorblindness, diversity, freedom, and individualism is deeply embedded in the desirable “American Dream” of many Chinese migrants, serving to blind them from seeing the historical injustice, exploitation, and asymmetrical relations of power that have caused race, gender, and class-based inequality in the contemporary U.S. Consequently, intercultural communicative practices and relationships of Chinese migrants are deeply charged with and shaped by whiteness that circulates with their transnational movements.

Hence, in my research project exploring and examining everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women, the conceptualization and theoretical construction of whiteness is vital to me, in order to uncover asymmetrical power relations

such as race, gender, and sexuality that have permeated in their transnational experiences and intercultural communicative practices. Moreover, whiteness studies with femiqueer critiques are also helpful for me to explore how these Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia navigate and negotiate racial, gender, and sexual inequality promoted by whiteness. The following section describes the evolution of whiteness studies in communication, discusses major approaches to research on whiteness that relate to my study, and offers theoretical constructs to approach whiteness in my study.

Nakayama and Krizek (1995) initiate the process of theorizing and exposing whiteness, as well as introducing this significant study to the field of communication. They argue that in order to challenge the white dominance, power hierarchy, and hegemony, it is important to expose, position, mark, and deterritorialize the space of whiteness. They state that whiteness is a relatively unknown territory that has been invisible, as it remains to affect the everyday fabric of our lives. Nakayama and Krizek also identify that the invisibility of whiteness has been displayed through its universality, which experiences and practices of Whites are viewed as the norms from which Others are marked. Nakayama and Krizek appeal for more research to disclose whiteness as a cultural construction and the strategies that embed its centrality, as well as to deconstruct whiteness as the locus where Others are formed and marginalized positioned. Responding to the call of Nakayama and Krizek (1995), in the following years, a number of communication scholars have investigated whiteness across a wide range of social, cultural, and political fields in both national and international contexts.

Whiteness studied as location and standpoint of Whites. Earlier whiteness studies have focused on how white people experience identity and race, mainly focusing

on racial labeling preferences, white resistance, and white privilege. They primarily pay attention to white discourse and the standpoint of whites and the pan-ethnic experiences of whites born in the United States. For instance, some studies that interrogate the preferences and meaning of the self-labeling process, ask white participants questions such as “What is whiteness,” “What does it mean to be white?” “How do you label yourself” (e.g., Jackson, 1999; Martin et al., 1996; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995)? These studies find that white label choices are much more than self-preferences but rather are rhetorical strategies of avoidance and denial. White participants in these researches generally avoid labeling themselves racially and often claim these labels to be meaningless. Another strand of white identity research has explored racial enculturation (Moon, 1999, 2016). By analyzing racial epiphany stories of whites responding to the question, “When was the first time you became aware that you had a race and what that mean?” Moon concludes that whites know much more about race as both lived-experiences and as a structural system of privilege, as well as that whiteness needs to be understood as part of the identities, experiences, and ideologies of White people.

A number of scholars (e.g., Crenshaw, 1997; Holling, 2011; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) also expose another discursive strategy that white people adopt to cover and protect their racial privileges: whiteness is assumed to be synonymous with American nationality. By conflating nationality/U.S. citizenship and “race”/whiteness, power is expressed because it relegates non-white racial groups to a marginal role in national life (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Examining the rhetorical dimension of whiteness in public political discourse, Crenshaw (1997) exposes that whiteness relies on a silent denial of white privilege to rationalize institutional and systemic decisions that protect white’s

material interests at the expense of people of color. In the research, Crenshaw finds that white and American are often assumed to be synonyms. People of color are otherized as having the characteristic of race while white people are not “raced.” This “othering” rhetorical practice has often been used in political discourse to relegate immigrants away from citizenship.

Similarly, Holling (2011) investigates the self-constructed identity of the Minuteman Project (MMP) through its online rhetoric. MMP’s rhetoric serves to legitimize an “American” identity that is constituted by patriotism, masculinity, militarism, and multiculturalism. Holling argues that such an identity subtly masks the white supremacist values and rhetorically frames immigrants as others. In addition, Flores and Moon (2002) focus on another group of whites, who adopt anti-racism strategy and call themselves “race traitors,” who advocate for the abolition of whiteness as a mean of crossing the color line. Flores and Moon critique race traitors that this new subject and identity enable whites to divorce their white skin from whiteness and hence white privilege. Race traitors position whiteness as an individual choice and as a state of mind. They avoid reflexivity and treat whiteness in monolithic and fixed ways. Ultimately, race traitors still need to rely on their white privilege and appropriate blackness to articulate their ideological and political agendas (Moon & Flores, 2000).

Whiteness studied in historical and intersectional contexts. Later studies on whiteness extend their scope, situating their research in an intercultural/international context and examining whiteness in micro-/meso-/macr-structures. For instance, Collier (2005) situates white identification in South Africa. By adopting a critical/interpretive perspective, Collier unmasks the matrix of domination of whiteness ideologies through

discourses. She argues that cultural identifications such as race-based identification are constructed and contested within and across dynamic contexts. Whiteness ideologies are socially, politically and historically constructed and reinforced by institutions. Whiteness, thus, becomes the norms to reinforce social hierarchies.

By examining whiteness in micro-/meso-/macro-structures, whiteness cannot be simply viewed as race, because whiteness functions to mobilize and maintain power relations (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). As Projansky and Ono (1999) point out, whiteness is not only about race relations; it also is about nation, freedom, power, democracy, and other factors. Whiteness is complicated and dynamic and is crisscrossed by other identities that can shift its meanings and social force. Therefore, studying whiteness needs to consider histories and other macro contexts, which show how whiteness evolves alongside other privilege systems that are often interpellated within or intertwined with white supremacy (Moon & Nakayama, 2005).

A number of scholars (e.g., Crenshaw, 1997; Moon & Flores, 2000; Moon & Nakayama, 2005) address that whiteness as other social categories does not operate in isolation. Through an examination of the media coverage of a murder in West Virginia, Moon and Nakayama (2005) indicate whiteness as a strategic formation of racial privilege that intersects with other social identities, such as heterosexuality and masculinity, to construct “social reality” that portray in media to validate the dominant, while nullifying others. Additionally, Griffin’s (2015) critical intercultural reading of *The Help*, exposes how whiteness resecurates the center at the expense of Black women. Griffin argues that whiteness of the white female protagonist is a site of power and protection that secures but tends to erase the everyday racial/sexual subordination of Black women.

To secure the territory of whiteness as the center, a group of scholars also find that whiteness operates with postracialism, colorblinding the historical and contemporary realities of racism. In the film *The Help*, whiteness functions as a site of apologia and redemption for white racist, by which whiteness is again displayed as a normative identity, discourse, ideology, and structure, calculatingly preserved, fortified, and disseminated as superior (Griffin, 2015). Moreover, Eguchi and Ding (2017) interrogate the “uncultural” rhetorical strategy utilized to mask the cultural others in the TV show *Dr. Ken*. The “uncultural” construction of Asian Americans covertly serves ideologies of postracialism and colorblindness that depicts Asian Americans as almost whites and as (nonthreatening) Others. Such uncultural assumptions strategically draw attention away from the reproduction of norms of whiteness at the expense of Asian Americans in the show. Although this Asian American show raises the potential to subvert dominant narratives, its subtle participation in whiteness continues to maintain the territory of whiteness as the center.

Whiteness studied as discursive practices and transnational ideologies.

Literatures discussed above primarily focus on discursive practices, location, and standpoints of whites, and on power relations between whites and non-whites. A number of scholars have noticed that many whiteness studies have overlooked the discursive effects of whiteness on the subjectivities and identities of non-white people. Shome (1999) situates whiteness in three axes of power, spatial location and history, and proposes questions asking what whiteness means to non-white people and how they experience whiteness in their lives. Shome exposes the complexities of a postcolonial perspective on whiteness. She states that whiteness travels and has historically traveled to “other worlds.”

This “travel” includes physical travel of white imperial bodies colonizing “other worlds” and neocolonial travels of white cultural products, such as media, tourism, and academic texts to “other worlds.” Whiteness, thus, according to Shome, is not just a discourse that is contained in societies inhabited by white people; it is not a phenomenon that is enacted only where white bodies exist. Whiteness is not just about bodies and skin color but rather is more about the *discursive practices* that, because of colonialism and neocolonialism, preserve and center the global dominance of white imperial subjects and Eurocentric worldviews. Additionally, Shome emphasizes whiteness as “situated knowledge” that needs to be contextualized. It impacts identities and spaces in different ways in different locations as it takes on different meanings in different sites.

Sharing the similar theoretical lens, Kapoor (1999) challenges whiteness in the development discourse. Kapoor argues that within the international progressive context, whiteness has lost its sense of race and ethnicity; rather, it is viewed as social, cultural, and political norms while simultaneously, non-white products are viewed as traditional and uncivilized. This essay proposes whiteness as symbolic power, rather than skin color, complexion, or mask, subsuming globalizing narratives that undermine context and history.

A number of scholars conceptualize whiteness as ideologies in transnational contexts. In his autoethnography article, Eguchi (2015) examines his transnational border crossing performance to explore the effects of whiteness in the constructions of gender, sexuality, and body. According to Eguchi, the colonial legacy of Orientalism repeatedly reproduces the historical feminization and subordination of Asian/American (gay) men in the U.S. mainstream, while whiteness remains functioning as a (homo)normative

materiality of male masculinity and beauty. Steyn's (1999) research explores the contextualized and historicized meaning of being "white." She offers a reflective personal narrative on the construction and meaning of her white identity in South Africa and in the United States where whiteness functions in different manners. Lee (1999) continues the experiential perspective in her study. She discusses her experiences in Taiwan and the United States to examine the problematics of color in both cultural contexts. This essay presents that whiteness is lying under the logic of colorist hierarchy and determines a person's social gain. The negative meanings assigned to darker skin play out differently for women than for men in Taiwan and still "otherize" her and her family in U.S. social/political contexts. Thus, Lee states that whiteness needs to be considered with gender, class, imperialism, and globalization.

Situating whiteness in my study. The literatures reviewed above have investigated whiteness from various perspectives and situated it in diverse contexts. Although many of these studies have explored the discursive effects of whiteness on non-white people, I argue that more research is necessary to further interrogate how non-white people experience whiteness on a daily basis and how they navigate, work on and/or against the normative power relations of race, gender, and sexuality informed by whiteness. Like many researchers studying power relations, people of color have often been positioned in a passive, monolithic role that merely suffers from oppressions and discriminations. However, I argue that such positioning of people of color, further marginalizes them and rejects their agency that people of color could practice, challenge, and/or resist whiteness, in order to secure and improve their precarious positions. For instance, in Sekimoto's (2014) study on her transnational migratory experience, she

admits, “I felt urged to prove that I do not fit the criteria of a stereotypical Asian woman: submissive, controllable, and voiceless” (p. 392). To “un-otherize” herself, she adapts to (white) American culture in front of people, by “pay[ing] attention to how they claim their space, command[ing] attention through eye contact, and creat[ing] a particular temporal flow through verbal exchanges” (Sekimoto, 2014, p. 392). Although Sekimoto critiques her process of being Americanized to “un-otherize” her “otherized” herself, reinforces ideologies of whiteness, further otherizes herself, and incorporates herself into the racial hierarchy in the United States, I argue that her mundane negotiations with power relations and critical self-reflections explicate and disrupt the logics of whiteness intersecting with patriarchy and heteronormativity. Thus, more research needs to be done on recording nuanced ways of the experiences of people of color with whiteness, to further problematize whiteness critiques.

In my research on exploring everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia, I approach whiteness as discursive practices and transnational ideologies that have been historically and continuously promoted, normalized, circulated, and reinforced through political, economic, and other systems, as well as through institutions such as media, governments, and schools. Along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism, imperialism, and (post-)colonialism, whiteness becomes the standard upon which knowledge, cultures, behaviors, and values of non-whites are judged and regulated. As norms travel and are (re)produced, preserved, and centered through transnational movements and globalization across time, whiteness practices and logics are often difficult to identify. However, as the “other”, communicating whiteness has become a daily “strategic” way for Chinese migrant women to live with,

problematize, and resist the power structure, or even to assimilate themselves to the mainstream U.S. society in order to mask their “othered” body and identities and to secure and improve their social capital. In this study, with the theoretical lens of feminism and queerness (i.e., femiqueer), whiteness could be revealed and identified through Chinese migrant women’s reflections of their lived, embodied, intercultural relationships, such as whom they desire to have relationships with, social movements they align with, and descriptions of their material conditions, for example.

(Racialized) Gender and Sexuality

In this project, I seek to promote a critical exploration on how gender and sexuality of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia are constructed and operated in the racial hierarchy of U.S. society. Gender and sexuality are shaped by social, economic, political, and cultural structures (Eng, 2010). That is, gender and sexuality need to be explored within certain sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. First-generation Chinese migrant women in the United States have been marginalized due to their intersectional identities as women, women of color, and women of color from East Asia (Lowe, 1996). Among studies of intersected identities of Chinese migrant women, gender and sexuality are issues that deserve more critical attentions. Their perceptions on their gender and sexuality are essential to their everyday life and intercultural communicative practices. Therefore, exploring their perceptions of their gender and sexuality, and investigating the social construction of their racialized gender and sexuality are vital to understand how larger sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts inform and shape these Chinese migrant women’s notions of gender and sexuality, as well as the contexts permeate their desires and choices in intercultural relationships.

Chinese migrant women have been facing the gendered and sexualized racism in their daily interactions. Their gender and sexuality have been historically exoticized and Orientalized (Eng, 2010; Shimizu, 2012). “Orientalization” is a colonial concept that has regulated these racialized, gendered, and sexualized stereotypes of not only Chinese migrants but of Asian Americans in general, to support the construct of global racial hierarchies, capitalism, and imperialism (Said, 1979). Images of Asian American women have been confined as exotic, seductive, and aggressive Dragon Lady or the hyperfeminine China Doll, while their male counterparts have been “racially castrated” as effeminate and emasculated (Eng, 2010; Espiritu, 2008). Therefore, it is significant to consider gender and sexuality in studying Chinese migrant women, because the gendering and sexualizing process plays a critical role in maintaining the racial formation (Ting 1998). Furthermore, it helps to understand how gender and sexuality affect Chinese migrant women’s choices of romantic and sexual partners and the dynamics of their intracultural and intercultural relationships.

The remainder of this section discusses feminist perspectives and sexuality/queerness thoughts. It shows how these theoretical perspectives have studied Asian American women. It also presents how such perspectives guide the research exploration of racialized gender and sexuality construction of Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia. Prior to delving into theoretical perspectives on Asian American gender and sexuality, it is necessary to briefly tease out the relationship between Asia and Asian America, to understand how the notion of Asia enables and complicates the formation of Asian America and how gender and sexuality studies of Asian America inform that of Asia and particularly the studied group of Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia.

The Asian American formation has been informed and constituted by the gendered and sexualized racialization of Asians, the legal inclusion and exclusion of racialized citizenship, and U.S. involvements in Asia through colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism (Lowe, 1996). Although Asian America contains heterogenous and various ethnic groups, Asians have been historically and systemically categorized as a homogenous racial group in the United States for both economic exploitation and political empowerment, depending on the particular historical times, global conditions, and U.S. immigration laws by which Asian immigrants have been historically integrated yet simultaneously marginalized and excluded from U.S. sociopolitical and sociocultural citizenship (e.g., Espiritu, 2001; Lowe, 1996; Takagi, 1994). As discussed in the introduction, anti-Chinese sentiment has been developed since the Chinese Exclusion Act era around the late 19th century and early 20th century. The fear of China, as a threat to U.S. world dominance impacts Asian Americans and Asian migrants in the United States (Ono, 2005). Asian Americans have been used by mainstream media as both scapegoats and spectacle for social, political, and economic issues (Osajima, 1988). Thus, Asian Americans' images have been conflated with those of Asians. When Asian people are constructed as enemies, Asian Americans' loyalty is questioned, and their right to be U.S. citizens is challenged. Mainstream media have been emphasizing "Asianness" of Asian Americans, instead of portraying them as "Americans." This further contributes to the construct of Asian Americans, whether they are citizens or non-citizens, as "forever foreigners" (Ono, 2005). Therefore, there is an inevitably historical and continuous connection between Asia and Asian America, and between studies of Asian America and the study of Chinese migrant women. The brief review of

the relationship among Asia, Asian America, and China, is to gain understanding of how they are socially, historically, and politically constructed, and to further problematize Chinese migrant women's experiences. Although they are Chinese migrants living in the United States, their identities and experiences cannot be simply geographically classified. Instead, their identities and experiences need also to be situated in transnational contexts and in the increasingly globalized world. Hence, the following section conceptualizes racialized gender and sexuality with feminist and queer perspectives, and further explores how Asian American studies have complicated and expanded these theoretical areas and how they help guide the exploration of Chinese migrant women's racialized, gendered, and sexualized daily experiences.

Racialized gender and feminist perspectives. As discussed in the previous section, Asian migrant women's lives have been fundamentally shaped by legal immigration exclusion and by the "liberalization" of immigration laws (Espiritu, 2008). Such immigration laws and policies have always been tied to racist, sexist, and capitalist agendas of the United States (Mohanty, 1991). Asian female immigration has historically been used to solve the needs of the nation's economic development and political issues (Lowe, 1996). Immigration laws and history, and capitalism and imperialism have long shaped the formation of Asian migrant women. This section discusses how Asian/Asian American women have been studied with feminist perspectives, and how feminist perspectives with intersectional and transnational notions guide my research project studying on Chinese migrant women.

Previous studies have looked at Asian/Asian American women as labor in local and global capitalist contexts and have indicated that their class struggles always intersect

with race and gender. In the exclusion era, Asian female labor existed primarily in two ways: as merchants' wives in self-employed ethnic businesses or as smuggled prostitutes in sex slavery (Ling, 1989). These women were subjected to the capitalistic and patriarchal control of their ethnic communities and the nation. Since 1965, the United States has witnessed the "feminization of immigration," in which women became the majority of immigrants from Asia, to either join their husband or improve their lives (Espiritu, 2008). To meet the U.S. market's increasing need, most of these women were recruited as cheap labor in the growth of female-intensive industries, such as service, healthcare, and apparel manufacturing. (Võ & Sciachitano, 2004). Some Asian American scholars integrate a transnational and (post-)colonial approach with feminist perspective to study gender and Asian/Asian American women, revealing the commodification of their gender and bodies to support the construct of global capitalism and imperialism. For example, a study of Asian mail-order bride challenges this business, which depicts Asian women as hyperfeminine erotic exotics who willingly and passively serve males (Lai, 1992). The study also reveals that such the sex industry manipulates Asian women who intend to escape conditions of poverty that are often created by capitalist expansion in Asia. However, such research still often constructs these women as "others" and further unconsciously reinforces constructions of Asian women as submissive, oppressed, and monolithic others.

Those studies discuss oppressive and exploitive conditions of Asian migrant women as cheap labors in the globalized U.S. capitalist and imperial expansion. In studies of Asian/Asian American female labors, some scholars shift their research focus from the oppressive role played by these women to their daily negotiation and resistance

in the workplace. In Chow's (1994) study, the author interviewed two groups of women, half of whom were foreign-born Asian American women and half of whom were U.S.-born Asian American women, to examine how work bureaucracy shapes the labor experiences of these minority women and their coping strategies when they encounter discrimination. Chow finds that resistance is an inseparable part of oppression in power relationships, and that the everyday unique coping strategies and resistance of these women show their struggles against patriarchal rule, racial domination, class exploitation, and cultural barriers. To deal with unfair treatments by their supervisors in a racial-stratified and patriarchal working environment, many Asian American female workers often show their emotions and attitudes in ways they believe their supervisors would approve of, instead of by expressing angers. Some women choose first to work very hard to earn the trust and dependency of their supervisors, in order to be able to express initial issues of being a woman and an Asian American in the workplace. Chow argues that Asian American women's "passive" and "submissive" style of resistance needs to be seen and acknowledged in studies of women's resistance, because their unique ways of resistance ensure the survival of their family and assist them in coping with multiple forms of oppressions.

In the similar vein, Shi (2008) argues that to minimize their disadvantage brought on by the social constraints and exploitative employment, the studied Chinese working-class migrant women develop unique everyday "quiet, flexible, practical, and long-term" resistance (Shi, 2008, p. 375). Shi's article calls readers' and scholars' attention to Chinese migrant women's creative tactics of resistance in their real-life contexts. Their everyday strategies are more suitable to their material survival and long-term battles than

open rebellions and resistance that often is the short-lived resistance used by politicians (Hanchard, 2006). Shi (2008) also states that these women's awareness of inequity and actions create a counter-image to that of powerless immigrant women.

Above studies focus primarily on Chinese/Asian migrant women as labor in local and global capitalism, while many other scholars examine Asian/Asian American women in the U.S. mainstream media, and address how these women's media representations inform and are informed by their daily lived-experiences. (Post-)colonialism has been historically embedded in the U.S. mainstream media. Its Oriental imagination limits Asian/Asian American women to racialized, gendered, and sexualized representations (Minh-ha, 1989). Their characters' images have been confined as exotic, seductive, and aggressive Dragon Lady or as the hyperfeminine China Doll (Espiritu, 2008). These distorted representations affect Asian/Asian American women's social, political, economic, and psychic survival (Võ & Sciachitano, 2004), as well as (re)shape their desire, behaviors, and relations (Ting, 1998). At the same time, Asian/Asian American women have been devoting their efforts into countering and resisting those representations through their own cultural productions.

Lim (2006) explores the historical significance of Asian American women's engagement with U.S. public culture by restoring their activities in sororities, beauty pageants, magazines, movies, and parades from 1930-1960. During this time, Asian American women were marginalized and often ignored through both racial segregation and immigration exclusion, due to their race, nationality, and gender. Lim claims that those Asian American women's engagements with U.S. public culture were critical to look at, because they unveil the invisible Asian American women's histories during this

time. She also argues that their participations in the mainstream public culture cannot be simply interpreted as assimilation. Instead, she highlights the historical contributions of these engagements in promoting social transformations and earning Asian Americans sociocultural space in the United States. Shimizu (2007) takes a different route, interrupting the fixed binary of “good” and “bad” media representations of Asian American women. She argues that these images are judged by moralism, which leaves the normality intact and excludes the emergence of alternative interpretations of sex and representation.

As discussed above, historically racialized and gendered exclusions have confined Asian/Asian American women’s experiences at workplace and have established contradictory media images of these women. It is worth noting that the exclusions have silenced their credibility and voices in the realm of feminism. Feminism is a political project that seeks gender equality and is permeated with power (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). To achieve the goals of feminism, feminists must truly engage with one another, to produce productive intercultural communication. That is, they need to be aware of, and recognize that the forms of subordination they experience are not the same, and they must move across and mobilize power lines (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). However, feminism has historically been divided along with the racial lines, due to the battles on defining power, voices, representations, and oppressions (Gajjala, 2004). For most white feminists, they experience and intend to change gender-based oppressions. However, many of them often reluctantly check or refuse to face their intersectional privileges, such as racial and class privileges (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Yet, for women of color, gender-based oppressions are only part of a larger pattern of unequal social relations (Espiritu, 2008).

In their everyday lives, women of color have to deal not only with sexism but also with the entire racial, gender, sexual, and class system that defines, stigmatizes, and controls them (Hill Collins, 1990). Thus, a feminism that focuses only on gender is not adequate. It masks various forms of oppressions faced by women of color and obscures the ways that white women oppress women of color (Mohanty, 1988).

For example, white women's experiences are often highlighted in feminism, and white feminists are often the center and serve as the credible source and brave representative for feminism, so that achievements of women of color in feminist theories, visions, critiques, and movements are often marginalized (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). To Asian/Asian American women, when race and racism are included in feminist conversations, Asian/Asian American women often still are not seen as racially legitimate in anti-inequality discourses, because race is often treated as monolithically "black" in the U.S. mainstream racial paradigm, which favors the black-white binary, and feminism of color usually emphasizes on Black women (Lim, 2006; Lee, 1998). Thus, in this racialized feminist discourse, Asian/Asian American women have been constructed as "the non-feminist Other" (Ong, 1994). Asian/Asian American women are either invisible or are included in white feminist scholarship as a token (Bhavnani, 2001). Such invisibility and tokenistic inclusion can be seen as synonymous with exclusion, and this exclusion reproduces racist and ethnocentric ideas within feminist work (Yamada, 2015).

Along with the global flows of capitalism, ideologies, and social movements, many Asian/Asian American scholars have noticed and addressed the unequal power flows in the globalization of U.S. feminist ideologies. They situate Asian/Asian American feminist movements in the transnational and historical contexts to problematize the

global circulation of U.S. feminism as the default feminist knowledge (Lee, 2003). For instance, a few Chinese diasporic scholars have studied the emergence of feminist movements in mainland China and Taiwan. They are very aware of the situation of Chinese social movements today that are sandwiched between the Chinese locally historical and political context and Western/U.S. hegemonic activist discourses (Lee, 2003; Liu, Huang, & Ma, 2015). That is, feminist movements in China emerge out of intertwined global and local currents. Liu et al. (2015) in their study on contemporary Chinese queer feminist movements, review the past and current Chinese feminist movements and problematize the complexity of young local activists' embracement of transnationalism and Western/U.S. feminist knowledge, as well as the self-reflexivity on their migrant identity and positions in local/U.S./global feminist movements.

The studies discussed above have challenged U.S./Western (white) feminist dominance in local and global contexts. They have inspired my research with useful theoretical perspectives. My research follows this route but also seeks to expand the scope of previous research and to contribute the field in the following ways. First, many of these studies have confronted the prevailing perception that Chinese women are uniformly submissive, passive, and oppressed. My research continues these studies' critical inquiries of Chinese women's heterogenous identities, experiences, struggles, and actions. However, I expand the scope to include first-generation Chinese migrants' racialized, gendered, and sexualized intercultural communicative practices and relationships. Moreover, my research situates Chinese migrant women's daily experiences in local, regional, transnational, imperial, and (post-)colonial contexts, to explore the effect of those histories and contexts on their perceptions of racial, gender,

and sexual inequalities. For instance, the recent social movement #MeToo initiated in the United States has ignited nationwide debates on sexual assaults and harassments and on gender inequalities in China online and offline. Inspired by this movement, investigations into a few decades-old sexual assault and harassment cases have been revived (Hernandez, 2018). The #MeToo movement has been celebrated as an opportunity to uncover gender inequalities in China and to create a global feminist alliance.

However, #MeToo has also been critiqued on its backlash, such as for its limitations led by binary thoughts on gender and a lack of intersectional perspectives. In the #MeToo movement, LGBTQ, transgender, and male victims do not receive adequate attentions. In addition, in the ambiguous and complex accusation against actor Aziz Ansari, the movement is critiqued by its lack of the recognition that men of color could be criminalized by white heteronormative feminist ideologies, so that it could further reinforce the notion that Western/U.S. feminism is “advanced” while non-Western countries are deeply controlled by patriarchy and gender inequalities. Therefore, in my research, I contest Chinese migrant women’s experiences in historical and transnational contexts, to problematize the global circulation of Western/U.S. feminism as the default knowledge and its effect on these women’s perceptions of race, gender, sexuality, and their desires and choices for intercultural relationships.

Racialized sexuality and queerness. Sexuality has been a significant and interdependent research field within Asian American studies, although there have been diverse focuses and debates among those studies. However, Asian women have been often left out from the discussions of sexuality and sexual desires, because their sexuality has been marked as taboo and they have historically been constructed as either asexual or

highly sexualized (e.g., Calafell, 2012; Shimizu, 2007). In my study, I challenge such notions, and explore how racialized gender and sexuality of first-generation Chinese migrant women inform and are informed by their daily-lived intercultural and transnational experiences. Thus, in this section, by reviewing Asian American studies on sexuality, I tease out the ways such fields of inquiry complicate and expand conversations about sexuality, and Asian American identities and spaces, to inform my research exploration on first-generation Chinese migrant women's sexuality, gender, and race.

Ting (1998) points out that sexuality had been integrated in Asian Americanist thoughts and research. In early Asian American studies, sexuality was used as a euphemism to refer to orgasm, vaginal-penile intercourse, homosexual existence, and sexual identities. Sexuality was studied as a stable and biological category, sexual preferences and behaviors. Such limited studies and understanding of sexuality naturalized other aspects of sexuality and obscured its political nature (Ting, 1998). An avoidance of discussing other aspects of sexuality, suggests that discussions of immigration and marriage, anti-miscegenation laws, dating and prostitutes, and standards of beauty are not, to some degree, discussions of sexuality. It also suggests that studies on homosexual existence, sexual identities, and orgasms are somehow not Asian American. Therefore, Ting asserts that rather than being considered as taboo, sexuality needs to be studied as relations of power. That is, sexuality is constructed in and through social and political relations. The politics of sexuality are not limited to personal sexual preferences. Instead, sexuality is political, and it is articulated with systems of race and class, with logics of nation and gender. Body, subjects, and performances, which are aspects of sexuality are parts of social relations of production. Takagi (1994) also points out the

necessity of situating sexuality in Asian American history for two reasons. First, it helps scholars re-think and re-evaluate “Asian American identity.” Second, it helps scholars be aware of that sexual identities are often hidden or invisible within Asian American communities.

Following this notion, more studies have begun to expand their discussions in negotiating sexuality with intersectional and complicated differences, such as race, ethnicity, gender/sex, and class, to examine the mutual influences of Asian American sexuality formation and the formation of Asian America within the U.S. white heteronormative discourses. That is, the racialized, gendered, and sexualized images of Asian Americans symbolize the U.S. racial formation while the racial formation of Asian America indicates the sexual hierarchies in the heterosexual and homosexual spheres (e.g., Eguchi, 2015; Eng, 2001).

For example, Shimizu (2007) critically analyzes the sexuality of Asian American women presented in media. She addresses that women have historically been alienated from their own sexuality. Their desires, pleasures, and behaviors are judged and heavily disciplined by the heteronormative gaze. The situation is even tougher for women of color who have been racialized sexualities and sexualized races. In the similar vein, Nguyen (2014) unsettles borders/binaries between American/Asian, top/bottom, and dominance/submission. By critiquing the heteronormative narrative of Asian masculinity, Nguyen reassesses Asian American racial bottom position and Oriental passivity. In another critical media study, Eguchi and Washington (2016) uncover whiteness ideologies in racialized media representations of queer men of color. They describe that the TV show repeatedly symbolizes Black and Latino men as sexual tops (intercourse

penetrators), while Asian men are depicted as feminine foreigners and intercourse receivers through the imaginations of Orientalization. Orientalism refers to the binary view of the West/U.S. as superior and the East as submissive. This view is also reflected in the framing of Asian masculinity and sexuality. Thus, Eguchi and Washington assert that these representations of queer men of color are produced for the consolidation of the current Asian American and U.S. racial formations. These U.S./Western queer subcultural productions reveal the historical reproduction of racial formation in a larger global and colonial context.

Some Asian American scholars also point out the influence of the racial formation of Asian America to the construct of Asian American sexuality. Ting (1998) states that Asian American racial formation produces a logic in which Asian American sexuality is “authentic” to the degree that it is repressed and distorted. That is, the logic distorts individual Asian Americans’ natural desires for hetero/homo-sexual romantic and erotic relations with other Asian Americans by making these “natural” desires impossible to feel, articulate, and act upon. Such repressed and distorted sexuality is also an indication of Asian American oppression.

By integrating (post-)colonial theories and critical race theories, many scholars situate sexuality in transnational contexts to reveal transnational whiteness in global and local contexts. A number of scholars (e.g., Eguchi, 2015; Eng, 2010; Lee, 2003; Puar, 2007) have argued that whiteness hegemonically structures global and local formation of sexual identities and spaces. Sexual minorities in hetero/homonormative discourses that are not white and male remain relatively invisible. Moreover, the production and circulation of sexuality knowledge have been controlled by U.S./Western queer

knowledge (Lee, 2003; Lim, 2006). That is, sexuality has always been used to promote U.S./Western ideologies that demarcate sexual minorities within and beyond the U.S./West discourses as barbaric and oppressive (Puar, 2007). For instance, Eguchi, Files-Thompson, and Calafell (2018) criticizes the Western cultural production “closet paradigm,” which functions as a hegemonic measurement to evaluate the progressivity of queer of color sexualities, and thereby to fixate sexual identification as singular and stable and to ignore the complex racialized and classed sexualities. Eng (2010) also addresses the danger of queer liberalism. He reveals the dependency of queer liberalism on the ideology of colorblindness that has been used to “prove” the historical queer freedom and racial progress. He argues that queer liberalism is to maintain whiteness, racism, normative family structure and kinship, and heterosexist morality. Puar (2007) refers to such emergence and expansion of a national homosexuality as “homonationalism” in which U.S. nationalism and imperialism continues to expand. Puar argues that the homonormativity does not necessarily contradict or undermine heterosexual norms, and it may support forms of heteronormativity and class, racial, and citizenship privileges that heterosexual norms require. That is, homonormativity closely ties to the recognition of homosexual subjects, both legally and representationally, and to the national and transnational political agendas of U.S. imperialism.

To counter such situation, many Asian/Asian American scholars have begun to reintroduce the conceptualization of sexuality to the indigenous and local context, to critique hegemony in sexuality knowledge and activism, and to raise awareness that more research on historicizing, contextualizing, and politicizing sexuality beyond U.S./Western discourse is necessary. For instance, Lee (2003) introduces the “kuaer theory” and

Johnson (2001) offers “quare studies” to explore shadow figures, such as Asians, Blacks, diaspora, the poor, and males and females whose sexuality, body, class, race, gender, languages, thoughts, and behaviors are often forgotten by the hegemonic queer hierarchies. Building upon Lee’s (2003) kuaer theoretical framework, Yep and Lescure (2014) kuaer Ang Lee’s *The Wedding Banquet*. They argue that homosexuality is still largely portrayed in U.S./Western films as a white phenomenon, that marks Chinese tacit negotiations on sexuality presented in the movie as being non-normative. Yep and Lescure claim that such media representation reproduces the ideology of U.S./Western superiority that favors and promotes “visible and explicit articulations and expressions of sexual desire, identity, practices, and politics in a global world” (p. 171).

Nguyen (2014) and Shimizu (2012) bring feminist notions into their research inquiry of sexuality. Both scholars claim that sexuality cannot be understood as an ossified identity category, but it closely ties to every aspect of human, politics, and knowledge production (Nguyen, 2014; Shimizu, 2012). Take masculinity as an example, to construct an alternative Asian/Asian American model of masculinity, many scholars argue that instead of merely resisting the racialized/sexualized and humiliating Asian/Asian American male stereotypes, Asian Americans need to be aware of privileges of being male, and/or straight. Thus, sexuality studies need to cross gender and sex borders, to build an alliance with Asian American women and LGBTQ groups. This is an important strategy to dismantle structural racism and hetero/homonormativity.

The review of literature above indicates the intersection of sexuality, gender, and racial formation. Queering perspectives go beyond viewing sexuality simply as sexual practices, preferences, and identities, to situate sexuality as and through power relations,

hegemony, and hierarchy (Yep, 2013). Queering perspectives encourage my project to look at race, gender, and sexuality interrelationally, rather than by treating them discretely. Sexuality has always been theorized and used to promote liberalism of Western/U.S. ideologies (Lim, 2006). As discussed previously, historically relying on heteronormative ideologies, U.S. racial and national formations are now accompanied by homonormative ideologies that reproduce narrow racial, class, gender, sexual, and national ideals (Puar, 2007). Within this discourse, the United States is benefited from the proliferation of queerness, and is propagated as progressive, tolerant, and as encouraging of sexual diversity, while demarcating its counterpart as barbaric, repressive, and homophobic (Lim, 2006; Puar, 2007). Thus, more studies are needed to focus on historicizing and politicizing U.S./Western sexuality ideologies in intercultural relations and transnational contexts. Among these, studies also need to pay more critical attentions to Asian migrant women and the construction, negotiation, and resistance of their sexualities through their everyday experiences and intercultural relationship with others.

In my project, sexuality reflects not only a demographic category, sexual practices or identities, but it also reflects a perspective to queer my understanding of “Chinese women” and its relation to “Asian America.” An examination through the theoretical lens of queerness helps me make sense of what sexuality means to these women; how they negotiate their sexuality in their kinship, at the workplace, and in their intercultural relationships; how their sexuality is negotiated through and by historical, social, political, economic powers; and how the power relations of sexuality intersecting with gender and race shape their body, subjectivities, agency, desires, and intercultural relationships.

Femiqueer Perspectives

To achieve the aims of this project, I adopt feminist and queer perspectives (i.e., femiqueer perspective) to examine how whiteness develops, promotes, and creates dominant, contradictory images of Chinese migrant women and affects their intercultural communicative practices, as well as analyzes racialized hegemonic frames relating to their gender and sexuality, and to the dynamic of their intercultural relationships.

Rachel Lee (2014) first introduces femiqueer approach in her pioneering book *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies*, that femiqueer approach embraces and emphasizes on materiality of body and embodied experiences. For instance, body parts are highly embedded in the history of gendering, such as the vagina, the breast, and Chinese women's bound feet. Femiqueer approach also challenges the stable category of woman. It critiques the notion that women across cultures are "a natural affinity group" (Lee, 2014, p. 32). This premise allows Western feminists not only to overlook the unequal formations of gender and sexuality in various sociopolitical positions, but also allows them to obscure the political ground for coalition building. With the theoretical lens of feminism of color intersecting queer theory, femiqueer as a theory and methodology continues critiquing a feminism that ignores asymmetric race and class relations by which women of color are excluded and otherized. It also challenges a feminism that relies on a too narrow focus of women's subordination and the biological binary of men and women that could ignore how men of color can be oppressed by White heteronormativity.

Femiqueer approach has also been used as pedagogies in teaching Lesbian and Gay Studies course in Women's Studies. Broad and Bloodsworth (2001) adopt femiqueer

pedagogies to help students think critically about gender and sexuality and to underscore the intersecting and complicated relations of feminist theories, queer theories, and sociopolitical movements centered on gender and sexuality. Broad and Bloodsworth claim that femiqueer approach creates a place for students to situate their embodied positions and material experiences in the larger context of heterosexism and in a system and institution defined by racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism. It also gives a space for the development of critical consciousness.

As to my dissertation project, it is vital to apply femiqueer approach as a theoretical framework to guide my research in studying the construct of first-generation Chinese migrant women's racialized gender and sexuality through their transnational and intercultural experiences. Women of color and feminists of color have historically been othered by and through their body. The queer feminist of color scholar Calafell (2012) places her embodied experiences alongside literature about shapeshifters/werewolves through which she unmasks how women of color are constructed as monstrous Others in academy. She states that women of color have been regulated and othered by hegemonic standards of femininity, such as through beauty standards and "acceptable" behaviors. Femininity is further othered when it intersects with race. Nakayama (1994) explains that the Asian male body historically has often been emasculated against the white male body as a way to maintain and center the white male. Asian bodies have often been ignored in the discussion of race, femininity, and masculinity, because they are the deviant from racial, gendered, and sexual "norms" (e.g., Eguchi, 2017; Yep, 2013). Therefore, the power relations of race, gender, and sexuality have been embodied in the experiences of people of color, as to this particular research first-generation Chinese migrant women.

Femiqueer perspectives serve as my theory and approach, and further dismantle the notion of normativity as perpetuated by the dominant reading of first-generation Chinese migrant women as oppressed, passive, and submissive (research) objects. It offers me the theoretical lens to critique the dominant/normative knowledge (re)production, consumption and circulation, as well as the ways of studying Chinese migrant women. Femiqueer approach enables me to generate insights to explore the intersection of feminism and queerness, uncovering often hidden whiteness ideologies that affect Chinese migrant women's perceptions of gender, sexuality, desires, and relationships, complicating dynamic identity politics, and challenging often essentially and biologically interpreted Chinese women and Asian America. Moreover, femiqueer perspectives equip my research with tools to critique the dominant Western/U.S. knowledge circulation associated with feminist, gender, and queer studies in the transnational context and an increasingly globalized world.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, this chapter reviewed my rationale of bringing together theories of whiteness studies, Asian American gender and sexuality studies with femiqueer perspectives as my theoretical foundations of this project. This framework provided a theoretical lens through which it painted the macro-ideological structure that has informed and constructed the micro-level of relational experiences within intercultural, interpersonal, and organizational communication of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia. In the next chapter, I discuss the qualitative approaches that I use in this project, to explore answers for my research inquiries.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

This study seeks to understand how power relations and ideological tensions over race, gender, and sexuality are reproduced, negotiated, and challenged by first-generation Chinese migrant women, through investigating their narratives of daily lived-experiences that inform and are informed by ideologies and power structures. The following research questions guide the inquiry of this study. First, how do interviewees' accounts of their experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in U.S. academia make sense of interlocking power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social lives? Second, how do interviewees navigate themselves in power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia? Third, how do interviewees engage with power relations to resist discriminations? To explore these research questions, qualitative inquiries serve the methodological needs. Qualitative approaches that focus on experiences and feelings of subjects are able to provoke first-hand narratives and rich accounts, and capture complexities and contradictions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Tracy, 2010). Below, I first introduce methods and procedures of data collection. Then, I reflect on my positionality in this research and in relation to my interviewees. Last, I discuss ways to conduct data analysis and interpretation.

Data Collection

Interview. As discussed in the previous chapter, Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia are still constructed as “others” and stereotyped as submissive, oppressed, and monolithic others. This study attempts to present previously understudied experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant academic women whose race, gender, and sexuality

have been viewed as deviant and invisible by the dominant perspectives. Thus, due to theoretical perspectives reviewed in the previous chapter and study goals, I used in-depth interviewing to invite subjects to represent their experiences in their own voices (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999). These approaches emphasize the significance of subjectivity and interactions. Through in-depth interviewing, knowledge is collected in stories, side topics, hesitations, expressions of emotions, and other elements (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). In-depth interviewing provides access to an individual's views of their lived-experiences and relations.

I used a dialogic style of interviewing, which encouraged interviewees to participate more and fostered more dynamic interactions between interviewees and me. By dialogic, I mean that interviewer and interviewee engage one another, and together they construct memory, meaning, and experiences (Madison, 2012). I interviewed the interviewees in an informal manner and shared my lived-experiences with them, in order to bring us together and encourage them to discuss, question, and even challenge each other (Conquergood, 1991). This open-ended, in-depth, and dialogical style of interviewing generated more reciprocal and dynamic engagement than a linear process of collecting information (González, 2000). That is, although I was the researcher and the interviewer, I did not control the interviews, but the flow and pace of our conversations did. Thus, through interviews, the interviewees and I collaborate to construct meaning, experiences, and memory together, in which individual subjectivity, embodied experiences, material conditions, and yearnings emerge that are inseparable from shared and inherited communal dilemmas and achievements, histories, and sociocultural and sociopolitical possibilities (Madison, 2012). Thus, in-depth interviews were vital to

explore my research inquiry on examining power structures regarding race, gender, and sexuality.

Questions discussed during interviews serve to explore research questions. I list my interview guide in Appendix D at the end of the dissertation. During the interviews, questions presented in the interview guide were slightly altered or added with follow-up questions along with more time spent in interviewing and more experiences received from interviewees (Madison, 2012). In the following section, I discuss the ways I approached to my interviewees in order to explore their experiences for my research questions.

To explore how my interviewees make sense of interlocking power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social lives, I first asked them to describe their roles at home, workplace, and social occasions. Then I asked them about their migration stories, such as when they migrated to the United States, anecdotes about moving to the United States, and what migration means to them.

Next, to investigate how interviewees navigate themselves in power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia, I continued the interview by asking them to describe incidents in their daily life that made them aware of and not aware of being a Chinese migrant woman. I encouraged them to consider their relational experiences at home, in academia, and in other social occasions. Then I asked them to reflect on some challenges they had encountered as a Chinese migrant woman in these contexts. We also discussed the root

causes of these challenges and conflicts, as well as how these stories were related to the larger power structure of their race, gender, and sexuality.

Furthermore, to explore how interviewees engage with power relations to resist discriminations, I asked them questions from the following diverse angles. First, I asked my interviewees to reflect on their perceptions and participations in some of the debates regarding issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia at U.S. universities and colleges. Then, the interviewees talked about their understandings of being categorized as minority and/or international academics. These two categories sometimes are differentiated and sometimes overlap in order to serve diverse institutional purposes. By asking these questions, I attempted to learn how these women perceive, negotiate, and engage with the power hierarchies regarding race, gender, and sexuality. Next, I asked my interviewees to propose some possible ways to work through conflicts they had discussed, and I asked for suggestions they might offer to other first-generation migrant women in general and particularly to those in U.S. academia. In addition, I asked them to reflect on the positive aspects of being a Chinese migrant woman, such as their advantages, major accomplishments so far, and some of the assets they believe they brought to the United States and whether they had been noticed and appreciated by others. Discussing these questions, I intended to interrupt the perception of Chinese migrant women often monolithically grouped as victims and the notion that what these women had achieved were because of the liberal and progressive discourses provided by U.S. society and education without considering what these women have already equipped prior to their migration.

Close to the end of the interview, I checked the responses of interviewees to the interview and interview questions. This served to confirm interviewees' impression of the interview, as well as to stimulate further conversation and reflexivity between interviewees and me. The interview questions reviewed above were not arranged to answer one certain research question, although they were placed under one. Depending on the responses given by interviewees, some questions were answered already through a different question, or some ones were expanded with minor questions or deleted. Again, the interview questions were asked not only to collect information from interviewees but also to initiate reciprocal, dynamic, and ongoing conversations.

Interviewees. To recruit interviewees, first I used purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) notes that a researcher chooses individuals for a study if they can purposefully inform the research study and deepen an understanding of the research problem. Riessman (2008) also observes that in critical inquiry, sampling is purposeful, not random, because the study is “not to generalize to the population but to interpret the meaning and function of stories embedded in interviews” (p. 60). Within purposeful sampling, the strategies of criterion sampling and snowball sampling were utilized. Criterion sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) requires interviewees to meet certain criteria. This study focuses on first-generation Chinese migrant women who work and/or study in universities or colleges in the United States, so the relevant criteria for this study were as follows: interviewees must be between 22 and 65 years old, and must be mainland Chinese who have lived in China for a minimum of 12 years before coming to the United States. These interviewees have to be a doctoral student in the United States and/or working in U.S. academia. They have to be fluent in Chinese (Mandarin) and English.

They may be in different forms of intra/intercultural relationships. They may come from different ethnic groups of China and have various legal statuses in the United States. To begin recruiting qualified interviewees, I utilized snowball sampling. I started with first-generation Chinese migrant women that I know and meet criteria discussed above and sent them an interview invitation letter through emails. In the letter, they were asked to voluntarily forward the email to other eligible Chinese/Chinese American women with whom they have connections.

A total of 11 first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working at universities and colleges in the United States participated in this study. Due to the relatively small size of the participant group, the quality and depth of each conducted interview and the following analyzing procedure were better ensured. In qualitative studies, there is no specific rule for determining an appropriate sample size (Patton, 1990). The purpose of selecting participants in qualitative analyses is not to generalize for a larger population (Creswell, 2007). Instead, recruiting participants in a qualitative study intends to provide an opportunity to explore “the complicated character, organization, and logic of culture” (McCracken, 1988, p. 17). Thus, McCracken (1988) argues that for qualitative analyses, the primary rule of choosing participants is “less is more” (p. 17). That is, interviews need to be conducted with a few people, with more care, and over a longer time, instead of with many participants in a superficial way. Thus, McCracken suggests that eight interviewees will be sufficient for many qualitative research projects. Polkinghorne (1989) also deems that 10 participants are reasonable for an in-depth interview lasting about two hours or more in a qualitative research. This study adopts in-depth interviews to explore embodied experiences of Chinese migrant female academics

in the United States. Its purpose is not to generalize for an entire Chinese migrant female population but is to examine the complicated meanings of these interviewees' stories. Thus, the 11 interviewees have provided me rich, nuanced, in-depth, and intensive qualitative data to work with.

Prior to the start of each interview, I asked the interviewees for their permission to audio-record our conversations and to take notes. I explained that the recording and notes are to help document the interview as accurately as possible. Then, I again confirmed with the interviewees their consent to conduct the interviews and informed them that their involvement in the study is voluntary and there are no foreseen risks associated with participating in this study. If they encounter discomfort when they talk about some distressing experiences, they could choose to continue or not to answer the certain question, or avoid talking about some experiences, or stop the interview at any time. Moreover, I informed interviewees that no names or identifying information would be associated with their responses. Their privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in this study are well protected. The interviewees chose their pseudonyms as we scheduled our interview. In my analysis of their interviewees, I de-identified their academic affiliations as well, in order to maintain the anonymity of their identities.

The interviews were conducted through video chat apps, such as FaceTime, Skype, and WeChat, and in both Mandarin Chinese and English. Each of the interviews lasts for approximately two to three hours. All of the interviewees are Mainland Chinese and currently are living in the United States. They represent multiple positions in U.S. academia and come from diverse academic disciplines, such as arts and sciences, social science, engineering, and medicine and public health. Among the interviewees, one is a visiting assistant professor, one is an assistant professor, and the others are doctoral

students in different years of their doctoral program. Among the nine students, eight are or will be working as a graduate assistant, whose duties include teaching, grading, and/or researching; the one who is not a graduate assistant is on a scholarship from China. The most recent migrant has been living in the United States for two years, while the first to arrive in the United States came 11 years ago. The interviewees were not required to reveal their immigration status, but one identified as holding an employer-sponsored work visa, and eight identified as holding a student visa.

Positionality and Reflexivity

To reach the research goals, critically reviewing my positionality is significant, because it pushes me to be aware of and recognize my own power, privileges, and biases while I am intending to criticize power structures that surround and marginalize my interviewees. Relationships between the researcher and subjects are situated in power relations and contexts that continue to develop (Madison, 2012). Conquergood (1993) and later Jones and Calafell (2012) suggest that researchers need to be aware of such power status and differences and to be able to accept the power and privilege that researchers carry with themselves, so as to the condition when interviewees who carry higher social status than their researchers. In addition, within the in-depth interviews, I also seek to have dialogues with my interviewees, as I mentioned in the previous section. Dialogue here means that the interviewer and interviewee engage one another and construct memory, meaning, and experiences together (Madison, 2012). Research by Conquergood (1991), found that dialogue is to bring self and others together, to discuss, question, and even challenge one another. Such dialogue is not meant to draw conclusions. It looks for dynamic reciprocal interactions between the interviewer and

interviewee and for ongoing conversations. Therefore, critical reflexivity is not only a reflexivity enacted by researchers, but also is an engaged-reflexive praxis, that is embodied with our everyday lived-experiences (McIntosh & Hobson, 2013). This engaged reflexivity also acknowledges yet challenges the “research limitations” that have been widely used in reflexivity on methodological processes (McIntosh & Hobson, 2013). Instead of simply acknowledging positionalities of researchers as limitations of the research for the sake of reflection, the engaged reflexivity recognizes that researchers’ positionalities and lived everyday experiences within power structures challenge our relations with different others and that reflexive failures are inevitable. Therefore, critical reflections encourage researchers to look beyond limitations and embrace relational reflexivity.

In my research, my interviewees are first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia. In the increasingly globalized world, transnational flows of capital, and political and cultural invasions have stimulated waves of migration worldwide (Shi, 2008). Along with these migrant movements, many Chinese women have been drawn to the United States for various reasons. As an international doctoral student from China and soon to be a visiting assistant professor in a U.S. liberal arts college, I consider myself as one of these first-generation Chinese migrants. This identity helped me build trust and relationship with my interviewees, because we shared similar experiences with migration, cross-cultural interactions, oppression, and marginalization. However, although I regard myself as an insider of this group, I am aware that some of the interviewees did not willingly expose much of their life experiences to me, for various reasons, such as concerns of privacy, lack of trust, and our different social positions. In addition, I am

aware that I am neither an expert of their experiences, nor the “natural” representative to speak for them (Mendoza, 2016). Moreover, I am aware that our experiences differed due to our various positionalities within a larger matrix of domination (Calafell, 2012).

For instance, my positionalities can also be viewed as a Western/U.S. American highly educated Chinese cis-gender woman, heterosexual, with some degree of class privilege and immigration status privilege due to my marriage to an American citizen. These perceived identities and positioning might somewhat constrain my ability to build rapport with some of Chinese migrant female interviewees. Although I position myself as a migrant from mainland China and I am able to relate to my interviewees with shared racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences to some extent, many of them might still consider me as a partial outsider, due to my language capability and immigration status.

While I was conducting the interviews, I realized that not every interviewee could express their thoughts freely in English. During one interview, although the rest of the interview was conducted in Mandarin Chinese, as the interviewee requested, the interviewee still showed some lack of confidence and discomfort with her English, and she described many incidents of being unfairly treated because of her English and accent. After reflecting on this interview, my English capability and English interviews might be perceived as a privilege and confine the trust building between that interviewee and me.

I also noticed some discomforts during interviews when I discussed issues such as “immigrant,” “feminist,” “queer,” “whiteness,” and “resistance” with some of the interviewees. For example, as I discussed with them their racialized, gendered, and sexualized transnational experiences, some of them might perceive these questions as having contained a certain liberal-political agenda. Especially when we discussed their

participation in social movements, some of them sounded embarrassed and defensive when they mentioned that they had not participated in such events much. They might feel being interrogated and judged ethically. I observed and could relate that some of us Chinese migrants sometimes prefer not to talk openly about politics due to the political legacies of China's Cultural Revolution and continuous media censorship. People are concerned about the consequences of discussing and critiquing political issues. News often emanates from less-government-controlled media sources reporting that some people are punished because of their criticism of China's Communist Party and their involvement of workers' movements and/or feminist/LGBT movements. Therefore racial, feminist, and sexuality related issues are considered to be politically sensitive topics for some of interviewees, and they were reluctant to reflect on such issues in the beginning of the interviews. But the situation was different for interviewees who are doing research in humanity-related subjects, because they are encouraged to be open, overt, and vocal about political issues by the U.S. higher education dominated by white liberal discourse. Thus, along with the process of interviewing, I not only reflected on how ideologies in relation to race, gender, and sexuality are embedded in our experiences but also ruminated about how my ways of doing this research were deeply influenced by and involved in Western/U.S.-centered knowledge circulation (Mendoza, 2016).

This reflexivity presents nuanced ways in which power relations have operated through rapport building between interviewees and me and through our conversations. More importantly, this reflexivity has kept pushing me to think about and consider ways to alleviate the discrepancy between the interviewees and me. For example, in some interviews, to decrease misunderstandings, I reworded my interview questions by giving

more explanations of certain terms and jargon. I also started the question sometimes with my own examples, to help interviewees understand my questions and be more interested in participating and reflecting in the dialogue. Although there were times when some interviewees were not able to relate to my certain experiences or they avoided talking about certain issues, such as sexuality, their reactions were still part of interview data that contributed to understanding their experiences.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To conduct this analysis, first, I transformed oral narratives into written texts. One of the interviews was conducted mostly in Chinese, so I translated it into English while I was transcribing. Then, I read through each interview text numerous times and analyzed the text with a narrative analysis method through the theoretical lens of whiteness studies and femiqueer theories.

Narrative analysis is story centered, and the story needs to be intact for interpretive purposes (Riessman, 2008). According to Riessman, “stories can have effects beyond their meanings for individual storytellers. They create possibilities for social identities, group belonging, and collective action” (p. 57). The primary goal of this study is to better understand the daily experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant academic women through their negotiation and engagement with power relations at home, academia, and social context. Therefore, utilizing story as the unit of analysis is imperative to make sense of their racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences, to uncover hidden ideological assumptions that have informed their othered and marginalized images and to explore how they negotiate their presence and survival in the U.S. academia and society shaped and dominated by white heteronormative patriarchy.

Thus, I worked with stories of a single interview at a time, and then I isolated and/or reordered relevant stories based on their topics. After this process was completed for all interview texts, I went back to stories of each interview. Through the lens of my theoretical foundations, I identified hidden assumptions in each story and analyzed them. Next, I connected and compared stories across different interviewees with the guidance of my research inquiries. I re-categorized the interviewees' stories by topics. Based on the initial analysis of their stories, I examined how these 11 women's stories are connected and disconnected from each other by investigating their similar and nuanced perceptions and experiences. The theoretical framework built upon whiteness and femiqueer critiques assisted me to connect their stories together, and make sense of the differences.

By doing so, three themes emerged in the investigation of the interview texts. The first theme, *Rethinking Positionality*, pertains to how the interviewees make sense of intersecting power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social life. It presents the ways in which interviewees reflect their perceptions and experiences of racialization and their racialized gender and sexuality. The second theme, *Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia*, refers to how the interviewees navigate themselves in the power relations through their everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia. It shows the ways in which Chinese migrant female academics navigate their marginalized and othered race, gender, and sexuality in U.S. academia through their teaching, doing research, and building networks. The third theme, *Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance*, reflects the ways in which the interviewees engage with the power relations to survive and/or to resist discrimination

in U.S. academia and society. The theme presents the interviewees' daily efforts and paradoxes of (non)participation of talking back to the power, in order to survive in U.S. academia and society. The three emerged themes demonstrate narratives of relational experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia through their home, academia, and social lives. The three themes also assist me point out how power relations and ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality shape, regulate, and marginalize these women, and how these women engage and interrupt the existing power hierarchy.

Through analyzing the three emerged themes, I noticed there are disconnections and contradictions among sub-themes, the interviewees' narratives, my interpretations of their and my stories, and my reflections. Therefore, following descriptions of interviewees' stories, I provided reflections for each theme as well, in order to demonstrating problems associated with the interview discourse, explaining disconnections and contradictions in the descriptions, and addressing what was missing from the interviews. By doing so, the narratives and interpretations of stories were further developed and contested. As the connector of 11 interviewees, I was able to link their micro-level stories to the macro-level power structure and address how they mutually shape and inform each other.

To more accurately represent these interviewees and their complex and nuanced experiences, I selected and utilized rich examples of their stories to illustrate these themes. Comments selected from interviews were "cleaned up" to some degree. I erased some break-offs, fillers, and repetitive words that do not affect the meanings of the interviewees' stories. I also fixed some grammar errors that commonly occur in interview

conversations. The cleanup of these quotes does not change or affect meanings of the interviewees' stories, because this study does not focus on searching linguistic patterns in the interview text. Instead, this research utilized narrative analysis that pays attention in interviewees' stories.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, in this chapter, I laid out the qualitative method approaches that I used to collect interview data and to analyze narrative texts. Narrative analysis, together with whiteness studies and femiqueer theories, enabled me to analyze the emerged three themes from the interview texts. Furthermore, I provided a reflection and examined the negotiation of my positionalities during the interviews with my interviewees. In the next chapter, I will thoroughly present my analysis of the three themes that emerged from interview texts and demonstrate each theme with rich examples of the interviewees' comments. Through the analysis, I will also demonstrate how I identified ideological discourses concerning race, gender, and sexuality from interviewees' stories.

CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I demonstrate the analysis of interviews with first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and/or work in universities and colleges located in the United States of America. Overall, through the interviews, I found that these women have been constructed as racial, gendered, and sexual others through their family, academic, and social everyday experiences. In turn, these Chinese migrant female academics' daily navigation and negotiation with power hierarchy shape and interrupt the construct of their foreign status and/or racialization of their gender and sexuality. Whiteness and heteronormative patriarchy have been transnationally circulating along with the continuous expansion of U.S. nationalism and imperialism. That nationalism and imperialism have instructed these interviewees' understandings of their race, gender, sexuality, and transnational relations; marginalized them from their academic practices; and informed their ways of engaging power relations. In the next section, I start the analysis by describing rethinking positionality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social contexts.

Rethinking Positionality

Under this theme, I examined how the interviewees made sense of their experience of racialization in the context of gender and sexuality as Chinese migrant female academics in the United States. I also explored how these women perceived racialization in their relationship with China. In addition, this theme suggests how racialized notions of gender and sexuality embedded in the construct of racialization of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. Universities and colleges.

Rethinking racialization. During the interviews with the 11 women, when they discussed race, some of them said they had never thought about race prior to moving to the United States. One reason was because in China, ethnicity is more visually apparent. In China, there is a Han majority and 55 ethnic minority groups. As Xuehua said, “In China, we have ethnicities; we have place of origin. We have discrimination based on place of origin. But that’s what we have. We don’t use the term race.” “Place of origin” here refers to the geographic locale where one grew up. Some people in China have a bias against people from rural areas or smaller cities, because such places are often associated with stereotypical assumptions that imply that these areas are socioeconomically less developed. In China, ethnicity is taught as early as kindergarten and that Chinese nation is comprised of 56 ethnicities.

Moreover, a communication process of learning about race in the United States implicates how some interviewees did not always think of their social privileges in terms of racial, ethnic, minority categories in China. This is because in China, being ethnically Han places one in the majority and privileged position. Among the interviewees, 10 out of the 11 identified themselves as Han Chinese. Han Chinese constitute more than 90% of the population of Mainland China, and the Han also makes up the world’s largest ethnic group (Mullaney, Leibold, Gros, & Vanden Bussche, 2012). For example, as Liu Ling reflected,

I think that’s the big difference after I moved here because I’ve never thought about race before I moved here because you take everything really for granted. Like everyone is like you, and everyone is your race. You have never lived in the racially diverse culture.

Liu Ling’s reflection on being not aware of racial or ethnic identities or tensions prior to coming to the United States, illustrated that being a Han Chinese is being cultural and

ethnic majority in China, where the Han dominant language, food, clothes, education, and cultural expectations are the norms. June, another woman being interviewed, said that, to her being Han in China is like being white in the U.S. She said,

I was pretty much white, right? As a Han ethnic person, I enjoyed a lot of privileges that I wasn't aware of whereby coming to here, now looking back, I'm way more reflective of those privileges that I think was very, very related to my experience of migration.

Different from these interviewees who identified as Han Chinese, Cactus was the only one of the 11 interviewees who identified as ethnic minority in China. She reflected, "So, when I grow up, I already knew I am different than lots of people because of my appearance." To her, the word "appearance" referred to her physical characteristics and to her choice of clothing that have marked her as a non-Han majority Chinese. Interviewees' statements were evidence that Han Chinese are granted social privileges and that Han Chinese typically do not think of racial, ethnic, and minority differences, as Cactus did. As for China's heterosexual patriarchy, gender and sexuality seemed to be the only minority identities, prior to their arrival in the United States, in the everyday life of these ethnic and cultural majority Chinese women; these components will be explicitly explained in the next section of *Rethinking Racialized Gender and Sexuality*.

Although some of these women said they had never thought about race in the context of China under the influence of Americanized globalization (e.g., the global circuit of U.S. white dominant media products, education.), they did have a limited understanding about race by learning U.S. history and by consuming U.S. mainstream media. Prior to coming to the United States or soon after arriving, some of them said they assumed that race and racism were only about black people. They also assumed that racism was no longer a problem anymore in the U.S. because slavery had been abolished

150 years ago, Barack Obama as an African American was elected to the presidency, and U.S. mainstream media often featured black people in a positive way. For those reasons, some of the interviewees said they had never considered that race and racism would affect their experiences in the United States.

In addition, in recent years, by portraying more non-Chinese characters, Chinese mainstream media has been embracing racial ideologies embedded in Americanized globalization and internationalization, while simultaneously promoting China's nationalism. Consequently, some mainstream media characters in China have often been racially positioned and associated with racial stereotypes. For example, in 2018 China's Lunar New Year Gala, one skit attempted to show a long-term friendship between China and Africa. However, the skit was very problematic, due to its racist portrait of African people. The skit featured a Chinese actress as an African woman with exaggerated buttocks, large breasts, a painted-black face, and carrying a plate of fruit on her head, with the company of an African man dressed as a monkey. On the contrary, the TV Gala invited white singers from the United States and Europe, singing a song about their love to China. Thus, the New Year Gala sparked numerous critiques within and beyond China. None of the interviewees, however, have recalled race being discussed in this way in China.

In the context of Market Reform and the Open-Door Policy since 1978, China has become heavily involved in internationalization and globalization, in which Western/U.S. economic, social, political, and cultural aspects that are characterized in white capitalist heterosexual patriarchy are widely localized, normalized, and adapted into our daily lives (Guan, 2000). The interviewees were all born and raised under the influence of this

context, that their daily lived experiences in China have already been shaped by Americanized globalization in different levels.

Although the interviewees were not very aware of the social construction of race and racial ideology prior to coming to the United States, as they “crossed” the border and became international scholars, some of them have become very aware of their experience of race and racialization of their positionalities. To June, her experience was to learn the process of racialization in which her positionalities shifted from a privileged Han Chinese woman to a minority woman of color. June described her experience:

I think that [learning race] is a process of first intellectually discovering the process and then living it. I think intellectually, after I came to the U.S., I took classes. That’s when I start to notice a lot of racial tension. I made friends who are radical feminists. They introduced me readings that are less accessible outside the U.S. That’s when I started to realize and understand more of the intricacy of racial relations. Then the process of me learning, like I talked about before about me learning that I am a woman of color, is when I started learning those concepts. Not just learn, but also live in these concepts and understand that it’s not a thing that only happens to other people. It’s not a thing that only happens to black people. It also happens to ME. I started to ask questions about how do different groups fit in the racial regime, like this black-white regime? Where does Asian American fit? Where does Latino, Latinx people fit? So yeah, that’s how I learned the concept of race.

She pointed out that to understand racial ideologies and racialization is a learning process in which one acquires knowledge of race concepts and theories, as well as experiences them in everyday life. Similarly, Liu Ling shared her learning process, and explained her understanding of race and her racialized identities,

Race is not biological. Genes can’t determine the racial difference. The genetic differences within race is bigger than the genetic difference across races. It’s really a social construct. It’s really a white people construct, I feel like. They designed those systems, when they were first bringing African slaves to Europe, to America. After I moved here [the U.S.], I started to feel how like Asian as a whole, how the race as a whole is doing in the U.S. Because there is always the myth of model minority. Like, they are doing very good in school, and they have the highest earnings in a lot of sectors, and they are doing extremely well in

STEM, but there's a bamboo ceiling that says Asians can't really get into higher administrative roles. That's kind of we are just seeing our fate. We are seeing our fate as an individual refracted in the fate as a race in total.

Liu Ling's observation pointed out that after moving to the United States, she has experienced her identity shifted to an Asian. She said she became aware of how the racialization as an Asian was constructed by whiteness in which her minority positionality and limited access to social mobility function to serve and maintain white privileges and the existing racial hierarchy in the United States.

Mei also said she was aware of the racialization of her positionalities. She told the story of her first time noticing herself becoming an Asian when she filled out paperwork to apply for a Social Security Number and Card. On the form, she had to place herself in a racial category as an Asian. However, the racial term, Asian, is an essentialist illusion of people from the region named Asia. This racialization is historically rooted in whiteness as a norm. She recalled, "I don't know who I am at that time. There's no Chinese citizen. The closest one is Asian. But I am not Asian." But she realized that U.S. society categorizes and labels her as an Asian without historicizing or politicizing the term. "There are a lot of nations in East Asian countries. They [Americans] just overlook the differences between Asians, diverse beliefs, diverse languages, diverse ways of thinking. They just ignore that part, which is very important to the society." Mei stressed that she will remember forever her experience of "becoming an Asian."

Based on the analysis of experiences of my interviewees, the racialization of Asian is deeply rooted in whiteness. As Okihiro (1994) illustrated, Asians have been seen as inferior to and deviant from U.S./European whites. The purpose of racialization is to shape these people and to give them an identity to further suppress and domesticate them.

The larger construction of racialized Asia and Asian America continuously reproduces the historical subordination of Asian and Asian Americans to whiteness in the U.S. mainstream society (Eguchi, 2014). By the racialization, whiteness remains the hegemonic and universal norms.

Whiteness as discursive practices and transnational ideologies that have been historically and continuously promoted, normalized, circulated, and reinforced through political, cultural, and educational systems. Along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism and imperialism, white ideologies concerning race and race relations are hidden from being mentioned. Instead, whiteness is expressed through liberalism, capitalism, and meritocracy that are globally circulated and locally normalized through the internationalization of the U.S. higher education system. These normalized and promoted white ideologies inform and shape the everyday experiences of these first-generation Chinese migrant female academics and their understanding of the racialization of Asian in the context of gender and sexuality.

The interviewees traced back their motivation of migrating to the United States. One important motive was to receive a higher quality of education. They deemed that the U.S. education is more advanced and better developed than Chinese education because the U.S. educational system promotes Western liberal ideals and individual developments. Qiu Qiu and Mohu both admitted that they chose to go to the United States for their undergraduate education because, in part, they wanted to avoid Gao Kao, the college entrance exam in China. This exam is held once a year. For most Chinese people, it is once-in-a-lifetime chance. As Qiu Qiu pointed out, "I didn't like to take Gao Kao, because that was like you could only do that once, and if you screw up that one chance,

then you just screw up your whole life.” In addition, the interviewees believed that the U.S. higher education system provides more useful courses and opportunities than those offered in China. Mohu mentioned,

I really liked the liberal arts education system, so I could take many different courses before I commit to a major. . . . It has a lot of impact on my personality. I’m more willing to challenge people, and I’m more confident in saying that someone is wrong. I’m not afraid of authorities or things like that, and I think it has a lot to do with going to classes that are small.

Mohu deemed that it is the U.S. higher education that has helped her become who she is today. If she had studied at a Chinese college, she said she never would have selected the subjects she is studying today and that she would have had to choose her major prior to enrolling in college in china. Similarly, Qiu Qiu commented,

In Chinese colleges, you have to take some courses like Political and Military Science and Theory. I didn’t want to take those courses, because I thought they were useless, and they were kind of mandatory. I think going to the U.S. would allow me to escape those.

Mohu and Qiu Qiu further problematized and contextualized the U.S. higher education system in the later part of their interviews. However, both said their motives to study in the United States were due to in part to the white liberal ideologies promoted and normalized in education. Several of the other interviewees could relate to their experiences. Attractive to them were what they considered the “advanced” educational ideals and system in the United States. U.S. education has become one of the most desired models of education (Ghabra & Calafell, 2018). Receiving a degree at a U.S. university or college is often more important and valuable than a degree from a school in China or another Western country. A degree from a school in the United States also often indicates that a student is especially capable. Consequently, a graduate of a U.S. university or college has a greater chance of being selected to work at a renowned

university or to join a company in China. The U.S. higher educational system is considered to be internationalized and progressive, in which whiteness is seen as social, cultural, and political norms while simultaneously non-white people and their knowledge products are regarded as traditional and uncivilized (Kapoor, 1999). Such progressive discourse of the U.S. higher educational system, which is embedded in whiteness, also shapes how Chinese migrants perceive each other.

Qiu Qiu concerns about the large number of Chinese students on her university campus where she is pursuing her doctoral degree. She admitted that sometimes she feels “a bit ashamed” by other Chinese students. One of the reasons is because many of them seem to care little about the environment. She said,

Every day for lunch and dinner, there are some Chinese restaurants, that they have packed lunch boxes, and they drive to our school to deliver. They usually have 100 or 200 boxes, and we line up to buy these lunch boxes. They’re not using recyclable materials. I think someone sent out an email saying we should try to use something more sustainable and recyclable, and we should try not to get those lunch boxes. So, I stopped, but then the other students, they continued. So, I feel like Chinese people, maybe they don’t care about protecting environment. But since I been here very long, I think I do care. But those students who first came here, in their first or second year here, they’re just not into that mindset.

Qiu Qiu’s story implies the progressive discourse construct of the United States while demarcating its counterpart the Chineseness as barbaric and less developed. The whiteness ideologies in the progressive discourse function as social norms that normalize and consolidate the invisible racialization and racial hierarchy in the transnational context.

In addition, Chinese migrants, under the racialized category of Asian/Asian American, have been constructed as “almost whites” (Eguchi & Ding, 2017). “Almost white” is a notion constructed by post-racial and “model minority” discourse in which non-whites are allowed to envision their proximity to the center dominated by whiteness.

Such “positive” construct together with liberal ideals that emphasize individualism and meritocracy gives many Chinese migrant academics a false hope that if they try hard enough, they will be able to succeed in U.S. academia. Moreover, due to cultural, legal, and financial restraints, many Chinese migrant academics must reinforce such ideals to regulate and evaluate their achievements. However, such ideologies insist on avoiding discussions about race, racism, and power relations intersecting with the politics of gender and sexuality (Eng, 2010).

To negotiate their racial positions between being “almost white” and less educational “advanced” Asian, several of the interviewees mentioned that they needed to work extra hard in U.S. academia to be “seen.” During the interviews, when they talked about their major achievement, many of the interviewees were very proud of their achievements in academia, such as winning a major award in a national conference or having their papers published. However, they were also very aware of being a migrant female scholar which means that they had to work harder than their white counterparts, in order to be recognized and to survive in U.S. academia. Cactus commented,

In academia, I feel like people just treat me less professional. They see me less professional. Or maybe they just don't think I can handle same kind of tasks as another American student. So sometimes I feel like I have to defend myself, or I have to put a lot of effort into it to prove I am as good as other people in my level.

Rikki stated, “In this [U.S.] culture, if you push yourself to be best and work really hard, you will succeed. Don't think too much, you will succeed, and people will not judge you.”

Mei felt that her values and achievements had to be evaluated by U.S. academia because “the university decides whether you are worth their money to process you working visa.”

The comments of those three women reflect the reality of discriminations, the hardship of getting social and legal capital, and the liberal hope that has pushed the interviewees to

continue following the “progressive” U.S. higher education discourse and practices. The construct of Asians as “almost white” and the “progressive” U.S. academia strategically masks the racialization of Asian and the white supremacy, keeps racism intact, and exploits productivities of these Chinese migrant women.

Rethinking racialized gender and sexuality. The interviewees reflected on their struggles and challenges on the basis of their gender and sexuality that they have been facing in their everyday migrant life at home, academia, and social context. I conceptually emphasize femiqueer critiques that also locates whiteness to examine their embodied experiences and to explore how they perceive their race, gender, and sexuality through the larger power structure. Furthermore, I interrogate how their stories speak to femiqueer critiques as they are learning and experiencing their race, gender, and sexuality through their body that has been hugely regulated by the politics of gendering, whiteness, and heterosexual-patriarchal ideologies.

During the majority time of the year, most of the interviewees live by themselves in the United States and are separated from their Chinese families. However, their stories show that China’s cultural and social expectations of women still follow them transnationally. Heterosexual patriarchal ideologies have constructed these expectations that shape their daily communicative practices with family and friends. For this reason, the interviewees have to constantly negotiate the meanings of women and Asian women in relation to China. For example, the interviewees shared about their frustration with their parents’ constant complaints about them being single. In China, being a “good” daughter means she needs to take care of the family reputation and adhere to the heterosexual patriarchal expectations of finding a good husband and bearing kids while in

their 20s. However, such pressure of “getting married before one becomes too old” is seemingly a responsibility borne only by Chinese women, not men. This is what June commented about that,

Before I met my partner and before we were going to get married, I was 28. When we were having lunch with me and one of my other cousins who is older than me, who is also single, but he is a man. Everybody is asking me when I’m going to get married. I was like, “Well, why don’t you ask him? He’s older right? He’s the priority.” They were like, “But he’s a man.” It’s so explicit. He will be fine. So, I think that is definitely about my gender.

Similarly, Summer also shared how her parents have tried to convince her to get married as soon as possible. She said,

Many Chinese male family members until now still believe that a good life for girls is to find a stable job, then assist their husband and bring up her children, instead of getting too much education. My parents think that they would be so relieved if I could find someone to get married.

Cactus also felt similar pressure from her parents. She regarded traditional Chinese values, or family values, as the reason for constant conflicts with her family about her still being single. She said that filial piety is highly valued in the Chinese family. It asks you to “respect your elder and maintain the family reputation.” Then she compared herself to her peers in China,

My age, especially a woman of my age in China, they might have at least one or two kids. They have a job, and they have family. But on the other hand, me at here, I have nothing. So you know, people talk.

The stories that the other women shared are evidence of the intensive pressure to marry that Chinese women feel from parents, relatives, and friends. In China, the traditional heterosexual patriarchal ideologies, such as following male family members’ demands and marrying a capable husband to have a decent life, still inform and shape the social and cultural expectations of a good Chinese woman. If a Chinese woman fails to meet

these expectations, in this case, not getting married and establishing a heterosexual relationship on time, she becomes a “leftover” woman. “Leftover” woman is a derogatory term to categorize Chinese women who remain single into their late 20s (Hong Fincher, 2014). This category is constructed by heterosexual patriarchal norms that have been historically and continuously promoted, normalized, circulated, and reinforced by Chinese cultural, political, economic, and educational systems. Such norms shape and construct the perceptions and reality of women’s gender, sexuality, and relational experiences.

However, some interviewees who are in a heterosexual romantic relationship or are in a heterosexual marriage, addressed their daily embodied experiences are still restrained and regulated by heterosexual patriarchal norms through their family roles as a girlfriend, wife, mother, or daughter-in-law. For instance, Qiu Qiu recalled her two former boyfriends who did not approve of her not being a virgin and that led to break-ups. She said,

My ex-boyfriend, he was very conservative. He found out that I wasn’t a virgin. At that point, he was quite in love with me, so he was debating with himself constantly. After a year of us being together, I finally broke up with him, because of that. And also, my last boyfriend, he also had this problem. He’s a top student from number one university in China and got a doctoral degree in science from a top tier U.S. university. And he still believes if you’re not a virgin, then the child you bear will carry DNA from your ex-boyfriends.

Qiu Qiu’s story shows how her relational experiences and her body are regulated and affected by heterosexual patriarchal ideologies. Cis-gendered straight males are not regulated by the same virginity discourse, in which many Chinese men still obsess with a woman’s virginity as a crucial criterion for marriage selection. Ironically, however, some men are eager to have premarital sex with their virgin girlfriends (Wang & Ho, 2011).

Mei said during her interview that her experiences with gender and sexuality are largely regulated by a heterosexual patriarchal structured kinship. Mei is married and is raising her toddler by herself in the United States while she is continuously working full time as a faculty member at an U.S. university. She recalled her experience as a Chinese wife under the cultural and social expectations.

When I was in China, I was kind of a very traditional wife. I took care of both families (hers and her husband's). But after marriage, you have to take care of his the most. A lot of compromise there because of different lifestyles. You have to devote your time, and you have to devote your energy in order to be in a family. Most of the women in China, they do want to be a good wife. They're proud of themselves, they can play the "tai-ji." By saying "tai-ji" I mean they can be quiet to avoid conflicts. I am the type of person that I do not want to create conflicts, so that's why I sacrifice much of my time and energy for the sake of the whole family, because you value the family first. Especially after marriage, it's your new family. You're there. You have your whole life there with them. Whether you like it or not, you have to find a way to like them and be liked.

Although Mei is now living in the United States and away from her husband and in-laws, these expectations of being a "qualified" wife and mother are still regulating her embodied everyday experiences. She commented,

The big part I think is because of a baby. Man does not have a womb. You are capable of having kids. And at that time, your body will change. And you may lose your attractiveness, and your husband may have an affair. This is another stress for women no matter where you are. In the U.S., or in other countries, the same thing. You don't have time and energy to do make-up, to do something. I did not do statistic research on it. I just assume. Kind of at that time is for more risk of not losing the people you love. Or there's a risk of losing a marriage.

Not only does Mei have to take care of her toddler all by herself because he was born in the United States while finishing her doctoral degree, finding a job, and surviving in a foreign country, but she also worries about losing her family and marriage because she does not have the time to maintain the arbitrary standards held by the heterosexual patriarchal discourse.

Many of the interviewees, including Mei, have talked about “compromise.” On the one hand, although they no longer live in china, they cannot put all these traditionally social and cultural expectations behind them. They still want the intimate connections with their family and try to avoid constant fights with them. Xuehua addressed she must make a compromise with her family to have a traditional Chinese wedding because some Chinese people still believe a decent wedding is more important than a law-protected marriage certificate to officially announce that two people are married. The procedures of a traditional wedding are always dictated by Chinese patriarchal traditions, such as the bride being picked up by the groom and marrying into the groom’s family instead of the other way around. Family and relatives also buy and hide dried dates, peanuts, and longan underneath the newlywed’s mattress, to express the family’s wish that the bride would quickly get pregnant and give birth to a boy. Because such a wedding involves many complicated patriarchal customs and is expensive and exhausting, many young couples choose not to have a wedding or to celebrate in an alternative way, such as getting married on a trip. Xuehua made a compromise of having a traditional wedding. She said,

If I disagree, if I want to make a big deal, all of this would not happen. And there would be a lot of conflicts. All of my parents would be disappointed and sad. My relatives would be disappointed and sad, so I did the wedding.

Mei’s and Xuehua’s stories showed that they have to make compromises sometime with their family. They also have to juggle between the heterosexual patriarchal kinship expectations of them being a good daughter, wife, and mother, with their own expectations related to career and relationships.

As to Summer, she considered her stable, long-term relationship with her girlfriend and her promising academic development to be her major accomplishments so far. However, she shared that she is struggling in a dilemma trying to balance her romantic relationship with the pursuit of a profession and looking after her family in China as the only-child. She said,

Like my generation, we are mostly the only-child of the family, so we have more pressure from family responsibilities. My family hope that I would have a stable relationship, a stable family. And they want me to come back to China and keep them company. My parents do not force me to do anything, but sometimes they plaint about they are getting old. It is an emotional kidnapping, I would say, in a negative way.

China's one-child policy was a birth-control program designed to control a burgeoning population. It was enacted in the 1970s and was eliminated at the end of 2015. By law, a Chinese family could have only one child. Many of the interviewees their family's only child. Together with another Chinese value filial piety, they constantly battle between whether they should stay in the United States or return to China to take care of their parents. This is what Summer commented about that,

My parents sometimes would say, after you finish your degree, just come back, and you need to have a stable life. Their perceptions about girls are that you shouldn't want too much, and you shouldn't be eager to excel. It's frustrating. I want to talk to them about what I want for my life, but they refuse to listen most of the time. They just think that you are a little kid, and how can you not to listen to our decades of lived experiences.

For Summer, the dilemma was further complicated by her sexuality.

Summer stressed that she is not confining her opportunities or self-development by insisting to stay either in the United States or in China. However, she said she did think that living in the United States might be easier for sexual minorities like her. She

mentioned that she had not yet told her parents about her sexual orientation, but she did have a feeling that her parents might have suspected it. She said,

I do have the plan to tell them, ... yeah, ... but you know it is very hard for Chinese parents to accept it. So, I still have to give it more thoughts on how to tell them. Also, I have to consider my relatives, my parents' social circle. It's easy to tell my parents, but what about the aftermath? My parents could be dragged into the "closet" by me and start to think about how they tell our relatives, and if they should tell them.

Summer's story showed her struggles of trying to find a middle ground to take care of her parents' needs while at the same time continuing her academic pursuits. Her gender and sexuality are compromised by heterosexual patriarchal ideologies and China's one-child policy.

In addition, there are many misconceptions about sexuality within and beyond Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) communities. Cactus shared her experiences of being bi-sexual,

I think bisexual people always experience not just discrimination from heterosexual people, but also from even within LGBT communities too. Lots of gay, lesbian people think bisexual people are not real. Because they think, "Oh, you are just in denial. You are gay. So you are saying this middle term, saying you are attracted to both genders, as a way to get away to be a gay person?" Things like that.

Cactus is majoring in public health. She has been doing community-based research on LGBT health. As she mentioned above, her sexual identity often is questioned by the binary perceptions of sexual orientation, that is, either being straight or being gay.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees said they were not targets of discriminations based on their sexuality, because they are benefited from being heterosexual. Some of them provided some thoughts about how they understand sexuality.

Xuehua explored her understanding of her sexual relations and sexuality as follows,

Luckily we [Xuehua and her husband] are both heterosexual, and that's how we came together. So, I don't suffer from being bisexual. I don't suffer. I'm not in minority, I know. I don't suffer the anxiety of social minority in sexual orientations. Yeah, but like, I think I have the potential to become bisexual, but there's also like ... because I'm in a relationship and my husband does not like it, and I don't have the courage, bravery. There's a cultural taboo, like it's exploring your sexual orientation beyond your relationships and even beyond the heterosexual norm. So I just think I have the potential, but which is not realized. And I don't have trust, which means I don't have the network to explore these kinds of sexual relationships. And I don't trust the networks you can find online or even interpersonal relationships, because people are more open. A lot of people are open, and you don't know whether people are healthy. I think health is also my primary concern. You can date, you can find people, you can have like sexual encounters in bars. It would be very easy, but it's very risky.

Xuehua's experience showed that she noted that her sexual relationships, desires, and sexuality have been shaped, constructed, and confined by heterosexual norms. However, her understanding of sexuality remained limited to sexual preference and behaviors, which are always stigmatized with distrust and public health risks. Xuehua's description of queer desire and relationships as an abnormal and adventurous exploration have been constructed, informed, and evaluated by heteronormativity.

Mei expressed her perceptions about sexuality when she mentioned about some difficulties of raising a U.S.-born Chinese child that she had shared with some other Chinese parents. She said,

Sometimes I do know some of my friends' kids that they want to be transgender. But based on the Chinese standard, it is totally unacceptable. But I just told my friend that this is American life. You just talk to your kid. First of all, you have to respect them. If they think that makes their life better, although you may think the opposite, you respect them because your thought is not theirs. But you have to imagine some challenges in their life. Let them make their choice. That's why I was kind of afraid of my kid, you know what I mean? Sexuality is a sexuality thing. I still want to keep my tradition as a social norm. I don't want to take this part of American life. I do know there's some reasons or stimulants for kids to

make that decision to be a gay, or to want to change their gender. I don't want that moment happens. I will try my best to live a happy life. Or at least the way of life that most people can accept. Especially there is homophobia. But just what if? If that thing happens to me, which I don't hope so, I just ... okay, I treat my kid first, as a human being. Just respect. That's my thought.

Mei's experience showed her concern about the development of her son's sexuality in the United States. She is aware of the challenges faced by sexuality minorities, and she respects them. However, in her excerpt she confined sexuality to a choice of sexual orientation and behavior. Her comments also conflated transgender and queer issue to Western thoughts and an American way of life that implies such issue does not affect her experiences in relation to Chinese context. At the same time, Mei possibly denied the presence of queer people and communities in China and their historical and continuous struggles and oppressed experiences. Her understanding of sexuality ignored its political nature and other aspects of sexuality that actually construct our daily experiences intersecting with race and gender, and other power relations (Puar, 2007). As Nguyen (2014) and Shimizu (2012) argue, sexuality cannot be understood as an isolated identity category, because it ties closely to every aspect of social, cultural, political, and knowledge productions.

As mentioned in the previous section, the interviewees deemed that their coming to the United States had granted them some more personal space, that they were able to focus more on themselves, instead of being dragged by the social and cultural expectations of women in China. As Mei commented,

Right now, as I am in the U.S., there is more space, more room for me. It's kind of freedom here, but not real free. Freedom means there is no in-laws around. So, all the time it's me. It's up to me, whatever I decide to do. There're no daily interruptions, but there's some mental ones, like ritual stuff is still there. The good thing is that I can have at least a percent of my time and energy that I can put them into the stuff that I really want to do. That's the primary. That's why I'm

thinking, not only me, most of women from China or other countries prefer to stay here because they feel kind of, that they enjoy their own privacy. They don't have to take care of other people if you don't want to.

Mei's comment pointed out that the migration to the United States has somewhat liberated her from constant compromises with others and that now, she can finally focus on herself. In her interview, Summer shared many gendered difficulties and challenges Chinese women face at home, academia and social context in China and in Chinese social circle in the United States. She deemed that the United States is more friendly to women. She said, "I prefer the U.S. type of relationships between men and women. They seem slightly more equal, although it maybe superficial, but still."

Based on the discussions above, the dominant U.S. ideologies that emphasize individualism and its "progressive" context in terms of racial diversity, and gender and sexuality equality, seem to have freed some of these Chinese migrant female academics from oppressive and uncivil expectations informed by China's heterosexual patriarchal ideologies. However, many of the Interviewee's stories also showed how white heterosexual patriarchal ideologies embedded in liberal ideals construct these migrant women's racialized gender and sexuality, and further fuel already-uncivil expectations for migrant Chinese female academics.

The previous section discussed Mei's struggles as a Chinese wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, due to traditional Chinese expectations of women. Although living in the United States has indeed decreased some of the heterosexual patriarchal family structured stress she might have faced, she pointed out how difficult it is surviving in the liberal and capitalist United States as a Chinese migrant woman. She explained that her migration journey has been full of hardships. The major concern has been her

immigration status, a situation that added great stress of insecurity because it is very difficult to apply for working a working visa, and she has had to constantly deal with unfair treatments due to her “foreign” status. She also felt a lack of social support, because her family and friends are not in the United States, and because she belongs to a different culture, it is hard to make friends with local Americans. “They are [from the culture of] individualism. They don’t think you have the hardship. They may not understand. It’s always your stress,” Mei said. In addition, financial stress has been immense to her. “Although you work as a professor, it’s not well-paid job. And you think about housing. You have to take housing into the consideration of the child’s education. And transportation, car, all these expenditures you have to think.”

Another big challenge that she has been facing is to raise her U.S.-born Chinese son. It is a daily navigation and negotiation between diverse cultural and social ideologies that inform lifestyles, language, and education. She addressed, “That’s why it’s a challenge. If you don’t have a kid, that’s okay. If you do have the kid, because you have to send him for education. All peers around them are majority people.” She has clearly noticed that she is the minority in terms of social, cultural, political, and economic positions. Sometimes she even felt lost about how to discipline her son because the standards of raising a child in the United States are different from in China. “The Chinese way of discipline kid may not work here. What I am going to do?” She also has experienced the difficulty of negotiating which language to speak to her son, what kind of food to eat and what TV program to watch with her son. “Home is not a relaxing time always.” She acknowledged that she tried speak more Chinese at home to preserve some Chinese culture for her son, but “sometimes, I just forget about it. I just talk to him with

English. Because that's your working language. You come back home, you just want to make your life easier.... But I just keep reminding myself Chinese, Chinese, Chinese."

Talking about watching TV, she said, "I prefer some Chinese stuff, and he prefers some American pop, comic stuff, animation stories, which means that I have to update myself in order to know what he needs I know what people around him talk about." After all, she reflected, the good part of these hardships was that "I know how the system works. That's why it's kind of giving us some evidence of minority versus majority. You learn the majority value from the very beginning."

Mei's story was an example of how race and racial differences have been playing a significant role in her experiences as a female migrant, an academic, and a mother, but race and racial differences are often invisible to the majority. Eng (2010) criticizes that ideologies of liberalism and individualism insist on avoiding discussions about race and refusing to acknowledge racial differences and their intersectionality with gender and sexuality. Such ideologies function as social norms that make them often invisible, so they normalize and consolidate the existing power hierarchy and racial formation in the United States. Thus, it can be rather difficult to be aware of and recognize ideologies, such as whiteness, that are hidden behind liberal and individual ideals.

Summer's and Cactus's stories below further illustrate how gender and sexuality of Chinese female migrants have been shaped by U.S. dominant racialized ideologies. Summer described how a Chinese friend explained some stereotypical assumptions toward China and Chinese women held by some U.S. Americans.

My friend has small feet, so her American classmate asked her if her small feet came from the foot binding tradition in China. Then, my friend explained to her classmate that foot binding was an outdated custom and had been eliminated long

time ago. However, her classmate didn't believe and talked to her in a very serious tone, "you can be totally honest with me. It is okay. Do not be afraid."

Cactus expressed her frustration over how cis-gender American straight males view East Asian women. She said,

I feel it more applies to East Asian women. I think lot of American people think East Asian women are attractive, not in a good way. Not in a good way. I am really frustrated. Not frustrated, more upset about it. I guess it's across sexual orientation, especially for cis-gender straight males. They just think you are attractive because you are East Asian, you're submissive, you're easy going, and you're needy.

The stories offered by Summer and Cactus illustrate how Chinese migrant women have been facing racialized, gendered, and sexualized judgements and treatments in their daily interactions. Borrowing Calafell (2012)'s argument of women of color, their gender and sexuality have been historically and continuously racialized and hypersexualized. Such racialized politics of gender and sexuality apply not only to Chinese migrant women, but also to Asian/Asian Americans in general, in ways that serve the construct of global racial hierarchies and capitalism and maintain the racial formation of Asian America (Eng, 2010).

Such racialized gender and sexuality construct not only have these interviewees experienced discomfort in social interactions, but also confined their opportunities and diminished their academic credibility. Interviewees who are studying and/or working in male-dominated academic fields, such as STEM-oriented disciplines and philosophy, reflected their experiences of being discriminated due to their race, gender, and sexuality. Mohu pointed out that such discrimination is systemic to her academic field,

I think my field is predominantly male still, so when I go to conferences, I might be the only woman. Especially in Europe. Oh my god, Europe. I would go to a conference and be one of the only two women in the conference that all speakers are male. The other woman would be an undergrad student or whatever, and I will

feel significantly silenced because my questions weren't taken seriously and things like that.

Sienna recalled her credibility and qualifications as a philosopher, also a male-dominated field, were constantly challenged by her male colleagues. She said,

Less amusingly, it happens at philosophy conferences a lot where there's registration table, and then people usually sit around and chat. When someone approach the table they're like, "Oh, sorry. I'm in your way." When I approach the table, they take no notice because they don't think I'm there to register. That happened to me quite a few times, and they would just be very confused. Usually, you have a group of people who don't know each other, but they don't all know that they're here for the conference. So sometimes there's track of conversation. People don't ever do that to me. And then they get very confused if I'm looking at them expecting a conversation, because they don't expect me to be a philosopher who's there attending it.

She also described a visit to another conference along with three white male colleagues/friends. She was annoyed yet amused that another man there at the conference believed she was the wife of one of her white male colleagues. She recalled the moment, "he had completely confused look of some like, 'Are we allowed to bring our partners to these things now?'" About the conference, Sienna also said, "I wasn't presenting. I just sat through the whole conference. The fact that he was drawn by me, that somehow the wife was extremely patient and was willing to sit through a math conference."

Above, Mohu and Sienna shared their experiences of being unfairly treated in their academic fields due to their race, gender, and sexuality. White heterosexual patriarchal ideologies construct and constrain the gender and sexuality and the relational experiences of Chinese migrant female academics. Such racial formation serves to maintain and solidify the white heterosexual patriarchal ideologies under the cover of liberal-progressive discourses.

Summary and reflection. The first theme *Rethinking Positionality* explored how the interviewees made sense of power relations embedded in ideologies concerning race, gender, and sexuality through their daily embodied experiences at home, in academia, and in social context. Their perceptions of being “Asian” and their racialized gender and sexuality varied due to their positionalities, relational experiences, and academic fields. Most of the interviewees deemed that understanding their racialized positionality in the context of migration is a (re)learning process and cannot be separated from Chinese cultures. In addition, based on the narratives of the interviewees’ stories, the first theme also uncovered the invisible and normalized white heterosexual patriarchal ideologies embedded in the U.S. “liberal” and “progressive” higher educational discourses and practices. Such hidden ideologies have greatly affected and informed these Chinese migrant female academics’ perceptions of race, gender, sexuality, and their relationships. Their daily experiences in turn has reproduced and interrupted the dominant discourses and the solidified construct of their race, gender, and sexuality.

In the analysis of the first theme, I found some disconnections between the two sub-themes *Rethinking Racialization* and *Rethinking Racialized Gender and Sexuality*. In the first sub-theme of *Rethinking Positionality*, the interviewees’ discussions of their perceptions and experiences of racialization seemingly did not relate much to their experiences of racialized gender and sexuality, because some of them perceived race, racism, and racialization of Asian that are mostly about race, ethnicity, and nationality. Next, the latter sub-theme presents a loose connection between the interviewees’ understandings of gender and sexuality and their experiences of being racialized as they reflected on their perceptions and experiences of gender and sexuality. In addition, their

reflections of their struggles and dilemmas of being a woman, under the influence of China's social and cultural expectations, did not seemingly relate to their experiences of racialization of Asian in the United States. To make sense of such disconnections, in the following section, I provide a reflection regarding the analysis of the first theme.

Furthermore, in the reflection I provide a reflection on how class location influences and shapes these interviewees' relational experiences and my limitations of initially not considering class as a salient issue affecting interviewees' narratives of their everyday lived experiences. By reflecting on the disconnections of sub-themes and rethinking class within our experiences, this section further contextualizes and nuances the interviewees' experiences and provides a bridge between interviewees' relational experiences and the larger power structure.

Although the first theme seemingly showed disconnections among race, gender, and sexuality in these interviewees' experiences, I argue their racialized experiences closely intertwine with their experiences of racialized gender and sexuality. In the following section, firstly I will start with my own story to illustrate the connection of my racialized experience and my experience of racialized gender and sexuality, and then I will point out such connection in interviewees' narratives.

Being a connector of these 11 Chinese migrant female interviewees, I can relate to many of their experiences. As an international student coming to the United States five years ago, I have experienced racialization of Asian as my interviewees, that my race is constructed by conflating our diverse experiences into one racial category. My racialized experiences, however, are closely related to my gender and sexuality. I remembered those incidents when what I did or say did not meet the dominant expectations, I would hear

people say, “She’s an Asian.” During my first summer in the United States, I wanted to buy a used car from a local white senior couple. I told them on the phone that I would like the car to get a thorough mechanical inspection, to make sure the car was in a decent condition. Meanwhile, my then boyfriend, a white American, took the phone, told the couple that my request was unnecessary, that I simply did not know the process to buy a car, and he said, “she’s an Asian.” I was immediately furious with him and confronted his comments. In this incident, my then boyfriend emphasized on my racial label to justify my undesired and “abnormal” negotiating manner, because he assumed in the U.S. white senior heterosexual couple are supposed to be trustable and reliable. I should trust their description of the car they were selling because of their “favored” race, gender, and sexuality. By labeling me as “Asian,” he also implied that I am foreign, that I was ignorant of the “authentic” ways of doing business in the United States, that I discounted the credibility of whiteness, and that I am the typical Asian woman who had no idea about car related issues. The stereotypes construct Asian women as bad drivers, knowing nothing about cars, weak, and lacking capability of forming strong argument to defend for themselves, so that we need a white male savior to pull us out of unpleasant situations like this one (Kawai, 2005). Thus, my boyfriend’s comment--“she’s an Asian” was a racial, gendered, and sexualized comment that some people often use to justify their perception of me being “different” from them. Thus, my “differences” have been constantly marked racially and sexually, and they associate with racial and sexual stereotypes that shape my daily relational experiences.

My reflection of past experience presented the intertwined connections among racialization, gender, and sexuality. Such connection is also visible by examining across

their experiences. As the analysis of the first theme pointed out, some interviewees reflected on how they have been struggling to negotiate their gender and sexuality under the influence of China's social and cultural expectations of a "good" woman. Living in the United States, to some of them, has somewhat liberated them from such expectations and duties that they need to fulfill in order to live up to these expectations. These women chose to stay in the United States because the country is perceived and imagined as liberal, free, and diverse. Thus, some interviewees deemed that the United States could give them more freedom as a woman and/or as a sexual minority. However, without problematizing the "liberal" and "progressive" discourse with the discussions of race, such perceptions of the United States being more civilized and advanced can be simply internalized to influence and shape these women's views of and relationships with other Chinese. The following illustrates how Chinese are constructed and perceived in the U.S. liberal and progressive discourse.

As Puar (2007) addresses, the U.S. liberal and progressive discourse regarding race, gender, and sexuality is always embedded in the globalization of the U.S. nationalism and imperialism. The global circulated and normalized notion regarding the U.S. as more liberal and advanced is utilized as a way to ensure and reinforce the dominance of white supremacy that believes non-white races, genders, and sexualities are inferior and uncivilized. Under this historically and continuously racialized, gendered, and sexualized construction of white and the rest, although China has become recognized as one of the most powerful countries in the world, China has been still pictured as an "uncivil," "undeveloped," and "oppressing" Asian country in which its men oppressing women and the Communist party suppressing LGBT communities, feminist movement,

and many other social justice movements aligned and promoted by the United States. Chinese men, together with other Asian men, have been still racialized, gendered, and sexualized as oppressing, passive, feminine, and asexual. For these reasons, narratives of experiences of Chinese migrant female interviewees presented explicit and close connections among racialization, gender, sexuality, and their relation to China. Their perceptions and relations with Chinese men, other Chinese, and China are influenced and shaped by the racialization of Asian.

Class is another imperative power relation embedded in liberal and progressive discourse that affects these interviewees' perceptions and experiences of race, gender, and sexuality. Some interviewees had come to the United States since high school as an exchange student, and some of them came for higher education as an undergraduate or a graduate student. Unlike graduate programs in the U.S. universities that often provide scholarship to their students, U.S. high school or undergraduate study are often very expensive to international students. Chinese students who are able to come to the United States for high school and/or undergraduate education are often perceived as rich. During the interview, some interviewees who came to the U.S. since undergraduate education, such as Qiu Qiu, who had her undergraduate education in a U.S. private Ivy League university, claimed that in the first or second year of a Chinese student's arrival to the U.S., they do not usually equip with American mindsets so that they do not seem to care about environment. This was a story told by Qiu Qiu that I analyzed for the theme of Rethinking Racialization. Qiu Qiu deemed that the longer a Chinese student lives in the U.S., the more civilized mindset they develop. In progressive discourse, less economically developed countries are always blamed for causing environmental issues

and the economically developed countries, such as the United States, always play the role of civilized and responsible planet citizens who are dedicated to save the environment. Even though class was not mentioned in Qiu Qiu's story, class contributes to a Chinese migrant's perceptions and experiences of race, gender, and sexuality. As I discussed in the analysis of the first theme, China has been heavily involved in the globalization, in which Western/U.S. mode of economic, social, political, and cultural aspects that are characterized in white supremacy and capitalism are widely localized, normalized, and adapted into Chinese people's daily lives. Occupying a higher-class location brings more social capitals and resources to the person so that one has more access to the dominant Western/U.S. productions and ideologies embedded in white liberal and progressive discourse that influence and shape their understandings and experiences of racialization of Asian and their race, gender, and sexuality.

However, I have also seen class as a less salient issue to these interviewees. Because although I did recognize that we were from different class locations in China, seemingly we are in a more similar class location in the U.S. due to the scholarship that we receive from our doctoral program and the class position other Americans lump us into. At the same time, I came from a middle class family in China where my family members were mostly doctors and college professors. This positionality also limits me from contextualizing their experiences further with class. Although we were not financially rich, we were perceived as elites who were holding certain privileged social positions regarding occupations and social capital that could lead me to more networks and opportunities. Class also showed me the access to consume globalized U.S. mainstream media products and education. Thus, my class position possibly blinds me

from seeing the interlocking relations of racialization and class. Still I recognize that our experiences are still heavily influenced and differently shaped by our class locations in China, such as the financial and social support we receive from our family in China, and our access and understanding of U.S. society and its mainstream culture. The connection and sameness that I felt toward my interviewees comes from racialization. That is, we are racialized as monolithic Chinese and Asian women and our racial, gendered, and sexual experiences and positionalities are racialized in a similar way. Such connection and sameness may bring us a social-capital opportunity of surviving in U.S. academia and U.S. society, but our experiences are also different in terms of our positionalities in China.

In addition, mainland China is a very active and important component in globalization. Although its developing rapidly, the United States still sees China as a political, cultural, and economic threat and depicts China as the uncivilized Other. However, simultaneously, Chinese cultural discourse also implies and promotes white supremacist ideologies and considers itself as less developed and a Global South country. As a result, Chinese people view the United States as a white country by consuming its mainstream media knowledge products. This also explains the mobility and desire of staying in the U.S. among these Chinese migrant female interviewees, because they wanted to come to the labeled as developed Global North country and become part of the white modernity.

The reflection above presented intertwined power relations of race, gender, sexuality, and class that heavily affect and shape the interviewees' perceptions and experiences of racialization, racialized gender and sexuality, class, and their relation to China and Chinese people. The reflection also addressed more nuances of Chinese

migrant female academics' experiences and my limited view of class. Next theme utilizes more examples to discuss the “othered” situations these interviewees experienced in U.S. academia.

Exploring the *Otherness* in U.S. Academia: “You Don’t Belong.”

Under this theme, I explored how the interviewees navigate their racialized, gender, and sexualized experiences through teaching, doing research, and building networks in U.S. academia. The interviewees indicated that their academic identities, such as being an assistant professor or a Ph.D. student, are their most salient identities. Some of the interviewees pointed out that because they are geographically isolated from their family most time of the year, they play only minor roles in the lives of their family in China. In addition, some of them deemed that they do not have a social life outside of academia because their tight schedule does not permit it and their social life is mostly limited to contacts with members of their academic circle. Thus, academia can be seen as a home and as a social space for these women. Consequently, this theme focused solely on the context of U.S. academia. It provided an in-depth investigation on the ways in which these first-generation Chinese migrant women are racially, gendered, and sexually otherized in U.S. academia. Moreover, the theme also explored how their sense of “not belonging” has been formed by their lack of social capitals that are dominated by white heteronormativity. As Carrillo Rowe (2008) addresses, power always informs and shapes our connectivity and desire for belonging. Thus, in the analysis of the second theme, I discuss how these interviewees navigated their academic experiences through the power relations.

You don't belong to the classroom. During the interviews, the interviewees who identified as a teaching assistant, or an assistant professor described how they are otherized and thus are not perceived as a qualified teacher in the classroom due to their English and nationality intersecting with their race, gender, and sexuality. As an international graduate teaching assistant, Xuehua often receives students' complaints led by her English and nationality. She deemed that the academic hierarchy informed by white heteronormativity also put her in an inferior position in which students feel more comfortable to challenge her.

In every semester one or two students will complain that I'm not good at English communication or the English language. They have issue with my English, which again it reminds me that I am Chinese, and English is not my native language and I'd be frustrating. Another example is that student would argue for the grades. There are a couple of factors. First, students like to argue for the grade. Second, I'm graduate student. Third I'm international student. They are more likely to argue with international students and maybe because I'm an international student. They would say that my document is not clear. Like my expectations are not clear. So not being clear is a commonly mentioned reason. But, in fact, [the reasons are] they were not paying attention, or they were not in class. They didn't read the document at all, but they would say it's [the document] not clear. I don't know if they would say that [the same reason] to other graduate students who are not international, but that's my guess.

June described her experiences of as a teaching assistant and later as an assistant professor. Students continue to question about her qualification and complain about her English and her nationality. She said,

Sometimes I definitely thought it's because of my foreignness, sometimes I feel it's because of my race. Sometimes I felt this might be because I'm a woman or most likely all of the above. So, the most salient example of my foreignness standing in the way, but I think that also applies to a lot of Asian Americans who were even before that. Some of my students have a problem with my English. Starting from when I was a TA, I would get students' paper that didn't make any sense. I would tell them that it didn't make any sense. I would get a pushback that says, "My friends can understand it. Why couldn't you?" The implication will be that's because my English was not good enough to grade them. Of course, when I was a TA, I always had instructor who were white and native born. They would

be like, "I couldn't understand it." Then that solved the problem. But since I become a faculty member myself, I still get those challenges. I think that is basically, and I'll also get a lot of comments, like the most frequent comments about my teaching would be students say that I have an accent and they couldn't understand my accent which is just I mean ... I don't even know where to start, but it's ridiculous to say. I think a lot of times they just didn't understand the concept, they didn't want to say that. That sort of to me very very saliently about my Asianness, might not be even just about my migrant status because I've heard people who just look Asian. Even though they were born here, they don't have an accent. Everybody has an accent, and they have the same problem.

Xuehua's and June's stories show that their foreign status of being a non-white, non-U.S. citizen, Asian woman was perceived as evidence that they were unable to speak "standard" American English. Their perceived accent, along with their race, gender, and sexuality, further emphasizes the construct of their foreign status and racialization, in which they are assumed to be less competent or trustworthy than their white male counterparts. Summer described her experience as a teaching assistant, and the ways she has been treated differently from her white American male counterpart. The U.S. academia embedded in white hetero-patriarchal ideologies justifies racial, gendered, and sexual discriminations through her perceived English capability and nationality.

I think it may relate to race. If I were American, or if I could speak better English, the students might be able to understand better. But I am not sure. I am not sure that students not paying attention were because I am an Asian, I don't speak good English, or I am not American. I don't know how to describe, but because of English, and the cultural barrier, students definitely talk behind my back why the school hires a foreigner to be their teacher. It could be also racism. For example, for the same class, besides me, there is another American graduate student as its teaching assistant. American students would prefer to go talk to the American TA instead of me. They would like to communicate with him more, asking questions and so on. But most of the time, if I am good at what I am teaching, American students would like you too.

Based on stories shared by Xuehua, June, and Summer, their cultural otherness in the classroom was seemingly more racially than sexually marked because they have been singled out by the perceived English capability and nationality. Xuehua and Summer did

not consider that their otherization in the classroom was also related to their gendered and sexualized body. However, their racialized, gendered, and sexualized transnational body does matter as they present themselves in the U.S. higher educational system (Eguchi & Spieldnner, 2015), because they are not only evaluated by their foreignness, but also their femininity which always contains racial assumptions. Their Chinese/Asian female migrant body and their academic position as a graduate assistant closely associate them to the histories and stereotypes. As Chow (1994) observes, because racial and sexual stereotypes that whites hold against Chinese women (Asian and Asian American women in general), often confine them from presenting a positive image. Asian/Asian American women are often seen as submissive, childlike, and weak and thus are not perceived as qualified, assertive, or credible faculty image that has been represented by “white heterosexual men who are much older than the traditional U.S. college under/graduate student population” (Eguchi & Spieldenner, 2015, p. 127). As June reflected that her race, gender, sexuality, body, nationality, and English are perceived out of the social norms in the context of U.S. higher education, so she has been otherized from being a qualified and credible faculty member.

Ironically, the emphases of these interviewees’ features of foreignness and Asianness have become the only measurement standards to evaluate if they are qualified as an instructor/professor. Mohu was very frustrated and angry when she talked about her experience of being evaluated solely by language and her nationality as a teacher in the United States. Mohu said,

To be a teaching assistant here, I have to take a speaking test, English-speaking test. I clearly speak English. Why did I have to speak into a machine to prove that I can speak English? It’s a school-wide policy, and I had to take it. There was no way to waive it, and I had to pay for it. I was like, “it’s just because I have a

Chinese passport that you're making me do this. I have a bachelor's degree from the U.S., and that's not enough."

Mohu said that she has been in the United States for years. She has studied in the United States since high school as an exchange student for a year, then she did her undergraduate studies in a U.S. liberal arts college, and then earned a master's degree in the United States. However, her English capability is still questioned because of her nationality. More ironically, her English capability seems as the only standard considered to evaluate whether she is qualified to teach. Her foreign and racialized body, in this situation, is far more outstanding than her knowledge expertise in her field.

The racial, gendered, and sexualized othering informed by whiteness, hetero-patriarchal ideologies have marked these Chinese migrant women as deviant outsiders in U.S. academia. The U.S. educational system apparently believes that these Chinese migrant women must be trained in certain ways to practice in an American way in order to be accepted in the U.S. classroom. In addition, those ideologies are covered and legitimized through colorblindness. Colorblindness is rooted in the post-racial assumption that race and racism have already been overcome and that racial equality has been achieved (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). In colorblind discourse, their racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences are denied. Colorblindness refuses to admit the existence of discriminations in the challenges and questions pertinent to their teaching capabilities. Their constructed foreignness and racialized Chineseness are legitimated in colorblindness discourse. Therefore, if they encounter challenges and difficulties in the U.S. classroom, it is only because they failed to live up to the standards and norms of being an "American" instructor.

You don't belong to the research area. A number of the interviewees have also recognized that they have been alienated from and marginalized by their research area. June shared the dilemma of doing research about China and how her capability as a researcher was challenged due to her racialized, gendered and sexualized otherness. She said,

In terms of when I was just in general marginalized in a group, I mean it's like the type of the work we want to do or the type of topic that we are drawn into is just not the hottest, sexiest topic. Right? So people don't really give a shit. So whenever I tell people I study China or Chinese people, you always have to think of a justification why that is important. I think nobody who studies ... I mean, I think that applies almost to everybody who doesn't study the United States. Those people tend to be migrants, right? I can be from Peru. You might be interested in Peru. I mean, I'm not saying that you have to be. You just need to do a lot of justification and say you're a woman of color who wants to do research about women of color in academia. That kind of topic is usually like marginalized. It has a niche, sort of.

When you're interacting with your colleagues, that they tend to think that they can teach you stuff, especially white men which is constantly wanting to teach me about, even things that I study, right? Not even academics. Sometimes I'll just have a random conversation with a white guy about my research. It would end up with the white guy trying to teach me a class about what I do. All those things I think have something to do with one or more dimensions of my identity as a migrant, as a Chinese migrant woman.

June's story showed that her research topic concerning China and Chinese people has been marginalized because it is not "mainstream" and because it is not about the United States, and thus she had to go to great lengths to justify the value of her topic. As a researcher, she has been alienated from her research area by her "foreign" topic and otherized Chinese/Asian female migrant researcher image. Both are outside of the constructed standards of white heteronormative patriarchy that determine what is research, what is acknowledged as significant to the discipline, and who can conduct important and rigorous research.

As Eguchi and Collier (2018) argue, some higher educational departments flaunt their “liberal” tendency, while simultaneously obstructing minority and diversity related research. Ideologies of whiteness, heteronormativity, liberalism, patriarchy, and individual meritocracy have been pervasively circulating and (re)producing in the U.S. higher educational structure, in which non-white issues are depicted as inferior and primitive. In such a structure, Chinese migrant female academics are always regulated on what research and what approach should they conduct on topics related to their home country. These women have to constantly negotiate their research between the risk of not passing the liberal-critical standpoint and the struggle of not representing China and Chinese people accurately. Irene Wang studies digital surveillance system in China. She discussed the extra efforts she had to spend to balance the two sides. The mainstream U.S. media and political rhetoric has been demonizing surveillance technologies in China as “an evil authoritarian state to surveil their people, to control their people, and to keep record of everyone and to target the dissidents, and to disconnect the dissidents from the digital life in general.” “I have to explain to people that’s not true,” Irene said. The incident affecting her doctoral comprehensive exam informed her of the intensiveness of negotiating her project between the U.S. ideologies and the fair representation of China.

This happened during my oral defense of my comprehensive exam and I was just informed about this maybe two weeks ago from my advisor. So she said that after I left...because after you finish answering the question you have to leave the room and they would discuss the answer. And my advisor told me that after I left the room this professor told her... told the whole room that he doesn't want me to grow up into a scholar that defends the China's model or China's political system or things like that. He doesn't want me to speak positively about this surveillance technology that is going on in China. And I didn't know this. This only came up when I was talking about my proposal draft with my advisor. She wanted to remind me that I have to be more critical about this awareness, the practice of the Chinese government in my proposal, just to address my attitude and show it to this specific professor in the committee. And I don't think he is...because I

generally think him as a very good scholar and I asked him to be on my committee because I like him.... He knows that when we talk about surveillance in a modern age, we should not make that old congressional power presumptions and we should talk about it in a more modern, social theory manner.

After that, Irene started to rethink about her wording and made changes in her draft. She regarded when she wrote her draft, she did not intend to approve or justify the surveillance system in China. Instead, her work was initiated from a perspective different from that of her white American male professor. She said,

So I had explained all that in my dissertation so that my committee did not think that I was in approval or I was speaking for the Chinese surveillance system, which I was not. I was really not. I mean from the very beginning, I was not. I was just not as critical about this thing as what they saw in the media reports, but they just presumed that if I was not being critical enough, I was being approval of it. It's a very binary thinking here.

Irene's story showed that under the U.S. liberal academic discourse informed by white hetero-patriarchal normative ideologies, China has been viewed as the Oriental Other that is a threat to U.S./Western democracy, while Chinese women have been seen as too weak and submissive to be able to conduct critical research that talks back to the power.

Chinese migrant female academics such as Irene, have to negotiate their research within the white liberal ideologies.

Qiu Qiu's comment echoed Irene's story,

So, some of the group works are on Wikipedia. One day she [group member] was talking about the censorship thing, and then whenever they talk about censorship, they talk about things in China. They ask me, "Can you still use Wikipedia in China? Or can you still use Github in China?" And I said, "Yeah, my friends told me yesterday that he was able to push his code onto Github."

Chinese migrants often encounter such "liberal" interrogations, such as whether Facebook can be used in China, or if Chinese people consume dog meat, or if Chinese women are permitted to work. U.S. academia expects its scholars to follow U.S. white

liberal ideologies and its construct of otherized China and Asia. Under the historical and contemporary context of the relationship between China and the United States. China has been viewed as the opposite and a threat of the U.S./Western democracy. The recent U.S.-China trade war and the technology cold war between Huawei and the Trump administration further negatively affect and otherize Chinese migrants, especially Chinese migrant academics in the STEM fields.

You don't belong to the social-capital network. Collectively, the interviewees recognized the significance of socializing in academia and building networks beneficial for their academic career development. Xuehua thoroughly explained why building a social-capital network in academia is crucial.

Maybe make publication is challenging, but if you go through, you pass the new stage, I think the challenge would be to navigate the terrain, to say you need the networks to survive and thrive. You need networks, you need mentors who can mentor you, teach you. You need people who can support your work, support your ideas, make you famous, disseminate your work. You need people who will nominate you with words. You need people to write letters of recommendations. So, you need networks. For people who are new, it takes time to build networks. If you have been here for long time, you may have certain networks. Right? It takes time, and it's important to have the entry point, like having good starting point will make it easier.

Based on the excerpt above, a social-capital network in academia provides social, material, and emotional support. Such support assists academic scholars survive and excel in U.S. academia. Xuehua continued describing with the difficulties that migrant scholars have been facing in building networks.

So everyone needs to build their networks. Some people, even natives, have more social capital, okay? They may have relatives or they may have their parents that might be professors. They know the institution. Even though you see a lot of things are not said. Hey, sometimes yes it is. "This is my friend. Let me introduce you to this friend." Sometimes it's more of the transfer of cultural capital, knowing the codes, the rules. We didn't realize we learned those, but those can

help you. But for immigrant you have to relearn, or you have to learn the codes, and sometimes you learn by making mistakes.

According to Xuehua, a lack of cultural resources is one of the primary difficulties that migrant scholars have been encountering in the United States. These scholars have to build the cultural capital and relearn the codes and the rules from the beginning. Chow (1994) defines “cultural resources” as values, language, mannerisms, lifestyle, and symbols that are required for upward mobility, but for Asian migrant women, such resources are especially difficult to acquire. Although some of these women have gained cultural resources, they still might not be able to break into the tight network of the inner group. The interviewees’ accounts of their social experiences in U.S. academia show that they have been restrained by the constructed cultural outsider in building networks of U.S. academia due to their lack of cultural resources. The interviewees’ non-white, foreign, female body together with their foreign accent obviously show their not-belongingness to white heteronormative structured academic social-capital networks. The emphasized foreignness and Asianness increase the difficulty that these Chinese female academics face as they seek and strive for social, material, and emotional support for upward mobility in the U.S. higher educational system.

Irene felt the anxiety of not knowing jokes or references that her colleagues talk about in daily conversations. Whenever that happens, it is always a reminder for Irene that she is not from this culture. Irene also recognized that using jokes and references is a way to build a more personal relationship in academia. She commented,

You want to try to develop a relationship with your professors. Like, you wanted to ask this professor on your committee. And you've been taking classes with him, but you wanted to develop a more personal relationship. Say you're at a happy hour and you're holding glass of wine and you're talking... I mean, it's better now, but at the beginning I found it's really hard to talk about things out of work. Like,

they talked about their family, talked about their kids' football game, talked about, like just trivial things; life, like the tree in their backyard. There was a deer on the road coming to their balcony and things like that. Because you don't have that ... you don't know what an American family looks like. Like, the house looks like, what the backyard looks like. I mean, now I have a better understanding, but at the beginning, when they moved on to topics like that, like things that I was unfamiliar with, I felt stressful. And then they joked about things in that topic area. And then you thought like "What am I doing here?"

Irene stated that she knew her professors acknowledged the good work that she has done.

However, because of her lack of social resources, such as not understanding lifestyles these professors have or issues they care about, Irene continues feeling the distance between her and her professors. Thus, Irene does not feel that she belongs to the academic network, like her American colleagues do.

Similarly, Mei also shared her difficulties with making connections within academia due to the language barrier and different ways of socializing. She said,

It's hard to jump in, and sometimes with it talked ... the language could be the slang, and you don't know. You cannot always ask, right? You cannot ask. Even if you are welcomed to engage, sometimes it's hard to find a moment to insert a word there. An example is social with the colleagues. Working place is not as easy as we think. Most of the time, we prefer to talk to people who have similar background with us. For example, they talk about some food or they drink some wine, and I really don't know. I can talk about tea, but they don't know. They can't talk to you with the stuff they don't know, right? You can't teach them this is the stuff you may want to try. They won't listen to that, because you're a minority. Your country is not that valued. They still keep their own thing.

Drinking is a popular way of socializing in the United States, not just in academia. A few interviewees recognized that drinking is another factor that often constraints them from joining a social group. In many social situations, such as conference parties, people are expected to drink. Liu Ling later commented,

One thing that always bothers me or stands out to me is that I don't drink at all. And then you go to social occasions and people are always drinking and they're like, "Why aren't you like drinking?" And it's kind of weird because everyone around you is drinking and they seem to be having a good time and you, and I

don't really grow up drinking. And I never enjoy drinking. So, I think I'm just an odd presence in those kinds of situations.

Although in such situations, Liu Ling was not forced to take a drink, she was marked as the odd others, and she felt she did not belong. As Xuehua pointed out, "I know I'm not part of the circle. I'm not close to them, like I'm not able to become friends as they become friends to each other. So that's why I know I'm different." However, in the United States, as a cultural, social, and political minority other, Chinese migrant women are still forced to adapt into the dominant U.S. ways of socializing, in order to be included.

Mohu commented that U.S. popular culture often reminds her of her otherness in the social context. She said, "Sometimes U.S. people annoy me when they talk about pop culture and stuff, and I'm like, 'I don't know anything about it and I don't want to know anything about it.' If you want to dominate your conversation by talking about that, then I'm not gonna say anything. And they're like, 'You have to know this.' I'm like, 'No, I don't care.'" Being familiar or not familiar with U.S. popular culture as another factor that often produces a sense of belonging or conversely, a sense of being a cultural outsider. Along with the expansion of the Americanized globalization and U.S. imperialism, U.S. popular culture has become dominant cultural norms (Shome & Hegde, 2002). Under this context, non-U.S. cultural products are otherized, and people who are not familiar with U.S. popular cultural products and references often are not accepted as members of the dominant U.S. social group.

In addition, Rikki identified her racialized gender and sexuality, as well as China's cultural expectations of women have constructed her as asexual and hypersexual other in the U.S. academia social space.

Here they [American female friends] talk about sex a lot. I mean we don't really talk about it. They feel like if you really want to get into their inner circle you kind have to do that. But it's very countering to our culture and I don't know. I don't really care that much about it. It's like some inner jokes that we play. Even in China, if you want to be really close to someone. Kind of need to make dark jokes or like kind of tease them something like share dark secrets, something like that. I think they do that in like region of sex here. Like a lot of them, they think that's really cool to say. It's like in junior high you learn to swear. Yeah they talk about that a lot. I feel uncomfortable at the beginning; I mean I never got comfortable with that.

In some Chinese traditional cultures, sex is still considered as a taboo topic that should not be discussed in public. However, in the U.S. white liberal context, sex is an important symbol that represents the United States as a modern and “free” nation (Puar, 2007). Being able to “freely” talk about sex also indicates the progressiveness of U.S. mainstream feminist and queer discourse in academia. Thus, the “sex talk” creates a hierarchy among women, and otherizes women who are not willing to share their sexual experiences. Rikki felt like she has been left out of the discussions of sex and that has marked her as an outsider to her American female friends who often socialize through talking sex topics.

At the same time, Rikki also recognized the hetero-patriarchal pressure on Chinese migrant women for being social and outgoing. She continued, “There are some social pressure, I think, or if you are very social or outspoken with Americans, some people will say you are a social climber or something, or social queen or something. I feel like in some circles, people are very conservative, like the Chinese students.” Rikki described her female Chinese lab mate who is friendly and social but she has often been called a social butterfly by their Chinese male lab mates. The comments from these Chinese men implied the hypersexual construct of Chinese/Asian women in the United States. This distorted racialized, gendered, and sexualized construct refers Chinese/Asian

women to be exotic, seductive, and aggressive who are willingly and passively to serve (white) males (Espiritu, 2008; Lai, 1992). Thus, the otherized construct of Chinese women as asexual and hypersexual places them in a dilemma in terms of socializing.

The model minority construct also contributes a dilemma for these Chinese women. Chinese/Asian academics are constructed as model minority because they are seen as quiet overachievers in U.S. higher education. However, they are often discriminated in the U.S. social context because they are perceived as socially awkward nerds who do not like to socialize with people outside of their own racial and/or ethnic group. Paradoxically, the model minority description of Asianness requires them to be quiet, submissive, nice, and passive, while the dominant U.S. social discourse forces them to neutralize their Asianness to obey the white hetero-normative patriarchy (Eguchi & Collier, 2018). As Rikki mentioned,

Chinese people are very social, or social oriented because we want to help each other. We want to make them [new migrants] secure so we just go together with them and not explore on our own. That actually takes a lot of courage to leave the group and talk to someone else.

Liu Ling echoed,

I think Chinese people also value socializing with your peers but it's different when you are socializing with Chinese people then when you are trying to socialize with the people in power, which are usually white male or white female. And just like I said, we don't really have common culture background for us to become personal friends. So you can see how sometimes professors get really, really close to some white students, but those close, the students are never Chinese. They are never Asian, I would say.

Thus, I argue that being recognized as part of the social-capital network in U.S. academia is not a voluntary choice made by Chinese migrant female academics. Instead, the mainstream network dominated by white hetero-patriarchal ideologies has never truly opened its door to these women. Cultural resources, such as language, mannerism,

lifestyles, values, and symbols that are required for upward mobility, cannot be achieved easily through cultural integration (Chow, 1994). Through continuous otherization, white hetero-patriarchal discourse controls cultural resources to maintain the existing power hierarchy and to reinforce the othered construct of foreignness and Asianness of Chinese migrant female academics. As Eguchi and Spieldenner (2015) argue, reproducing whiteness relies on the otherized representation of non-white as the deviant from and subordinate to the dominant group.

Furthermore, white hetero-patriarchal ideologies also isolate Chinese migrant female academics from feeling belonged by socializing with many other minority female academics. Some of the interviewees identified different experiences that have kept them and domestic women of color separately in different groups. June talked about prior to coming to the United States, she had been privileged in China. In China, she was not burdened with the label of being an inferior “other,” and she was given all of the social resources she needed to excel because she is the single child of her family. She said that her friends who are U.S.-born women of color cannot relate to her experience. Coming to the United States, the visa and her immigration status have become the constraint that pulls her away from feeling belonged to the women of color category. June said,

There's a lot of the mainstream expectation because say a visa, there are legal restraints on what you can do in this country. To me, I think that in a lot of ways shape people's trajectory and shape their expectation of themselves.

I do feel weird sometimes reading work by women of color because it's still not really ... I think they would respect, there are also dimensions of identity that intercept with race and gender. But many times, those dimensions don't really get fully explored and discussed.

Mohu echoed, “[The school system] only cares about domestic students’ racial background. For international students, they just think, ‘Oh, they’re just guests, and

they're not permanent.” The two excerpts showed that the experiences of Chinese migrant women and domestic women of color are shaped differently by one's immigration status, which grants different level of access to social, cultural, and political capitals.

June deemed that the globalized mainstream U.S. culture is another reason why it is very hard for migrants to enter the social circle of women of color. She reflected that she did know the existence of these groups other than those that the globalized mainstream U.S. media had shown, promoted, and normalized. She said,

Those spaces are very hard for immigrants to get into because we don't ... Everything that's exported to the rest of the world about the US is what Hollywood would want to present it, is what the mainstream US culture want to present, it's what CNN is talking about. Prior coming to the US, I didn't know anything about this network existed. Not to mention try and get connected with them.

Also, these groups tend to also be cut off from the rest of the world so you don't have the resource to reach out. So I feel like they know what happens in the end is move my socialization into the US society is very mainstream in a way which is sad. So it ended up that I have just this weird hodgepodge of network. But I think even most of my politically radical friends are still white because those are the ones who have the voices, they are the one with the resources to have their voices heard so that I can reach out and make friends with them. A lot of people of color I think are actually doing the work but don't really have time to socialize with me.

June's experience showed that mainstream U.S. discourses embedded in white hetero-patriarchal ideologies are promoted, normalized, and circulated along with the expansion of U.S. white nationalism. Other voices and experiences, such as those of women of color, are marginalized and regulated by the U.S. mainstream media. The presented and visible media content generates the assumption that only the whites' experiences are legitimate. Thus, without the knowledge of the existence and resources of non-whites, the newly coming Chinese migrant women have been forced to social and adapt into the white

dominated academic networks. Simultaneously, whiteness continuously keeps these groups separate to maintain the white dominated power hierarchy.

Summary and reflection. The second theme *Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia* examined the otherized relational experiences the interviewees navigate through teaching, doing research, and building networks in U.S. academia. The theme also addressed the ways in which these Chinese migrant female academics have been marginalized and alienated from being considered as a qualified instructor, a trustworthy researcher, and having social-capital network by their othered construction. Their connectivity and desire to belong are informed and shaped by white hetero-patriarchal ideologies. In the following reflection, I further reflect the interviewees' narratives about their connectivity and desire to belong through the racialized, gendered, and sexualized construct of model minority.

My experience of teaching echoes that of many of my interviewees. When I was a Master student at a Midwestern U.S. university, to be considered as a potential teaching assistant for an international student, I had to take a training class designed for international students. In that class, a white U.S. American female lecturer taught us how to understand and use some American English slangs, and she taught us how to teach in an American classroom. At the end of the semester, a few American students and faculty members were invited to the classroom to evaluate our teaching performance, and to decide whether we would be “qualified” to teach. However, in this class, we had never talked about racialized, gendered, or sexualized discriminations that international instructors might encounter in the classroom. The class never recognized the expertise of any of its students. We were merely asked to adapt to the white dominant American

classroom, leading to an assumption that if there was any problem, it was because we did something that did not adhere to the “American” way. Once in the class, I brought up the difficulties that an international instructor might face due to their race. My Chinese male classmate who was a STEM major immediately stopped me by saying we should not discuss race in the classroom because it is an unneeded interruption and is unprofessional. He also deemed that race is a sensitive topic and that if we do talk about it, we may be seen as racist.

In this scenario, my racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences of teaching in U.S. classrooms were interrupted and regulated by model minority discourse implied by a Chinese male. The model minority discourse expects Asians and Asian Americans to always be soft, quiet, nice, and nonthreatening (Zhang, 2010). If the expectations are not met, these people will be depicted as threatens and troublemakers. Thus, the comment of that Chinese male student might be deeply concerned that my claim could present him as such in front of the white female instructor and lead to some negative consequences on his teaching performance evaluation. Moreover, as Calafell (2012) addresses that if a woman of color in U.S. academia does not conform to the dominant definition of femininity and its “acceptable” behaviors, the woman is marked as the monstrous other. As a Chinese woman in U.S. academia, I am always expected to perform as quiet, easy-going, and not strongly opinionated. This might be another reason why the Chinese man interrupted me, because my comment violated the expected images for a Chinese woman.

The model minority discourse was also visible when the interviewees discussed their experiences of being marginalized in building social-capital networks in U.S. academia. Their narratives mostly showed their interactions, negotiations, and struggles

of socializing with and assimilating into the dominant white hetero-patriarchal institutional system. During the interviews they did mention the network building with non-white colleagues being challenged by white supremacist beliefs that are circulating and promoted through U.S. mainstream media products, so that these Chinese women felt isolated from socializing with many other non-white minority academics. However, they did not discuss much of their actual interactive experiences with other non-white minorities. As I pointed out in the analysis, some interviewees indicated that they are privileged and marginalized differently from U.S. domestic non-white minorities, in terms of race, gender, sexuality, class, mobility, and citizenship. These differences make it hard for them to feel being related to those domestic non-white minorities. Nevertheless, some interviewees discussed that they are very comfortable to interact with other international students.

According to Mohu, she felt most comfortable hanging out with are other international students, because they are “usually quite open-minded.” Mohu also said,

International students are already these self-selected few who are open-minded enough to go to another country for education. It's already a huge commitment, and it already shows that they're liberal enough to make that kind of decision. So, they're usually quite well-informed about international politics, about diversity and things like that. I usually find them to be very easy to talk to and quite understanding and things like that.

Similar experiences of migrating to the United States and struggling to adjust to the new environment connected Mohu and many other international students. However, she also pointed out that some international students from UK or Canada are hard to talk to. Some other interviewees echoed with Mohu's experience, that they deemed those international students who are from some European countries or Canada are not really counted as

international students because they are white. “Unless [they] talk, people wouldn't notice that [they] are from another country,” said Qiu Qiu.

Among such similar comments about international students from European countries and Canada, I found that some interviewees viewed these countries as “white” countries that they neglected the existence of non-white students/scholars from European countries and Canada, or it is possible that some interviewees did not even consider some non-white international students/scholars actually came from or were born in Europe or Canada. This may also prove that why some of these interviewees did not talk much about their interactions or perceptions of non-white people such as women of color or people of color around them in U.S. academia. It could be because they assumed the United States is a white country in which whiteness represents and controls the mainstream U.S. knowledge production and white people occupy the center of power so that they have more privileges, access and resources than other races. Such white supremacist beliefs drew them to socialize with white cohorts and colleagues and to assimilate to the white-structured institutional system, in order to gain social-capital networks. As a result, these Chinese interviewees might not be able to be aware of or recognize the social-capital non-white colleagues and groups have, or they may not be willing to align with the latter group to risk their “model minority” image.

During the interviews, when I asked interviewees about their relational experiences with minority students/faculties or cohorts/colleagues (such as women of color, people of color, and LGBT communities), some interviewees immediately related these individuals and communities to the discussions of social justice and resistance, instead of thinking about their relationships as network-building in academia or merely

making friends. The myth of model minority considers Asians and Asian Americans as hardworking, well education, law-abiding, productive, and nonthreatening (Kawai, 2005). Simultaneously, the myth juxtaposes African Americans and Latina/os that cause tensions among racial minority groups. The model minority myth promotes the stereotypes that indicate these groups of people as threats, crimes, and troublemakers. Although China and Chinese have also been perceived as “yellow peril”, a threat to the U.S. economy, culture, and politics, these interviewees did not talk about any experiences that relate to being perceived as such a threat in U.S. academia or U.S. society. They framed their narratives within the construct of model minority.

The myth of model minority is used to reinforce the post-racial assumption that race and racism have already been overcome and that racial equality has been achieved. Some of the interviewees admitted their decision of migrating to the United States was to chase the “American Dream.” The rhetoric of raceless, ideologies of colorblindness, diversity, freedom, meritocracy, and individualism is deeply embedded in the desirable “American Dream” of some of these Chinese migrant interviewees, and inform them that as long as they work hard, they can achieve success in the United States. Thus, based on their narratives, many of these interviewees want to be part of this white modernity and want to achieve their American Dream, which reinforces the construct of model minority. Their desire to be part of the white social-capital networks blinds them from seeing the historical injustice, exploitation, and asymmetrical relations of power that have caused race, gender, sexuality and class-based inequality in the contemporary United States. Aligning with non-white minority academics and communities, sometimes do involves discussions of social justice, resistance, self-reflexivity and critiques on the model

minority myth and the American Dream. However, such experiences do not count for productivity in U.S. academia where promotes white supremacy and meritocracy. Therefore, such relational experiences risk the construct of model minority and the pursuit of American Dream.

The reflection above further discussed the interviewees' and my "othered" experiences. Through examining the construct of model minority myth, I further contested the interviewees' narratives and relational experiences of their connectivity and desire to belong in the social-capital networks in U.S. academia. Next theme discusses and explores how these interviewees engage with power relations to negotiate their survival and resist discriminations. It also contests the paradoxes of their (non)participations of speaking back to the power.

Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance

The two previous themes investigated the accounts collected during interviews with 11 first-generation Chinese migrant female academics of their everyday experiences through home, academic, and social contexts. The two themes also explored how these interviewees make sense of and navigate their daily negotiations with power relations that are shaped and informed by whiteness, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. Under this last theme, I examined these interviewee's daily efforts of engaging with power relations to survive in U.S. academia and society by open participating resistance and daily negotiations and practices. By doing this, the section also intends to problematize the globalizing U.S. dominant notions of resistance and to interrupt Chinese/Asian stereotypes in the resistance discourse.

In resistance discourse, there has been a traditionally binary division between open, collective resistance and covert, individual resistance (Shi, 2008). The former form of resistance often includes confident and decisive attitudes, collective moves, rebellious actions, social movements, and even social revolutions. The latter is expressed through daily efforts, individual negotiations, and paradoxical adaptations to dominant forces. Consequently, the former is often heroized and promoted while the latter is trivialized and overlooked. Such a binary view of resistance has been problematized by a few scholars who study migrant women. They have recognized “unconventional” and alternative forms of resistance. For instance, Shi (2008) claimed that the unique and everyday “quiet, flexible, pragmatic, and long-term” way of resistance is necessary and imperative for the survival of migrant Chinese women who have been suffered from multiple forms of oppressions. Chen and Lawless (2017) explored the deployment of non-threatening but interruptive ways of resistance by migrant female faculty members to resist oppressions from the white, neoliberal, capitalist higher education system. Chinese women and Asian and Asian American women in general have been viewed and constructed as the submissive and monolithic others. Their ways of engaging and resisting power relations, as well as their contribution to social justice, have historically and continuously been derogated, understudied, and downplayed. Consequently, these women’s constructed images and resistance are mutually shaped and reinforced. Therefore, seeing, studying, and acknowledging these women’s open, rebellious, passive and/or submissive styles of resistances are imperative, because their unique ways of resistance ensure their survival and assist them to engage with multiple forms of oppressions. In this theme, I first discuss the paradoxes of participating in an open,

organized resistance; next, I explore their alternative, covert, flexible, practical, and long-term ways of resistance; and lastly, I problematize their racialized, gendered, and sexualized privileges and disadvantages in the resistance discourse and practice.

Participating as an act of resistance. A few of the interviewees associated their roles in social contexts to social movements. Cactus, as a Ph.D. student and a researcher in minority Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) health, actively participates in West Coast LGBT communities as a volunteer. She helps organize fundraising events. At the time of the interview, she was helping one of the Chinese LGBT communities to prepare events for pride month on the West Coast. Talking about the reason she chose her major and her participation in local minority community events. She shared,

I have always been interested in all these human rights movements, and also myself, identify as bisexual, so that's another reason. I really wanted to know more about myself. . . . So that's why I focus on LGBT health. But the more I get into the field, I feel that I have more passion to work with these communities, because I learn a lot from their experiences and their life, and the challenge they face too. So, there's a lot of work we can do, you know? I'm not gonna make money at all, but I'm happy. I'm really happy with what I'm doing now.

Through the volunteer and scholarly works Cactus takes part in, she felt a strong connection to her racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences. Not only does she explore her own identities through these works, but she also intends to raise social awareness and understanding of intersectional minority communities and to break stereotypes of those groups. She stated that she often uses herself as an example to help people overcome the fear of reaching out to these minority groups. She continued,

Most of the time I just put myself as an example. I really did do all this work. I work at the LGBT center in my university [prior to the current one]. I just put myself as an example. I'm an international student. I'm a woman, you know? I'm bisexual, and I work at LGBT resource center. So, I can do it, I think lots of

people should do it. Like I knew a lot of Asian or even Chinese friend or people never stopped by LGBT center because they're afraid of people seeing them to come in the LGBT center would treat them as a gay person, which is ridiculous. So usually I'm really involved with all these things. I went to different classes to talk about LGBT 101, talking about intersecting identities across all these minority identities I have. And, yeah, I work with communities. And also, I went to conference, academic conference, and community conference. And also, my dissertation is about it. I fight against it in my daily life. I support my friends who are also fighting against all these oppressions in daily life.

Cactus reflected those experiences have helped her grow and become a stronger person. She has been learning to develop resilience and coping strategies to deal with different intercultural and/or interpersonal types of discriminations. She deemed that she has become more passionate about local minority community issues and that she is ready to fight against various difficulties in different contexts.

Similar to Cactus, who has been passionately participating in social movement events associated with her identities and daily experiences, Mohu is very active in organizing and facilitating organizations that aim to increase minority participation in the field of philosophy. As mentioned previously, Mohu is a Ph.D. student studying philosophy. Her field is dominated by white hetero-patriarchal ideologies, which she has been fighting her way out through being marginalized due to her racialized, gendered, and sexualized othered identities. To intervene the situation and to help people like her, she has been very actively participating in discussions of departmental issues and by running and initiating local and international organizations. The organizations help promote minorities in philosophy, provide resources that are often not available for them, and build community. She reflected, "I feel that it's a very personal issue to me because women are very underrepresented in philosophy, minorities more so, and sometimes it's very hard for people to get helped in their department. So, it's very nice to have an

organization that has chapters at local schools that can be a resource for students to go to and can organize events and things like that.”

In addition, as a migrant Chinese female student herself, Mohu is also aware of obstacles and oppressions international students from less developed countries are facing, issues that local students of color and international students from developed countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada do not face. She said,

A lot of international students [from less developed countries] already feel more stressed out about going to the next thing, like the pressure of finding a job right after you graduate, the pressure of getting into a good graduate program right after you graduate, the pressure of getting a tenure-track position or a good postdoc right after you graduate. These very basic things play a big role in their daily life. And a lot of international students are from countries where the government censors expression and things like that, so they don't have the habit of speaking up. They're usually not that active. Some international students from UK or Canada in my department, they're super comfortable here.

Thus, Mohu plans to organize an international student workshop very soon to present and inform about some unique difficulties and challenges that international students are experiencing. Her hope is to raise awareness of this often silenced and ignored group of students. June identified herself as a “fucking badass feminist.” She commented that she has been participating events at local grass-root organizing communities, and marching at protests for women’s right, Black Lives Matter, and other causes.

Talking about their participating resistance prior to coming to the United States, Mohu and June identified their roles as a feminist or feminist activist. However, because they left China, that they have not received much updated information about local feminist issues or had connections with other Chinese feminists, their role as a feminist in China has faded. Rikki also echoed,

In China when I was more related, in my hometown, I had some interests in the educational inequality between countryside education and city, so back in high

school I did things such as donate books and be a volunteer. Here [in U.S.], not much. Basically, here volunteer is more about poverty and just donate some food, store shelves, and activities.

Based on the experiences presented above, these interviewees' (non)participation of resistance is closely related to their identities and relational experiences that have been shaped by and affected by white hetero-patriarchal ideologies that they have been paradoxically adapting and fighting against.

Nevertheless, being able to physically participate in resistance refers owning a certain level of privilege that often is related to one's English proficiency, length of migration, immigrant statuses, education level and background, class, and physical ability. For these reasons, the interviewees reflected their different experiences and obstacles when they engaged with participatory resistance. The women cited three obstacles that related to their immigrant status, family constraints, and the lack of support that have been limiting their abilities to participating in open, collective, and organized resistances.

Most of the interviewees reflected on how their non-U.S. citizen immigration statuses have been restraining them from participating in open resistances and/or from requesting more fair treatments, because doing so might increase the risks of losing the right to legally remain in the United States and applying for changes in their immigration statuses in the future. Moreover, the complicated and worsening China-U.S. relationship also further jeopardizes their already precarious living conditions. Xuehua actively participated an anti-racial discrimination protest at her university. She said, "I attended the meeting. I received emails. I joined the chat groups and also talked with people outside of the department. I communicated the information I got to the group, and also to the organizers." As part of the protest, graduate teaching assistants were expected to

withhold their undergraduate students' grades to pressure the university's administrative authority. Xuehua thought about participating, but she received an email threatening graduate assistants. She said they were told if they withheld grades of their undergraduate students, they risked losing their tuition waiver and funds given to graduate assistants; they also risked the possibility that their contract to teach during the following semester might not be renewed. Xuehua recognized that the university was pressuring graduate assistants this way because the university knew these graduate students are financially insecure. However, in this situation, as an international student, Xuehua had more concerns. She shared,

For me particularly, as an international student my tuition is out of state. It's higher. It's much more than people who can claim in-state tuition. Second, I'm not eligible for working off campus. If I don't get the teaching assistantship, I would not be able to find other jobs that can support me. Third, I think if participating in this, if this is considered a violation of contract and this may have legal consequences. If this is ever reported, the worsening situation is my visa status maybe evoked, and I may not be able to return [to the U.S.].

Considering her precarious situation with her immigrant status, she decided not to participate in this particular graduate assistant strike. She admitted "In this situation, I feel my particular situation makes me vulnerable to the legal requirements. They make it difficult for me to stand alongside my colleagues." For Xuehua, the anxiety of her precarious immigrant status not only limited her capability to take part in the open and organized resistance, it also isolated her from her colleagues and peers.

Another interviewee June also married to a male Latino American who is a U.S. citizen. This allows her to apply for permanent residency through her marriage. She admitted that because of this reason, she does not feel the pressure to gain a working visa

from her academic job. However, she reflected on experiences of some of her friends who are working outside of U.S. academia and feeling pressures. She said,

Some of my friends are talking about how they just suck up their job that's very exploitive because of this immigrant status. I think that's a challenge to some of my friends who are even still looking for a job. One of my international students was telling me that now, there are a lot of jobs, even academic jobs that don't sponsor visa because of the more and more stringent policy, maybe funding for migrant international talents, especially those ones from China. So, I think that's a challenge. That's pretty horrible.

To secure a job that sponsors migrants working visa, many migrants have to be quiet about unfair treatments that they have been experiencing at the workplace.

In addition, to be able to receive a visa sponsorship, the U.S. immigration laws demand proof that the immigrant applicant is the better suited for the job than any U.S. citizen candidates. This creates intense pressure for migrants, especially in this project, for Chinese migrant women who are already working extra hard to prove themselves as capable and as qualified as their white male counterparts in U.S. academia, because of the body politics informed by race, gender, and sexuality. Thus, such huge stress and anxiety confine some interviewees away from even considering fighting for their own rights. As Mei reflected,

If you don't have citizenship, you need to work hard and harder, harder than other minority groups. You don't have the actual energy to fight for yourself. Just focus on what you can do. For the minority, if you are the citizen already, just focus on civil rights movement. Right? Women rights, civil rights. You don't worry about your citizenship, and they [U.S. government] can't chase you away from this country.

In addition to the anxiety of immigration status, such as with Mei, domestic responsibilities as a mother also mount her pressure and confine her from having time or energy to care about nothing else but managing her and her family's survival in this

country. Reflecting on her days of right after having her baby while still being a Ph.D. student, Mei said,

I did not think much about my career at that time. I had to think about my degree first, take care of my baby first, and then take care of my life first. No matter what, you have to move on. You don't have any energy to think about anything else. Always be positive, and just appreciate what you have. You have shelter, you have water to drink, and you have food to eat. You're not thirsty, you're not hungry, and just move on.

To Mei, it is a privilege and a luxury to even have the time and energy to think about dealing with oppressions, to fight back, and to even pay attention to discriminative issues. It is time-consuming and energy draining. As a migrant Chinese woman and a single parent who has to provide and take care of her new-born baby while working as a graduate assistant and studying to graduate, she realized that all she can do is to “be positive” and “move on” from one thing to the next. “You need money. You need time. And you have to find a way to balance those.” She has to engage in and play with the power relations that constructed by colorblindness to struggle a space for her and her baby to survive.

Many interviewees also identified a lack of support as another reason that they are confined from joining the open organized resistance. Ph.D. student Rikki reflected her experience during her first year as a college student in the United States. Her school hosted a white Republican male senator to deliver a speech. As he was talking, the senator spotted Rikki and directed a racist comment at her in front of all audience, “Are you a computer science major?” He asked. Rikki replied, “No.” The senator continued, “What’s your major?” “Physics,” answered Rikki. “Oh, that’s good because you’re not stealing our data.” Rikki was shocked by the blatantly racist comment. She also addressed that the audience were shocked too, but nobody said anything. After the speech,

some of the audience approached to her, tapped her shoulder, and said, “He’s a jerk.” In that situation, Rikki admitted that she did not fight back, “I can’t fight back because he [the senator] was in a position of authority.” Without social and material support, Rikki felt very helpless, and this incident has haunted her for years.

Whether to resist or to keep quiet about discriminations, there is always a cost and a risk to these women due to the lack of support. Encountering others’ unfair assumptions toward her, Mohu tries to avoid the situation. She said, “These situations suck, and they are horrible. Right now, I just try to avoid as many of them as possible for my own mental health.” Liu Ling acknowledged that she has not been personally outspoken in any of discriminative issues because “I am afraid of being retaliated against.” She recalled how she witnessed the retaliation happened to her friend’s academic career because her friend was outspoken about discrimination that she said occurred in her department.

Mainstream anti-racist, feminist and queer resistance discourses shaped and informed by whiteness, individualism, liberalism, and post-racialism always place intense pressure on these women, and demand them to speak up, to fight, and to educate the “privileged”. If they fail to do so, the mainstream society blames these women to reinforce oppressions themselves. However, such liberal and progressive discourses regard that women across cultures are “a natural affinity group” (Lee, 2014). This assumption allows the dominant resistance discourse to neglect the unequal racial, gendered, and sexual relations in which these migrant women of color are excluded and otherized. Such discourses leave whiteness out of discussions and keep it intact.

Everyday negotiations for resistance. Discussions above revealed a few obstacles in these Chinese migrant female academics’ lives that have been limiting them

from resisting the racialized, gendered, and sexualized discriminative treatments. These obstacles make the open, collective, and organized resistance seem unrealistic, risky, and difficult. However, these women managed to explore various ways of resilience and negotiation that are pragmatic, flexible, and long lasting so that they can survive and thrive the white heteronormative patriarchy dominated academia and society. As Lorde address (2015),

Survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those other identified as outside the structures, in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. (p. 95)

Their daily negotiation and strategies to survive bring about the possibility of interrupting the existing power hierarchy. These alternative ways of negotiating and engaging with power further demonstrate that these women are not subject to be victims as oppressed, submissive, and monolithic others. It is imperative to be aware of and to recognize their ways of resistance to interrupt and challenge the construct of the racialized, gendered, and sexualized stereotypes that have been confining and marginalizing these Chinese migrant women. The following passages introduce their alternatives ways of resistance.

Being aware of self-value as the act of resistance. Along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism, imperialism, and liberalism, migrating to the United States to pursue a college degree has become more desirable. Very often the benefits of migrating to the U.S. are overrated and underlined that can blind us from seeing the valuable assets that migrants have brought along with their migration and the great contributions that they have given to this country. Some interviewees pointed out that, as a Chinese migrant female academic, they need to be more aware of their self-value, in order to resist the

stereotypes, that mainstream academia and society sometimes intend to place you in. June recognized that,

A lot of times, the US audience doesn't understand is that a person from the third world country moved to the United States, in terms of parallel comparison, they go downward. Right? These people are like maybe the 1% talent even though they might not be from the 1%. Then they come to the US. They become a regular academic, right? That sounds super snobbish, but that's the truth. The truth is I have a set of skills. My intellectual ability is very consistent with the requirement, of the scholarly requirement of academic in the U.S., even though you might not recognize it that way.

What June described might not be that accurate, but with many Chinese migrant women's daily experiences of being racialized, gendered and sexualized, they tend to internalize that they are inferior in this society. As a university assistant professor now, June suggested that Chinese migrant women should not accept the boxes by which the mainstream society has constructed and been using to regulate them. Instead, she deemed her otherized experiences as an advantage that she always uses them as example in her teaching. Moreover, she appreciated those experiences from which she developed surviving techniques at both psychological and intellectual level that she can share with some of her friends and her community members who needs help. Similarly, Xuehua is also aware of how her otherized identities and experiences are good examples that help her students and colleagues see different ways of living. She commented,

I talk about my experiences in my classroom that present them with different example and experiences. I breach the cultural knowledge here. Also, in classrooms, in discussions, like one of the courses I took, I could share different examples or counter examples that are different from my colleagues. The cultural difference could have been an asset that opens people's eyes.

Based on these interviewee's experiences, the previous theme presented how they are otherized in teaching U.S. classroom and doing their research. With their otherized race,

gender, and sexuality, these Chinese migrant women have often been seen as unqualified and incompetent, that is, lacking in sociocultural knowledge and linguistic skills. Such assumption maintains and reinforces the power hierarchy and white hetero-patriarchal normativities. However, Xuehua's and June's comments broke the construct of their "incompetent" image. In fact, these Chinese migrant female students and/or instructors have been bringing various forms of social, political, cultural, and experiential knowledge into the white hetero-patriarchal ideologies dominated U.S. classrooms. They are the "cultural wealth" that resists the dominant and oppressive ideologies, normativities, and knowledge production on the daily basis (Yep, 2014). Thus, recognizing self-values is a way of empowerment and resistance. The following section explores the presence and existence of these Chinese migrant female academics becoming an act of resistance.

Survival as the act of resistance. A few interviewees pointed out that being able to survive is a way of resisting the power hierarchy. Mohu strongly believes that her existence and presence in U.S. academia and the country is sending a big message to the society. She has asked me to write her following sentence into my dissertation. She stated, "Let me be here, I think it's a pretty big message, a pretty big 'fuck off' to Trump!" Entering the Trump administration in the U.S., whiteness, hetero-patriarchal ideologies informed racism, sexism, and homophobia has been further normalized. Due to the worsening relationship between China and the U.S., the anti-Chinese sentiment has been growing that is negatively affecting Chinese migrants' daily experiences and restricting their immigration application.

Under such social, cultural and political circumstance, some interviewees regard that they have to work hard and harder to survive. To Mei, migration is fighting, that is,

working hard. She commented, “Work hard. It’s the first rule. You have to work hard.” As mentioned before, she has to juggle and balance among several different roles, that makes her has no time or energy to think about or fight against the ideologies that have been shaping her experiences. She has to fight to survive of being an immigrant, a mom, an academic, and a Chinese female. Similarly, to Qiu Qiu, a PhD student studying and teaching in the white male dominated computer science field. She said, “Now I’m a PhD. Because I’ve been doing computer science, I have noticed, there aren’t many women in this field. I need to survive to prove that this bias is wrong. So that really carried me.” To be able to survive, in a daily basis, Mei and Qiu Qiu has to engage in power relations. That is, they have to navigate and negotiate their racialized, gendered, and sexualized otherness, in order to survive in the system ruled by white heteronormative patriarchy.

June deemed that surviving the U.S. academia is also holding the space for people like her. She said,

Sometimes I feel like I stay in academia not because I really love it, but because I think I have to be there. I have to hold the space for people like me. I don't want the next Chinese student to walk through the door thinking that they couldn't find anybody like them. That’s part of the fight.

She recalled that when she started graduate school, she could not find anybody in her department whose experiences were similar to her. During her graduate program, she was trained by two white scholars. June mentioned that although they were respectful, they did not understand what she had been through. She also had trouble connecting with local women of color due to their information and resources were not available through the globalized white U.S. dominant media prior to her coming to the U.S. Thus, June regarded that holding the space and building community is significant for the fellow generations of Chinese students. “When they come to the U.S., they would know who

they can connect with, and they do not have to pick one of the most famous white professors in their department anymore,” said June. Echoed June, Mohu deemed that building network and community is very important, and just working hard is not enough. She commented,

I did put into a lot of work, and I did know my stuff, but that’s totally not enough, totally not sufficient for what I have accomplished. A lot of people helped me. It was the right time, I know the right people.

To Xuehua, the karate club in her university that she has been serving as a president is the community that she feels strongly connected to. She has contributed a lot of her time and energy to promote the club, to apply funding for it, and to make the community a better place. Xuehua’s efforts negotiate a space where its Chinese members can build their social-capital network and practice cultures that they are familiar with in white dominant U.S. discourse.

To manage their survival, some interviewees admitted that they intend to say no to the resistance. In the mainstream white anti-discriminative discourses, minorities are always expected to be the representatives and expert to discuss race, gender, and sexuality issues, and fight for social justice. Considering this reality, Sienna pointed out that it is not fair. Because of such expectations, she constantly feels the pressure and exhaustion. However, whenever she encountered the discriminative comment judging her capability of being a philosopher, she felt the urgency of presenting and succeeding in her field that has been dominated by white males. She said, “I really don't want to go to this event, but if I don't, it's going to be a white event and they're going to talk about what to do. So, I should probably go.”

For personal wellbeing, Mohu intends to avoid micro-level of interpersonal negotiation about discriminative issues and focus to make some changes in a larger level. She said, “for my personal wellbeing, and since I don't have a lot of time, I will just hang out with people I feel comfortable with usually, and then change on a scale that's less personal. I feel it's best for my mental health.” Liu Ling also shared her experiences,

I still feel very angry and very frustrated. It really, it creates so much stress and anxiety in me that I actually have to take medication. I actually, sometimes I feel I'm fine. Sometimes I feel okay, this is what it is. I'm fine, I can deal with it. But then, my body, physically can't take it. Like physically, my body would go against me by grinding teeth at night and I can't help it. I really tried everything, and I can't. So, it's just a lot of negative emotions like it creates even more self-doubt in your ability, in your future. It's just not very good for your mental health in general.

Due to her mental health that has been hugely affected by her daily navigation in the discriminative discourse, she has to pull herself away from the toxic situations and focus on graduating. She said, “I made a decision to graduate as soon as I can and not become too involved in those things because it just breaks you, seriously.”

This theme does not intend to reinforce the victimization of Chinese women or excuse them from fighting against discriminations. The following further problematizes the interviewees' racialized, gendered, and sexualized privileges and disadvantages in the resistance discourse and practices. During the interview with Liu Ling, she discussed her relationship with her advisor, a first-generation Chinese migrant woman who is now a tenured associate professor. According to Liu Ling, her advisor is a very productive and leading scholar who has no interest in getting involved in anything political. “She would always try to see everything neutrally or everything that is not race related,” said Liu Ling. “The fact that she refused to get into the political side of things means that you're not gonna get support if you feel like you are being mistreated politically.” Liu Ling had

reported to her advisor unfair treatments by other American faculties and the selection procedure for departmental fellowship, but her advisor did not respond to her. In other situations, her advisor would simply conform with white American male professors without even defending her own ideas. In addition, Liu Ling deemed that because her advisor never took on important administrative roles, the departmental decisions were always left to the white men to make. Liu Ling mentioned that she does not understand why her advisor chose not to speak up, even though she is tenured and is protected as a result of her outstanding publications. Although the advisor never offered protection or assistance to her students when they were mistreated, the advisor did teach her students how to be a rigorous scholar, because the advisor believes in hard-working so that her students would earn a good standing in the department and in U.S. academia, instead of political conflicts. However, Liu Ling pointed out that although her advisor is one of the best scholars in her field, she does not even get half of the recognition that she deserves. “People just say she’s nice and she’s hardworking and that’s it,” said Liu Ling.

Liu Ling’s reflection on her advisor explicitly illustrated how often-times the model minority construct allows some social and material privileged yet racially and sexually disadvantaged Chinese/Asians to avoid recognizing race, gender, and sexuality related issues. Instead, they embrace colorblindness and meritocracy embedded in white liberal U.S. higher education discourse. The model minority construct portrays Asians and Asian Americans in general as overachievers, while simultaneously confines them from occupying authority positions (Eguchi & Spieldenner, 2015). The model minority stereotype requires Asian and Asian American women, in this case Chinese migrant women, to be cute, quiet, passive, submissive, soft, and nonthreatening so that they can

play along with others (Kawai, 2005). In addition, the model minority construct is essential to reinforce colorblind ideologies that these Chinese female academics' "achievements" are used to exempt the historical and contemporary reality of racism, sexism, and homophobia, as well as to justify that U.S. academia and society are progressive and fair to everyone. This logic embraces meritocracy of U.S. higher education and informs these Chinese female academics that as long as one works hard enough, one would succeed. Thus, given to the model minority image, these Chinese female academics need to be quiet and hardworking without resisting, although U.S. liberal higher education discourse encourages and values the act of resistance. Because if these Chinese women violate such stereotypical constructs, they would be denigrated as aggressive, uncivil, threatening, exotic, and violent (Espiritu, 2008). To conform to the model minority status that is constructed and favored by white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies, Liu Ling's advisor chose not to be a departmental "trouble" that might problematize racial, gendered, and sexual discriminations, although she had certain social and material privileges as a tenured associate professor.

Summary and reflection. Overall, this theme investigated the paradoxes of the interviewees' participation of the open and organized resistance, and it explored their alternative, covert, flexible, practical, and long-term ways of resistance. Through their stories, the interviewees challenged the mainstream resistance discourse and its expectations of minorities. They emphasized the importance of participating the open organized resistance, yet some of them were confined by various reasons constructed by existing power hierarchy. More importantly, their stories presented the significance to recognize their alternative ways of understanding and practicing resistance. At the same

time, however, their racialized, gendered, and sexualized privileges and disadvantages needs to be problematized with the critiques of white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies, in order to deepen the understandings of resistance discourse through the perspectives of these Chinese migrant women. The following reflection further contests the paradoxes of the Chinese migrant female academics' participations in resisting discriminations.

The analysis above showed the paradoxes of participating in open and organized resistance for the Chinese migrant female academic interviewees. Some of them pointed out that being a Chinese migrant woman in U.S. academia, legal status, family constraints, and lack of social support are some of the reasons that have been limiting their capability of participating in resistance. To many of these interviewees, resistance means in the context of U.S. academia, their negotiations and engagement with power relations to navigate their career, everyday life, marginalized positionalities, and social-capital networks in a different country, institution, hierarchy within academia, in order to survive in the U.S. society and academia. To many of them, ways of resisting discriminations are not limited to participate in the open, organized resistance or speak up. They explored alternative, flexible, covert, practical, and long-term ways. They deemed that the survival in U.S. academia sending imperative message to interrupt the existing power hierarchy. To a few interviewees, self-resilience is another way to resist that they need to pull themselves away from being involved too much in power negotiations to preserve their mental health. Their alternative tactics of resistance and their survival in U.S. society and academia do bring possibilities to challenge the existing power hierarchies.

I can relate to many of these interviewees' concerns and experiences of resistance. I share their uncertainty and fears of speaking up to defend for myself or other women of color when they are publically attacked. I have experienced being used by some white female colleagues in my field as their Asian sidekick. By emphasizing on our "friendship" and close "working relationship" that they made up, they gained legitimacy and benefits studying and working in the field regarding race, gender, and sexuality. In a different scenario, these white female colleagues publically shared their disdain on one of my Latina colleagues and allies. I was sitting there horrified and furious, but quiet. In both scenarios, I did not confront these white women or address my thoughts to them afterwards. I was scared of being retaliated by them and their white social-capital network that might bring negative effect to my academic path. Also, I was uncertain whether they would even care about my opinions or whether the conversation could change anything. Since then, I have been keeping my distance away from them to not let their racist and sexist practices affect my productivity. Thus, conducting this project becomes my way of addressing my experiences and resistance to respond to these past situations.

After contiguously reflecting on these conversations with my interviewees, however, I began to realize and concern that our silence, "quiet" negotiations, and self-protections might leave our privileges without being contested and continuously reinforce the existing power relations and hierarchies in U.S. academia, that not only further marginalize ourselves from home, academic, and social lives, but also assist the power structure further marginalize less privileged individuals and communities than us. Moreover, our quiet negotiations could be wrongly understood and fueled racial and

sexual stereotypes of Chinese women. It can be examined from Liu Ling's reflection of her relations with her Chinese migrant female advisor. The advisor has purposefully avoided any discussion involving discriminations and has conformed to white hetero-patriarchal power to avoid conflicts. As a result, although she has a number of significant publications in U.S. academia, she does not earn the recognition that she deserves. Instead, she is still viewed as a "nice" and "hard working" Chinese woman that continuously confines her in the model minority image. In addition, because of her silence, her advisees who are from China are not able to get protections or social-capital network from the advisor. They keep experiencing unfair treatments and discriminations from the white hetero-patriarchal faculties in their department. The power structure is maintained and secured in which Chinese students' academic development and mental health are deeply affected.

As I reflected in the previous theme, the desire to be part of the social-capital network in U.S. academia embedded in controversial liberal discourse with meritocracy and individualism, as well as the model minority myth, can blind some of us from seeing, experiencing, or resisting discriminations, caring about others' struggles, or recognizing these being systemic problems. Although some of us concerned about the risks of speaking up and resisting due to our marginalized positions, our choice of being quiet is actually expected and protected by the model minority discourse, in which we will not be much affected by being silent. For example, even though immigrant status is one of the reasons indicated by many of the interviewees that confine their participation of resistance, they are documented and legal immigrants. In general, Chinese migrants (legal or illegal) are mostly perceived as legal immigrants under the model minority construct.

In my case, I am granted the temporarily permanent residency (green card) through marrying a U.S. American male. This immigration status and the heterosexual marriage with a white American man bring me more privileges than most of my interviewees regarding surviving in the U.S. society and finding a job in academia. Moreover, because of their racialized images as model minority, we are less likely to experience harassment or questioned from institutional forces such as police. However, not directly encountering such negative experiences does not mean that we are living in a racism, sexism, homophobia and discrimination free society. These are systemic problems and they influence and shape our daily-lived relational experiences.

Although the U.S. academia encourages people to speak up to defend for themselves, the construction of model minority expects us not to speak up and “awards” us from not resisting. As I discussed in the last theme, in model minority discourse, Chinese women are depicted as hardworking, quiet, productive, and nonthreatening, while simultaneously, African Americans and Latina/os are often associated with crimes, threats, and illegal immigrants/citizenship. In the context of U.S. academia, if the latter individuals and groups do not speak up to resist discriminations and marginalization, they often would be pushed further away from or out of academia. If they do speak up, they often would be viewed as threats and monstrous others who need to be regulated and tamed (Calafell, 2012). Unlike them, if Chinese migrant women do not speak up, their privileges or rights will not be affected much, because their silence is expected by their stereotypes informed by the model minority discourse. As I discussed, in the model minority discourse, Chinese migrant women together with Asians and Asian Americans are constructed as “almost white” who have been taken as white sidekicks or tokens to

serve white hetero-patriarchy and meritocracy that claim the U.S. academia is a liberal and progressive context where systemically racial, gendered, and sexual discriminations do not exist. Therefore, these stereotypical images of Chinese women not only pull them away from speaking up, but also “allow” them not to.

The reflection above further contested the paradoxes of the interviewees’ and my experiences of negotiating power relations. We do experience marginalization and discriminations in different ways that limit our capability of enacting resistance to some degree. However, we also need to be aware of, recognize, and challenge our own privileges that we may want to maintain or reinforce. We need to be mindful that our choice of distancing ourselves away from addressing power, could further marginalize ourselves from home, academic, and social lives, but also assist the power structure further marginalize less privileged individuals and communities than us.

SUMMARY

This chapter explores three themes *Rethinking Positionality*, *Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia*, and *Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance* that emerged from analyzing the interviews with the first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia. *Rethinking Positionality* explored how these interviewees made sense of power relations shaped and informed by ideologies concerning race, gender, and sexuality through their everyday embodied experiences at home, in academia, and in social contexts. It uncovered white hetero-patriarchal ideologies that have been promoted and normalized in the globalized U.S. liberal and progressive discourses and practices in which these interviewees’ everyday relational experiences have been affected. *Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia* investigated

the otherized relational experiences the interviewees have navigated and negotiated through teaching, doing research and building social-capital networks in the U.S. academia. The power hierarchy has been informing these interviewees' connectivity and desire for their belonging in U.S. academia. *Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance* explored the paradoxes of interviewees' acts of resistance. It found that white hetero-patriarchal ideologies have been limiting their capability of participating in resistance, while pressuring them to resist. Through interviewees' daily navigation and negotiation with power relations, they have developed alternative ways of resistance. These themes illustrated the ways these women have been racially, gendered, and sexually constructed as foreign others through their family, academic, and social everyday experiences. In turn, their everyday navigation and negotiation with power relations influence and interrupt the U.S. dominant construct of their otherness. As the connector of these 11 interviewees, I retold, reinterpreted, and contested our micro-level daily negotiation and engagement with power relations. I also linked our experiences and reflections to the macro-level power structure, to examine the ways in which our experiences and perceptions and the power hierarchies mutually inform and shape each other.

In the following chapter, I briefly review each chapter, and connect them to my research question. Next, I discuss theoretical implications and methodological reflections. Then, it follows the reflections of research limitations, by which I explore further research directions.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, informed by scholarship of Asian/Asian American critiques on whiteness and femiqueer, I analyzed narratives of everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia. By examining their relational experiences in home, academia, and social contexts, I illuminated the ways in which power relations and ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality shape, regulate, and marginalize these women. I also explored the ways in which these women engage and interrupt the existing power hierarchy. The primary goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of these Chinese migrant women's daily experiences and negotiations with power hierarchy and to challenge the dominant perception and construction of Chinese/Asian women. By analyzing narratives of their everyday experiences, I found that whiteness and heteronormative patriarchal ideologies have been globally promoted, normalized, and circulated along with the internationalization of U.S. nationalism and imperialism. These ideologies have been informing and shaping these Chinese women's perceptions of race, gender, sexuality, and transnational relations, as well as constructing them as racial, gendered, and sexual others through their relational experiences with their family, academia, and social lives. Nevertheless, at the same time, the daily negotiation and engagement with power relations and the survival of these Chinese migrant women reinforce, shape, interrupt, and challenge the existing power hierarchy and the racial formation of Asian America. Next, I summarize each chapter and answer my research questions raised in Chapter One *Introduction*.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women who study and work in universities and colleges in the United States. I sought to understand how these Chinese migrant women navigate, negotiate, and engage power relations that are rooted in whiteness, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. I also attempted to explore how their relational experiences reproduce, interrupt, and/or shift power hierarchies. In doing so, I intended to challenge the racialized, gendered, and sexualized construct of otherness of these women. The central problem to be addressed in this project is how do narratives of everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in universities and colleges in the United States make sense of, navigate themselves in, and engage with power relations embedded in ideologies of whiteness, patriarchy, and heteronormativity.

As I stated in the introduction, three research questions guided my inquiry in this study: (1) How do interviewees' accounts of their experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in U.S. academia make sense of interlocking power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social life? (2) How do interviewees navigate themselves in power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia? (3) How do interviewees engage with power relations to resist discriminations? These research questions guided the research inquiry and the development of the rest of the chapters.

In Chapter Two, I formed a theoretical framework that brings together theories of whiteness studies and Asian American gender and sexuality studies with femiqueer perspectives. This framework allowed me to position my research in the current

discussions about race, gender, and sexuality and the formation of Asian America, and this framework justified my research as relevant and recent. In this research, I approached whiteness as discursive practices and transnational ideologies that have been promoted, normalized, and circulated along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism, imperialism, and (post-)colonialism, through the Americanized globalization of media and education. Situating my research in femiqueer studies, I sought to promote a critical exploration of how gender and sexuality of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia are constructed and operate in the U.S. racial hierarchy. In this research, I approached sexuality not only as sexual identities and practices, but more importantly as a perspective to queer the understanding of “otherness” of these Chinese women and their relation to “Asian America.” The framework provided me with a theoretical lens to uncover the invisible, dominant, normative knowledge (re)production and circulation by which the existing power relations and hierarchies are maintained. In this chapter, I also provided the background of academia in the United States, in order to contextualize and politicize its ideologies that maintain whiteness and heteronormative patriarchal ideologies that have been exploiting and marginalizing Asian migrant female academics.

In Chapter Three, to apply my theoretical lens in order to answer my research questions, I adopted in-depth interview and narrative analysis as my methods. I conducted 11 individual interviews with first-generation Chinese migrant women who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia. All the interviewees were originally from mainland China and self-identified as Chinese. Currently, they live in the United States. These interviewees represent multiple positions in U.S. academia and come from different academic fields. They hold different immigrant status, and fulfill diverse roles at

home, in academia, and in other social contexts. I utilized narrative analysis to approach my interview texts. Three themes emerged from analyzing interviewees' stories of their experiences.

In Chapter Four, I provided an analysis of the narratives of the interviewees' experiences. Three themes emerged from the analysis, and each intended to answer each research question. Theme One, Rethinking Positionality, answered the first research question: How do interviewees' accounts of their experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in U.S. academia make sense of interlocking power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday experiences in family, academic, and social life? The interviewees articulated their perceptions of race, gender, and sexuality, through their relational experiences at home, in academia, and in social contexts. Their understandings of power relations concerning race, gender, and sexuality were varied, due to their different positionalities and their understandings cannot be separated from cultures of their home country. The analysis of the interviewees' stories also exposed the invisible and normalized white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies embedded in globalized U.S. liberal and progressive education discourses. These ideologies have been shaping these interviewees' understanding of their racialized, gendered, and sexualized relational experiences.

The second theme, Exploring the Otherness in U.S. Academia, responded to the second research question: How do interviewees navigate themselves in power relations of race, gender, and sexuality through everyday home, work, and social experiences in U.S. academia? Through analyzing the interviewees' stories, I found that all of them considered their academic identities as their most salient identities, other than their roles

at home or in their social life. Also, due to their precarious status in the United States, their survival in U.S. academia is rather imperative for them. Thus, they spent almost all of their time addressing their academia duties, and their social life was mostly replaced by socializing within academia in order to build social-capital networks. The analysis of their stories presented that these Chinese migrant female academics have been otherized and marginalized in U.S. academia through teaching, doing research, and building social networks. White heteronormative patriarchal ideologies that have been hidden behind the liberalism of U.S. academia have been marginalizing and alienating these women's racialized, gendered, and sexualized othered body from being a qualified instructor, a trustworthy researcher, and an insider of the dominant social-capital network.

The last theme, *Engaging with Power to Enact Resistance*, explored the third research question: How do interviewees engage with power relations to resist discriminations? This theme interrogated the paradoxes of the interviewees' participation of resistance and explored their alternative ways of resistance. The findings of this theme challenged the stereotypes of Asian women as passive, submissive, and quiet, and who also have a low intention of participating in traditionally perceived resistance. Based on their stories, some of these women have been actively participating in the traditionally perceived resistance that is open and organized. However, being able to attend such open and organized resistance does not apply to many other interviewees, who have been limited for various reasons, such as immigration status, family responsibilities, and other demands on their lives. Some of these interviewees came up with alternative ways to understand and practice resistance. They are some ways that are covert, flexible, practical and long-term that meet these women's needs. This theme also problematized the

alternative ways of resistance through examining their racialized, gendered, and sexualized privileges and disadvantages. The analysis showed that their privileges and disadvantages are inseparable from their model minority images constructed by white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies. As a result, this has brought more complexities to their ability of openly resisting discriminations.

Connecting these chapters reviewed above, in the following sections, I provide a discussion of the theoretical and methodological implications. Finally, I reflect on some of the limitations in this study and suggest directions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

As proposed in Chapter One, this study is expected to provide theoretical implications regarding the complexities of embodied experiences concerning race, gender, and sexuality in historical, transnational, and ideological contexts. This study presents that ideologies are implied in interview discourses, constructing Chinese migrant women's relational experiences within family, academic, and social contexts. This study provides theoretical implications to ongoing conversations started by scholarship of Asian/Asian American critiques on whiteness and femiqueer perspectives.

Whiteness studies. The Asian and Asian American studies informed critiques on whiteness provided a useful analytical tool in examining everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia. In this analysis, I extended and emphasized the whiteness critiques to further interrogate how non-white migrants experience, perceive, engage with, and negotiate whiteness on a daily basis in relation to their home, academia, and social lives. I utilized whiteness critiques to examine the racialized experiences of me and my interviewees. Through our everyday relational

experiences, we are shaped and given an identity as Asian/Asian Americans. We have been constructed as either inferior and submissive Asian or model-minoritized Asian/Asian Americans for the convenience of the dominant society to emphasize our foreign status and deviant gender and sexuality, as well as to reproduce the historical subordination of Asian/Asian Americans to whiteness. The analysis exposed that the racialization of Chinese migrant women is deeply rooted in whiteness. Its purpose is to maintain the hegemonic position of whiteness in U.S. society.

I approached whiteness as discursive practices and transnational ideologies that have been historically and continuously promoted, normalized, globally circulated, and reinforced through cultural, political, and economic systems and institutions such as media, education, and governments. I paid special attention to how whiteness travels transnationally along with the expansion of U.S. nationalism, imperialism, and post-racialism through media and education. My analysis examined how whiteness has always already been adapted, normalized, and naturalized into everyday lives in China, along with the process of Americanized globalization and China's Market Reform and the Open-Door Policy since 1978. Born and raised in this political, social, and economic context, Chinese migrant women might already have internalized the invisible, normalized, natural whiteness ideologies prior their migration to the United States. That became evident in this study when the interviewees and I discussed perceptions and experiences of race, gender, and sexuality. Whiteness ideologies have been informing, shaping, and limiting their perceptions of race, gender, sexuality, and their relational experiences with other non-white (migrants) in China and in the United States. Whiteness ideologies also constitute these women's migrant motives. Covered by ideologies of

liberalism and progressive discourse of the internationalized U.S. higher educational system, whiteness has become social, cultural, and political norms and lost its sense of race. In this context, U.S. education has been continuously promoted as advanced while China's education has been viewed as underdeveloped and traditional. Overall, in this project, I approached whiteness as discursive practices and transnational ideologies to further examine how these Chinese migrant women experience, perceive, and negotiate their race, gender, and sexuality through their transnational experiences.

Femiqueer perspectives. Furthermore, utilizing the femiqueer approach is important for this research to examine the construct of Chinese migrant female academics' racialized gender and sexuality through their transnational and intercultural embodied experiences. Femiqueer critiques pointed out the often-invisible regulations of white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies to the Chinese migrant women's racialized, gendered, and sexualized transnational body through kinship, academic, and social relationships. These ideological discourses continue to otherize their foreign body and racialized femininity from the dominant U.S. social capitals.

In many previous studies on migrant women's experiences, race and gender have always been the salient facets that received academic attentions. However, sexuality has been often and still viewed as taboo and/or irrelevant topic in studies of this group of people. The understanding of sexuality is often limited as sexual identities or sexual practices. However, Chinese migrant women have been facing the gendered and sexualized racism in their embodied relational experiences. Thus, built on Asian American queer and feminist critiques, this research utilized Rachel Lee's (2014) theorization of femiqueer to examine Chinese migrant female academics' racialized,

gendered, and sexualized relational experiences. Femiqueer critiques address body as the site of the knowledge production. Narratives of interviewees come out of their embodied experiences. This research approaches sexuality not only as a demographic category, sexual practices or identities but, more importantly as a perspective to queer the understanding of Chinese migrant women's experiences and its relation to the racial formation of Asian America. This research exposed that these Chinese female interviewees' perception of gender and sexuality have been confined by heteronormative patriarchal ideologies. The research also showed these ideologies have been informing and shaping their gendered and sexualized embodied experiences in relation to their home country's cultural expectations of femininity and women. To conclude, through the lens of femiqueer perspectives, I interrogated how whiteness promotes, normalizes, and reproduces dominant-paradoxical images of these Chinese migrant women and their racialized gender, sexuality, and relational experiences. The theoretical lens of whiteness and femiqueer perspectives adopted in this research enabled me to connect the micro-level of these women's relational experiences to the macro-level of power hierarchy, and to examine the power negotiations between them.

Using the theoretical framework of whiteness and femiqueer critiques to approach everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women studying and/or working in U.S. academia, I attempted to uncover and stress how whiteness influences and shape these women's racialized, gendered, and sexualized experiences. In this project, I chose whiteness and femiqueer critiques as my theoretical foundations instead of intersectionality, because the latter one has received some critiques of leaving whiteness intact in some of research utilizing intersectionality. As Puar (2007) argues,

intersectionality is sometimes used as a checklist of identity categories by some researchers, so that its capability of critiquing power, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, is reduced. Thus, in order to directly address whiteness, I used whiteness and femiqueer critiques in this research. However, although whiteness and femiqueer critiques do not exclude the examinations of intersectional power relations, this study is limited from considering class as an imperative component that shapes and informs the interviewees' perceptions of their positions and relational experiences. This limitation of leaving some crucial elements out without thoroughly examining, such as class issue in this project, actually is evident to demonstrate the importance of interrogating power relations intersectionally. Therefore, as I continue to work with the interview data and findings conducted by this research, I will possibly consider to use intersectionality as my theoretical lens.

Critical Intercultural Communication. Utilizing whiteness and femiqueer critiques enabled the critical exploration of the often-overlooked Chinese/Asian female bodies in the discussion of race, gender, and sexuality, and dismantled the dominant reading of first-generation Chinese migrant women as oppressed, passive, and submissive (research) objects. The theoretical implications contribute to the critical intercultural communication field by expanding the ongoing conversations of Chinese migrant women's experiences. This study investigated the link between micro-levelled everyday relational experiences of these Chinese migrant women through interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational contexts and the macro large power structures and ideological discourses. By doing so, the analysis found that these women have been marginalized in U.S. academia and society due to the historical and continuous

otherization of their race, gender, and sexuality by the dominant white heteropatriarchal ideologies. These ideologies have been shaping the construct of their othered body and informing them that their “foreign” and “Asian” body does not belong to the U.S. classroom, research fields, and dominant social-capital networks.

Moreover, this study explored the ways in which the micro-levelled negotiations of these Chinese migrant women influence the macro power structures. The recognition of these Chinese migrant female academics’ achievements and their contributions are often purposefully ignored and discounted. The dominant ideological discourses have racialized them as Asian/Asian Americans and reinforced the stereotypical construction of the model minority that granted them privileges as well as disadvantages. In applying whiteness critiques and femiqueer approach to examine this privileged yet disadvantaged group of women, I found that these women have been actively navigating, negotiating, engaging, and/or resisting the power relations regarding their race, gender, and sexuality in order to survive and thrive in U.S. higher educational institutions and U.S. society. Their everyday experiences, existence, and negotiations within whiteness heteropatriarchy-informed relationships actually interrupt the dominant power hierarchy and the stereotypical view of Chinese female migrants and problematize the stagnant construction of Asian America. Their nuanced experiences presented in the research show that the meanings of Asian America are fluid, multiple, and dynamic. These Chinese migrant women and their experiences are a significant part of the larger anti-racist, feminist, and queer movements, and their efforts and contributions need to be acknowledged in the larger communication field. For this reason, I encountered some challenges when I conducted and analyzed my interviews.

Methodological Reflections

In this study, my educational and migrant background and identifications helped me recruit individuals to interview. I am originally from China and now am studying and working in U.S. academia. I came to the United States to earn a master's degree in 2013, held a student visa at that time and have continued my academic career since then. Through my marriage, my immigration status was changed to a temporarily permanent resident at the end of 2018. These changes provided a connection with my interviewees in that I was considered as an "insider" and one of them. These also helped me gain their trust so that they would share their experiences with me. However, I still faced a few challenges while conducting the interviews.

Challenges in interviews. The first challenge came from the time constraints. According to my interview guide, each interview was supposed to last for about two hours. Due to this time limit, I found it was sometimes difficult to contribute my experiences to the dialogic style of interviewing. However, with the final question, which was to ask the interviewees if they had any other thoughts to address or share, the interviewees often used this question as a chance to inquire about my thoughts and experiences about certain questions and questions. For instance, some interviewees asked me about my motivation to conduct a doctoral dissertation about this topic. Some of the interviewees were interested in my experiences of studying communication and teaching U.S. undergraduates. Specifically, one of my interviewees Liu Ling and I discussed more about our Ph.D. programs and the current job market at the end of the interview. She was interested in hearing my experience and comparing it with hers.

Another challenge I encountered was language. Some of the interview questions might be seen as misleading by some native English speakers. However, the interviewees and I as ESL (English as Second Language) speakers, interview questions reworded in certain way actually helped us understand them better. For example, all of the interviews were conducted in English, except for one in Mandarin Chinese. Due to different academic fields the interviewees from, sometimes I would use terms that the interviewees were not familiar with and that I had to explain or translate into Chinese. However, we often found difficult to come up with a precise translation to describe the English term. Historical, political, and cultural nuances of a term sometimes were lost in the translation. I found it difficult to use precise Chinese phrases to translate the notion of whiteness. I have read some Chinese translations of whiteness in some articles, but they are not quite accurate. Some common translations more focus on its meaning of white nationalism. However, whiteness contains more nuanced meanings than merely white nationalism. Thus, when I used the word whiteness during an interview, if the interviewees were from similar academic fields or they had taken related courses, they would be familiar with it. But if not, I had to avoid using the word or offer additional explanations.

Another term I found difficult to explain in Chinese was sexuality. In China, although some scholars have begun studying sexuality, the understandings of sexuality are still often limited to sexual orientation or practices, as I discussed in the analysis. Thus, I found it was difficult to ask questions related to sexuality in Chinese. For example, the interview with Summer was conducted in Chinese due to her request. When I asked her if she had ever felt discriminated against on the basis of her sexuality, I had to ask her if I could talk about the meanings of sexuality in English, because I did not know

how to deliver it with accurate Chinese phrases. Fortunately, Summer was able to understand my question and explanations. Although she asked that we conduct the interview in Mandarin Chinese because she felt more comfortable speaking Chinese to express her thoughts, it was not difficult for her to understand questions related to sexuality, and she answered them with her experiences half in English and half in Chinese. Therefore, this challenge reminds me that many of these terms have been discussed in U.S. social and political context and in English. Also, this project is also rooted in U.S. academic discourse. I need to continue complicating and contextualizing my analysis and critiques to interrupt the U.S. dominant knowledge production, as well as to be aware of the possibilities that my research might reinforce the (re)production and circulation of the status quo.

Challenges with analysis. One of the goals of this research is to problematize the normative knowledge (re)production and circulation of viewing and studying Chinese migrant women. Thus, I felt rather challenged when I wrote the analysis while considering how to represent these Chinese migrant women and their experiences in an accurate and critical way without further victimizing and stereotyping them. For instance, I was hesitant to point out ideologies related to race, gender, and sexuality that have been reproduced and reinforced in their narratives, because they did not directly mention them. However, my theoretical foundations of whiteness and femiqueer critiques pushed me to uncover the invisibility of ideologies contained in their narratives. I realized this is also the way to problematize and challenge the normalized and victimized stereotypical images of these Chinese migrant women. As I discussed in Chapter Two, whiteness, gender, and sexuality are not only about white people. Instead, more researches is needed

to interrogate how racial, gendered, and sexual minorities negotiate, reinforce, and challenge these ideologies, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these ideologies function transnationally and interculturally. In addition, it was difficult to reflect, address and challenge privileges of these Chinese migrant women, including mine. Part of the reason was because we are either doctoral students or junior faculties. We perceive that we are at the relatively lower end of the power hierarchy compared to those other tenured/senior faculties in U.S. academia, so that some of us intend to focus more on reflecting the struggles that we have experiencing through engaging with power relations. But by doing so, we could reinforce the victimization of our experiences. Therefore, to better represent my interviewees' experiences and to further expose and prove how white heteronormative patriarchal ideologies shape and are negotiated through their experiences, I presented in my analysis chapter rich quotations of the interviewees so that their narratives can be further contextualized.

In this study, narratives that I collected and analyzed contain several levels of meanings. These narratives are constituted by stories told by these first-generation Chinese migrant academic female interviewees and their interpretations of their lived-experiences, as well as my stories and interpretations and reflections developed based on exploring our stories. Stories are told, negotiated, contested, and reflected by engaging and negotiating with these Chinese migrant women, my own struggles and privileges, and power structure and hierarchy. Storytelling from the margin exposes the complexities and nuances of these Chinese migrant women's daily experiences. It problematizes the "othered" construction considering their race, gender, and sexuality, and further contested their privileges brought by this othered construction. It also recognizes and acknowledges

the efforts and achievements of their daily negotiation and engagement with the power relations. In this study, despite the careful research design, aspiring goals, and compelling findings, the project nonetheless contains limitations as well as potentials for future research.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited to focusing on analysis of perspectives merely from cis-gendered females as a start of a conversation that explores first-generation Chinese migrant women's daily experiences with power relations concerning their race, gender, and sexuality. But because sex and sexuality are still often seen as taboo in some Chinese cultures, it is very difficult to gain access to women who are self-identified as transgender and/or gender-fluid.

In this study, I interviewed 11 Chinese migrant female academics from mainland China and then analyzed the interviews. The findings somewhat problematized the monolithically and stereotypically racialized, gendered, and sexualized images of Chinese migrant women. However, the experiences of "Chinese" migrant women are focused on women who came from mainland China. Thus, to further contextualize and politicize the myriad meanings and experiences of being "Chinese" and "Asian," future research could expand its scope by conducting interviews with women who are from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, as well as Chinese female diasporas in other Asian countries and Chinese migrant women in worldwide, who are historically, culturally and/or politically related to China. Due to the colonial histories of Hong Kong and Macau, women from those places have different political, cultural, social, and economic systems and structures from those of women from mainland China. Although the constitutional

principle of “one country, two system” has been applied to unify Hong Kong and Macau, democracy and its related issues have been contributing to conflicts between mostly Hong Kong and mainland China. Democracy is also always viewed together with whiteness. Democracy and its related issues have also been manipulated by Western/U.S. media to intensify the tensions between Hong Kong and mainland China. As a result, experiences of these people can further complicate and nuance perceptions of being “Chinese” as well as their relation to “China.” These people might have different perceptions, negotiations, and engagements with U.S. ideologies concerning race, gender, and sexuality. The political, cultural, and economic relationships between Taiwan and China have been rather complicated and sensitive. Thus, interviews with these groups could further historicize, politicize, and contextualize the existing findings and critically examine the fluid notion of “China” and “Chineseness.”

Furthermore, this study was also limited to focusing on everyday experiences of Chinese migrant women studying and/or working in universities and colleges in the United States. These women are commonly considered as social elite and own certain cultural, class, social, and political capitals. In the project, all of the interviewees have their own U.S. granted immigration visa. That is, they are not on dependent immigration visa, which means they do not have to rely on their partner’s immigration status. Thus, future research could expand the analysis by conducting interviews with Chinese migrant women who traditionally are considered to hold less-privileged positionalities, for instance, Chinese migrant women who migrated through marriages whose experiences are confined by their partner’s professional development and immigration status. Such research could continue to utilize whiteness and femiqueer critiques to explore

experiences of Chinese migrant women who are in different positionalities. Thus, it is imperative to highlight that the current study painted only part of the big picture of Chinese migrant women's experiences.

Lastly, although this study analyzed the concerns shared by some of the interviewees in relation to their immigration status due to the Trump administration and the context of the China-U.S. relationship, as I was writing the dissertation, the relationship between China and the United States worsened. The technological war between the two countries has already negatively affected Chinese migrant women's daily experiences through their home, academic and social lives, especially women in STEM fields. Unfortunately, this dissertation did not capture their reflections under this political context. Thus, future research could expand the results by conducting follow-up interviews with these Chinese women, and further complicate, contextualize, and politicize their relational experiences within the dynamic power relations concerning race, gender, and sexuality.

Conclusion

Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia are a unique group because they hold some privileges yet simultaneously are discriminated, but in general they are understudied, and their voices are not often heard. The purpose of this research is not to victimize these Chinese women. Instead, the research intends to show the complexities and the web of power relations in which these Chinese women have to negotiate and engage with on a daily basis. As evidenced in this study, white liberalism and heteronormative patriarchy are still ongoing in U.S. academia, and they have been globalized and localized through transnational movements of media, education, people

and so on. They have historically and continuously been shaping and regulating Chinese migrant female academics' experiences concerning race, gender, sexuality, and relational experiences.

My primary goal of this study is to better understand everyday experiences of first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia. My hope is that this dissertation project can create a platform for these women to share and make sense of their daily experiences and struggles that they experienced at home, academia, and social contexts. Through this project, their experiences could be presented, and their voices could be heard, for the purpose of problematizing the normative and generalized construction of Chinese migrant women. As Cactus reflected,

I think people really need to learn, really need to know what's happening. Because honestly, some people actually don't know about it. They aren't aware, they aren't aware it happened. That's a problem, when they aren't aware that happened in that life. It's hard to build a conversation.

Some of the interviewees and I realized that our interviews provided an opportunity to share and validate each other's experiences that often many other people could not relate to, so that they refused to believe. June commented:

This world tells you over and over again, that you're overreacting. You're being too sensitive. It's not about you. It's not racism. It's not sexism. It's just that people easily are awkward individuals. They're just being benign; you're reading too much into their reaction. So I feel like those kind of conversations with people who share similar perspective is very helpful.

Some of the interviewees also appreciated that the interviews pushed them to think and reflect to deeper degrees. Sienna reflected, "One great thing is now I realize that maybe my previous driver's test officer was discriminatory, and somehow that made me feel better just reflecting it."

Rikki echoed, “You have to have people tell you that’s oppression to feel that’s oppression. Otherwise, you are so used to it. You don’t feel it as bad.” Racism, sexism, homophobia, and many other forms of discriminations are often masked by normalized and naturalized ideologies, so that people living in it are used to the existing power relations and hierarchies, and it is difficult to be aware of, recognize, call out, and resist such power structures. It is even more challenging when one is granted certain privileges within this power structure, and the person wants to maintain them, so that one has to continue conforming to the power relations.

It has been an amazing experience working with these Chinese migrant women who are also studying and/or working in U.S. academia on this dissertation project. I hope this newly built network will continue to grow, provide social-capital and emotional support to each other, form peer-mentorship, and explore ways to reduce racial, gendered, and sexualized discriminations in both China and the United States.

Appendix A IRB Approval



OFFICE OF
THE INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

DATE: October 22, 2018

IRB #: 18018

IRBNet ID & TITLE: [1336916-1] Resisting the Victimization: Examining Ideological Tensions of Race, Gender, Sexuality and Transnationality among First-generation Chinese Migrant Women in U.S. Academia

PI OF RECORD: Shinsuke Eguchi, PhD

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

BOARD DECISION: APPROVED

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 22, 2018

RISK LEVEL: Minimal Risk

PROJECT STATUS: Active - Open to Enrollment

DOCUMENTS:

- Advertisement - Recruitment Email (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Application Form - Project_Information (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Consent Form - Consent Form (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- CV/Resume - CV Eguchi (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Data Collection - Interview Questions.docx (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Other - Scientific Review (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Other - Project_Team (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Protocol - Protocol (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Training/Certification - CITI Zhao (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)
- Training/Certification - CITI Eguchi (UPDATED: 10/15/2018)

Thank you for your New Project submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized. **This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

The IRB has determined the following:

- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation has been waived for this project. To obtain consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that the project can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to participants or others, SERIOUS or UNEXPECTED adverse events, NONCOMPLIANCE issues, and participant COMPLAINTS.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. **It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this project.** If the IRB approval for this project expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this project. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

Please note that all IRB records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the closure of this project.

The Office of the IRB can be contacted through: mail at MSC02 1665, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; phone at 505.277.2644; email at irbmaincampus@unm.edu; or in-person at 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. You can also visit the OIRB website at irb.unm.edu.

Appendix B Consent Form

Resisting the Victimization: Examining Ideological Tensions of Race, Gender, Sexuality and Transnationality among First-generation Chinese Migrant Women in U.S. Academia Consent to Participate in Research

October 5, 2018

Purpose of the research: You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done by Zhao Ding, under the supervision of Dr. Shinsuke Eguchi who is the Principal Investigator, from the Department of Communication of Journalism. The purpose of this research is to learn how first-generation Chinese migrants women in U.S. academia navigate their everyday experiences that are influenced by power relations as they live through family life, labor relations, and public interactions.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are between the age 22 and 65, you are a Mainland Chinese who has lived in China for a minimum of 12 years before coming to the U.S., you are a doctoral student in the U.S. and/or working in U.S. academia, and you are fluent in both Chinese (Mandarin) and English.

This form will explain what to expect when joining the research, as well as the possible risks and benefits of participation. If you have any questions, please ask one of the project researchers.

What you will do in the project:

Your participation in this research is *totally voluntary*. You will be interviewed at a place where you feel comfortable or via Skype/WeChat/Facetime. The interview will be audiotaped for the purpose of analysis. The interview will take between one hour and two hours (unless the participant expresses wanting to extend the time) to complete the interview. Although you are fluent in English, you can feel free to use Chinese phrases to express your thoughts when there may not have corresponding English translations. One of the Co-PIs is a Chinese who is a fluent native speaker of Mandarin Chinese. She will translate the Chinese into English during the process of transcribing.

During the interview, you can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can stop the interview at any time.

This dissertation may be published in academic journals or a book. Before my submission, I will send the manuscript to you if you want to ensure that you are represented in a way you hope. If you raise disagreement and/or request clarification, I will correct the manuscript accordingly.

Risks:

This project is no greater than minimal risk. There is minimal risk of possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in any research study.

Benefits:

While no direct benefit will be promised, a direct possible benefit resulting from participating in this study for you to articulate and rearticulate your everyday intercultural life experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in the U.S. academia. You may generate a better understanding of your race, gender, sexuality, and relationalities.

Confidentiality of your information:

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all research data. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this project.

The Co-PIs will protect you by conducting all conversations in a safe place. The information you provide in this study is confidential. Your name will not be collected or documented in consent form, audiotape, transcript, or following analysis process. You will choose your pseudonym (nickname) to ensure anonymity in this research. Also, information (e.g, legal names, physical address, work, and/or contact information) identifying your privacy will not be disclosed or collected in the research. All of oral and written data will be stored in the student Co-PI's laptop, which requires password to log in. To further protect the safety of data, all data will be kept in the document folder, which requires additional password. Confidentiality of any of you who opts to withdraw from the study also will be protected by immediately deleting data collected during your interview. So, your interview will be entirely excluded from this study.

Payment:

You will not be paid for participating in this project.

Right to withdraw from the research:

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point without penalty. During the interview, you can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can stop the interview at any time.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact:

Dr. Shinsuke Eguchi, Department of Communication and Journalism,
1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.
917-488-8898. seguchi@unm.edu

Zhao Ding, Department of Communication and Journalism,
1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.
240-893-5096. zding2015@unm.edu

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: <http://irb.unm.edu/>

Appendix C Invitation Email Letter

Subject Line: Opportunity to Participate in Research

Dear x,

I am Zhao Ding, a PhD Candidate in the Department of Communication and Journalism at University of New Mexico. Under the supervision of my dissertation advisor Dr. Shinsuke Eguchi, I am currently working on my dissertation project. In this project, I am interested in learning how first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia experience, make sense of, and navigate power tensions over race, gender, and sexuality through their life in family, academia, and public relations. To conduct this study, I would like to interview you to learn your perspectives on this topic.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are between the age 22 and 65, you are a Mainland Chinese who has lived in China for a minimum of 12 years before coming to the U.S., you are a doctoral student in the U.S. and/or working in U.S. academia, and you are fluent in both Chinese (Mandarin) and English.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed at a place where you feel comfortable or via Skype/WeChat/Facetime. The interview will be audiotaped for the purpose of analysis. The interview will take between one hour and two hours (unless the participant expresses wanting to extend the time) to complete the interview. Although you are fluent in English, you can feel free to use Chinese phrases to express your thoughts when there may not have corresponding English translations.

Your participation in this research is *totally voluntary*. During the interview, you can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can stop the interview at any time.

This dissertation may be published in academic journals or a book. Before my submission, I will send the manuscript to you if you want to ensure that you are represented in a way you hope. If you raise disagreement and/or request clarification, I will correct the manuscript accordingly.

This project is no greater than minimal risk. There is minimal risk of possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in any research study.

While no direct benefit will be promised, a direct possible benefit resulting from participating in this study for you to articulate and rearticulate your everyday intercultural life experiences as a first-generation Chinese migrant woman in the U.S. academia. You may generate a better understanding of your race, gender, sexuality, and relationalities.

Your privacy will be protected by conducting our conversation in a safe place. Your participation will be strictly confidential. Your name will not be collected or documented in consent form, audiotape, transcript, or following analysis process.

If you have any questions regarding this research and/or would like to have some time to consider your participation, please feel free to let me know. My contact information is:

Zhao Ding
Department of Communication and Journalism,
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131.
240-893-5096
zding2015@unm.edu

I strongly appreciate if you choose to participate in this research.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zhao Ding".

Zhao Ding

Principal Investigator: *Shinsuke Eguchi, Ph.D.*
Study Title: Resisting the Victimization: Examining ideological Tensions of Race,
Gender, Sexuality and Transnationality among First-generation Chinese Migrant Women
in the U.S. Academia
IRB # : 1336916-1

Appendix D Interview Guide

1. How do you describe who you are?
2. What are your roles at home?
3. What are your roles at work?
4. What roles do you play in other social occasions/spaces outside home and work?
5. When did you migrate to the U.S.? Tell me some of your stories of moving to the U.S.
6. What does the migration mean to you?
7. How does migration change your life? To answer these questions, can you provide some stories from your daily life?
8. In your family life, both in the U.S. and in China, what kinds of incidents or interactions make you aware that you are a Chinese migrant woman?
9. In the space of U.S. academia, what kinds of incidents and interactions make you aware of being a Chinese migrant woman?
10. In the space of social relations outside home and work, what kinds of incidents or interactions make you aware of being a Chinese migrant woman?
11. What kinds of incidents and interactions where you feel that your identity as a Chinese migrant woman does not influence how other people treat you?
12. What are challenges of being a Chinese migrant woman do you have at home?
 - a. What do you think of what is causing it?
13. What are challenges of being a Chinese migrant woman do you have in U.S. academia?
 - a. What do you think of what is causing it?
14. What are challenges of being a Chinese migrant woman do you have in other social occasions?
 - a. What do you think of what is causing it?
15. In your experience as a migrant who moves across national borders and interacting with people of different races and cultures, have you ever felt discriminated against on the basis of your race?
 - a. If so, how have you dealt with the situation?
 - b. Let's talk about how you have come to understand race and racism in the United States, coming from a Chinese background where there are different understandings of race, ethnicity and nationality.
16. How have you felt discriminated against on the basis of gender?
 - a. If so, how have you dealt with the situation?
17. Have you ever felt discriminated against on the basis of your sexuality, which I mean your sexual identities as a heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual women, sexual desires, and sexual relationships?
 - a. If so, how have you dealt with the situation?
18. In addition to your personal experiences, what do you think are the most recurring challenges for first-generation Chinese migrant women in U.S. academia?
19. In U.S. universities, debates on issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia are often on the center stage. Have you ever been involved in such debates? What roles have you played?

20. In the academic setting where you study and/or work, there are ways in which international faculty and minority faculty are differentiated as two categories for institutional purposes. How do you feel about such categories?
21. What are the possible ways to work through these conflicts?
 - a. Let's talk about individual and group actions.
22. Do you have any suggestions for first-generation migrant women in general and particularly those who are studying and/or working in U.S. academia?
23. What are advantages of being a Chinese migrant woman in your position?
 - a. What do you like about being part of first-generation Chinese migrant women?
24. What have been your major accomplishments? How did you achieve them? (RQ3)
25. What assets do you think that you brought to this country? Do you think these assets are being noticed and appreciated by others?
26. Has this conversation raised any questions or ideas that you would like to address or go back to before we close the session?

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