(Re)Constructing the Strategic Cosmopolitan: Class, Race, and Neoliberal Cultural Logics of Asian International Undergraduates in Globalizing Higher Education

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Abstract

This research investigates what neoliberal cosmopolitans expect from their global education project, how they experience it through U.S. higher education, and how in the process they make sense of racial categories in the host society. Employing the framework of neoliberal ideologies, class practice, and racialization, I locate these middle-class young Asian international undergraduates lived experiences at an American university in the linkage of the macro context of neoliberal globalization. This dissertation examines how class, race and neoliberal cultural logics shape middle-class young Asians' aspirations as well as their academic and social experiences at a globalized American university through an in-depth, multi-sited, 18-month ethnography. In doing so, I explore how the meaning and role of education has been altered by neoliberal globalization and how it not only has expanded educational spaces to include a global space, but has also given those educational spaces a particular scope of value. I address the following specific questions:

1) How are Asian international undergraduates' class backgrounds and the macro context of neoliberal globalization intertwined and how do these shape their aspirations for their transnational journey to U.S. higher education?
2) What cultural logics and strategies play out through their academic and social experiences?
3) As Asians, how were they racialized on an American campus and how did they understand this and respond? Particularly, how did the neoliberal ideologies interact with their meaning-making process of race and

racialization?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a multi-sited ethnography of Chinese and Korean international undergraduates from August 2013 to December 2014. My research employed participant observation, observation, formal semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and a survey at Midwestern University (Mid U), a large public university in a mid-sized Midwestern city. This research also expanded to interviewing and observing the undergraduates in their home countries of China and Korea.

From the data analysis from my fieldwork, I found that Asian international students' global education journeys were initiated by the goals of middle-class mobility, that is, to secure or even improve their position in the global knowledge market. They practiced neoliberal tactics focused on the efficient production of marketable and tradable knowledge and social capitals in their academic and social experiences at an U.S. university. However, these experiences were often limited both in scope and their worldview of market-like logics. Simultaneously, neoliberal cultural logics regarding race shaped the students' unique understandings of, and responses to, race and racism with the meritocracy, performativity, and self-responsibilization that aligned with American color-blindness. The role and meaning of education in their strategic cosmopolitan project is privatized as an individual accomplishment and responsibility for self-management rather than as a public good.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This research investigates what neoliberal cosmopolitans expect from their global education project, how they experience it through U.S. higher education, and how in the process they make sense of the categories of race in the host society. Employing the framework of neoliberal ideologies, class practice, and racialization, I locate these middle-class young Asian international undergraduates lived experiences at an American university in the linkage of the macro context of neoliberal globalization.

Neoliberal ideologies have become the hegemony that assumes "individual freedoms are guaranteed by freedom of the market and of trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 7). The idea of a free market and free trade is not limited to economic spheres but has moved into various political and social dimensions. The field of education has been significantly influenced by neoliberal policies by aligning its educational spaces and practices with market-logics (Apple, 2006; Lipman, 2004). In recent decades, in U.S. higher education, as an institutional context, has sanctioned this kind of approach and adjusted their system and culture to support neoliberal globalization by paying attention to marketable knowledge production and a particular group of students (i.e., international undergraduates) who can generate greater revenues under 'academic capitalism' (Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009). There is

abundant research that has investigated the institutional policies and practices that are shaped by neoliberal ideologies and the market force; however, there is a relative dearth of research on how these students are experiencing their education, and how market logics are influencing their everyday lived experiences (Kandiko, 2010; Naidoo & Jaimieson, 2005; Saunders 2007; Shumar, 1997).

Asian international undergraduates are the emerging student group that represents the key aspects of neoliberal globalization in the world's economy and higher education. They also reflect the response of middle-class families to educate their children outside their home country. Bound, Braga, Khanna & Turner (2016) found that the short fall of state funds after the economic crisis in the United States and the rising middle- and upper-class families in Asian countries, especially in China, explains the increase in the number of Asian international students. Furthermore, Ong (1999) argued that for middle- and upper-class Asians, U.S. higher education is not only the space that hosts the neoliberal cosmopolitans, but that it also offers the "ultimate symbolic capital necessary for global mobility" (p. 90). Middle-class families' efforts to convert cultural capital such as a prestigious higher education into a social advantage and mobility is not limited to Asian families, but widely found throughout the world, especially, in the relation to the macro context of neoliberal ideologies and globalization (Ball, 2003; Weis, Cipollone, & Jenkins, 2014; Weis & Dolby, 2012).

Given that the context that global capitalism and neoliberal ideologies are changing the concept of national boundaries and a sense of belonging, Ong (1999) illustrated how the emerging Asian elite population of "flexible citizens" freely move across borders and utilize multiple places of belonging to pursue their optimized and

maximized capital accumulation. Studies pointed out that this new type of 'discrepant cosmopolitans' does not necessarily recognize the differences in, or obligations to, the public interest of the world's community, but is closely tied to private interests and social upward mobility (Abelmann, Park, & Kim 2009; Iredale, 2001; Mitchell 2003, 2007; Rizvi, 2005, 2008). Moreover, Mitchel (2003) emphasized that the 'strategic cosmopolitans', the individuals driven by market competitiveness and private interest, were becoming the "new imperatives of globalization as perceived by neoliberal politicians and educators" (p. 388). The ideal of individual freedom is often not necessarily compatible with social justice and democracy (Harvey, 2005). This indicates that the aspiration for, and meaning of, education has been realigned by particular cultural logics based on the competitive global economy.

Although these 'strategic cosmopolitans' cross borders to pursue their transnational education, as 'Asians' they cannot sidestep the category of race in the U.S. society. Because Asian Americans have been racialized in a complex way in relation to other racial groups in the United States, Asian international students also need to process the meaning making of their race and racialization, specifically in terms of the rhetoric of a 'post-racial' society in the neoliberal era. Neoliberalism has not only altered the discourse in the political economy, but has also shaped our understandings of race and racialization (Omi & Winant, 2014). Giroux (2003) argued that race matters can also be privatized in the neoliberal era and based on the color-blind approach that omits socio-historical context, and thus limits the understanding of racism to a matter of individual attitudes and personal prejudices. Yet, there is gap in the literature linking the neoliberal higher education context and race in Asian international college students' experiences

(Glass, Wongtriat, Buus & Aw, 2014; Lee & Rice, 2007).

In such a context, through an in-depth, multi-sited, 18-month ethnography, this dissertation examines how class, race and neoliberal cultural logics shape middle-class young Asians' aspirations as well as their academic and social experiences at a globalized American university. In doing so, I explore how the meaning and role of education has been altered by neoliberal globalization and how it not only has expanded educational spaces to include a global space, but has also given those educational spaces a particular scope of value. I address the following specific questions:

4) How are Asian international undergraduates' class backgrounds and the macro context of neoliberal globalization intertwined and how do these shape their aspirations for their transnational journey to U.S. higher education?
5) What cultural logics and strategies play out through their academic and social experiences?
6) As Asians, how were they racialized on an American campus and how did they understand and respond? Particularly, how did the neoliberal ideologies interact with their meaning-making process of race and racialization?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a multi-sited ethnography of Chinese and Korean international undergraduates from August 2013 to December 2014. My research employed participant observation, observation, formal semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and a survey at Midwestern University (Mid U), a large public university in a mid-sized Midwestern city. This research also expanded to interviewing and observing the undergraduates in their home countries of China and Korea. Participant observation and observation during the semesters took place in

institutional spaces such as classrooms, student organizations, university events, and informal spaces including dining halls, libraries, residence halls or apartments, coffee shops, restaurants, grocery stores, and other frequented spaces around Mid U. During their summer break, I visited students' homes in China and Korea to meet their families and to get a sense of their home-life context. I also conducted 74 semi-structured interviews with Asian international students and their families, colleagues, friends, professors, TAs, and university staffs. For basic demographic information on Asian international undergraduates at Mid U, I conducted a survey of 199 students and this number represents roughly 10 % of the Asian international undergraduate population.

From the data analysis of my fieldwork, I found that Asian international students' global education journeys were initiated by the goals of middle-class mobility, that is, to secure or even improve their position in the global knowledge market. They practiced neoliberal tactics focused on the efficient production of marketable and tradable knowledge, and social capital in their academic and social experiences at a U.S. university. However, these experiences were often limited both in scope and in their worldview of market-like logics. Simultaneously, neoliberal cultural logics regarding race shaped the students' unique understandings of, and responses to, race and racism with the meritocracy, performativity, and self-responsibilization that aligned with American color-blindness. The role and meaning of education in their strategic cosmopolitan project is privatized as an individual accomplishment and responsibility for self-management rather than as a public good. As Lipman (2004) argued, neoliberal ideologies narrow their meaning of education and hardly relate it to "humanity, difference, democracy, culture, thinking, personal meaning, ethical deliberation,

intellectual rigor, social responsibility, and joy in education" (p. 181).

Context

Student mobility and global knowledge economy in the neoliberal era. In 2010, 4.1 million students left their country of origin and moved to new locations for their education (OECD, 2013). In the knowledge- based economy that values information and technologies that compress time and space, and in turn expand societies into a global entity, acquiring higher education is crucial. The World Bank (2005) reported that the global knowledge economy "is transforming the demands of the labor market in economies throughout the world" (p. 6). Since economic growth is based more on highly developed technologies and knowledge-intensive industries, 'human capital', that translates to 'knowledge' embedded in a human form, is regarded as a critical source for maximizing the performance of the economy (OECD, 1996). Thus, the value of low-skilled physical labor is decreasing and manufacturing industries and labor are being outsourced to developing countries; meanwhile attention to the qualifications and credentials for high-skilled working force is increasing.

Neoliberal globalization, "an ideology which promotes markets over the state and regulation and individual advancement/self-interest over the collective good and common wellbeing" (Lingard, quoted from Ball, 2012, p. 38), escalates the competition for production and distribution of knowledge and information. In recent decades, the expansion of global higher education and increased student mobility reflect the macro-context changes based on the knowledge-based economy inherent in neoliberal globalization. The demand for a global knowledge economy has shifted its purpose,

policies, and practices in higher education. Through the theory of "academic capitalism," Slaughter and Leslie (1997) and Slaughter and Rhoades (2000; 2009) argued that higher education has transformed its space into a market where institutions and faculty compete for external grants that promote maximizing prestige and transferrable knowledge with corporations. The higher education field no longer separates itself from the new economy, and students have become active consumers seeking the best outcomes for their investment (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009).

In this context, the reasons for students' mobility across borders for education are based on optimized performance and maximizing benefits. This can also include "obtaining knowledge—and credentials— unavailable at home, gaining the prestige of a foreign degree, gaining access abroad when the doors may be closed at home, and, of course, emigration" (Altbach & Engberg, 2014, p. 11). The desire to participate in the social upward mobility in the global field is the driver for obtaining education and a degree in Western countries (Kim, 2011). Fong (2011) articulated that transnational Chinese students see studying abroad as an opportunity to obtain membership in this "imagined developed world community" (p. 6). Along the lines of Ong (1999) and Appadurai (1996)'s argument, Fong (2011) applied Anderson (2006)'s idea of imagined communities to describe the aspiration of transnational Chinese students who want to belong to this 'imagined developed community'. Such a community does not refer to a certain nation or society but rather to a larger and blurred community "composed of mobile, wealthy, well-educated, and well-connected people worldwide" (p. 6). Though Fong (2011) indicated that the purpose of these students' transnational journey might include the possible contribution for advancing Chinese society, Ong (1999) and Rizvi

(2005) argue that the primary concern of the transnational elites is mainly focused on private wealth accumulation. Although the neoliberal aspirations of these students is not limited by national boundaries, they may be limited in the scope of individual development and interest.

Context of Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States. Internationalization of higher education can be defined in various ways such as changing the mission statement of the institution, altering how the curriculum is organized, and/or expanding study aboard programs and international student recruitment and support. In this section, I examine the context of the effects of globalization on U. S. higher education, specifically the institutions' internationalization policies and practices regarding accommodation of international students. By adopting Altbach (2004a) and Alt bach and Knight (2007)' work on the internationalization of higher education, I used the t erm 'internationalization' as the practices and policies of institutions and individuals to a djust and thrive in the macro context of social, economic, and political globalization.

After the passage of the 1961 Fulbright-Hays Act (officially known as the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961), allowing for reciprocal educational and cultural exchange, the U.S. government and institutions began to pay closer attention to international students as important participants in the American education system. The OECD (2013) reported that the United States ranked as the top choice for international students. In recent decades, the number of international students has significantly increased. The proportion of international students is meaningful both to U.S. higher education and the immigration field. In November 2011, international students represented five percent of the total enrollment in its universities and colleges (Institute

of International Education [IIE], 2012a). Moreover, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2012), in 2011, there were two million temporary migrants (legally resident nonimmigrants) in the U.S. and approximately 40 percent were international students.

Researchers have argued that the United States has to prepare to win in the increased competition of attracting international students and scholars; thus, it requires a change of government policy and practices to attract more of "the best and brightest" (Altbach, 2004b; Anderson, 2005; Johnson, 2009). Becker and Kolster (2012) also pointed out there is competition between countries, especially between the United States and the United Kingdom, which is ranked as the second most popular destination for international students. And the competition is fierce. The OECD (2011) reported this competition is not only about the international students as 'students,' but also about competing for high-skilled migrants. Along with globalization and countries that are involved in migration, more countries are aggressively competing for a high-skilled population, and international students are regarded as a potential source (OECD, 2011). The STEM Job Act, approved by House of Representatives in November 2012, shows a similar rationale. This legislation clearly indicates that the policy's main idea regarding international students is to attract competitive, intelligent human resources in particular fields.

On the state level, policies concerning international students is shown in the international education resolution and the involvement of local initiatives. National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) (2012b) provides information about what states can do to attract international students and education in light of globalization.

The international education resolution focuses on the promotion of international student exchanges and opportunities to study abroad for U.S. students. In 2012, 23 states participated in the resolution. Although the resolution does not have legal binding, it shows a consciousness at the state level about the significance of international education and how institutional foundations need to support it (NAFSA, 2012b). According to the states' agendas, the resolution contains varied content but commonly addresses the importance of international education and shows interest in the economic benefit of having international students and their contribution within the states.

On an institutional level, in October 2011, the American Council of Education (ACE, 2012) surveyed the internationalization process of 1,041 students in higher education with indicators such as the mission statement of institution, curriculum organization, international student recruitment and support, etc. The Council found accelerated internationalization across the nation: specifically, 93 percent in doctoral institutions, 84 percent in the masters' institutions, 78 percent in baccalaureate institutions, and approximately 50 percent in associate institutions and special focus institutions (p. 6). In terms of mission statements, in 2011, approximately half of the respondents indicated that their mission statements referred to international or global education, or other aspects of internationalization (p. 7). Across the institutions, about 40 percent showed a strategic plan for recruiting international students and were increasing the amount of funds for staffs' travel for recruitment (ACE, 2012). At this time, the primary regional focus was Asia. Although Knight (2006) indicated that the traditional nonprofit universities are not seeking financial resources but aiming for better knowledge and information capacity, Altbach and Knight (2007) pointed out that eventually

internationalization of higher education is looking for economic profit.

Context of Asian International Undergraduate Students in the United States. As noted above, the population of Asian international undergraduates has recently increased in U.S. higher education. Traditionally, international graduate students outnumber international undergraduate students. Compared to the number of undergraduates in the academic year 1977-1978, the number of graduate students more than doubled the number of undergraduates (Borjas, 2002). In recent decades, however, the number of undergraduate and graduate students have been about the same, but in 2012, for the first time in 12 years, undergraduates exceeded graduate students (IIE, 2012b). Massive portion of the undergraduate population was from Asia, especially from China and Korea (IIE, 2015).

This dissertation focuses on the experiences of international undergraduate students from China and Korea. There is a large body of literature on international graduate students and this dissertation does not address that literature (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Chellarj, Maskus, & Mattoo, 2005; Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998; Shen & Herr, 2004; Tallman, 1991; Trice, 2004). International undergraduates are situated in a distinctive position in which they are heavily recruited for their tuition dollars. but not really valued as talented or skilled immigrants. Using the notion of academic capitalism, Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argued that although undergraduate students are welcomed as one of the main revenue generators for universities, they are less likely to gain benefits from the neoliberal transformation of institutions, which is more focused on market transferrable knowledge and external research grants, rather than teaching itself. Moreover, under the knowledge economy, international graduate students are targeted as

desirable immigrants because of their skills (Chellarj, Maskus, & Mattoo, 2005). Thus, I argue that international undergraduates have to deal with high-stakes choices involving extensive financial expenditures and low possibilities of professional employment in comparison to international graduate students who are often funded and recruited as high-skilled global elite. For instance, as international graduate students in the science fields are often regarded as desirable immigrants to the United States, there were very few undergraduate students who were able to gain U.S. residency or citizenship solely based on their education or employment. Thus, the experiences of graduate students are very different from undergraduate students economically, politically, and socially.

Rahul and Li (2012) pointed out that the main target of institutional recruitment is the undergraduate population. The distinctive difference between an undergraduate student and a graduate student is shown in terms of an economic dimension: 80 percent of undergraduates fund their educational expense out of their own pockets, whereas only 40 percent of graduate students are self-funded (IIE, 2012). In my research, 98.5 percent of the 199 participants who answered the survey reported that their families paid their tuition and living expenses. McMurtrie (2012) attributed the large number of Koreans in undergraduate programs, a number similar to Indians in graduate programs, to the economic conditions of their families and country of origin. In her news article entitled "China Continues to Drive Foreign-Student Growth in the United States," she quoted the President of the Institute of International Education, and wrote that undergraduates are referred to as "game changers" who do "not only stay longer, but have more impact on campus culture, both inside the classroom and out" (2012, p. 1). However, there is a

scarcity of literature addressing international undergraduates actual lived experiences in the globalizing U.S. higher education system using an ethnographic approach.

The rise of self-funded Asian international undergraduates reflects the shift in the global economy in the recent decade. Bound et al (2016) indicated that decrease in state funding has intersected with the increase in the number of international students on U.S. campuses, especially after the failure of public funding after the 2008 economic crisis. The economic impact of international students is significant to U.S. higher education (NAFSA, 2012c). Along with the effects of the neoliberal transformation, higher education has been restructured with neoliberal ideologies and practices, and the international student population has risen as one of the new revenue-generating sources. Simultaneously, the emerging middle class and the upper class in East Asian countries can be identified as the key players in the global education market in recent years along with the change in the global economy (Bound et al, 2016; Koo, 2016). The sharp increase of Asian international undergraduates is situated at the intersection of this shifting global economy, the neoliberal hegemony in social dimensions including education, and the aspiration of the new middle class.

Korean international students and study abroad policies in Korea. Korean students form one of the prominent groups of international students in the United States According to IIE (2015), Korea has occupied third place in the total international student population in the recent decade, but in terms of undergraduate education, Korea was the number one country of origin until 2007. Currently, it represents the second largest population after China. Compared to smaller national populations, other top-sending countries such as China or India, Korea has the largest population of international

students per national demographic. Researchers pointed out that many Korean students begin their education in the United States at an early age and argue that their parents' strong desire for their children to possess globally competitive knowledge capital, to maximize their earning potential, often leads the global education experience that specifically targets a college education in the U.S. (Abelmann, Park, & Kim, 2009; Finch & Kim, 2012)

According to the Regulations on Study Abroad (Executive Order No. 27751), Korean students are allowed to study abroad without any restrictions if they graduate from a compulsory education, which is 9 years of elementary and middle school education. However, even if the students are in the middle of a compulsory education, they can request approval from the District Office of Education and begin to process the study abroad application. This indicates there are few restrictions in their early study abroad experience if students can provide funding. Approximately 90 percent of my participants had had experiences in a U.S. high school before they enrolled in Mid. U.

Early study abroad experiences reveal students' socioeconomic background as middle and upper-middle class. The U.S. government only allows international students to attend private secondary schools, which commonly has high-priced tuitions and expenses compared to public schools and can even cost more than public universities. Minsu, one of my Korean participants, told me he was relieved because Mid U tuition was more affordable than his boarding school. Although international students are welcomed to participate in student exchange programs at public schools, they are not allowed to attend for more than a year; therefore, if they want to proceed with their education for more than a year, they must transfer to a private school that can provide I-

20 documents. Due to this regulation, students move to different states because they have to transfer to a private school after a year of public school experience as exchange students. Some spent their full four years of high school at a private school before entering college. They either lived with a host family or attended private boarding schools.

Although Korean students still comprise a significant portion of the international student population, but the number of Korean international undergraduate students has slowly decreased in recent years (IIE, 2012a; 2015). The decrease is often analyzed as the result of the reduced value of a U.S. college degree that does not guarantee high-quality jobs for Korean students despite their rigorous investment (Jeon, 2015; Lee, 2015). After nearly a decade of the global education project, Korean students and their families are placing a hold on their belief in the value of U.S. college degrees.

Chinese international students and study abroad policies in China. Since 2008, however, China has been the number one country of origin in the undergraduate students' population (IIE, 2015). Researchers credit the recent upsurge of Chinese international undergraduates to the rapid emerging middle class in China, who can afford the expenses of higher education abroad (Bond et al., 2016). Although China has been sending a significant population of international students of all educational levels for decades, the sharp increase of undergraduates is a relatively new phenomenon that reflects the rising middle and upper classes in its metropolitan urban areas.

The Chinese policy on studying abroad can be traced back to the Deng Xiaoping's reform in 1978. In order to promote modernization and development of Chinese society (Ministry of Education of The People's Republic of China [MOEPRC], 2009), travel

restrictions eased and in turn expanded opportunities for students and scholars seeking to study abroad. In 1992, the Chinese government actively encouraged the rapid development of students and scholars in their education and research pursuits in international settings and also promoted their return to China (MOEPRC, 2009). China's entry into the WTO in 2001 set another important point that its government was encouraging overseas studies in various ways, including establishing scholarship programs for self-funded students and waiving the fee charged to students and scholars who go overseas for their own benefit (Jie, 2007). In 2002, the Chinese government also expedited a review process for self-funded students who were applying for their overseas education (Zheng, 2010).

Compared to the Korean student group, Chinese students rarely spend their high school education in the United States before entering college. Among the 135 Chinese student respondents of the survey, only 17 students had experience in U.S. high schools. Many came directly from China, but others had some level of international experience: summer language camps in the States, a year as an exchange student there or in Europe, or had attended an international high school in China. There were also a few students who had graduated from high schools in the American Midwest. The longer history of interest in Korea in undergraduate education in the United States that began in 2000 and the Chinese students' minimal U.S. high school experiences reflect the relatively new phenomenon of the massive self-funded study abroad candidates for college degrees.

Research Method and Design

Ethnography. In order to understand the detailed and complex experiences of

Asian international undergraduates' strategic cosmopolitan project, I conducted an ethnographic research in a Midwest University (Mid U, a pseudonym) in Wood City in the American Midwest, from August 2013 to December 2014. Clifford (1986) states that "ethnography is actively situated between powerful *systems of meaning* (italics added)," and it "describes the process of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes" (p. 2). Various contexts have afforded me the opportunity to expand my understanding of 'systems of meaning' while situating myself in their daily life in activities such as chatting with them before student organization activities, walking across the hall and seeing whom they say hello to, washing dishes after lunch, and playing a drinking game.

My research focus, however, was not only to understand their daily lives, but also to situate the meanings in the multiple intersections of the macro context of neoliberal knowledge economy and the micro context of cultural logics of the young middle-class Asians at an American university. Especially in relation to the global knowledge economy, critical bifocality was a useful methodology to conduct the fieldwork. Weis and Fine (2012) argue that "critical bifocality" is:

> "a way to think about epistemology, design, and the politics of educational research, as a theory of method in which researchers try to make visible the sinewy linkages or circuits through which structural conditions are enacted in policy and reform institutions as well as the ways in which such conditions come to be woven into community relationships and metabolized by individuals" (p. 173).

Using critical bifocality, I focused on the neoliberal ideologies as the hegemony in global

educational spaces as well as racial relations to investigate the social, economic, and cultural reality of how students make sense of their experiences and future plans.

One challenge I encountered in this study was how to remain conscious of the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' and to acknowledge the possible exploitation and oppression of my informants' voices during the process (Fine, 1996). However, there was an intriguing part of the power relationship between me, the researcher, a Ph. D student, a first-generation college student, and my informants who were mostly from middle- or upper-class, highly educated families. I was often queried about my background: 'where is your alma mater?' or I would receive 'compliments' such as, "Oh, you are speaking good English though you are a total native Korean." I would even get sympathetic responses, "Isn't it hard that you only came here for grad school? You didn't do your undergraduate studies here, right?" These moments reminded me that I was conducting "researching up." However, in the campus setting, I was still older and more educated than they were; thus, I was careful to pay attention to the power relations between my participants and me, as a researcher, and to listen their voices. While following them around and conducting participant observation, I maintained the role of a "marginal native" who keeps "some social and intellectual distance" in order to create the space that the "analytical work of the ethnographer" requires. (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p. 102).

Research Design. In terms of its length, my research was designed in two phases. First, I conducted a pilot study from August to December in 2013 in which I randomly interviewed recruited international students from China, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, and India and accompanied them to their frequented sites on campus. Then, I

redesigned and restructured the research methods focusing on the Chinese and Korean groups. I started my fieldwork in January 2014 and ended it in December 2014. After completing the main fieldwork stage in 2014, I contacted the participants for follow-up interviews. In terms of location, my research was conducted as a multi-sited ethnography that covered locations not only across borders, that is, China and Korea, but also in multiple spaces on and off the Mid U campus. In terms of methods, my research design employed participant observations and observations, semi-structured interviews and informal interviews, and a survey. In sum, I spent an average of 5-6 hours every day conducting participant observations and observations throughout 2014. I conducted 65 audio-taped interviews and collected 199 responses from a survey concerning basic demographic information. All the names of the people and institutions in this study are pseudonyms to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Participant observation. My participant observations began in spring 2014 at Mid U. I selected the following observation sites: the student organizations (Korean Drumming Club and the International Business Skills Club), an Ethnic Studies classroom that was a popular course for international students, and two intermediate-advanced level ESL classes. Mid U requires students to earn three credits from an Ethnic Studies course for general education, and international students are mandated to take ESL courses unless they pass the placement test, which is very rare. I chose the ESL and Ethnic Studies courses for observation not only because these classes provide common educational experiences as mandated courses for international students, but because both deal with diversity issues in terms of language, race, and ethnicity on campus. In the classrooms, I was able to recruit more Chinese students because Korean undergraduate students

comprised only one third of the Chinese population. I was able to recruit and interact with more Korean students because of the student organization, especially the Korean drumming club. In the International Business Club, I could interact with both Korean and Chinese students.

Soon, fieldwork expanded to other informal and formal spaces such as other classes, residence halls, dining halls, libraries, apartments, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, etc. In addition, I followed 8 of the focal informants' (4 four Chinese and 4 Koreans) daily activities to gain an in-depth understanding of their life patterns. I walked them to class, washed dishes with them after dinner, watched television with them, played card games, sat in the corner at parties, participated in final project presentations in class, and joined their commencement ceremonies.

Since I worked with two different groups, the participant observation and observation was done in slightly different spaces due to the differences in their life styles and the student groups' characteristics. For instance, I could observe more Korean students in the student organization settings because, unlike the Chinese students, the Korean students participated in structured organizations such as the drumming club, economy studies club, business practice club, bike club, photography club, dance club, soccer club, etc., as all of these clubs fell under the umbrella of the Korean student organization. These organizations have their own president and officers and also quite a large number of members. Student organizations function as a meaningful social unit for Korean students. In addition to club activities, the students eat, drink, and socialize together afterwards, whether there was a club meeting or not. However, the student organizations geared towards Chinese students are independent from each other and the

activities are based on special events, such as a New Year's Day event, a singing contest, a prom party, rather than daily social gatherings. A few officers are responsible for the activities and there are no specific members. All Chinese students are welcomed to participate in each event, but the organization does not serve as their daily social group. Even other organization officers act as cooperating colleagues rather than daily contacts to meet with after class to socialize. I found that Chinese students preferred to have their own small group of friends and/or spend time with their roommates. As a result of this difference, I spent more time meeting with my Chinese participants' at their apartments or co-op residential halls with two to four of their roommates or dorm mates. I also went with them to social events held by the Chinese Student Association such as 'street night market', Dumplings Day, and game nights. On the other hand, though many of the Korean students were involved in Korean student organizations, most of them were living by themselves. Among the 17 Korean students I interviewed, only five were living with other students, and one was living with her brother so technically, only four had roommates. Still they spent time with their friends at their apartments, but it was not because they were living together.

Semi-structured interviews. I interviewed Chinese and Korean international students and their family members, friends, their international and American colleagues, TAs, professors, and staffs. The main questions were based on students' motivation and purpose for studying at a U.S., college, their application and preparation process, their social and academic experiences in the U.S. and their future plans. These informal interviews occurred on various casual occasions. I conducted 74 audio taped interviews: 41 international students (focal participants were interviewed twice), 6 parents, 12

American peers, and 8 of their professors, TAs, and staff. International student participants included the following: in terms of gender, 16 males, 25 females, and in terms of nationality, 16 Koreans, 22 Chinese, 2 Malaysian, and 1 Indian. The students ranged from second-semester freshmen to seniors. Since the data were collected over the academic year, we had moved into the next semester. Among the interviewed 12 American peers, 7 were female and 5 were male and in terms of race, 7 were White, 3 were Asian American, 1 was African American, and 1 was Latino.

The survey. The survey was distributed in the ESL courses, student organizations, international students targeted events, and in dining halls, and other public spaces on campus. The purpose of the survey was to collect basic demographic information about Asian international undergraduates. I was able to obtain 199 responses that represented approximately 10 percent of the total international student population. Survey samples indicated there were, in terms of gender, 85 males, 114 females, and in terms of nationality, 137 Chinese, 49 Koreans, 6 Malaysian, 3 Taiwanese, 2 Indonesian, 1 Japan, and 1 Thai. During 2013-2014, the Chinese students comprised almost 50 percent of the total international population and outnumbered Koreans threefold at Mid U, so the university samples might reflect the population dynamics in the research.

I took field notes during participant observations and observations, and then I transcribed the interviews. The data, using a MAXQDA Survey, was analyzed to obtain the basic demographic data.

Settings: Mid U. Mid U is a large public university, and its student population is predominantly White. Located in the American Midwest, Mid U has an excellent reputation in U.S. higher education. It is listed as one of the top 50 universities in the U.S.

and known for having relatively affordable tuition compared to similar-sized universities. The campus is located in the middle of Wood City, a mid-size town. In magazines, Wood City is often referred to as one of the nicest places to live in the U.S. due to the high-quality of its education system and its advanced healthcare service infrastructure. According to the 2010 census data, Wood City's population was 78.9 percent White, 7.3 percent African American, 7.4 percent Asian American, and 6.8 percent Latino. The population ratio in 2010 by race at Mid U was similar but slightly differed in the number of people of color: 73.4 percent White, 2.9 percent African American, 5.7 percent Asian American and 3.7 percent Latino. However, these percentages did not include international students. Although Wood City has been praised as a beautiful and wonderful place to live, the students of color in Mid U struggle with hostilities and a low retention rate.

As one of the top destinations for international students, Mid U has experienced an increase in number of international students; by fall 2013, approximately 5,100 graduate and undergraduate students comprised 12 percent of the total student population and n 2013, approximately 2,100 of those were undergraduates. The population of internationals included undergraduate students, graduate students, specialists, and professionals. In comparison, the undergraduate population in fall of 2008 was approximately 1,300, a difference that indicates the upsurge of undergraduate students over a 5-year period. The sharp increase of undergraduate students reflect the explosive rise of the Chinese undergraduate student population. In 2008, the undergraduate population of Chinese nationals was 432, but in 2013, the number rose to 1,400. On the other hand, the number of Korean nationals in 2013 decreased from 485 to 394, but still

represented the second largest population of non-U.S. citizens on campus. Korean and Chinese students make up approximately 85 percent of the total non-U.S. citizen undergraduates at Mid U. Although the Mid U enrollment report only provides the nationality of non-U.S. citizens (approximately 2,500 students), and does not specifically provide international students' (approximately 2,100) country of origin, we can see the significant percentage of Korean and Chinese students and the increase in the number of Chinese undergraduate students. Moreover, based on my fieldwork in the Chinese and Korean groups, the distinction between non-U.S. citizens and international students is not very clear. They could be permanent residents but have only spent only a few years in the United States, and here mainly for college. Even in the case of the Korean students who are U.S. citizens, the line is still blurred. For instance, one of my participants, Hyejin came to the U.S. when she was 13 and spent almost half of her life going through U.S. schools, yet according to her visa, she is an international student. In contrast, Mia who came to U.S. in the second semester of the 11th grade is a U.S. citizen. She said she would never consider herself a U.S. citizen if she had not come to the U.S. for her college degree. Hyejin and Mia's parents are all living in Korea. This raises another interesting question regarding the categories of people and citizenship, for instance, legal versus social and cultural citizenship.

Globalization is one of Mid U's espoused goals. On its homepage, the mission statement reflects its intention to promote diversity and international excellence. In the welcoming speech at convocation in 2013, Chancellor Gessler celebrated Mid U's diversity noting that new students had come from 37 countries. While she requested that students reach out across boundaries, she referred to each of the student groups by using

the university's symbol, Big Cat; for example: "Mongolia, you are the Big Cat," etc. Following the chancellor's speech, Professor Hill, the student services coordinator, also called upon students to recognize their global society while stressing the significance of the rights and responsibilities of global citizenship and international competence. The convocation, as an institutional ritual, publicly shows Mid U's educational goals and interests, and clearly indicates that the university wants a significance presence in globalization. However, as a result of the massive state budget cut in 2014, Mid U implemented two important policies affecting international students: (a) lifting the out-of-state students cap, and (b) charging an extra service fee to international students. Beginning in fall 2014, international students are required to pay an extra $75 per semester because of the repeated budget deduction from the university in order to improve student services including documentation, reporting, new programs and advising.

At Mid U, English as Second Language (ESL) classes are required for international students who do not pass Mid U's placement tests even though they have passed the TOEFL exam. Incoming freshman and transfer students must take placement tests for English and Mathematics, and ESL students are often placed in Academic English Writing courses from level 1 to level 4. The courses from level 1 to 3 do not qualify for graduation requirement credits, but level 4 qualifies as a communication course, or a general education requirement. For transfer students, however, even if they have completed ESL courses in previously attended institutions, they are required to retake the ESL placement test again and the ESL courses at Mid U. This regulation is in contrast to domestic students' credit for English courses: communication courses are also

accepted without re-evaluation. Along with the communication course requirement, Ethnic Studies is another general education requirement for all students at Mid U. Among the various Ethnic Studies fulfillment courses, I observed an Asian American immigration class. From the pilot study, I knew it was a well-known and popular course among the Asian international students who often choose a relevant Asian course among the many other choices

Data Interpretation and Ethical Concerns

At the initial stage of my fieldwork, I was not particularly interested in the neoliberal aspect of students' experiences. My initial research primarily focused on Asian international students' experiences as global citizens at a U.S. university. My research question was how social and academic experiences in the globalized American university shape Asian international students' identities and their sense of belonging as global citizens. I wanted to examine, as global citizens, how students negotiated the social, racial, and cultural hierarchies and barriers in their host society. Neoliberal economic forces were taken into account as one of the elements in my research proposal's framework, but it was only used to describe the larger environment. I kept this research question until the middle of stages of conducting fieldwork and continued to focus on how the participants were dealing with race, nationality and global citizenship. For the note, for this dissertation I defined a global citizen as a person who understands his or her right and responsibility as a member of the global society based on transnational ties in political, social, and economic dimensions beyond their single nation state along with the work of Banks (2008), Dower (2002,), and Noddings (2005). However, after spending more and more time with them and following them around campus and visiting their

homes in Asia, and looking at the pile of handwritten field notes on my desk, I realized my research questions and concepts were not reflecting the voices of my informants. I realized that neoliberalism was the 'hegemony' of their aspirations, values, and activities. Neoliberalism made itself obvious in the data! I continued the data analysis during and after fieldwork, and the codes 'productivity,' 'efficiency,' 'future benefits,' 'high returns,' 'utility,' 'time-management,' 'competitiveness,' 'optimizing resources,' 'self-responsibility,' and 'self-management' emerged repeatedly in my field notes and interviews—the classes they chose to enroll in but never attended or the student organizations they joined or did not. Their CVs were always on their mind and their future concerns and summer break plans were all shaped in terms of their market relevance. Although neoliberal economic forces affected a significant part of their lives and choices, it did not fill their every moment. The distinct cases and unique details of the informants and the context protect this research from being a deductive approach to human beings in a mere ideology container.

While I was working with the neoliberal concepts, my main concern was how I could show my informants as human beings and not mere statistics. It was very tricky to do this while I was presenting their experiences as middle-upper class neoliberal subjects and at the same time trying not de-humanize them. I was strongly concerned about the possibility that I was creating another stereotype for Asians as neoliberal subjects, which is very similar to the characteristics of the model minority stereotype: hardworking, goal-oriented, quiet, high achievers. I made every effort to show how neoliberalism was affecting the daily lives of the student groups and professionals at the university. It is true that Asian international undergraduates are not the only neoliberal subjects at Mid U. In

other words, the institution itself is shrouded in neoliberal policies and inhabited by American students who are highly self-regulated and performance-oriented. It is very important to understand that neoliberal subjects do not just mean ruthless, cold-blooded capitalists; rather, it denotes docile students, diligent professionals, and 'ordinary' citizens as researchers articulated how neoliberal governmentality works (Ball, 2012; Ong, 1999). The social mobility that they aspire to, though it contributes to perpetuating inequality rather than serving the public good, is not especially intended to directly exploit or harm others, however, this is how neoliberal subjectivities work. In the everyday context, it just means 'happiness and a better life for one's kids and family.' The attempt to stigmatize a certain group with a label is not the purpose of this research. I argue that the data from this research reflects a larger field than higher education and more of the global trend of neoliberalism.

Researcher Identities, Participant Observation and Positionality

"You think you are watching us but we are watching you too. You are the one who is watched."

Haneul, a Korean male student, was talking to me while we were having dinner with a few other Korean students after drumming club practice. After we decided to have dinner, he kept asking me what I wanted to order and cautiously said. "Oh, you don't like this, right? I knew it. Wow, I got this skill from the army, I can do this." He wanted to guess what I was thinking to show he was respectful of me because I was 13 years older. Not only were the participants usually curious about my choice of dishes on the dinner menu, he and many others wanted to know other things I was interested in, and what I had learned from working with them. So they kept watching me and tried to construct

who I was as I followed them and struggled to grasp who they were through my observations.

To my participants, I had multiple identities: first of all, I was a Ph. D. student, a married woman, in my mid-30's, a Korean international student, from the Seoul area, and had completed my undergraduate education in Korea. Since I looked relatively young, my participants mostly engaged with me as a 'big sister.' As a Ph. D. student, I often had informal Q&A sessions about applying to graduate programs. I had anticipated these identities before the fieldwork; however, my roles expanded. I became their note taker for the classes they missed because I was there for an observation. I also drove them to grocery stores. I was their Korean sister (*Hanguode Jeje*) when my Chinese participants introduced me to their friends. At a potluck party, I was expected to bring 'mom's dishes' to the group. Often I was called an 'elite' because of my educational background. I was also asked the name of my alma mater in Korea—even if they were from China and knew only handful of names of Korean universities—in order to check 'how' elite I actually was. I had conversations with many female students, regarding marriage and relationships in which I revealed aspects about my personal life. My identity as a researcher was multiplied and complicated through both the relationships with the participants and also through the research. Furthermore, these identities and roles were not consistent across the space and time even after I was defined as a "member" and an "insider." I was 'one of them' while I was playing in the Korean drumming club and memorizing the beat flow, then I became a researcher, a Ph. D. student, a married woman soon after we walked out the practice hall.

In my cross-cultural work with two different groups in a transnational context, my positionality influenced my access to the site, the relationships, the data collection, its interpretation and analysis, but it was more complex than I expected. In terms of language, I spoke in Korean with Korean students and English for the other group of students. Speaking Korean did not guarantee that I was able to obtain richer data when in Korea. Although we spoke fluently and shared many things in common, due to the rigid hierarchy governing language and age, they often remained very polite in expressing themselves. The language already established our relationship in a certain way, causing the data to be also influenced by that. On the other hand, as neither the Chinese nor I were native English speakers, conversing in English, however, provided us a space in which we could communicate in a somewhat egalitarian way. They could just use my name, introduce me as a friend to their American friends, and share their ideas more freely.

Moreover, though I am from Korea and a native Korean language speaker, that did not always give me access to the Korean undergraduate students' spaces because of my other identities. For example, when I contacted the person in charge of the Korean students' orientation and picnic in order to attend, I received a refusal: "It may inhibit the comfortable atmosphere having you, a Ph. D student watching us." Because of my age and education level, I was not regarded as an "insider." Yet, my educational status often provided access to Chinese students as it gave them an understandable reason as to why I was with them even though I am not Chinese. More specifically, when I visited their family homes during the summer break, I was welcomed as a 'Ph. D. from America' and was invited to their family dinners and meetings with friends. They were willing to spend

time with me, sharing their thoughts, and wanting to hear what I was thinking. But in Korea, the students thought I should be with my own family and not be with theirs. I could meet them in places in their hometowns and see their larger neighborhoods, but I could not access as much data as I could when I was in China. Interestingly, I was welcomed and invited to lunch with their parents when I visited a Korean student who was from a local city. Unlike most Korean students from around Seoul, he was living in Daegu, which to get there, takes a 4 hours train ride from Seoul. In this case, again because I was a Ph. D candidate from Seoul, I was given access.

Furthermore, my identities as a first-generation college student were scarcely evident throughout the research. These identities were disguised under my educational background, my campus job as a TA, and my English fluency. Although the students were curious about my alma mater, asked my age or even my marital status, they soon assumed that I was one of the international students from the middle class. This assumption may represent that class status is taken for granted and that it is rarely asked about or recognized among them. Because I am a Ph. D student, many of them thought I had already succeeded in my life. Because I was married and completing my degree, the female students especially told me: “You’ve got everything.” In reality, I am a mere graduate student who is still writing her dissertation. The way they perceived me provided rich data in how they see the world and how they define ‘success.’

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I review the purpose and points of the research inquiries, explain the study’s method, and provide the context of the research site, the participants, and the positionality of the researcher,

In Chapter 2, I explore how Asian international undergraduates and their families view the value of a U.S. degree in the global market and what strategies they use to get to an American university campus. I argue that these students and families are educational entrepreneurs who actively invest a vast amount of resources and various forms of capital, take multiple transnational journeys to meet their goal, and face the risks of the flexible knowledge market. Also, I illustrate Korean and Chinese students' focus on marketable and efficient production of knowledge in higher education.

In Chapter 3, I examine how the Asian international undergraduates are racialized by university policies, class, faculty perspectives, and also by their peers in the United States. I argue that Asian international students are largely segregated from the major campus spaces, people living and working there, and even in situations where they want to integrate. The data from fieldwork in classes also indicate that Asian internationals are often racialized as untrustworthy and unqualified, and as those who may need excessive screening and discipline because of their 'culture.'

In Chapter 4, I argue that Asian international students are aligned with American color-blind ideologies although they are racialized as 'other.' I analyze their denial of racism and the naturalization of racial relations using the framework of color-blind ideologies that imply meritocracy, performance, and self-responsibilitization in the understanding of race and racism. Furthermore, I argue that their pursuits to perform in the global market are often linked to favoring 'White' capital in their education journey.

In Chapter 5, I summarize the findings and provide the implications of my research in global higher education.

Chapter 2

The Neoliberal Aspiration of the Asian Middle Class for Distinction in the Global Knowledge Economy

In this chapter, I trace the efforts that Asian international undergraduates and their families undergo to gain access to U.S. universities, and I analyze the aspirations that drive their participation in the global knowledge economy and the specific knowledge they seek in their higher education. Employing a framework of neoliberal ideologies and class reproduction, I examine how Asian international students and their families make sense of the meaning of an education in the United States in terms of market relevance, and how they pursue a U.S. degree and educational experience as profitable 'Western' cultural capital in the macro context of the neoliberal global era.

I argue that they are the entrepreneurs in the education market who actively seek their best interests despite the flexible knowledge economy that may not guarantee expected outcomes. They clearly recognize the global knowledge economy and thus carefully assess the value of U.S. higher education. Many Chinese students quit high school in the middle to start to prepare for the SAT and TOEFL exams, and invest their resources, even long-term family savings, for their future. Korean families even risk separating their family transnationally to support their children's education trajectory and may let the young entrepreneurs journey alone to United States. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) argued, the neoliberal culture is an occult culture that promises a

magical burst of capital accumulation to those who gamble and invest in financial investment products in modern times. Thus, Asian middle and upper class families 'throw the dice' hoping to maximize their children's opportunities on the global stage. They carefully weigh the odds and choose the best option for them. I argue that they are entrepreneurs in the neoliberal regime not only because they are taking risks, but also because they rarely receive any help from the state and must utilize individual strategies and their own economic, cultural, and social capital in the trajectory. All the processes prior to attending an American university, such as finding the right institution to master English in their home country, transnational traveling to take college entrance exams, and attending U.S. high school schools are made possible by individuals using their own family resources, employing private educational consultants for overseas education and networking. They clearly understand the value of a U.S. college degree in the global market and enthusiastically prepare their journey to gain admission.

Theoretical Framework of Neoliberal Ideologies and Neoliberal Subjects

In this dissertation, I adopted Harvey (2005), Apple (2006) and Ball (2012)'s ideas on neoliberalism and defined neoliberalism as a macro framework of political economy and as well as micro human subjectivity, that is, the set of ideas pursuing free market-oriented logics such as for the state and also for individuals to earn optimized performativity believed to lead to human well-being and individual liberty. According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is a theory of political economy "that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). This ideological movement began in the 1950s after

World War II and opposed state intervention as a possibly totalitarian movement. The movement has prospered since the mid 70's "as a potential antidote to threaten the capitalist social order and as a solution to capitalism's ill" to revive capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005, p. 19). If this is so, what is the difference between liberalism and neo-liberalism? Foucault (2008) contends that distinctive neoliberalism seeks competition for social relations and the political economy of the state, whereas traditional liberalism focuses on exchange and equated position (Read, 2009). Competition becomes the core ethos of the neoliberal era, and because of globalization, it is not limited to a region but expands beyond borders. Another distinctive characteristic of neoliberalism is the regulation and assessment with market logics. Apple (2006) argued that the difference between neoliberalism and classical liberalism is the existence of a "regulatory state" that plays a key role in evaluating and supervising the performance of individual and institutions in the market (p. 63). For instance, using the notion of an "audit culture," Strathern (2000) explained how neoliberal measures of accountability regulate and normalize certain social practices and behaviors of professionals in higher education.

Whereas a state operates as a regulatory agency to measure and control performance with market-logic, individuals as neoliberal subjects also transform their subjectivity in certain ways. Evaluation and assessment are not only targeted toward the productivity of institutions but also expands to include the performativity of individuals. Adopting Foucault's framework, Ong (2006) argued that neoliberal governmentality also regulates individual subjectivities as "technologies of subjectivity and self-government so that citizens can optimize choices, efficiency, and competitiveness in turbulent market conditions." (p. 6). In this vein, the ideal type of human being in the neoliberal era is an

entrepreneur and/or consumer who can calculate the best profit in the global knowledge economy. Rose (1999) explained what the demand to become an entrepreneur means: "Individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives through the choices they make among the forms of life available to them" (p. 230). The literature indicated that students are redefined as consumers who are buying higher education as a commodity to maximize their future benefits (Saunders, 2007; Kandiko, 2010). For the 'consumers,' the meaning of and aspiration for education can be framed in particular ways.

Neoliberalism can be framed as a regime of policies and practices or a technology of government, but it also can be understood as a process of global cultural formation (Ferguson, 2009). Although neoliberalism has developed in the realm of economics, the idea of a free market and free trade, accompanied by corporatization and privatization, has become the common matrix in social, cultural, and political domains, and thus creates certain cultural logics. Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) argued that the culture of late-capitalism reflects the uncertainty and anxiety resulting from a flexible economic transformation and wealth production that is not based on labor but rather on power and knowledge. Furthermore, they claimed that the discourse around this "magical" process of occult economies becomes the central belief and practice of general social domains (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001, p. 23). The neoliberalism that formulates the cultural logics that shift the goals and values of social institutions also forms certain patterns of living that are desirable and practical under the market-logics of the global economy. Like other social institutions and domains, education has been significantly influenced by neoliberalism. In the neoliberal culture, the purpose and value of education has changed.

Rizvi and Lingard (2009) noted that

> educational purposes have been redefined in terms of a narrower set of concerns about human capital development, and the role education must play to meet the needs of the global economy and to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy. (p. 3)

Finally, though neoliberal ideologies are mainly rooted in competition, it does not necessarily work in an egalitarian way. Harvey (2005) pointed out that the neoliberal ideology is a class project favoring a privileged group through the process of "accumulation by dispossession." Likewise, income disparities and the concentration of wealth have accelerated under neoliberal restructuring in the field of economics, and neoliberal reforms and practices have contributed to inequality in education through the framework of accountability, performativity, and privatization (Ball, 2006; Apple, 2000; Lipman, 2004). Specifically, the middle class is the favored and qualified class, comprised of ideal neoliberal subjects who are enthusiastic consumers and self-governing entrepreneurs (Davies & Bansel, 2007). In this research, I employ the framework of neoliberal ideologies and neoliberal subjectivities to show how the Asian middle class is actively enacting the neoliberal cultural logics through their global education project.

Neoliberal Culture in Higher Education

Neoliberal reforms are redefining and reshaping the culture, values, and norms of higher education (Strathern, 2000; Slaughter & Rhodes, 2009; Shumar, 1997). Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argued that in the higher education field, the recent trend of neoliberal reforms and globalization worldwide denotes academic capitalism, which is an "institutional and professorial market or market-like efforts to secure external moneys"

particularly through globalization (p. 8). And according to Rhoads & Torres (2006), knowledge is calculated using financial language. Furthermore, researchers have pointed out the collapse of the academic culture and values among professors and administrators due to the neoliberal transformation heavily focused on accountability and audits (Strathern, 2000; Lincoln, 2011). University administrators are now similar to corporate managers who focus on regulating performance and marketability. Moreover, teaching no longer provides privileges to professors, rather researching or bringing in external grants and transferrable knowledge are favored (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009). Shumar (1997) critiqued the commodification of public educational institutions under state neoliberal policy reforms and consumer capitalism and pointed out the transformation of knowledge into products and identities of students in higher education. Despite significant efforts to examine how late-capitalism and neoliberalism has shaped the policies, intuitions, and professional experiences at the higher education level, the understanding of students' experiences has been limited (Saunders, 2010; Kandiko, 2010). There are indications that market-driven reform and policies affecting higher education have been changing students' aspirations and behavior in particular ways. Over the past 40 years, students' motivation to attend college has also been focused on securing social mobility more than serving the public good (Astin, 1997; Saunders, 2010). Neoliberalism does not only exist as a macro political economy system, but it is also inextricably connected to the formation of an individual subject, who is considered an 'entrepreneur' and a 'consumer' (Mitchell, Marston, & Katz, 2003). Along with the public disinvestment of funding in recent decades, academic institutions have also made efforts to recruit specific groups of students who are seen as proper 'consumers' who will ensure the highest and stable

revenues. Moreover, these efforts go beyond borders (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2009; Saunder, 2010). Slaughter and Rhodes (2009) contended that university students are active consumers who have a keen expectation and demand for appropriate preparation in the global economy market. Undergraduate students are frequently framed as the "workforce" rather than learners, and their education focuses more on 'skills' (Urciuoli, 2008). In this context, a college education is regarded more as the 'training' that prepares students to be competitive in the designated market. Furthermore, Cannan and Shumar (2008) argued that students are more like consumers who demand a full educational package and prepared knowledge rather than critical thinkers who actively produce and engage with knowledge. However, there is little information about how this is accomplished, especially in the form of ethnography. While educational anthropology largely focuses on school ethnography, relatively few ethnographic studies investigate higher education compared to other educational settings (Lucas, 2012; Pabian, 2014). Yet, the educational field could benefit from an ethnography that allows researchers to examine how the macro context of policies and institutional reforms intertwine with the lived experiences of students. Ball (2012) held this view and noted the significance of examining the detailed layers of neoliberalism in the education field:

> Attention to the mundane also serves to highlight neo-liberalism as a process, not something that is realized as a set of grand strategies and ruptural changes but rather made up of numerous moves, increment reforms, displacements and reinscriptions, complicated and stuttering trajectories of small changes and tactics which work together on systems, organisations and individuals—to make these isomorphic. (p. 32)

Building upon Ball's idea, this chapter articulates how neoliberal cultural logic as a process shapes Asian international undergraduates' aspiration towards and experiences at an American university. Their lived experiences, strategies, and tactics illustrate how neoliberal subjectivities currently play out in globalized higher education.

Bourdieu's Theory of Class and Cultural Capital in the Age of Globalization

To analyze Asian middle-class students' social and academic experiences in terms of class practices that secure their cultural and social capital through a U.S. degree, I adopt the notion of class and capital from Bourideu's work. In Bourdieu's analysis, class is comprised of "sets of agents who occupy similar positions and, being placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditions, have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests, and therefore of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 198). Brubaker (1985) further stated that Bourdieu's definition of class divisions is the "differing conditions of existence, differing systems of dispositions produced by differential conditioning, and differing endowments of power or capital" (p. 761). Moreover, according to Brubaker (1985), class to Bourdieu, compared to Marx and Weber, is a general concept and a "universal explanatory principle" (p. 762) because it covers internal dispositions and external conditions and is not limited by product or power.

Then, what makes a class? Bourdieu (1985) explained that it is the distribution of agents according to the distribution of power and properties, that is, capitals. Furthermore, he defined social class as the classified position in the social space determined by the possession of certain capitals: cultural capital, economic capital, social capital, and symbolic capital (1987). Specifically, Bourdieu (1985) pointed out the

volume and the composition of capitals in the multiple dimension of social space: “Thus agents are distributed within it, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital.” (1985, p. 197; 1987, p. 4). Therefore, individuals are defined by their relative position in the multidimensional social space that corresponds to different values (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 5). The two works of Bourdieu’s that focus on class, *What Makes a Social Class* (1987) and *Social Space and Genesis of Group* (1985), provided a similar explanation to what constitutes “class” and “social-class.” Basically, in Bourdieu’s work “class” is not limited to social class; instead he interchanges these terms. Social class, especially, is represented by occupational groups (Brubaker, 1985). In both *Reproduction and The State Nobility*, a student’s class is mainly measured by the students’ parents’ occupation (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1996). In other words, Bourdieu’s concept of class is interpreted as socioeconomic status.

According to Bourdieu (1986), “Capital is what makes the game of society” (p. 241) and he went on to explain that “Every moment [it offers] the possibility of a miracle” and a “[change in] one’s social status” (p. 241). Thus, capital is a powerful resource that gives people the opportunity to make a “profit” in a social space, in other words, the market. Bourdieu (1986) used the metaphor of a game to refer to capital as cards you can play. However, capital does not solely mean money in a capitalistic society. Bourdieu uses the term ‘capital’ to investigate what is behind “money.” He acknowledges that a monetary investment in the scholastic market cannot fully explain the different academic achievements in different social classes. Therefore, he developed the concept of cultural capital that makes “it possible to explain the unequal scholastic

achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Furthermore, cultural capital is hidden and invisible compared to economic capital, but it heavily contributes to academic success. Cultural capital exists in three forms: (a) an embodied state that includes disposition, (b) an objectified state that includes material objects such as books, paintings, instruments, and (c) an institutionalized state that includes qualified academic credentials. Lamont and Lareau (1988, p. 156) pointed out that Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital addresses a wide range of resources, but in his framework, "cultural capital is alternatively an informal academic standard, a class attribute, a basis for social selection, and a resource for power which is salient as an indicator and basis of class position" (p. 156). Bourdieu defines cultural capital more specifically as being related to an educational standard and covers "linguistic aptitude (grammar, accent, tone), previous academic culture, formal knowledge and general culture, as well as diplomas" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 155). The "educationally profitable" cultural capital is valued in the scholastic market. In the current global economy dynamics especially, profitable educational and cultural capital comes from the West, and United States holds the hegemony in the field (Marginson, 2006).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argued that cultural capital is distributed unequally by social class, that it is imbedded in social origin, especially in one's family background. From birth, cultural capital can be acquired unconsciously by transmission in the home (Bourdieu, 1986). This transmission clearly reveals itself in the form of the embodied state of cultural capital. Also, timing matters for attaining it. Children's age when they first start school makes a strong difference among classes; this difference is measured by

the accumulation and possession of cultural capital (Dumais, 2005). However, the initial lack of cultural capital from one's social origin can be compensated for by academically based cultural capital, such as accrual of academic credentials (Swartz, 1997). The petit-bourgeois is a representative group that attempts to offset social origins by academic success. Compared to the middle-upper bourgeois, however, they still lack high intellectual taste and can be more docile than academically serious students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). For my participants, though they are from a proper middle-class background, having highly educated parents with professional and managerial occupations, their status in the United States is closer to the 'petit bourgeois' due to their lack of cultural capital in the context of the host society. Yet on the global stage, their economic capital and acquired Western cultural capital secures their bourgeois position. Although cultural capital can be acquired through education and academic credentials, the form of embodied status cannot be acquired "second hand" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). Therefore, only students whose families are in the dominant class can master educationally profitable language and culture, and those possessions of capital create the class.

In the era of neoliberal globalization, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is receiving demands that should reflect not a single society but global economic and power relations. Drawing on Bourdieu's works on stratification and cultural capital, Igarashi and Saito (2014) argued that cosmopolitanism can be institutionalized as cultural capital, and depending on their class, students have different levels of access to cosmopolitanism in their educational trajectory. Although cosmopolitanism does not necessarily require involvement with or exposure to the West, when it comes to cosmopolitanism as 'cultural

capital' it tends to include Western countries. Kim (2011) also argued that Korean graduate students are motivated to pursue their U.S. degrees in order to acquire 'global cultural capital' in their positional conflict in the global field. Middle-class parents seek this cosmopolitan cultural capital in the construction of their children's education project because they understand the value in ensuring a prestigious position in globalized world (Weenink, 2008).

Bourdieu's concepts of class and cultural capital allow me to analyze the meaning of U.S. higher education for Asian middle-class families and what they aspire through their offspring's educational trajectory in the global knowledge economy. Moreover, taking into consideration the expanded use of the cultural capital concept in relation to the transnational and globalized context will shed light on the significance of the linkage of Asian international students' experiences in the macro dynamics of neoliberal globalization.

Research on the Middle Class in the Education Market

Although the concept of a middle class remains debatable, the literature has focused on how the middle class has played a key role in the field of economics, political, and cultural domains throughout world societies in the era of neoliberal globalization (Ball, 2003; Heiman, Lietchy, & Freeman, 2012; Reay, Cozier, & James, 2013). Ball (2003) articulated the importance of the study of the middle class in the education field, "because their actions produce or contribute to the perpetuation, inscription and reinvention of social inequalities both old and new" (p. 5).

School choice is often regarded as both a process of middle-class production and also middle-class practice. Ball (2003) illuminated the school choice-making process of

U.K. middle-class families for their children in order to reproduce their class position. They collectively negotiated with institutions and policies, individually sought exclusionary advantages, employed social capitals mainly available due to their class status, conveyed the market's 'new morality' and responsibility for securing their children' position, and struggled with risks and uncertainties. Weis et al. (2014) also pointed out that middle- and upper-middle class parents in the United States feel morally responsible to secure their children' place in prestigious colleges and are actively engaged in every step of the college application process, even buying educationally profitable real-estate in top-tier high school districts. Ball (2003) and Weis et al. (2014) both argued that the middle and upper-middle classes are favored in the neoliberal context and unintentionally contribute to perpetuating inequality across classes. Furthermore, Weis and Fine (2012) argued that "as the professional and managerial upper middle class now consciously exploits any and all opportunities to position its children for advantage, it effectively constricts access for the rest of the middle classes, thereby cutting itself off from any kind of larger class base." (p. 184). For students, middle class identities as psychological capital also influence the advancement of their academic achievement and adjustment in competitive educational settings (Demerath, Lynch, and Davison, 2007).

In conjunction with the global economy shift, a global middle class has emerged around the world (Cárdenas, Kharas, & Henao, 2011; Li, 2010). Neoliberal economic forces create the context for this global middle class through economic restructuring, labor outsourcing, and global finance. Education is no exception. The sharp growth of the middle class in Asia has received great attention from the higher education market**.** Fong

(2011) argued that the sizable increase worldwide of Chinese transnational students can be attributed to the increased economic capability of Chinese parents and their investment in their "only hope," that is, their one child. Among the Korean middle- and upper-middle classes, the pervasive wild-geese family (kiroˇgi) typically involves the mother moving to an English-speaking country with the children and the father staying behind and supporting them. Finch and Kim (2012) articulated that the kiroˇgi parenting is the practice of the middle-class parents to ensure that their children's future is maximized by entering an American college. This argument is similar to Vincent and Ball (2007)'s that purports that middle-class parents invest in their children's acquisition of cultural capital to ensure class reproduction.

As my research focuses on the educational experiences of Asian middle-class students in higher education, I need to ask: what happens if class and race intersect in education? Various studies have focused on the relationship and intersection of race and class regarding educational achievement and attainment (Horvat, 2003; Laureau, 2003; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Ball, Reay, & David (2002) and Reay, Davis, David, and Ball (2001) studied the intersection of class and race in entering higher education. Reay et al. (2001) used Bourdieu's (1987) term "sense of one's place" (p. 5) to analyze why working-class students with ethnic minority backgrounds do not feel higher education is their place. According to this research, the "conceptions of 'the good university' are both racialized and classed" (p. 865). On the other hand, Ball et al. (2002) investigated the relationship of the influence of ethnicity and class on students' college choice. According to Ball et al. (2002), working-class ethnic minority group students do more "ethnic choosing" when selecting higher education institutions near their home and

in a familiar setting compared to their middle-class counterparts who make a cosmopolitan choice and feel relatively free to go to White-dominated or unfamiliar ethnic college settings. This finding provides a clue to how Asian middle-class families decide to make their choice of universities in the United States.

Findings: Asian Middle Class's Neoliberal Aspiration for Global Cultural Capital from U.S. Higher Education

Context of Asian middle class. Through an analysis of the survey results, interview transcripts, and fieldwork data I unpack the context of the Chinese and Korean students' middle class-ness and further related complexities. One of the main indications of the Chinese and Korean students' class status is their ability to self-fund their college education abroad. All of my primary participants, including the focal participants and formally interviewed participants, paid their tuition out of their own pocket. Per the survey, 196 out of 199 respondents are paying tuition out of pocket and all the participants who were interviewed received funds from their family. Among the three who indicated they received financial support from their home government, two were from Malaysia, which has an undergraduate study abroad scholarship program paid by the government, and only one student from China was on its government's scholarship program. Except for these three, everyone was financially supported by their families. In addition to the tuition ($13,325.52 per semester in 2013), they had to pay rent. Among the 199 survey respondents, 111 students, more than a majority, paid more than 700 dollars for their rent. Only 26 respondents were living in housing costing less than 500 dollars monthly. By the year 2013, the average cost of living and tuition for out-of-state-undergraduates at Mid U was approximately 50,000 dollars. It is noteworthy that

international students are not eligible to apply for state financial aid and major scholarship programs in the United States. Thus, to be international undergraduates in higher education in the United States, economic support from their own family is presumed.

The occupation and education level of the parents can also indicate the family's class status. In the survey, 170 out of 199 responded that more than one of their parents or legal guardians was college educated. In the interviews, I learned that quite a few parents had graduate or professional degrees and some had educational experiences in the United States themselves. There were 29 first-generation college students and only two of them were Korean. The majority of first-generation college students, 21 of them, were Chinese. This may reflect that China is recently experiencing an emerging middle class (Wu, 2014). Through formal and informal interviews with the participants, I found that many of their parents hold managerial positions in major corporations in their home countries; some were professionals such as doctors, attorneys, professors, researchers, and engineers, and also small business owners, individual stock investors, and teachers. Many of the Korean students were from prestigious areas in Seoul and other large cities that are well known for their high-priced real estate and prominent education system. Large numbers of Chinese students were from Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou and other metropolitan cities that reflect a massive geographic variety in China.

When I asked the Asian international students about their perspectives on their economic and social status, they acknowledged they were from affluent families. Ting, a Chinese female freshman, remarked that she knew she is middle class because she had met a woman her age who only went to middle school and worked as a house maid at her

friend's house. Hyejin, a Korean female senior also shared her realization of her relatively affluent status when her Korean friends at home wanted to postpone a movie day to get a discount for the tickets. She remembered that day especially because she realized whether she had a coupon or not did not matter to her. However, the students emphasized that they were not from the prestigious upper class. When I asked if they noticed any class differences or had met upper-class students around campus, they often responded "Not really. This is just a public school." They said the Chinese and Korean internationals from wealthier backgrounds were at Ivy League schools or prestigious private schools. Furthermore, they recognized that in order to attend those schools they would need greater cultural and economic capital, which they did not have. Of course, there were a few extremely wealthy Asian international students at Mid U who lived in penthouses at luxury apartments, or who drove fancy cars, but this was not the norm. I only had two participants who owned a car. Most of the students were surprised that I owned a car though it was a 10-year-old, used compact car. They appreciated it when I gave them a ride to the Asian grocery store which had very affordable prices and food they were used to. Many of the Chinese students lived in a luxury two-bedroom apartment, but they shared the apartment with three other roommates, so it was pretty crowded. When an apartment is shared, the rent becomes about same or even cheaper than the university residential halls which cost about $700 a month in 2013. The Korean students often lived by themselves, but their rent was about the same as Chinese students who were living with three roommates. The apartments they chose were in older buildings or located farther from campus. However, one of the interesting aspects regarding their spending was that they used quite a large amount of their financial

resources to travel as cosmopolitans. The majority of the Korean and Chinese internationals flew home every year or even twice every year, and international flights are expensive. Furthermore, the students often spent their Spring Break abroad in exotic places such as Cancun, the Bahamas, or even Paris. It is noteworthy that students adjusted their economic resources in certain categories; for instance, choosing not to have a car but going to Paris during Spring Break. Global experiences, even if they were only for a for week, mattered to them.

It is worthwhile to acknowledge that as members of the middle class these students are more advantaged than many of their peers in their home countries. However, the monolithic stereotype of Chinese and Korean international students as spoiled and rich young people does not capture the context and complexity of experiences among my participants. An interesting aspect regarding their class identities was that the students considered other ethnic groups as more affluent. The Chinese perceived the Koreans as affluent and the Koreans viewed some of the Chinese as very wealthy. Kai mentioned that "Koreans are rich but the Chinese are not" and Sungjun, a Korean male sophomore said, "Koreans are about the same in terms of money, but some Chinese are outrageously rich. One of my friend's roommate said he got stressed and drove to Chicago and bought millions of things." It seemed easy for them to have a stereotypical perspective of other group members as a 'rich internationals.' In reality the out-of-state tuition and living expenses at Mid U was never easy for many students and their families. In the interviews, many students said they chose Mid U because of the relatively low tuition compared to school ranking.

SH: Why did you choose Mid U?

> Qiang: Among the schools that admitted me, it was the best one. I think it's better than U of Z or other universities and the tuition is lower than other private universities.

A number of students explained that they chose Mid U because of its reasonably priced tuition. Asian international students compare the quality, exchange value, and cost to attend the institution where they want to study because even if students are from the middle class, this does not mean they have limitless resources. Kai, a female Chinese junior remarked how she felt overwhelmed by the amount of her expenses.

> Here most of the Chinese students are not that rich. Maybe the whole year's salary of
>
> their parents is used to support their son or daughter who is in U.S. There is no money left for them or for saving. You know, my dad told me the average U.S. family's income is 50,000 dollars. That's what I spend a year. It's huge in Chinese RMB. So my parents have to earn more and more money.

Kai is from Beijing and her mother is a researcher at a university in China and her father owns his own business. Therefore, in her home country she is considered middle or even upper-class, but she is still concerned about her parents' economic sacrifice. She lived with three other roommates at the Fortune Apartments, a renowned luxury apartment building for Mid U students located at the center of the campus. Her room that she shared with her roommate was small with space for only twin beds and small desks. The economic sacrifice weighed on her heavily. She could not sleep before the day of her biology test and felt very nervous about her grade. It was similar to Anxi, a female Chinese sophomore.

> My parents used their entire savings and moved to a small house, just for me. My mother is a teacher and she, she cannot make a lot of money, you know. They have saved the money since I was very little. With this, this sacrifice, I can't fail.

She felt obligated to achieve academic excellence in order to make her parents' sacrifices pay off. Anxi is planning to spend a few more years in the U.S. after she finishes her degree and then will go back home to live with her parents.

For Chinese students who are usually the only child in their family, the situation is usually simpler, but in Korean families there were often other children for parents to support. Yonju, a female Korean junior, had a sister who was attending a 4-years college, thus, she had to spend a couple of years at a community college in the U.S. until her sister finished her degree and their parents could afford to send her to a 4-year university. After some financial juggling, she was able to come to Mid U. Yonju family's experiences indicate how Asian middle-class families have to manage diverse tasks to secure their children's place in American higher education. Taemin, a male Korean senior, also wanted to finish his degree a semester early since his family had already paid quite a large amount for his older sister's education, who also attended Mid U. He wanted to remove some of the financial strain from his parents, even though his father was an established engineer who worked at multiple locations around the globe. But Taemin knew that paying education expenses for two children was burdensome. Even when he was a freshman, he went to the library every Saturday and Sunday morning to complete his degree ahead of schedule. The Asian international students may be middle class, but they rarely forget that their families are buying their chance for a prosperous future. Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) wrote that international students in Australia

express concerns over their high cost of tuition and financial situation. In the U.S. context, Lin (2012) shows that the high cost of tuition strongly affects international students' stress. Charles and Stewart (1991) pointed out that out-of-state tuition and unstable international students' financial situation, such as being self-funded, can affect their academic performance. At the same time, this information provides valuable tips for international students' academic advisers. The researchers suggest that advisers should be aware that international students' financial situation may cause an academic overload (i.e., taking excessive credits per quarter) because their financial source comes from their personal and family funding.

Moreover, there are also students who stretched their economic ability for the transnational educational project. Although I was not able to meet those students in my field work in person, I witnessed a Chinese students' fundraising for a classmate who was struggling with economic difficulties. When I was chatting with Lifen, a female Chinese senior in her dorm room, we had a visit from Anxi who brought an envelope. She mentioned it was for Haochen and left the envelope for Lifen. Lifen knew beforehand who Haochen was and what the envelope was for. While she pulled out money from her purse, I asked what it was for and Lifen said, "Anxi is conducting a fundraising for a Chinese student who has taken out a loan for his study abroad and whose mother was recently diagnosed with cancer." She told me he had already taken a leave of absence due to the burden of the loan and he had gone back to China to be with his mother. He had taken the risks for his future and participated in the cosmopolitan project, but his gamble was not successful compared to his middle-class counterparts who had more cards for the game. I felt that I wanted to contribute to the students because I was benefiting from the

international student community in my research. After we placed some cash in the envelope, Anxi came back to pick it up and held Lifen's hands as an expression of gratitude. It is evident that there are students who are not from affluent backgrounds. I often heard from students that there are some students who are from humble backgrounds and are working at the Chinese restaurants to pay off their living expenses and some of their tuition, but I was not able to meet them. Perhaps, there are a very small number of such students compared to the large body of middle-class students. In the survey, there were 3 students who responded that their rent was under $300. Among those 3, 1 was Korean and the other 2 were Chinese. As there were only 3 out of 198 students, it was not easy to find them. Moreover, they might not have had much time to talk with a researcher who was asking for their time, which is a precious resource for them.

Desire to go on the global stage. Asian middle-class families' aspiration for their children's higher education and future, envisions a move across their national borders and expands to the globe. Lifen's father was one of them. When I asked her why she decided to study abroad.

> To be honest, it was my dad's decision. The decision was made when I was 14. I never thought about it, but my dad just sent me to the international school and let me study, to study abroad. He thought education is kind of an investment. If he invests in me to participate on the international stage, I will play on this stage not just in China. He wanted to put me straight onto the stage so I would have a better future. I think it's really, really an insightful decision.

Lifen, a female Chinese senior, majoring in architecture is from Beijing. Her district, Feichang (pseudonym) is well known for having the best school system in

Beijing due to the prestigious universities there. Her father is an idependent stock investor who has been successful for a decade due to the soaring Chinese stock market. Her mother works at a university as an administrative staff. While describing her father's job, she said, "Well, people say the Chinese stock market will soon go down, it's all bubble, but they said the same thing 10 years ago too." The shifting landscape of the world economy and China's rapidly emerging economic power provide the background of her reason for studying abroad. Although her father did not physically move around the world through his work, he sees the worth of entering the 'international stage' beyond China's boundary. He envisions for Lifen a future in global spaces that will probably provide more competitive opportunities for her; therefore, her education becomes useful 'capital' to attain that end. International education, the cultural capital, is a crucial resource to secure or promote one's class status in the competitive field, but it cannot be the sole purpose itself. Rather, it is seen as an 'investment.'

Lifen went to a U.K.-Chinese cooperated high school and learned a curriculum based on the U. K. education system. International secondary education is one of the most pervasive trajectories among Asian international undergraduates at Mid U. Lifen remembers that the tuition at her high school was much higher than other public schools in China. His father's effort to give her a secondary international education worked out as she successfully came to the United States. Half of her classmates went to the United Kingdom for college and the other half came to the United States. She will continue to invest in her future by pursuing a graduate degree after she completes her undergraduate education at Mid U.

Investment in the opportunities in the global market comes from a keen

understanding of the current economic geographies in the world. Eunsoo, a male Korean junior, came to States in the 11th grade. His sister is studying marketing in Shanghai. In the summer of 2014, I traveled to Korea and was able to interview Eunsoo's father. In the interview, his father revealed his insights about global dynamics while describing his children's choice of countries for study.

> Because I've been in the business of international trade, I know there are not many possibilities here. Korea's economic growth is over. I mean, no more growth can be achieved here. In a society like this, job opportunities will not be expanded and chances are getting less and less. China is emerging now, right? I guess, at least, America will do well at least for a century because of their imperialism. I sent one of my children to America. The United States seems like the sun that is going down, but they will be okay for a while. China is the rising one.

Eunsoo's father owns small import-export company and mainly works with customers from various countries, including China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and United States. His work experiences shaped his understanding of the world economy, and based on his interpretations of the future of world markets, he made decisions about where to send his children to for higher education. He is giving Eunsoo an international education in order to maximize his future opportunities. The plan for him to go to a university in the United States was initiated when Ensoo was in middle school. He had come to the United States to attend an English camp when he was in the 7th grade, and he also went to Australia. After those experiences, Eunsoo studied for the TOEFL in junior high and he used the score he received to apply to U.S. high schools. He came to the States in the 11th grade

and attended two different high schools before entering Mid U. It was interesting to hear that Eunsoo's father's decision about the places he would send Eunsoo and his sister to study abroad was based on an analysis that reflects the downfall of America and the emergence of China in global economic dynamics. It sounded more like a column in 'The Economist' rather than an education plan. Eunsoo is not the only one who has a sibling studying in China. Sanho, a male Korean junior, also has a brother studying in China. He remarked, "My father has a big future plan in his mind." Having two children in two different economically powerful countries is a strategic choice that indicates that an undergraduate education abroad is not limited to educational scope or institutional academic excellence but open to the world market. Eunsoo and his sister regard Korea as a limited economic space, and other Korean participants shared this perspective. Sumi, a female Korean sophomore, also described Korea as offering limited opportunities and viewed being educated abroad as a way to prepare to play in a larger sphere.

> I would say, just for the wider world? I mean, you can still live in Korea but it's too small. You know, society is kind of…but if you come to the United States and if you have some experiences, like working here, then you probably can play in larger world.

The choice of the international market that is not limited to a single nation boundary is the distinctive aspiration shared among the Asian international undergraduates. Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz (1995) argued that middle-class families make a more cosmopolitan choice that goes beyond their familiar spaces to ensure their children's future prosperity and outcomes while working class remains locally. According to Appadurai (2004), this can be articulated as the higher 'capacity of aspire.'

> The capacity to aspire is thus a navigational capacity. The more privileged in any society simply have used the map of its norms to explore the future more frequently and more realistically, and to share this knowledge with one another more routinely than their poorer and weaker neighbors. The poorer members, precisely because of their lack of opportunities to practice the use of this navigational capacity (in turn because of their situations permit fewer experiments and less easy achieving of alternative futures)
>
> have a more brittle horizon of aspiration. (p. 69)

As the Asian middle class families have more resources and capitals to navigate their future with more chances and possibilities, their 'capacity of aspire' moves out into the world. They are able to 'read the map' of the opportunities in the competitive global market that may provide more life chances, and they are able to invest to actually be on the path to attain their goals.

The 'global stage' is not necessarily only the market itself, but it also can be the 'imagined community' for those who are on the stage. Yan, a female Chinese freshman from Fujian province related that her father wanted her to meet "high quality people." I met Yan and her parents when I visited China in August 2013. We dined at a privately run restaurant, which did not have a sign or menu, as it catered to only the select residents in the apartment in which it was located. While enjoying a delicious seafood course, Yan reiterated that the community is "not necessarily rich but those people who are willing and work hard. Better people." Fong (2011) articulated that the desire to belong to the "imagined developed world community" brought transnational Chinese students to the world's spaces. Who belongs in this community? I asked Yan's parents what kind of

friends did they expect Yan to have while she is in the United States, and they answered: "highly educated ones, those who are studying hard." Merit and a strong work ethic are two of the core beliefs shared by neoliberal ideologies. Both of Yan's parents earned graduate degrees from the best university in the province, but they wanted Yan to have a better education than they did, in other words, an international education. Their dream of an international education for her begun when she was in kindergarten and elementary school. She went to a kindergarten that had an English program, which is rare even among the Chinese students. Yan's family had to utilize their social capital to gain permission for her to attend the international elementary school, one of the best schools in her city. Yan remarked that many rich families in the city buy old and small apartments in front of the school so their children can gain access to the school.

Although Yan's parents dreamed of an international education for Yan, the outcome of such an education manifests in specific ways. While it may appear as if Korean and Chinese students' aspirations for an undergraduate education abroad are mainly located in market-relevance, the stories of some of my participants challenge this simplistic characterization. For example, Yan's family's purpose for sending her to the United States for higher education cannot necessarily only be interpreted as a privatized project for capital accumulation in the global market, but also includes one aspect of social good.

> He wants me to master knowledge and contribute to the world. To the society and whole world. It's an honor to make a contribution to the society. He said your life will be dull if you just think about yourself and live for yourself. If I come back to China, I will be okay living on my own to make a living, but the more important

thing for me to do is to do something for other people.

Yan's father was one of the few people in my interviews who actually mentioned the public good. It is noteworthy that there are multiple perspectives among the students and their family members. Although there was diversity within the group, I should point out, that Yan's father views this idea of 'contribution' in very specific ways. Yan and her family debated about whether she should transfer to a more prestigious university. At the lunch, Yan's father kept asking me if I thought Mid U was good enough for her undergraduate education compared to Ivy League schools and other prestigious private institutions ranked in the top 10 for undergraduate education in the United States. As Yan is planning to earn a graduate degree, I explained she can go to any of the top U. S. universities for graduate school with her degree from Mid U, and that actually Mid U ranked very high for graduate programs. Additionally, I told him that Mid U is a great place to meet her educational goals, but he seemed unconvinced. From the conversation, I could see there is a presumption that in order to contribute to society, you need to have a high social status though that may not necessarily require that you make a contribution. There is a very specific type of community the students, and their families, want to join. Upward mobility is one of the clear motivations for Yan's studying abroad.

Whereas many of the parents were intensively involved in their children's transnational education project, there were a few students who made their own decisions. Hyejin, a female Korean senior was one. After spending few months in the United Kingdom, she decided to go abroad for her education and persuaded her parents to let her go. As she was only 13 years old, her parents did not agree with her idea, but after they were connected with Hyejin's aunt in Philadelphia, they decided to send her to the

United States. She came here in the 8th grade and has now spent half of her life here. She remembers that she came here because she had "much fun" while living in the United Kingdom. When she came to the States by herself, she entered a boarding school in Pennsylvania. She was happy that it was filled with international students from various countries, mainly from China, Mexico and Korea. However, it was very expensive, even more than average private schools. As a result, after doing some research, her parents decided to move her to a new school, a predominantly White school that was close to where her aunt lived. As soon as she transferred to the new school, she really could not find any fun and said, "I always wanted go back home then." I asked why she did not go back, and she replied, "It's because of my mom. She kind of threatened me and she never let me come back. In her opinion, 'if you go now, nothing can be achieved. How can you adapt to Korea?'" Mia, another Korean sophomore who was sitting next Hyejin nodded her head, and added "Me too. My father told me if I came back to Korea, then you will be totally useless!" Quitting midway in one's transnational education trajectory is not an option, especially in the competitive educational environment with a high-stakes college entrance exam in Korea and in China. Wu (2014) illustrated middle class parents' fierce competition for key schools that would guarantee their children' educational excellence and secure competitive positions in China. Fong (2011) also pointed out the hypercompetitive context of the Chinese education system. Korea is also struggling with the pressure of high-stakes testing that is even called "examination hell" (Lee and Larson, 2000). 'Fun' can start the journey, but it should not end in 'failure.' When Hyejin moved from the boarding school to a regular school, her mother flew to the United States to take care of Hyejin and her sister Sora who joined them later, leaving behind her husband in

Korea. With her mother's support, Hyejin was able to enter the Mid U and Sora entered New York University.

The distinction of a U.S. degree. Asian international undergraduates want to enter the global realm, but that does not mean they want to go to any random place in the world. There is a specific direction in which they want to move, and the United States is one of the foremost destinations for international students (OECD, 2012). Marginson (2006) argued that the United States occupies a hegemonic position in the global higher education stratification. Undergraduates from China and Korea are well aware of the dominant position of the U.S. globally, and the value of a degree from an American university is assessed in various ways, such as the competitiveness of a degree, options for immigration, and English as a valuable resource for the future (Fong, 2011). In her interview, Kai talked about the United States as her choice for her undergraduate education compared to other countries.

> My parents wanted me to live in a better place. (...) Actually my sponsors, my parents wouldn't send me to an Asian country. They would send me only to the U.S. and the U.K for higher education. Actually, Japan has good education but…

Kai went on explain that while Japan is one of the exceptional cases in Asia with respect to having good universities, she still believes that a U.S. degree provides the Western capital needed to yield a higher market value compared to an Asian degree. Kai went to a foreign language school and saw English as the connector to the worlds similar to Fong's (2011) transnational Chinese students. The United States and the United Kingdom, the two top destinations for international students from Asian countries, are seen as far superior to Asian countries. It is also important to point out that she referred to her

parents as her 'sponsors" as she explained the relatively competitive value of a U.S. degree. I heard other students refer to their parents as their 'funders' or their 'investors,' suggesting that they only provide financial support. Although the gap between higher education in Asian countries and Europe and North American countries has been decreasing, the U.S. remains the leading country in the field of tertiary education (Marginson, 2006). The choice of a U.S. college among many other options was repeatedly shown in the data. For instance, Taemin, who had been educated at international schools in Israel, Taiwan, and Shanghai, coinciding with his father's work transfers, came to the States for his college education like his older sister who moved here for college when they lived in Taiwan. He said, "There are wider opportunities and my parents thought my college education should be in the U.S." A degree earned at a U.S. institution is regarded as a more transferrable commodity and might work in other locations globally compared to a degree from Asian countries.

The decision to attend an American college is often the result of a comparison to the opportunities in the Europe, but students see more value in coming to the United States. Anxi, a female Chinese senior explained why her father chose a U.S. higher education for her. "Europe is good but America is the best. Maybe for an architecture major Europe would have more prestige, but other than that, a U.S. degree is regarded as the best." Her father explained that the exchange value for a degree from the States is higher than a degree from Europe. Although Anxi's father mentioned the exceptionality of the architecture major, Soyoung, a female Korean junior who was majoring in Interior architect was still debating about where she should go for her graduate degree. She was considering either France or the United States, as both countries provide an excellent

quality of education in her field.

> I know if I go to France, the tuition would be much lower than here. If I go to graduate school here, I would pay tons of money. There are not many opportunities for master students as TAs. or something like that, right? It seems like I should pay another three hundred thousand dollars…and a degree in France still works well in this field but..I don't know. Still in Korea, a U.S. degree has stronger power, you know. It also would probably take less time here than a degree in France. Of course, there is language problem too. I don't know. (Field note, 02/10/15)

Since that interview, after months of thought Soyoung plans to proceed with a graduate degree in the States. Although a U.S. degree requires higher expenses, its marketability significantly influenced her decision. Furthermore, thinking about yet another country would mean she would need to master yet another language.

Whereas the competitiveness of a degree for a future career is significant in making a decision about the destination for Asian undergraduates, they also take into account transnational migration. Qiang, a male Chinese senior from Beijing, explained why he chose the United States over the United Kingdom. It involved the limited opportunities while staying in the host society.

> SH: Why didn't you go to the U.K. or Austrailia or Singapore?
>
> Qiang: Singapore or Australia are not better than the U.S. All people in China think the U.S or the U.K are the best countries to be educated. And for U.K., I heard that, at the time for the degree, it's only, almost 3 years. It's kind of a short for stay. Also it's impossible to stay in the U. K. after graduate.

Qiang's answer aligned with other students' perspective on the value of U.S. higher education in that it may provide the opportunity for an extended stay in the States or even the possibility of immigrating. In the survey, for the question about the reasons for their choice of the United States for their college education, 41 students responded that they were looking for an opportunity to live there permanently in the future. About 20 percent of the total respondents considered the option of immigration as one of their reasons to study abroad, among choices such as academic excellence, future career and economic opportunities, learning English, and meeting people in, and learning about, a different culture. Although the academic excellence choice (88 %) and future career and economic opportunities choice (70%) comprised the major reasons for considering a college education in the United States, a chance to immigrate also matters. Asian international students' interests in an extended stay in the United States was also found in the question regarding their vision for the future. In their interviews, students said they were considering staying in the United States after graduation because they wanted to utilize their cultural capital or that having a career in a U.S. city would pay off when they went back home after a few years. Also, the hypercompetitive job market and restrictive social atmosphere in their home country often was divulged as the reason for their longer stay in the United States. Per the survey, in the question asking about their plans after completing their current degree, 157 out of 199 respondents answered that they wanted to either pursue an advanced degree or find a job here. The population who is willing to extend their stay is almost five times larger than those planning to return home. Furthermore, among the 31 who answered they wanted to return to their home country, 10 were also considering staying in the States for another degree or job. Students are

taking into consideration the immigration option seriously for their future. Although student migrants have gained attention recently, there is a dearth of studies in this field within the United States (Hazen and Alberts, 2006). Researchers pointed out that the migration of students is not a linear decision-making process but is more consistent with 'brain circulation,' that is, transnational migration (Altbach, 2004b; Johnson, 2009). Finn (2003) supports the argument of the transnational migration of international students and found evidence of continuing migration and moving back and forth between the United States and abroad.

Competitive institution. While the value of a U.S. degree is based on the global hegemony in higher education, the competitiveness of the degree can also be also found in the university's ranking. For many of the students I interviewed, ranking was one of the strongest factors in their decision-making process of where to attend college.

SH: Why did you choose Mid U?

Lifen: It was because here is the, I would say… it's the highest ranking university admitted me, so I chose it. Also my mom knew someone who came before so.. It's kind of well known in the higher education level society.

Ranking has been a strong factor in higher education in the United States and the rest of the world (McDonough et. al., 1997; Abelmann, Park, and Kim, 2009). While university ranking works as a main factor, it was interesting to learn of the reputation of Mid U in Lifen's community. Her mother has a graduate degree and works in a high status university that probably reflects the highly educated society she refers to. Students' parents actively share information about the university application process within their social networks. Ting, a female Chinese freshman, remembered that her mother and a

parents' group put together information about institutions ranked top 100 in a file and it almost looked like a book. Even if parents do not have all the details about the institutions, ranking still counts considerably. Sarang, a female Korean sophomore, transferred from another institution, one of the top 100 U.S institutions, to Mid U because her parents regarded its ranking as significant for her future.

> I told them, I am not sure if I can do well at Mid U. I might not able to manage my GPA very well or maybe I would lose my scholarship, but they said, 'You must go.' They have a kind of traditional mind about the university. The school name is really important.

Transfer students comprise a significant part of the Korean student population. Although the population of Korean students is decreasing, the number of transfer students who are Korean is increasing. They might suspend their belief in the importance of a U.S. degree, but their pursuit of competitiveness has not paused. To study in a better institution, Taehee, a female Korean senior, changed universities three times. Initially, she was admitted to one of the most prominent universities in Korea, but her parents were not satisfied because it was not as prestigious as the top three national institutions. So, she moved to California State University with plans to proceed to graduate school and then work in the States. She has transferred again to Mid U, which has a higher ranking than Cal State, and is preparing her graduate program application. Transferring is often utilized as strategic choice for Asian international students who want to save both money and energy involved in initial admittance. Jini, a female Korean sophomore, transferred from one of the institutions in the Midwestern State University system that requires a less competitive application, lower tuition and living expenses compared to the Mid U, the

flagship university. She was told by an educational consultant in a private institution in Seoul that she could transfer to Mid U with no hassle after she spent a few years at the branch university. Other students in that institution in Seoul applied to different universities in the Midwestern State system with the goal of eventually studying at Mid U. The use of education consultants is a common practice among Chinese and Korean international students. Hyejin's first middle school in the United States, Soyoung's college decision, Ting's college admission essay involved the advice given by private consultants and also by instructors in the private SAT and TOEFL education institutions. From providing general information about U.S. education, to customized support at every level of college admission, private consultants play a significant role. One of the most interesting cases of private institutions related to studying abroad involved a student named Ting. Ting was invited as a teaching assistant during her summer break at the institution she attended and was asked to provide some advice for prospective study abroad students. When I asked what was her role was exactly, she said "Just saying everything is going to be okay." Employing experienced students who seem 'successful' is one of the institution's strategies to relieve some of the anxiety prospective students have about their uncertain future.

On the other hand, there is another standard that Asian international undergraduates use when choosing an institution. While they chose the United States as a place they can earn a competitive degree, they also wanted to learn about American culture. However, their understanding of what 'real' American culture looks like is very racialized. As shown in the first section, while Yan and her parents wanted to join a high-quality and highly educated community, there is specific type of community they

imagined.

> Yan: My parents want me to learn more about America so they wanted me to go to the East Coast which is more American. My parents and I didn't want to go to California. A bunch of Chinese there and a lot of Asians there. Right? We don't think that is right.
>
> SH: Did you think you couldn't learn about the American culture in California
>
> Yan: No. I can but…there is…you know, too much of a mixed culture. Not traditional. The East Coast is more traditional.

Her use of the word 'traditional' is interesting as it implies the authenticity of American culture, which she believes Asians living in the United States would not experience. Yan is not the only one who is reluctant about studying in California. Quite a few students mentioned avoiding California. Soyoung was admitted to University of California at Los Angeles(UCLA), one of the best U.S. institutions, but she chose Mid U. One reason was because she learned about the bankruptcy of the UC system at that time but also because of its racial ratio.

> I heard Asians make up 40 percent of UCLA. I mean, I have my own imagination and dream what an American college looks like and I didn't want to choose a school that is 40 percent Asian. It would be weird. It's not like this school. I thought it's kind of strange.

Whereas they explicitly seriously consider global marketability and the ranking of degree programs in their educational trajectory, race is an important factor in their decision-making process. Global competitiveness is often regarded as color-blind and a race neutral criteria, but Asian international students' choice represents a tendency to

pursue the capital of Whiteness, even within the States. As Fong (2011) argued, Asian transnational students aspire to the 'imagined developed world community' and this community has a specific racial context. For Soyoung and Yan, the imagined community for higher education reflects an "authentic" and "traditional" American space, which often means White spaces. Although learning about 'American' culture is regarded as one aspect of cultural capital that is sought in their college education in the United States, White culture is regarded as the 'real' American cultural capital. This is not only shown in their decision about which university to attend. Many Korean students spend their high school years in the U.S. and attend predominantly White schools. They explained that they wanted to learn English better. It seems like American culture and English are strongly tied to Whiteness.

Interestingly, while explaining her choice to not go to California, Ting's friend explained she could not learn about American culture from Asian Americans, but simultaneously she was concerned about Korean students who come to America too early and lose their own culture. This raises the question about the concept of culture in this conversation. When Asians come to the United States, they risk losing their own culture and could become Americanized. However, learning about American culture from them is not possible because they are not 'authentic' Americans. It seems like they view culture as relatively static and they have views on authenticity. Furthermore, they have associated Whiteness with Americanness and that implies they cannot learn American culture from Asian Americans.

Marketable and efficient knowledge influencing their choice. Students' choice of their undergraduate major provides ample information in what kind of knowledge they

seek in their transnational education journey. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics are the most favored choices. Per the survey, allowing for multiple choices, 85 out of 199 participants answered they are majoring in the STEM field, that is, in engineering, biology, biochemistry, mathematics, and computer sciences. Students' interest in the STEM field is not new. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2016), the number of degrees in engineering increased 29 percent between the years 2008-9 and 2013-14. Furthermore, this major is not the only choice among students, but the STEM field overall has been given enormous investment and attention by universities due to the financial marketability and the transferrable knowledge from universities to corporations. Moreover, Slaughter, Taylor & Rosinger (2015) argued that the science and engineering fields receive relatively more funding and advantages than the social sciences and humanities fields. The STEM field also provides a vision of a bright future. STEM not only promises a challenging career and a good income, but it also allows the students a more flexible citizenship that is very useful in a transnational life. Ting decided to major in nuclear science when she heard about the STEM Job Act which opened opportunities for a green card to STEM major graduate degree holders. "I realized it's been debated few years so hopefully before I graduate, the law can be passed." The STEM Job Act was introduced to the U. S. Senate in 2015 and currently has been referred to the Committee in the Judiciary.

On the other hand, besides STEM majors, business is another major discipline favored by Asian international undergraduates. Forty-seven out of 199 participants answered they are majoring in business, which includes finance, marketing, accounting, actuarial science, etc. This overlaps with the large trend in the United States as the largest

number of Bachelor's degrees in 2013-14 were in the field of business (NCES, 2017). Slaughter and Rhoades (2000) also argued that the neoliberal restructuring and marketization of higher education has caused a shift "from the liberal arts toward a professional and vocational" (p. 74). A highly compensated and lucrative future certainly influences the internationals choice to major in business. Economics, closely related to business, is a strong choice for many students. As a single major, 28 students answered they are majoring in economics. Compared to STEM or business or multiple majors, economics stood out as a top choice. Soyoung described economics as a "doable and useful" major. She explained that her brother chose "econ" because he transferred and did not have enough time to complete his other major's requirements. Soyoung remarked, "There are quite a few of courses known as easy and if you take those on time, then you can graduate." Hyejin also chose economics because after she spent 2 years studying biochemistry, economics proved to be only one of a few options she had in order to graduate on time without excessive effort. While Asian international students search for marketable knowledge, efficiency still takes an important part in choosing a major.

The efficiency factor often caused conflicts and debates in the students' decision in choosing their major. Anna, a female Korean sophomore, had deliberated for a long time on whether she would double major in criminology and psychology. She had a lot of interest in criminology, but her older friends asked, "What are you going to do with that? Can you get any job from it?" The intensive investment in their education often makes them think seriously about the "result." Sumi argued that "Koreans are always tied to the idea of success and result. We always think we have to do this, or that. (…) Americans can do what they want to do. But we can't." This may be interpreted as their recognition

of their position as petty-bourgeois in American society. Jun, a male Chinese senior, shared a similar idea with Sumi. “They (Americans) can do it because they are already, I mean, established. We are not that rich or affluent yet,” though they are very established compared to most of their peers in their home country. Students regard themselves as ‘in the middle’ of the global field and that requires more effort and endurance. Of course, there were students who followed their current interest and passion and chose their major in the liberal arts field. Yan, a female Chinese freshman majoring in theatre, also joined the college theater team. When I followed her to her morning theatre course, she was the only Asian student in the class. One by one each student performed their act in the studio and I enjoyed watching her acting in her bare feet. She signed up for another play to participate as a stage staff. When I asked Yan’s father what he thought about her majoring in theatre, he thought it was fine. He wanted her do what she wanted to do. Yet, following his open-minded statement, he added his analysis about the economy and the future of China. He thought for now, journalism and economics will lead the Chinese economy, and if acting helped her out in her career in journalism, he would be okay with that. However, Yan ended up doing a double major in theatre and economics. She decided to choose one of her majors to be compatible with market logics.

The neoliberal cultural logic that seeks marketability and efficiency is often reflected in students’ academic experiences in American higher education. Asian international students use various strategies to attain meaningful cultural capital from U.S. higher education. That does not necessarily mean from the education itself, but the reason is often closer to the credentials it affords. One interesting example is how they avoid the regular courses from Mid U and take an online course or courses from the

community college in Wood City. Sumi took summer courses at the Wood Area Technical College [WATC] because "it was much more straightforward than Mid U's course and it was also easy to get an A and was cheaper. You can transfer the credit anyway." Sarang, a female Korean junior, was considering taking courses at an institution in her home country.

Sarang: Well…I have to take a literature course as well, but it seems kind of difficult for Koreans.

SH: Yeah? What do people do then?

Sarang: They take the course in Korea.

SH: Really? Are there any institutions qualified to transfer the credit?

Sarang: Yeah, Yonsei or Korea University. Initially I was thinking about staying here, but a summer course costs more than $3,000! In Korea, you can take the course at a much lower cost.

SH: So you want to go Yonsei? It must be close to your place, right?

Sarang: Maybe I could go Seoul National university. I heard they give you a student card even for the summer.

SH: Oh, you want it.

Sarang: Well, It's the dream student card.

The conversation with Sarang was interesting not only because she confirmed that many Korean students go back home during the summer and take courses at local institutions, but also that "ranking" still influences their tactical strategy in the pursuit of efficient knowledge. Other tactics they employed included taking online courses that require less energy and registering for "GPA boosters" which are widely known as easy

A courses. To complete their degree in the most efficient way, they actively share knowledge about courses that may be irrelevant to their academic interests but guarantee good grades with low effort. Yet, this strategy does not mean they are not 'hardworking.' They stay up two nights straight, spend a large amount of time in the library, and even wake up early every Saturday morning ready to study. I argue that they know how to selectively distribute their 'effort' to earn the most efficient knowledge and educational capital. Furthermore, this is not the sole practice of Asian international undergraduates. In the interviews with American students who were taking the Ethnic Studies class I observed, they confessed they chose the course because it was known as an easy A course. Moreover, in the classroom discussion, Peter, a White male student, argued that he would prefer to take a private financial management or healthcare course rather than a mandated Ethnic Studies course because knowledge in those areas is much more in need these days. Meanwhile, Emma, a White female student, agreed with the value of the Ethnic Studies requirement, but she looked at it from more of a business point of view. She saw the importance of understanding cultural differences: "worlds are getting smaller and business covers everything." This indicates that the emphasis on transferrable and productive knowledge is not solely created by Asian international undergraduates, but is a part of the larger system and culture of U.S. higher education. Slaughter and Rhoades (2010) pointed out that neoliberal higher education's focus is located "in preparing undergraduate and community college students to be malleable workers who will fit into (and be retrained for) new information-based jobs and work" (p. 73).

Studying abroad as plan B. In the sections above, I explained the purpose and aspiration of Asian international students in their college education in the United States,

yet there is one missing story behind this global journey: education abroad as Plan B. The value of a U.S. degree and the competitiveness in the global market might attract them to join the transnational education project, but it is important to point out that many students pursued study abroad because of the fiercely competitive educational systems in their home countries. Qiang talked about his decision.

> It's impossible for me to go to Peking University or Chinghwa. Maybe, probably, only an A university or a B university. My parents told me if you go to this school you still need to go abroad for your masters degree so thought it's better come to early.

Later, he explained that if he was accepted at Peking University, he would not have come to Mid U. Many Chinese students who expect not to receive a high score on the national college entrance exam ('gaokao') often decide not to take the exam but accelerate their trajectory to study abroad. Because they have to study for a completely different type of exam, they have to make this decision early; that is, in the second semester of their first year of high school or at least by the first semester of their second year. Sometimes, they quit high school midway. After Ting quit school to prepare for the SAT and TOEFL, she entered a private institution known for its expertise in preparing for college abroad. She even leased an apartment so she would be near the institution where she received private instruction after the regular sessions. Junho, a male Korean sophomore, also said his decision to come to the United States was because he did not receive the expected score from his college entrance exam in Korea. When Soyoung's brother realized he could only gain admittance into less prestigious institutions, he decided to follow Soyoung who was already in the United States attending high school.

After he transferred from a community college to Mid U, he said he plans to visit Korea to brag about his accomplishment to his high school teachers who had told him that he never would make it to a university in Seoul, one of the evidences for determining the best universities in Korea. In fact, Soyoung also decided to come to the States after she failed her foreign language high school entrance exam, which is extremely competitive—only one out of 50 applicants are admitted. The harsh competition in their home countries force Asian international students to find a place that both provides more opportunities and less competition. Sungjun, a male Korean sophomore, sees life in America as less competitive.

> You know, Korean people really work. They spend all their energy to do well. But here, you don't need to do that much hard work. Just lay back and do some work, but still you can get in to a college like Mid U. I think it's really nice. Isn't it? In Korea, they work really, really, really hard and still don't get much.

Many Asian students were involved in the seriously competitive education track in their home country. Ting entered her elementary school when she was 5, 2 years younger than other children. Her mother wanted to raise her as a special child with early education and had the social capital to allowed her entry into the school. Ting studied with a teacher privately for her first 2 years. She also played the violin from when she was 6 to 10 years old. Every morning at 6 a.m., she woke up and practiced the violin until 9 a.m. She felt as if the violin was like a stone in her shoulder. Competing for social upward mobility had already begun in her home country when she was a child. Recently, Ting's family moved to a smaller house in a well-known school district to secure a place for Ting's sister to attend a good middle school. On the other hand, Donghun, a male

Korean sophomore, learned Go, an Asian chess game, when he was in elementary school in Korea. Although he liked playing Go, he felt suffocated by his education that involved intense lessons at a private institution (‘hagwon’) until 11 p.m. every day. He had to memorize 100 words every other day at the private English institution when he was attending, in addition to his elementary school. He is satisfied with his education in the United States that requires less competition compared to what he faced in his home country.

Anxiety, depression, and psychological cost related to studying abroad. The students’ parents were often the first ones to understand the significance of international education experiences to secure future possibilities for their children. However, sending them onto the global stage is never easy for Asian parents, even if they strongly want a flourishing future for their children. Eunsoo’s father shared his concerns about his children because they were thousands of miles apart.

> In this city, we often say that we do not send our daughters to Seoul. Going to Seoul from Gaya is a big thing. It's the same for sons too. Now, if I send my child to a foreign country, I have to break another wall from my position. How frightening is it to send out these adolescents to go abroad. I haven’t experienced studying abroad myself. I am always so worried about what if something goes wrong. On the phone, when it doesn’t sound right, I ask. What is it? What’s going on? Then, I would just say something like, "That’s not a big deal. Easy, kid." But I am so nervous inside. It cannot be not easy for them to get to class and understand a foreign language. It must be a whole new world for them. It's my

> own duty to listen to and comfort them but then I still need to process all these things on my own."

It takes not only economic resources to participate in the global competition for better chances in life. There is a hidden cost that includes a psychological burden that accompanies the acquisition of the necessary qualifications for a highly-selective college degree, which is a prerequisite in order to secure the competitive position in the global knowledge economy (Reay et al., 2013).

Despite that going onto the global stage might provide distinctive opportunities for the students, the larger pool of competition also results in fatigue and anxiety for the students, such as in the case of Ting, who described her experiences in the United States, using the analogy of a river and the ocean.

> In here, I am like a fish in the ocean. I am not a beautiful fish because here are so many excellent beautiful fish in here. But in China, I was a fish in the river. I was above the average. "

Ting's analogy explicitly indicates her middle-class status in China and also shows her stress in participating in the competitive global space. She remarked she would not choose to study abroad if she could start all over from the beginning because "it is too exhaustive." In fact, throughout my field work, I found that many students were struggling with fatigue, anxiety, and depression. A few remarked, "It would be hard to find anyone who doesn't experience those feelings." One of the Chinese female students lost 30 pounds in a semester and only weighed 90 pounds due to her depression. Another Korean student confessed that he did not meet anyone throughout the summer because he could not leave his room because he was so depressed. A Korean female student also said

that once she finished all of the papers and study requirements for the course, she suddenly felt helpless and even thought about suicide. Demerath et. al (2008) had addressed the stress and anxiety of high-achieving, middle class students in prestigious secondary institutions, and Ball (2003) also argued that anxiety was the ethos of the middle class. Students in a foreign country by themselves have to manage not only the competitive academic and social tasks related to college life, but also the pressure from their parents' economic sacrifice. Ying remembered how lonely she felt when she saw her American roommate's family picking her up for Spring Break, and Yan had to handle going to the hospital by herself in the middle of night because of a sudden illness. In the morning after a few treatments and wearing her pajamas, she took the bus alone because no one could pick her up or take care of her. Often, many of the Korean students were struggling with serious illnesses such as liver failure, herniated disc problems, or chronic shoulder dislocation requiring surgery. As my research was not specifically focused on medical anthropology, I did not ask further questions about my participants' health situations, but I assumed some of these health issues could be caused by having to live by themselves in a new country, some as early as 12 years old, and the long competitive educational journey without their families. The journey toward the global stage costed some Asian international students more than they expected.

Conclusion

This chapter provides the context of Asian middle class's decision-making process of studying abroad, and the complicated stories of the students and their families entering and studying at Mid U. While this process can be analyzed as a neoliberal aspiration involving strategic choices in the competitive global knowledge economy, it

can be also understood as practices of being ‘good parents’ who want ‘appropriate’ opportunities for their children as Weis et al. (2014) contended. The students’ parents often initiated the ‘global dream’ rather than the students themselves, but the value of a U.S. university degree and the importance of efficient and marketable knowledge were widely agreed upon across the students and their parents. It is interesting to see that although a degree from a U. S. university has distinctive value in the global market, the decision to study in the United States is often not made as an absolute first choice, but as a “plan B” after considering all the conditions in both the home and host society. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that students and parents pay not only an economic cost for studying abroad, but they also incur an emotional and psychological cost.

Chapter 3

Racialization of Asian International Students

This chapter examines how Asian international undergraduates are racialized at Mid U. Specifically, this chapter explores how Chinese and Korean international undergraduates are categorized and positioned as 'other' by the institution through university policies, programs, classes, faculty and also by their social contacts with their American peers and associates throughout their academic and social experiences. How is the racial category of 'Asian' revalued and represented in educational spaces produced in the larger-scale processes of globalization and neoliberal marketization?

The United States has its own distinctive social categories of race that significantly shape the opportunities and quality of life within social, economic and political contexts, and as a social institution, educational spaces have produced and reproduced the categories of race through selectively chosen curriculums and unequally distributed capitals and resources based on race that limit students' experiences (Leonardo, 2009). Research in higher education indicates that students of color have been racialized in post-secondary education and have struggled with racially marginalized experiences (Cabrera, 2014; Cabrera, Franklin, and Watson, 2016; Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000; Museus & Vue, 2013). Researchers have argued that diversity is overlooked among Asian Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders, thus Southeast Asians, for example, are render invisible in higher education due to the monolithic model of the minority stereotype of Asians (Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus & Vue, 2013). Asian

international students have similar experiences due to their racial categorization but have their own ways of negotiating and reconstructing their racial position. It is unavoidable that Asian international students are racialized as students of color and also as foreigners in American society. Especially, given the understanding of that Mid U is a predominantly White university with the majority of students being local to the predominantly White state, the situation can be more difficult than on a racially diverse campus.

Employing the framework of neoliberalism and racialization, this chapter gives a critical account of how Asian international undergraduates are racialized and othered in U.S. higher education. Based on the understanding of the racial project as ongoing and a flexible social construction (Omi & Winant, 2014), how are the two groups of young Asians in my study— Korean and Chinese students mostly from the middle class and attending an American flagship public university—racialized? The interview and fieldwork data reveal that Asian international undergraduates are racialized through exclusion, patronization, extra screening and discipline, and are subject to the apparent contradictory pendulum that swings from 'the best and the brightest' to unqualified, 'sneaky foreigners'.

Framework of Racialization

The theory of racialization provides a useful framework to analyze how Asian international undergraduates are defined and categorized as a racial group as they enter U.S. society. Omi and Winant (2014) defined racialization as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practices, or group" (p. 105). Racialization can be understood as the meaning-making process of a certain group

based on the social concept of race. Desmond and Emirbayer (2015) argued that the "processes of racialization actually can demarcate difference where previously no phenotypical or biological difference existed" (p. 53). However, racialization is not a mere categorization. It involves power relations that invoke ideological and material consequences. In this vein, racialization should be understood as "not neutral acts of categorization, but acts of power" (p. 3) that draws the line to who can access and be qualified for the power of White privilege (Lee, Park, & Wong, 2016). Racialization of people of color has repeatedly been used to justify the power and privileges that increase social inequality throughout history. Racialization is profoundly based on the process of "othering" (Omi & Winant, 2014). Thus, any analysis of the race-making process of Asian international students' is how they become the "other" in U.S. society.

Research on Asian American racialization is a resourceful reference to understand in connection to Asian international undergraduates. Scholars have argued that studies on Asian Americans offer complicated insights into the racialization process in the United States, and is often limited to the black-white paradigm (Kim, 1999; Wu, 2003). The 'foreignness' factor is central to understanding how Asian Americans have become "the other." Unlike White immigrants in the early 20th century who were regarded as undeserving immigrants but over time were seen as proper 'Americans' because of their Whiteness, Asian Americans are regarded as 'perpetual foreigners' even though they have lived in the U.S. for multiple generations (Tuan, 1998; Wu, 2003). Asian Americans are often questioned about their Americanness and their 'unassimilable' cultural differences and seen as possibly disloyal to the United States. The perpetual foreigner stereotype plays out in their daily lives with such questions as "where are you really from" (Sue et

al., 2007). Moreover, during World War II, Japanese Americans were interned in remote camps even though they had been born and raised as U. S. citizens (Takaki, 2008). Ngai (2014) articulated the legal history of the Asian American immigrants' marginalized experiences by employing the term 'impossible subjects' and further argued that those who were not allowed full U.S. citizenship were treated differently by White-European immigrants and depicted as an unassimilable group. While arguing the continuously changing relational nature of the U.S. racial structure and its multidimensional racial hierarchies, Kim (1999) proposed a racial triangulation based on "field of racial positions" that entails two axes: superior/inferior and insider/foreigner (p. 107). She indicated that "Asian Americans have been racially triangulated" under dominant White subordination and exclusive civic membership because of their foreignness. Considering that even Asian Americans with legal membership in U.S. society are still perceived as 'foreign' and 'unassimilable,' how are Asian internationals understood in U. S. higher education and its associates?

In educational spaces, the model minority has become a representative racialized image of Asian Americans. The relational nature of racial structure is also observed through the model minority discourse that constructs Asian Americans as "always positioned in comparison to other groups as more hardworking than, less American than, more successful than, less loyal than." (Lee, Park, & Wong, 2016, p. 4). S. J. Lee (2009) pointed out the model minority stereotype is used to justify the existing racial hegemony and policies of meritocracy and condemn other students of color, especially African Americans. In higher education, model minority stereotypes exaggerate the image of 'yellow peril' that describes the massive influx of Asian Americans in higher education

from the stance of xenophobia, and often assumes Asian American college students are not in need of support and resources like other students of color (S. S. Lee, 2008). However, the isolation of Asian Americans on campus and the racism and hostility shown toward them indicate that Asian Americans have marginalized experiences in higher education like other students of color (Abelmann, 2009; Cabrera, 2014). Museus and Kiang (2009) argued that the model minority stereotype contributes to the invisibility of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who are often regarded as a monolithic ethnic group and are less challenged by racial hierarchy, despite the struggles these students experience in higher education.

On the other hand, given that the participants in my dissertation research are from China and Korea, it is necessary to look at how the racial identity of East Asians are understood in the literature. S. Lee (2010) pointed out that because the model minority image is usually attached to East Asians, most Chinese and Korean Americans are often reluctant to recognize the existence of various groups under the pan-ethnic Asian. This also masks the struggles and difficulties of students who do not fit the stereotype. Ong (1999) argued that Asian Americans are subjected to the ideological process of whitening or blackening according to their class and cultural status. For instance, Chinese businessmen are regarded as closer to the boundary of the White standard, whereas Cambodian refugees are closer to the Black standard. In this context, the majority of my participants, who are middle and upper class East Asians in educational spaces, are not far from the image of the model minority and are possibly at-risk subjects of Whitening racialization.

Literature on Racialization of Asian International Students

In this section I will review how Asian international students are understood and depicted as 'other' in the research and media. One of the distinctive racializations of Asian international students, especially in the era of neoliberal ideologies, is the concept of commodification." Along with the globalization of higher education, international students are also often objectified as commodities as opposed to human beings. In other words, they are considered only as capital resources for the host country. While reviewing the articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education from 1996 to 1999, Rhee and Sagaria (2004) found that international students are regarded in the media as capital in the U.S. economy and argue that this is a reflection of U.S. imperialism. Benson (2006) reported that in New Zealand Asian international students are represented in the radio media as a commodity. Waters (2006) posited that the internationalization of higher education in the United Kingdom and Australia is a neoliberal idea and these two countries pay more attention to "revenue-generating" students (p. 1049). She argued that the neoliberal reform of higher education in terms of public budget cuts generates a dependency on international students. Although this research was conducted only in the United Kingdom and Australia, the context is not so different from what is happening in the United States. Lewin (2012) pointed out that a few universities have even started to charge additional fees, up to $2,500, to international students. In contrast, Chisti's research in 1984 suggested America should block international students due to the low benefit of having them and cited a European case that had experienced large expenditures for foreign students. This shows that the stance of institutions and states to international students can be significantly affected by economic situations and expectations.

On the other hand, international students are often racialized as "unqualified." The

discourses on the economic value of international students are often linked to the perception that international students lack capability. It is noteworthy that students of color are also often described as unqualified in Western higher education, particularly in the debates concerning affirmative action. It could be that when American higher education experiences an increase of non-White European students, the questions of student quality follow. Likewise the view that students of racial minority groups can gain admission into American higher education based on race and not on intellectual capability, has created a similar view that international students' admission was not based on academic prowess but on money. Glass et al. (2015) argued that some professors regard international students "as necessary but inconvenient revenue sources for the survival of their department's academic programs" and view them as students with a language deficiency who need extra care (p. 24). This attitude also occurs in the United Kingdom. In an interview with the Huffington Post, Dr. Bassnett, a U. K. university professor he criticized the government: "We have all seen the way in which international students with poor qualifications have been recruited as cash cows for years now" (Kingkade, 2012, p. 1). Although his criticism of the commodification of international students is well founded, the perception of international students as not academically prepared for advanced study should be taken into consideration. In many research studies, international students, especially Asian students, are characterized as passive learners with low-self-esteem. Tompson and Tompson (1996) noted that business school professors regard some of the behaviors of their international students in the classroom as unproductive; they do not participate in discussions, often study with or sit near colleagues from the same country of origin, and do not ask questions to clearly

understand the assignments. The professors' perspective shows how international students are racialized in both commodification and as low-quality students. This is interesting especially in regard to the pervasive rhetoric praising global education and international students' mobility in recruiting the 'best and the brightest.' However, there is a dearth of literature addressing the contradictory range of racialization of international students from the globally talented to the unqualified cash cows.

Lastly, the isolation of international students is widely found in the research literature (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). The American Council of Education (2012) found that, though the university institutional level of internationalization and student mobility has rapidly increased in recent years, students' groups remain isolated. In her ethnography of American college students in their freshman year, Nathan (2005) observed that "international students learned quickly that being a student, being a dorm mate, being a classmate—none of it automatically qualifies you as a member of the community." Their position in American higher education reminds us of the long existing exclusion of racial and ethnic minority students on campuses. McClure (2014) argued that the segregation of students of color hinders the developing of belonging in higher education spaces and obstructs their success to reach their educational goals. Isolation in international students' experiences could also prohibit them from accessing social and cultural capital in the host society.

Categorization of internationals as other at a white-dominant university

In this section I will analyze how Asian international students are labeled as other in a White-dominant university. When the students begin their university life at the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) experiences, internationals are

categorized and separated from the host society's students. In their daily lives, they are easily excluded from the dominant group, the Whites on campus, and by design are actually forced to be with their co-ethnics. The unbalanced power and positional hierarchies between Whites and people of color was also shown in the ESL classroom that lacked a faculty of color but is full of students of color.

An 'international' from the beginning. SOAR is the first social setting that international undergraduate encounter at Mid U. All international freshmen and transfer students are asked to attend a separate SOAR geared toward international students as it provides information that includes rules and regulations from the Department of Homeland Security and a document scan process. In fall 2013, the international SOAR was held at the Union Center of Mid U. It looked like a usual day at the Union Center except for the racial dynamics. The dominant population was East Asian. There was large group of Chinese students who sat together and talked. I also heard Korean spoken quite often. In 2013, Mid U experienced a sharp upsurge in its Chinese undergraduate population. Koreans managed to maintain its position as second in the size of the international student population. Among the international undergraduates, two national groups made up more than 80 percent of the student population.

Maybe that is why the staff kept cordially offering to guide me toward SOAR. At the front door, and in the hallway, White students with a Mid U logo printed on their green shirts approached me with smiling faces, asking if I was there for the international SOAR. I appreciated their help but also wondered why they thought I was an international—as I am not an international undergraduate. Since it was raining and only a few days before the fall semester would begin, there were not many other students there.

The Union Center was not limited to the SOAR, but most of the spaces were open as usual. When the student staff was guiding me on the stairway, a young White woman walked by without any interference or questions. Then I realized that there were some White students walking around the hall like me wearing backpacks and casual clothing. Although internationals cover different ethnic and racial backgrounds, these students were not stopped by the helpers. They could just walk through the cluster of staff standing at every corner. Although they were right at guessing that I was as an international, still questions remained for me. How are Asian faces categorized as international while Whites are free from that assumption? While investigating the stereotypes of international students in connection to American students, Spencer-Rodger (2001) found that one of demographic stereotypes of international students are those from Asia. The recent increased population might support the assumption of Asians as international, but it is worthwhile to ask: who is categorized as international and who is not? Who is regarded as foreign and who is not?

The construction of Asians as internationals may be linked to the position of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners. Wu (2002) stated that Asian Americans are regarded as such regardless of how many generations they have lived in the United States, and are often asked 'where are they really from?' Tuan (1999) argued that multigenerational Asian Americans are regarded as "forever foreigners" under the conundrum between White and Black, whereas their White European counterparts have "ethnic options." Here I am not arguing that Asian international students should be recognized as Americans; rather, I argue there is a certain racial group, Whites, from my observation, who are free from being labeled as "international." Although about five

percent of the international undergraduate students were from predominantly White-dominated countries, it appeared that being White at Mid U did not prompt the question of whether they were internationals or not. Therefore, the categorization of international tends to overlap with people of color and resonates with the contemporary racial construction in the United States.

Also, the categorization at the SOAR not only operates as a symbolic racialization process but clearly draws a fine line between American and international students on the first day at Mid U. The general SOAR for American students had already taken place the previous month. Thus, on their first day, the two groups would never meet each other. Ying, a junior from China, expressed her discontent with this segregation.

I was really disappointed at the SOAR when I realize there were only Asians. I thought I could make some American friends or meet new friends. But I ended up spending all day with my Chinese friends. I like them. . .but it was really unexpected.

Ying was not the only student who was dissatisfied with her international-only SOAR. As I went with Minsu into the SOAR orientation room, he asked me, "So, are they all internationals?" I said 'yes' and he remarked, "Well, this is kind of sad. A room filled with only Chinese and Koreans." Of course, it is understandable that the international SOAR process has to follow the Department of Homeland Security regulations and possible travel dates based on the students' visa status. Given the importance of the SOAR, however, the lack of shared or common experiences between American and internationals at the beginning of college life contributes to the separated community culture. On the Mid U campus students' racial and ethnic groups are also largely separated. For instance, from the interview data, I found that only 2 participants

out of 41 had an American roommate. The remaining 39 lived with co-ethnics or other Asian international roommates; they eat, study, play, shop, date, argue, drink, and spend most of their time with their co-ethnic group. When I asked Mei and Tao where they met their current roommate, they answered "on the first day at SOAR." The divided SOAR is the first time they make contact with other students in the United States and this could indeed be the starting point of internationals' segregated campus life. It is also noteworthy that there is another type of categorization that occurs at the general SOAR. Kathy, a junior and a Latina, explained her unusual experience at her SOAR. Although she did not ask for a specific group, she was assigned to the "multicultural SOAR group." It was helpful to know other students of color, but she wondered why she as designated as a "multicultural." Given the understanding that the SOAR is the first place students get to know the institution and other students, pre-categorization of student groups can prohibit natural intercultural understandings and promote the feeling of alienation from the dominant group.

Lastly, racialization not only means who is categorized as "international," but also denotes the positional hierarchies. At the Union Center, there were about 20 SOAR staffs throughout the building, but only one was person of color. Most of the "international students" who were holding a green eco bag with SOAR logo were Asians. The staff held administrative positions and were White. This mirrored the racial dynamics that was often repeated in the other social and classroom settings at Mid U. For instance, in the ESL classrooms, strong gatekeepers as mandatory courses for international undergraduates, all but two instructors among 47 were White; students were mostly Asian and people of color from other parts of the world, mostly Latin America and the Middle

East. These uneven positional hierarchies confirm the existing racial structure in the United States.

Exclusion in daily life. This section will analyze the isolated experiences of Asian international undergraduates. Here, I argue that the university structure, culture, and policies contribute to the lack of interaction between the racial groups. I found that racial structure and neoliberal cultural logic mutually contributed to the segregation of Asian international students. Students of color often experience a limited sense of belonging and hostility in U.S. higher education, especially in predominantly White universities (McClure, 2015). However, the exclusivity of the post-racial era has become more subtle and 'natural' because there are fewer overt signs of brutal racism or legal segregation. Researchers have pointed out the rise of a new racism that is subtle and taken for granted, for instance, uncomfortable feelings toward different groups as being human nature (Spears, 1999; Bonilla-Silva, 2011).

For Ting and Yan, both freshmen from China, it was considered 'natural' that they would become dorm roommates though they were never asked if this arrangement was what they wanted. It was regarded as natural because the placement happened without any questions or debate, as if it was inevitable. On their floor, they were the only two Chinese students. Interestingly, both students were originally assigned American roommates. However, after 2 weeks, Yan's American roommate asked Ting if she would like Yan to be her roommate. Although Ting liked having an American roommate because she thought college life in the United States should include interaction with Americans, she also thought it would be okay to have Yan as a roommate. So, Ting and Yan ended up sharing a room together. However, now on that floor, all Americans had American

roommates and the two internationals roomed together. Later, Ting talked to me about how she felt about her dorm experience. “In my dorm, on my floor, everybody knows each other and are very close to each other but not with me and my roommate.” Bonilla-Silva (2014), using the term “white habitus,” explained the process of naturalized segregation process of Whites as a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites’ racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their view on racial matters. One of the central consequences of the white habitus is that it promotes a sense of group belonging (a white culture of solidarity) and negative views about nonwhites. (p. 152)

Although international and students of color are often blamed for “self-chosen” segregation, the blocks of White students are easily absorbed into the background and ignored. The noticeable lack of interaction between international students and American students at Mid U revealed the complex historical and social context of race existed. The next year Yan and Ting moved out of the dorm into a two-bedroom apartment and shared it with two other Chinese students. When they first decided on the apartment, they were excited about having new neighbors. Ting said, “It will be so fun! We probably going have more neighbors there than here and maybe we can invite them for hotpot some day!” However, at the new apartment, they barely talked with their American neighbors but were able to make friends with other Chinese students in the same building. The process of ‘segregation’ looked like very ‘natural.’

This natural process of pairing also happened in classroom settings. Jinho, a senior from Korea, had his lab partner changed from a White female student to a Latino immigrant male student without any explanation from the TA. No one but Jinho in the

class had changed his or her lab partner changed, most likely, he thought, so as not to interrupt the continuity of the ongoing experiment. I would argue that this indicates how internationals, and to some extent other racially marginalized students, are excluded from the dominant student population. When I went with Hyejin to her Ethnic Studies dance class, which included more physical activities, I assumed there would be more interaction between racial groups than, for example, a chemical experiment in a lab class. However, I found a strikingly divided classroom. A group of Asians comprised of Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean students sat on the right side of the classroom and a group of White Americans and two people of color sat on the right side of the classroom. The professor sat in the middle. Later the professor confessed she tried to mix the groups and encourage interactions, but she found that the "White students were scared about" getting out of their comfort zone. Hyejin shared her experiences of intense debate in the class dealing with racial discrimination and American history. She remembered that a few White students resented that "Whites always had to be blamed." Her experiences indicated not only is there segregation at Mid U, but also a racially hostile environment. Yet self-segregation of White students rarely came up in the discussion of the lack of interaction between international and American students. Everyone can live in the same dorm and take the same classes, but the groups are separated "naturally." At a residence hall dinner gala to celebrate international diversity, Jini, a junior from Korea, and I experienced something significant in the case of segregation on campus.

I was waiting to meet Jini at her residence hall dinner gala to celebrate diversity and promote conversation between intercultural groups. The Prairie hall filled quickly so it was hard to find an empty seat. I was sitting at the table close to the door. Jini showed

up after 15 minutes and I was worried about our seats, but she said her Chinese friends were supposed to get her a seat so I decided to follow her. We walked down the hall passing crowded tables. As table was located in the middle of the room, it was easy to find. But it was empty except for two young Asian women sitting there. Whereas all the other surrounding tables were packed with students, mainly Whites, this table remained barely occupied. This table that could accommodate 12 people had only four Asians. (Field note, 10/15/13)

Thus, even at events ostensibly meant to celebrate international openness and diversity students were segregated by race and nationality. This image remains vivid in my mind because of the stark contrast of an empty table in the middle of a crowded dinner hall. Because I was sitting in the corner of room, I could observe how the other tables were filling up and why this table was unoccupied was perplexing. No one forces students to sit at particular table, but the all-Asian table occurred naturally because the subtle exclusion process was hardly visible. Researches pointed out that students of color are often criticized with 'self-segregation' (Abelmann, 2009; Crozier & Davies, 2008; McClure, 2014). However, it is necessary to point out the racial dynamics that create the context and the frame of 'self-segregation.' In interviews with American students, though they did not agree with the idea, they admitted they often heard their American peers criticizing international students—"they only flock together themselves and never came out the bubble." They are the 'unassimilable' bodies and so 'different' from Americans (Ngai, 2014). Thus, the segregation of international students is highly visible and often regarded as 'problematic' due to the lack of interaction with others on campus. However, the tables of White students was not seen as segregated because the students were sitting

in the crowded hall, and every chair was occupied. It was not one table of four Asian students with empty chairs.

Nonetheless, not all Asian international students remained at the table. Lifen is a very proactive young woman from China who loves to meet new people and challenge herself with new adventures. In her single room, a colorfully decorated dorm room, she uses skateboarding to think through problems or just for fun. In her first year at Mid U, she decided not to mingle with Chinese students so she could make American friends and learn what she could about the United States. In fact, at the end of her first year, other Chinese students came to invite her for a dinner with hotpot and said, “You are the last Chinese we could find.” She tried hard to break out from the Chinese bubble. She joined a student organization that helped non-Chinese speakers learn the Chinese language and provides intercultural programs such as Chinese game night and dumpling making. She was able to meet all different types of people and engaged with them at the programs. Yet that did not necessarily mean she made a friend who would meet her after the program and share life stories. Comparable to the difficulty of finding a friend outside the Chinese group, it was also hard for her to find a partner for ballroom dancing. She loved to dance, so she joined the ballroom dance club and when she moved to the upper level, she had to find a regular partner to practice with. Whereas everyone else found partners, unfortunately she could not find one and had to quit the club even though she was very passionate about dancing. Her feeling of exclusion also continued into her academic program. Her program was pretty small with only 14 colleagues, and all the students were White except for Lifen. She said she is pretty close to her colleagues because of the nature of the course work. They used to stay up nights all together at the studio. But the

level and intensity of relationship between Lifen and her cohort was different from the relationship among her cohort members who came from same state. Lifen described her cohort's relationship as a family. She felt like she belonged in the group when they worked together on a project, but the day after it was completed she did not feel she belonged any more. She found the group was a hard shell to break into. "I can feel it from my classmates. They treat me differently. They treat me like a guest. More a…how to say. More…not as easy going as they treat their other friends." However, by her senior year, she was not bothered by that type of treatment anymore. All those who joined in to watch her final project presentation, who helped her with job interviews, and who came to her graduation ceremony and celebrated with her were Chinese,. Despite her efforts, she was never able to become an equal member of the student cohort. She described why she changed her mind

For the first year I wanted to improve my English and learn American culture and become friends with Americans. I joined a Chinese language club and also joined a ballroom dance club, but I couldn't find partner in the advanced level so I just quit. Everybody naturally found their partner, but I couldn't. You know, during the first year, I was like I won't hang with the Chinese. I need to do this, to meet more American people, and I need to do that. But by the next year I was like, okay whatever. Let's do what I want to do. If I want to hang with Chinese, let's hang with them."

Segregation is not only limited to a feeling of isolation for Asian international students, but it also acts as an obstacle in accessing social capital. Asian international students probably can acquire a certain amount of social capital through their co-ethnic groups but that can be limited especially if the students are segregated from the dominant group in

the host society. Min described her frustration about her limited access to the social capital in her field.

It's hard to blend in to American students. I really tried hard to blend in, but it's hard. They kind of tend to stick together. If you are thinking about global citizen, it is also about the business and business is all about the sharing information and networking. I think they share the resources and information within their own group.

Bourdieu (1987) viewed social capital as a network that allows access to resources and information in order to secure and then raise their class position. The exclusion from the dominant host society inhibits students from achieving their academic and social advancement. Therefore, a co-ethnic community works as the place that provides crucial alternative social capital for Asian international students (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013). As shown in Lifen's case, she could learn interview skills and practice interviews with her co-national friends. Of course, she contacted the department to find out how she could get information about job interview skills and practices, but they only referred her to the department's website. Maybe departments are not the designated place to get information about career preparation at Mid U; however, Lifen could not find any other meaningful social networks and capital to help her employment and future planning, but she did end up receiving an interview offer from a U.S. firm. Thus, she utilized her Chinese network and was able to get the appropriate advice and resources. Korean students also practiced their job searching and interview skills through their own business student organizations. They formed a study group that investigated prominent companies and their hiring process. Often ethnic communities not only help students look for a job, but they help them prepare for tests, make decisions about which

classes to take, and even set up fundraising for unexpected events such as car accidents or a sudden illnesses. This type of assistance is rarely available through the university or the dominant American group. It is possible that 'self-segregation' in an ethnic community might involve the neoliberal logic that includes an efficient and convenient way of securing resources, but it is still important to note Mid U's racially exclusive context.

ESL as a white-dominant educational space. An ESL classroom is an important space for Asian international students because of its focus on learning academic English and the American culture. Furthermore, it works as a gatekeeper as it is a mandatory course for completing a degree at Mid U. Mid U policy requires an additional ESL placement test even if the students have satisfied the minimum TOEFL test. If students do not pass the placement test, they are required to take ESL courses. Most Asian international students have already had experience with ESL. From the interviews I discovered that only 1 out of 41 of the participants had passed the placement test. Thus, ESL can be understood as a gatekeeper for most Asian international undergraduates. In the 2013 fall-2014 spring semester, I visited Ms. Weiss, Ms. Shenider, Ms. Dawson, and Mr. Nelson's ESL classrooms out of 47 classes. I also interviewed the director of the ESL department, Ms. Jones and an instructor, Mr. Lee. At that time, Mr. Lee was one of the very few staff who was a person of color in the department, so it was important to hear his voice regarding racialization in ESL classroom spaces. Ample literature has pointed out that the ESL classroom is a crucial place to understand students' and teachers' race and racialization process in an educational setting (Kubota & Lin, 2009)

Based on my observations, the ESL classroom mostly consisted of students of color and a White instructor. Mr. Lee, an Asian instructor, confirmed that he is one of

only two staff of color among 47 instructors and staff. However, when I asked Ms. Jones, the director, about the racial ratio of the faculty, she did not give specific numbers, instead she answered, "Oh, I never think about it in that way." She smiled, "It doesn't matter to me. I only think about them as our teaching staffs." Her answer was interesting to me because this provided an almost perfect example of color-blindness. Omi and Winant (1999) described that color-blindness is frequently used as a legitimate excuse for racial inequality. It dismisses the recognition of racial construction but instead focuses on individual merit and capability that can always be evaluated differently by one's own race. Winant (2001) argued that "racism must be identified by its consequences" (p. 308) under the racial hegemony of the 21st century. The significant lack of faculty of color supports evidence of racial inequality in the relatively large ESL department.

Teaching and learning are often regarded as distant from race and racialization. However, the lack of faculty of color and the position of English in Mid U's symbolic hierarchies influence the racialization of Asian international students and other students of color. Who can teach English? Who is qualified to teach English and who are positioned as learners? While I was sitting in the hallway of the ESL department waiting for Ms. Jones, I realized that because of my race, to anyone observing me, I was being assigned to the position of a student. There was no possibility I could be mistaken for a lecturer or a staff. The instructors, who were all White, passed by and kept asking me, "What is your issue?" or "Who do you have appointment with?" I appreciated that they were trying to help. When I answered that I was there for research, they wished me good luck but with surprise on their faces. Although Ms. Jones mentioned that all of the faculty are just teaching members, regardless of race, there was obviously a particularly expected

type of instructor in the ESL department. Interestingly, when I asked the participants about their ESL instructors' race and what they thought about that, students answered that most of them were White and the participants seemed to take this for granted or were satisfied with that. Ying commented on her White instructor: "This is America and it's about English." Ying was not the only one who readily accepted Whiteness as a pre-condition for teaching English. Many students assumed that learning English from a White person is not a questionable matter. When I asked again, "Aren't Black people American and don't they speak English too?" the students answered that they barely thought about these questions in that way. Often, students had a suspicious look on their face when they thought about learning English from an African American and gave the excuse of a problem with "an accent and weird feeling." The White teaching staff in ESL classes confirmed their understanding that "real" Americans are White.

Racialized as Other in Control and Screening

In this section, I pay particular attention to the racialization of Asian international students as targets of management and testing that could assume the students' lack of academic honesty or capability of being active learners. The racialization of Asian international students as untrustworthy foreigners is striking. I found that one of Mid U's policies mandates the re-testing of international students' academic achievement in previous institutions. I also found that there was a pervasive attitude among faculty and administration that international students are prone to academic misconduct. In the classroom, the micro-managing rules for international students indicated that they are regarded as passive learners and even subject to patronization in the classroom.

Uneven policy: Additional screening. While exclusion is apparent in the daily

life of international students, Mid U has an uneven policy for international students who transfer from other institutions. Min, a senior from China, had to manage unexpected extra time and cost for her degree because of extra screening for transferred international students. According to the Mid U policy regarding the English class as a general education requisite, introduced in 2014, all transferred international students have to re-take an ESL placement test regardless of their previous academic coursework. Min had transferred from one of the Midwestern State's campuses to Mid U and expected to graduate by December, 2015. However, she found out that she needed six more credits of ESL at Mid U before she could graduate, though she already completed equivalent ESL courses at the previous institution, which is in same university system with Mid U. This meant she needed to add extra credits to her schedule and take a summer course to complete her degree on time. The following statement on Mid U's website outlines the policy regarding re-testing for incoming international students to ascertain their English proficiency.

All incoming international transfer students will be asked to complete our ESLAT (English as a Second Language Assessment Test) placement test before attending orientation. The Office of Admissions and Recruitment will only grant credit for previously completed English coursework in the US if the student tests into or places out of our English 118 course, which fulfills our Communication A requirement.

Thus, regardless of their previous educational experiences and record, international students must be re-tested, even if they have transferred from the same franchise university. However, this policy does not apply to American transfer students as their previous English coursework also qualifies for the general education requisites. When

Min found that her American friends who transferred from the same campus could transfer their credits without any further tests or extra classes, she was deeply frustrated with her situation. American students who took same class with us transferred here and they could transfer the credit. We can't transfer the credit. I think maybe this is too strong word but. . .this is discrimination. They neglect to honor what international students have done even though some of international students got higher grades from the course than the Americans. Min's experience regarding the policy indicates how ESL and Mid U perceive international students and their academic achievement. Their achievements are the target for retesting which possibly translates as being untrustworthy.

Although I understand the particularity of ESL courses and the policy must be well intended to ascertain that international students learn English appropriately and achieve a certain level of proficiency, questions about the process remain. Who is the target of the re-testing and who is not? Who is trustworthy in terms of academic performance and who is not? Mid U wanted to retest the international transfer students with its tool even if these students had come from the same franchise campus. What does that mean? We can set aside the discussion of reliability or validity of the testing policy, but it is important to note that many international students had already spent quite some time in English-speaking countries. Why does the administration selectively choose international students to be re-assessed? This distinctive process of othering can be found in the following sections. It remains questionable if the sole purpose of this rule is to gauge the quality of ESL education, or if it is linked in some way to secure extra revenue sources. Many of the international students criticized Mid U's policy because they were forced to spend extra money and time to take ESL courses. In 2013, a three-credit ESL

course cost $3,373.33 per the website of Mid U. Ming, a female Chinese senior described her impression of Mid U as “they are doing business with me.” However, a neoliberal university does not only do business with internationals. Slaughter and Rhoades (2000) found that students are increasingly regarded as revenue generators in light of public budget cuts. Internationals who pay out-of-state tuition, incur the cost of additional ESL credits and extra processing fees are one of the most favored student groups for a university.

Construction of Sneaky Foreigners and Use of “Culture.*”* Jini received a call from her ESL instructor Ms. Baker on Monday. She did not know what it was about, but when they met she learned that her paper would be given a zero because she had plagiarized it. Ms. Baker said that 20 percent of her paper was the same as the another Chinese student in the class. Jini was surprised and shocked. Then, Ms. Baker asked: ‘Did you copy someone's paper?’ ‘Did you work with someone?’ ‘Did you take pictures of the other student’s papers?’ Although thisis procedural, Jini felt that she was treated like a criminal. Jini answered ‘no’ to all the questions because she had not done any of these things. However, according to the checking machine, 20 percent of the answers were coincidental which indicated plagiarism. Ms. Baker is a fair person and asked the coordinator for feedback, but there was no exception for rule. Both of the students received 0 points. (Field note, Feb/20/15)

In this section, I will analyze the racialization of Asian international students as untrustworthy foreigners at Mid U, especially in terms of academic misconduct. International students’ plagiarism is a central issue that rose from conversations with faculty members in ESL and the administration at the International Student Center. When

I asked several faculty members what their major concern was in teaching international students, Ms. Gibson, a vice provost of student affairs and also the director of the International Student Center, answered,

> "I would say, one of the issues is that there is a greater proportion of academic misconduct among international students than Americans and that's something that this office is working on. I have given presentations for students with the Dean of the Students Office, and this year we changed things a little bit. Unfortunately only one student attended the workshop on academic misconduct. (…) The international students caught cheating, or doing something misleading, such as plagiarism, I don't believe they intend to do that. They are stressed out, run out of time, or creativity, and then they have no idea the tools that the university has to find out that they have cheated. They are very naiive. That's what we tried to share the workshop is that, there is software programs plus you have communicated them with English that is very broken, especially in emails, right? (…) Then, you have this beautifully written paper, are you kidding me? Of course, we know.."

In the interviews, I was led to believe that the belief of international students' involvement of academic misconduct is widely shared across the campus. Yonhee remembered an instructor who hovered around the international students during her economics class exam. Ms. Gibson confirmed that there is a shared understanding that international students are inclined to engage in academic misconduct at the university level. Ms. Weiss also mentioned that she takes plagiarism seriously in essays in the ESL classrooms, and the department has clear rules and tools that assess the academic

misconduct of students. Ms. Johnson, the Director of the ESL department, took into account what the cultural aspect of what plagiarism meant to international students: “I know, maybe the plagiarism is new to them. I mean, it could be new. In France, you know, there’s even no such concept of plagiarism.” The Asian academic culture is different from American academic culture, and a new context inadvertently could lead Asian international students to academic dishonesty.

Cultural difference could matter. The Western notion of knowledge and academic integrity could confuse Asian international students and frame their academic achievement in certain ways (Kell & Vogl, 2010). Denise (2016) pointed out that universities should provide academic support for international students. Here, however, my focus is not on whether academic dishonesty is caused by the Asian culture or not. Rather, I am intrigued by how faculty and administrators’ discourse around international students’ academic dishonesty is attributed to ‘culture’ in particular ways. At this point, culture is hardly beneficial to the students, but rather it comes closer to the problems that clash with Americans’ understanding of academic integrity. Culture involves drawbacks that should be fixed with American norms rather than support for international students. Thus, the concept of culture was utilized to problematize their behaviors rather than to respect what they brought as students to Mid U. Fanon (2008) argued how imperial projects employed culture as a tool to control and devastate the colonized ‘other’ from a Western perspective. Culture can also be used to prove the inferiority of the ‘other’ and support the necessity to control a group ‘appropriately,’ which overall is regarded as the norm for the American White middle class.

On the other hand, it is important to note that American higher education has been

struggling with increased academic misconduct in the recent decade. This is not solely a problem pertaining to Asian international students. Literature has showed that academic misconduct is a fast-growing trend in U.S. higher education (Blum, 2011; Jones, 2011; Rigby, Burton, Balcombe, Bateman, & Mulatu, 2015). Blum found "75 percent of students admit to having cheated; 68 percent admit to cutting and pasting materials from Internet without citation" (p. 1). Wolverton (2016) found the market for academic cheating practices is rapidly expanding and students can easily hire a ghostwriter for their essays from online sites such as Craigslist that created new economy. Blum (2011) argued that the competitive and exhaustive environment that students in selective colleges experience in their educational trajectory should be taken into account, rather than making plagiarism as solely a morality issue. Nonetheless, from the perspectives of the Mid U faculty members and administration, the broad context of the 'cheating culture' in American higher education is not an issue, but the group of internationals who display academic misconduct is problematic. In a similar vein, dealing with the racialized understanding of mass shooters, Brandzel and Desai (2008) found that the cultural explanation for an Asian mass shooter omits the inherent problems of the U.S. society that not only alienates people of color and immigrants, but also leads the media to focus on the 'unassimilable difference' that may contribute to fatal consequences. Therefore, the larger context of the United States becomes invisible, but the troublesome 'other' in a smaller context remains visible.

In addition, it is still arguable how academic integrity should be pursued and handled.

Let's return to Jini's case. Maybe the 20 percent of coincidences in the two students' papers could draw reasonable suspicions of academic misconduct. However,

Jini's paper was not an argument paper that expressed opinions, but a summary paper of a four-page article comprised of one-half pages. The students were told to identify the key arguments of the original document, and in the classroom they also practiced learning paraphrasing and certain sentence types. In the summary, it is possible that the two students used some common sentences they could employ as non-native English speakers. Moreover, when it comes to one-half pages, 20 percent of the coincidences could end up as only a few lines. I do not intend to argue that the students did not exercise academic misconduct, but there could be loophole, and maybe there could have been another recourse rather than relying on the no-exceptions, restrictive integrity rule.

Patronization using control and micro discipline in the classroom. In Ms. Weiss's classroom, I observed the assignment guideline sheet that was common in most of the ESL classes. While the sheet provided information about homework assignments, at the bottom there were penalty policies regarding assignment submission. It is understandable that a few penalty policies are necessary to manage the quality of learning and the process, but there were rules that were not necessarily related to teaching or learning. For instance, students were told to submit an assignment and identify it with the specific file name such as class number and full name. If they submitted the wrong name, they would get one point deducted from their grade. Also, if students used another file format other than MS-Word, they would also receive another one-point deduction penalty. I understand that Mid U instructors were struggling with heavy workloads from the multiple courses they taught and graded, especially those involving extensive writing homework. In fact, Ms. Jones said in the interview that, though ESL instructors experienced an increased workload because of the sharp increase of international

students, the department did not have sufficient financial support from the university. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that an assignment file name or type could harm a student's evaluation especially when the course is not specifically related to a particular computer program or file type. In actuality, one point cannot ruin the student's whole coursework grade and the students' efforts. Yet Joohee, a female sophomore from Korea, could not submit her homework because her instructor refused to accept it as the margins differed from the instructions. She received a zero for her essay and had to take a make-up test to replace that grade.

It is important to examine why ESL class spaces have these micromanaging rules that are different from regular college classes. It might be argued that learning a language requires a different class setting than regular college courses due to the language course's more intensive practices and training. However, when I went with Taemin, one of my focal participants, to his Chinese language course, that course did not have this type of micromanaging rules. I also accompanied students to various other major and elective courses, but I never found such micromanaging rules in those classrooms. I argue that this is a process of discipline targeting international students as English learners. Although the rules do not have excessive force, students always needed to be aware of them. As Foucalt (2012) articulated, it is the process of making a "docile bodies" that fits with particular modern spaces such as a factory and a school classroom (p. 148). ESL classes, the mandated courses for Asian internationals, operate as disciplining spaces for them.

A 'docile body' is not only created by assignment rules, but also by actual body control when the instructor assigns the students their seats. Ms. Weiss, a thoughtful and

enthusiastic instructor, often carefully assigned seats to her students to make sure they were not sitting in a group of their co-ethnic peers. She felt this arrangement could prohibit their learning process. When three Korean students were sitting together at a table before she assigned seats, she approached and asked them with smile, "Is this a small Korean block?" Although she did not make them move their seats that day, the Korean students seemed to have difficulty in responding. They looked nervous and just gave an awkward smile. Then Ms. Weiss moved to the podium to begin the session. Later in the interview, she mentioned that the co-ethnic bubble in the ESL class concerned her. While I agree with her idea that students need to practice more English to learn better, it is often helpful to use one's mother tongue to clarify the class contents or assignment direction with their co-ethnic peers. Researchers have reputed the belief that a person's first language hinders their learning English, and there are a few substantive empirical evidences that English-only class practice can improve the quality of language learning (Coelho, 2004; Cummins, 2003; Guo, 2009).

Moreover, it remains arguable that the use of patronization is necessary to control where college students take a seat and whether where they sit in the classroom determines the specific contents of learning. Ms. Weiss's practice is not unique. From my personal experience, on the first day of my ESL class for a writing a thesis and dissertation course, the instructor, Mr. Green, a White man in his 50s, gave similar seat assignments to students. He made all Chinese students raise their hand and assigned seats to them: "Chinese, no Chinese, Chinese, no Chinese. Are you Chinese?" Although all of the students in my ESL classroom were graduate students and even Ph. D candidates who are generally regarded as professional academics in her/his field, the seat-assignment process

did not reflect our academic status. To be clear, Ms. Schneider, another ESL class instructor, did not have these specific guidelines in her class, but the class was all Chinese except for two Koreans. That ratio was different from Ms. Weiss's class that had somewhat more diversity. Jini, a junior from Korea, who took an ESL class with another instructor also mentioned, "I feel like she (instructor) treated me like a child. She was careful and kind but the way she was talking and her attitude. . .was like I was a small child." Other students also remarked in similar way and one of the students even described ESL as a kindergarten. He wanted to say it was fun and instructors were nice, but he also implied he was not treated like a college student. The lack of a certain level of English proficiency is often regarded as a lack these students' capability as young adults.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed how Asian international students are racialized as 'other' at Mid U, a globalizing American university. Though Mid U and Wood City are regarded as a historically progressive place, the data indicates that both the university and the town are struggling to attain racial social justice. Asian international students are categorized and separated from the main student body and often targeted for continuing assessment and management. As a graduate student, the university's attempt to screen and control is not surprising to me because since 1992, 18 states had passed laws mandating the screening of foreign TAs via an additional, standardized English test and training, even though the TAs had already proved their English skills during the admission process that included a TOEFL test (Smith, Byrd, Nelson, Barrett, & Constantinides, 1992). Across the United States, there were strong petitions that required screening and control of international TAs. The quality assurance of a teaching assistant could be crucial since

they take on a significant part of undergraduates' education. Then, why did they want to manage only a specific group of TAs? This could confirm the selective recognition of the others' credible voice. Whose voice is regarded as trustworthy and whose voice is regarded as unreliable?

Chapter 4

Asian International Students' Neoliberal Understandings of and Responses to Race and Racism

This chapter explores how neoliberal ideologies and practices shape Asian international undergraduates' understandings and responses to racism and the racialization process that occurs in a globalizing American university. In Chapter 3, I argued that Asian international students are racialized and othered in a particular way within the racial structure in the United States. Yet, how are Asian international students themselves making sense of race in the process of their education in a globalized American institution? Employing the framework of neoliberalism and racialization, this chapter argues that Asian international undergraduates share the notions of color-blindness and race avoidance with American students based on neoliberal logics. Interviews and field notes reveal that they used codes of invisibility, self-responsibility, and performativity to make sense of their experiences concerning race and racism in the United States. Race and racism were rendered invisible, not only through the denial of the existence of racism itself, but by using culture and cultural differences to naturalize the lack of interaction between Whites and internationals. However, this 'invisibility' also promoted silence around racism for social integration. With neoliberal logics of responsibility and performance, students become individually accountable for their trouble with race, and self-checking performance regulates their denial and privatization

of racism with the rational of meritocracy. Some students interpreted their experiences with racism as an indication that they were "not successful enough" as color-blind ideologies omit the structural racial inequality and only focus on the individual context. Performativity also mattered in the ways that students seek Whiteness as capital for their aim of global competitiveness within internalized racial frames.

Although Asian international students may not fully understand the cultural and historical forms of race and racism in U.S. society, their color-blind and "race neutral" responses to and understandings of racism are surprisingly similar to the pervasive perspectives in American society as outlined by Bonilla-Silva (2013). It is important to note that American White students who were interviewed and observed also indicated color-blindness regarding race and racism. I argue that the global process of neoliberal meaning making of race stems not from a specific group of individuals' perspective, but from the predominant political economy of neoliberalism, the structure of race in U.S. higher education, and the global society at large.

Neoliberalism and Racial Structure and International Students

International students are often referred to as neoliberal cosmopolitans due to their aspirations and practices, which are based more on ideas of global competency and market-like logic rather than the traditional liberal ideals of global humanity or the celebration of cultural differences (Kim, 2011; Rizvi, 2005; 2008; Weenink, 2008). Researchers have pointed to international students' global education projects as part of their social and cultural capital accumulation and have argued that the students tend to be "less concerned with the moral and political dimensions of global connectivity than with education's strategic economic possibilities" (Rizvi 2009, p. 260).

This can be inferred from the neoliberal ideologies that are widely shared by American higher education institutions and Asian international students, which prioritize a global free market and private benefits while drawing attention from interests in the public domain. Mitchell (2003, 2007) argued that neoliberal education policies have shifted the idea of a global citizen to a "strategic cosmopolitan," an idea that consequently narrowly frames and erodes the purpose of multicultural education. Sleeter (2014) also pointed out that neoliberal forces can also erode the ideas of social justice in the education field with the concepts of privatization and market competition.

Neoliberalism and the structure of race are closely related in the current construction of U.S. society and throughout the world. As neoliberalism has become the dominant form of political economy since the Reagan administration, other social domains are also under the regime of the ideology. Specifically, the literature explains that neoliberalism has changed racial formation as well as racism in particular ways, rendering race and racism invisible by means of the neutral meritocratic free market rationality. Omi and Winant (2014) stated that neoliberalism denies race issues and employs color-blindness to mask existing racial inequality. Bonilla-Silva (2013) articulated that a new racial structure has emerged that omits and perpetuates racial inequality after the post-civil rights era. This new racism is often referred to as color-blind racism, which is operated by "traditional liberalism for racially illiberal goals" (Bonilla-Silva, 2013, p. 7). Because free-market ideologies firmly believe in equal opportunity and fair competition, race and racial structures are not recognized. Furthermore, the consequences are based solely on individual merit. In this way, neoliberal logics have legitimized racial inequality with color-blind racism by

condemning racial minorities through the use of market rationales such as poor work-ethic, low skills, and unworthy merit while normalizing Whiteness.

Moreover, individualism and a reduction of public interest aggravates the repudiation of the racial structure. The logic of color-blindness and neoliberalism share the fundamental principles of individual liberty and freedom; thus, individuals come before the structure. Under neoliberal influence, "the discourse about race becomes more privatized" (Giroux, 2003, p. 193). According to the free-market logics of colorblind racism, an individual's effort and merit matters more than one's race or background. Thus, the history and context of racism become hidden and the struggles of people of color are framed as individual failures or the fair result of the free market. Furthermore, market logics matter in the reconstruction of racism in terms of the financial value and cost of a certain racial group. Omi and Winant (2014) also contended that neoliberalism has deliberately neglected racial issues. For example, financial rationales are often utilized to discriminate against a racial minority group with the evidence of the cost of crime control and welfare services used for racially marginalized groups. Giroux (2003) critiqued that "racial justice in an age of market-based freedoms and financially driven values loses its ethical imperative that embraces commercial rather than civic values, private rather than public interest, and financial incentives rather than ethical concerns" (pp. 195–196). In neoliberal times, race becomes invisible while racism continues to perpetuate the varied logics of the free market.

Research has pointed out that international students are struggling with racial discrimination (Jung, Hecht, & Wadsworth, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007; Redden, 2012). Lee and Rice (2007) examined international students' experiences within the framework of

neo-racism and found that cultural hostility and intolerance in U.S. society create difficulties for them. International students, especially Asian students, are often illustrated as passive learners with low self-esteem. However, not much research has been conducted regarding the understanding and response of Asian international students on race and racism in the neoliberal context using ethnographic data. Moreover, a large portion of the research on international students has focused on adaptation and accommodation issues rather than addressing the larger social structure of race and the macro neoliberal economic context. While they are pursuing their strategic cosmopolitan projects, how are they making sense of race and racism as social structures that they cannot escape? The following sections attempt to address this question.

Codes of invisibility

Although racial hierarchy and inequality are still working as a critical social structure of U.S. society, color-blindness often fails to recognize the existence of racism. While a few students told me in their interviews that they were frustrated with the overt and subtle racial discrimination that they experienced at Mid U, the majority of Asian international and White American students agreed ‘there is no racism here’ at the university or in Wood city (pseudonym). Despite the denial of racism, enrollment data reveals that the retention rates of African American and Native American students are significantly lower than those for White students. The enrollment data statistics not only imply evidence of racism, but several on- campus incidents reflect a hostile climate for racial and ethnic minority students. One of the most significant incidents was when campus police arrested an African American student while he was in class. They suspected he had drawn anti-racism graffiti messages on a campus building. The campus

police wearing bullet-proof vests, body cameras, and visible guns entered the classroom without respect for the instructor. The African American student was arrested after he followed the officers outside of the building. Reports of racially biased violence and hate crimes on campus indicate an increasingly intolerant behavior in recent years. As this evidence shows, there is no doubt racism exists and is quite influential on campus; however, Asian international students and White students in this study shared a denial of the existence of racism The codes of invisibility are represented in three forms: the verbalization of "not here," a natural occurrence due to culture, and proper silence.

"Racism exists in the U.S. Society but not here". The strategies of Asian international and American students that deny racial discrimination are various, but the central point is that racism is not happening now or here by "us." Certainly, they still believe that racial discrimination exists in U.S. society but not at Mid U. They believe it is promoted by others who are uneducated, poor, drunken, or immature. Students also believed that racism was more prevalent in the South, or was a problem of the past. This approach frames experiences with racism as extreme cases that are out of the ordinary, rendering it invisible in their daily lives. In the interviews, Asian international students responded that they had not experienced racism and "Americans are mostly nice and the campus is welcoming. I don't think there is racism anymore (Yan, Chinese female, Sophomore)." When I asked for clarification, Yan explained, "I know there were a lot of ugly things that happened like the Chinese exclusion…not giving citizenship and other things, but I think it's in the past. It's in the history book, but not now." Yan had taken the Ethnic Studies class that covered the history of Asian American settlment and their struggles in the United States, so she had knowledge of Asian American history. Yet, she

felt that she did not see racial discrimination because of the socioeconomic and education levels of people in Wood City. The university has a reputation for having a progressive political atmosphere and a high quality of education in both K-12 and higher education. Therefore, students often assume that racial discrimination does not occur in Wood City.

> People who live here are highly educated and most of them are students or university-related people. I don't see any racial discrimination by them, but I know if you go up north, outside of Wood City, it maybe is not like people here.

Luo, a Chinese female student, had similar ideas. "I think people here are mostly educated and nice people. Especially on campus. But when you go out of the campus, like to Walmart, there are a lot of uneducated people." In interviews with international students, young people expressed that the educated and middle class, which most of them belong to, are "civilized" and relatively free from racism.

The "South" was a popular comparison that came up in interviews when explaining how Wood City is safe for racial minorities. Interestingly, James, a White American male student, shared his ideas about the South regarding racial discrimination: "Wood City is a liberal and progressive city, you know, so…well, I think the situation here is much better than other places...If international students go South, they would have faced more of that kind of thing." Wood City is separated from the context of the whole United States when comparing the American South to the American North. The South is perceived as having a higher Black and Hispanic population, is more rural, and is a relatively low-educated region. In contrast, Wood City is predominantly a White, liberal town with a relatively highly educated population. While Wood City seems to be situated beyond the racial inequality of the United States, Asian international students regard

racist incidents as extreme cases. Even if they had experienced or observed incidents around campus, it was not framed as racism but framed as out-of-ordinary cases. Min, a Chinese female student, is one of the students who recounted her experiences with some "weird" individuals.

> Well, I had one…one night I was on the bus and there were guys yelling at me "speak English!" but I really didn't care that much. They were just drunk. And you know…it's night and we were on the bus. That never happens to me other times. Other people here are nice and welcoming.

Eunsoo, a Korean male student, also explained his problematic experiences with "those immature boys." Giroux (2003) argued that neoliberalism altered the understanding of racism as a private sector problem that limits racial matters to an individualized issue. The cases reflect a specific individual context not based on structural understanding. The privatization of race related to such concerns shifted the students' response to and understanding of racism. Therefore, students understood racism as not a structural problem that requires systemic approaches and reflects U.S. society as a whole, but rather as isolated, extreme cases limited to "weird" or "immature" individuals. Wu (2003) argued, "As a nation we have become so seemingly triumphant at vilifying racists that we have induced denial about racism" (p. 13). This "othering" of racism serves to obscure racial inequality in the society. While they exclude racism from the population, in location and time they are present; consequently, it perpetuates racial discrimination because it is recognition remains neglected.

On the other hand, Quang, a Chinese male senior's response about racism shows "othering" racists may be a link to othering racialized victims. When I asked about his

experience with racial discrimination, he answered "Well…Not to me, but it happens to people, I mean, Asian immigrants who work at a laundry or Chinese restaurants or something like that." As a Business major senior, a future graduate student, and a former IBM intern, he could not relate to the marginalized population who are struggling with racial discrimination. His upper-middle class background and his academic credentials blurred his ability to understand racial inequality, thus he distanced himself from "those Asians." When racism becomes invisible, the struggles of racial subordinates are hardly recognized as structural problems, but are rather framed as "self-responsibilized" issues.

Naturalization and cultural racism. Another effective approach of making race and racism invisible is naturalizing race-related occurrences and experiences. Bonilla-Silva (2013) argued that naturalization is utilized by Whites as a frame to explain segregated communities and their social preferences. When discussing residential segregation and White-oriented friendship, Bonilla-Silva's White respondents normalized racially motivated events and relationships as natural. For Asian international students in my current research, naturalization is used to understand their experiences of isolation. Ting, a Chinese female freshman carefully chose her residence hall. She did her research and found out that Spring Hall tended to have a high population of Asian international undergraduates, especially Chinese, due to recommendations from formers students and its convenient location. Because she wanted to meet new people and make friends with Americans, she avoided Spring Hall and chose Green Hall, which is located away from the campus center and has few Chinese students. As she expected, there were very few Asians in the dorm compared to Spring Hall. Ting and Yan, another Chinese female freshman, were the only two Asians on their floor and "naturally" they became

roommates, though they did not request it. Both had initially White American female roommates, but after 2 weeks Yan's roommate wanted to change her roommate, and again "naturally" Ting was asked to be Yan's roommate. Therefore, on that floor, all the Americans shared a room with Americans and the internationals had a room together. Later, Ting talked to me about how she felt about her dorm. However, Yan and Ting still did not interpret this as a race-related matter; rather, they understood it as a natural consequence. Yan tried to rationalize her former roommate's choice as a natural gravitation towards similar people.

> I understand her. She said she wanted to have a roommate like a family. She wanted to share her day and talk about what she was thinking… Our culture is really different…maybe she had a hard time sharing her experiences or understanding me. And….I was kind of quiet and shy….we didn't talk much. So….

Yan was not the only one who interpreted limited contacts between American students and Asian international as a natural occurrence. Angela, a White American female senior, shared similar ideas about her perspective of the fine line between American and Asian internationals.

> "I guess you know you do see some level of, I guess self-imposed segregation maybe in classes where…I mean partially maybe a language thing or partially just a cultural thing. (…) It's not like, I don't know. There's nothing being forced upon us of whatever. That's just the way, I guess people end up or they, they so, yeah, they do it themselves. I don't know whose fault it is or it's not like anybody's fault or anything. It's just...That's just kind of..."

Interviews and observations repeatedly revealed the absence of friendship between American and Asian international across campus and throughout semesters. Asian international students and Americans frequently understood the situation as a natural phenomenon and resisted the idea that race was involved. In other words, they understood racial segregation to be a natural occurrence. Students believed that they naturally became roommates with their co-ethnic peers, happened to study with students of the same race, and eat lunch and spend weekends together with them. It is possible that their choices are based on self-segregation. However, there are cases that do not fit well into the sole frame of self-segregation. Lifen, a proactive Chinese female senior who wanted to get out of her Chinese bubble, joined the student ballroom dance club and the department event committee; most of the population was predominantly White, but she still could not find an American friend to spend time with her after classes or on weekends. She was the only one who did not have a partner at the dance club. However, Lifen and many Asian international students continued to naturalize this segregation and hesitated to mention race. They even naturalized the isolation of culturally different groups of people as natural human behavior. Anxi, a Chinese student and Lifen's dorm mate, explained her experiences in China.

> In our class, we had a White girl from Europe, maybe Sweden. I remember she experienced the same thing. I didn't ask her at the time but I guess she had a hard time to become friends with us and to understand us. It's the usual thing that happens if you go to a new place.

It is interesting that Anxi brought up the case of a White young woman in her class in China, which, given the context of Asia, is situated in different racial dynamics. It is

often observed that students argue that Americans, mostly Whites would experience a similar isolation if they went to study in Korea or China. That shows that on the one hand, they want to frame their segregated experiences only with culture, and on the other hand, they failed to consider the racial hierarchy in their host country but also in their home country. Sumi, a Korean female sophomore, also mentioned a similar event: "I am not saying there is no discrimination but it's the kind of the thing inevitable when there are so many different cultures. You know, because there are all different people, it's hard to embrace everyone." When cultural difference is utilized to support the naturalization of groupings of people who are ethnically and racially the same, limited contacts between Whites and racial minorities are easily settled without question.

Culture is not only used to naturalize the limited interaction between different racial groups, but also to stigmatize one particular group, mostly African Americans. When I asked Sumi, why there is a low retention rate of African American students at Mid U, she brought up the idea of culture to understand the situation.

> I think they have a different culture and values than we do. They really don't value the degree or academic things but they value other things. Maybe that's why there are not in the school. Also family culture matters…they don't have many people in their family who went to college.

Sumi also mentioned community and cultural environment to explain the lower educational credentials of African Americans.

> The environment is different. Well, I think the neighborhood is really more important than individuals. Whites are living in the northern part, I would say wealthier parts of Chicago and Blacks are lived in the South and the place is

> really dangerous. The neighborhood itself is different. You can hear gunshots in the night. (…) so since you have lived in that environment, they may choose to join the Army not college. I mean, it's a bottom-up choice. No one forced them to join the Army, but the environment made them choose.

Sumi initially formed her ideas about Blacks from her high school experiences in Chicago, but they were also confirmed by the larger dominant discourse about African Americans at the university. Angela, a White female student shared a similar perspective. When I asked the same question, why do you think there is a low retention rate of African Americans and Native Americans at Mid U, Angela offered a cultural explanation. She thought that each community was less likely to value education and are more likely to be struggling with poverty, which again is linked to neglecting the value of education. Furthermore, she mentioned that they failed in college because they did not put in the proper amount of effort to maintain their academic status. Thus, she did not agree with affirmative action. It was interesting to find out that she has decided to take more Ethnic Studies classes, more than required, because she wants to learn more about life in America. A cultural explanation and blaming the community of color seem quite powerful, even compatible with the knowledge she learned from Ethnic Studies classes. Sumi and Angela's comments echo Balibar's (1988) argument that cultural difference rationalizes racism by employing the rhetoric of "incompatibility of life style" that implies inferiority of the subordinate racial groups. In this context, their 'different' culture that does not value education and is located in a dangerous place is very different from 'us.' When I asked Asian international students about their relationship with African Americans and Latinos, they often answered that they barely met with them,

followed by an explanation of the Midwestern state's population statistics. In the field work, it is also found that the limited interaction is not only between White Americans and Asian international students but also between Asian internationals and the racial minority at Mid U.

Silence on racism. The third code of invisibility encourages silence about race and racism. Color-blind racism requires people to not be aware of "color" as the recognition itself can be discriminatory; however, color-blindness itself maintains discrimination against people of color by ignoring structural and historical contexts. As noted in previous sections, many students at Mid U were reluctant to recognize the involvement of race in their daily lives. In this section, I will provide more evidence of the students' color-blindness, and how students argued that even talking about racism made the current race-related situation worse or wasteful. Sulgi, a Korean female freshman, expressed her tiredness about discussing racism while she and two other Korean friends were having dinner at a nearby café campus.

> I am so bored about talking about racism. Whites are always bad and Asians are always discriminated. I'm sick to hear that. I think that has adverse effect and kind of maintains the second place of Asians. You know, it presupposes Asians are meant to be discriminated against. (Field note, October 30, 2014)

Sulgi's friend Hyejin, a Korean female senior agreed, said, "We really don't need to know about that. That makes us more aware of those…" Tao, a Chinese male student, had a similar view when I asked how his Ethnic Studies class was going.

> I think the Ethnic Studies class is not really good. Well…honestly, what we are learning sounds racist. We are all equal, I mean White and Asian are all

> equal…but in the class, they are confirming the hierarchy of the races and saying Whites are first and Asians are the second.

This approach towards discussions of racism was prevalent in interviews with Asian international students. They complained about the idea of Asians as victims of racial hierarchy. Their comments might be interpreted as a powerful statement of anti-racism, showing the agency of Asians; however, they reveal an ignorance of structural racial discrimination and the reluctance to unmask racism. Similarly, although their complaints about Asians as second-place citizens could be understood as advocacy of equity among racial groups, they also imply students' willingness to identify with the dominant White population. Their identification with the mainstream rather than subordinates, may explain their unwillingness to discuss racism. Bhatia (2007) similarly found that middle-class Indian professionals "wanted to establish their identity as being similar to that of the dominant majority" and they strategically converted their difference into sameness with their American White counterparts.

Nevertheless, Asian international students were not the only group who were hesitant to talk about racism. Chris, a White American female junior, agreed that talking about racism would not be good for achieving social integration. While the Ethnic Studies class was talking about the role and influence of the course, Chris was worried about the side effect, "Pointing a finger at certain people and saying you were being oppressed is not really talking about moving forward together. I don't think that's a good idea. That will keep people divided." It is even some times regarded as 'rude' if you talk about race and racism. Bonilla-Silva (2013) argued that the color-blind myth accuses people who discuss racism and race as cultivating racial divisions. However, keeping

silent about race seems to neither conceal racial divisions nor achieve equality in society. Castagno (2009) pointed out that the silence of White teachers on racial matters perpetuate racial inequality and the experiences of struggle of students of color in schools. Moreover, she argued that the silence exists because teachers believe that talking about race is not nice, thus silence and niceness go together. Many Asian international students did not want to discuss racism because they felt it would hurt the White students' feelings. White and Asian international students are both engaged in silence surrounding racism, but they did it for different reasons. While White students avoid the conversation in order to negate White privilege in the social and historical context, Asian international students are reluctant to consider themselves racially subordinate to Whites despite the social reality

Codes of performativity and self-responsibility

While codes of invisibility indicate that Asian international students' perspective on race fit with American color-blind racism, this section will explore how they have come to align with such color-blindness. In doing so, I will especially focus on the hidden neoliberal cultural logics in the experiences of Asian international students. Data show that neoliberal ideologies construct a discursive understanding of race and racism in the ways that match the market-like logics of self-responsibility and performativity.

Self-Responsibilization of being racially subordinated. Responsibilization is one of the powerful logics of neoliberal ideologies. Relying on the works of Foucault (1991), research has focused on the shifts in public responsibility to the private sectors that eventually promote self-regulation and self-management of social risks (Shamir, 2008; Lemke, 2002). By accounting for the consequences of the structure of inequality on

individuals as performance, responsibilization effectively omits society and structure. While discussing the absence of contacts between American and Asian internationals, many Asian undergraduates blamed themselves for their introverted personality, limited understanding of American culture, and/or English proficiency, rather than pointing to racial tensions and White segregation. In other words, they believed they were responsible for reaching out to White students and that they had a "choice." What happened in Lu's residence hall with the Chinese female students clearly demonstrates responsibilization. In a house meeting, one of the White American female students added to the agenda that Chinese students must speak English in the dining hall because they isolated Americans from the conversation. She said "Imagine how do you feel if you can't understand the language." It's important to note here that the dorm was majority White students and had few of people of color. The Chinese students numbered around 10 at the time. I regularly visited their dining hall to eat and talk with one of my focal participants, and although we spoke English the whole time, we were never invited to the larger table or interrupted and asked to be joined at our table. Clearly, Chinese students' language use was not the problem. Rather, this White student's proposal was an attack on a racial minority's safe space and in turn pushed the "White habitus" to the background. Bonilla-Silva (2013) explains the process of naturalized segregation of whites with the notion of "white habitus": "a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters. One of the central consequences of the white habitus is that it promotes a sense of group belonging (a white culture of solidarity) and negative views about nonwhites" (p. 152). However, Lu agreed with her dorm mate's point. "We have a choice about the

language because we can speak Chinese and English but they have no option." When I asked her about whether the culture of American English is inclusive to Chinese, she responded, "Even if we can't understand their English, it is not their fault; again, it's our fault…we should watch more TV shows, read more books, studies." It is interesting to note that the core concepts of neoliberal ideologies such as choice and responsibility emerged from the conversation. Lu placed all of the responsibility on herself and other international students, explaining that the international students had made a "choice" that led to White students' discomfort. In the interviews and field work with the international students many of them blamed themselves about being introverted and shy, and not proactive. Often, they stated that their limited proficiency in English compared to their American peers prevented them from both connecting with the dominant American society and easily making American friends. Students rarely emphasized the racial structure or particular campus climate of the predominantly White university but focused more on their individual responsibility to reach out. Before they blamed the system and the structure of race, they assessed their own accountability. Sungjun, a Korean male sophomore remarked, "What should I do? If I could speak English fluently, I wouldn't have been treated in that way" while talking about his unpleasant experiences while he was living in the United States. Ting similarly emphasized the need to take more responsibility before blaming others. In her ESL class, one of the students gave a presentation on Asian Americans and racism and she was somewhat upset about the content.

SH: Do you agree with his initial point?

> Ting: Whether it exists? No, I think most of the people are nice. This is not the first time people present racism. I think everybody is kind of complaining. If Americans were there they would be unpleasant. People overestimate things. They didn't do their best but were blaming others. (Field note, December 5, 2013)

Ting's response shows how responsibility is centered in students' understanding of racism. Often, the suffering of people of color is responsibilized as their individual fault, such as having a bad work ethic or low interest in education (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Since neoliberal ideologies advocate individual freedom and liberty based on market logics, Lemke (2002) contend that "the consequences of the action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them" (p. 12). In this context, people of color's critical approach to racism is often mocked as 'playing the color-card' and even means abandoning responsibility and blaming others under neoliberal color-blinded logics.

Performativity matters. Evaluation of performativity is the core of neoliberal ideologies that controls individuals. Apple (2006) explains the difference between traditional liberalism and neoliberalism by the existence of a "regulatory state" that assesses the performativity of individuals and institutions with market-driven logics. Ideal individuals who espouse neoliberal cultural logics are capable of self-checking and self-regulating their performance in every aspect of their life. For Asian international students, the success of their global education project is significant as their performance is evaluated most importantly in respect to their academic achievement, but also to their social experiences. Thus, the experience of racism is often coded as being "unsuccessful" in their education abroad experiences. Lu shared her idea about why she and her friends do not talk about race-related matters.

> I don’t know why we don't talk (about race)...you know, it's...it's a pain in your life. It's un-comfortableness you have in your life. If you talk about this it means you are not doing well. Not getting along with Americans, you are not reaching out and it is blame here. So we don’t talk. (Field note, October 20, 2014)

They hope their global education experiences will go smoothly without struggles so that it may be evaluated as a “successful” education project. Thus, if an international student experiences racism, that means their performance is lacking. This framing is also linked to self-responsibilization when explaining racism. As color-blind racism in the neoliberal context minimizes the importance of racial structures, any troubles these students may experience become their own responsibility and a performance issue. Lu added her hopeful wish: “If I am successful enough, if I do my best job, I am sure they will change their perspective of me, or of being Asian” Hyongsik, a Korean male freshman agreed with Lu that her idea of success could resolve the issue and was related to his ‘success’ story at his White-dominant private high school.

> I tried to show myself, not as Asian. I tried to show who I am. I participated in what Asians didn’t usually do, just from my interest, you know. I put effort to show this is who I am. You should look at me. This is me. So I tried to study hard and show achievement. I will say this. I was the only Asian who was selected to a leadership class.

He described himself as a ‘rare’ case, one who successfully mingles in a predominantly White space. That does not mean it is rare because of racial tension, but it is special because of his effort and achievement. I asked if he felt any racial discrimination, and he said “Not there.” Hyongsik and his family intentionally chose his

high school, a White private Catholic school, so he could learn English more effectively. Lu and Hyongsik believed their performances would solve the problems that Asians face with their race, but social science research indicates that this either hardly happens or tweaks the problems in another way. Lee (2009) argued that the model minority stereotypes of Asians mask the existing racial inequality in educational spaces and U.S. society, and neglects to recognize the struggle of diverse Asian groups while praising the success of a specific Asian group.

Performativity of race: White capital. Research shows that seeking a degree in the United States is related to attaining globally competitive cultural capital (Kim, 2011). Although global competitiveness may not seem racialized, Asian international students indicated that the "imagined developed world community" they desired was indeed racialized. In interviews, Asian international students described how they wanted to specifically access White global capital in the United States. In an interview with Lifen, she explained why she did not go to California for her education.

> SH: Here at Mid U, 80% of the students are White. What do you think about that?
>
> Lifen: I think it's good thing.
>
> SH: Why is that?
>
> Lifen: I think it's a more ideal American university I got into. It's not like…I know in California there are a lot more Asians, but in…my ideal thinking the White community is something I am thinking of when I say USA. So I think that matches my thoughts.
>
> SH: Then…what do you think about people of color? Latin Americans, African Americans…

Lifen: I think it really isn't a matter of color.

The interview with Lifen shows how color-blindness plays a double role with Whiteness by masking the racial hierarchy but valuing White capital. She was denying race even as she admitted to seeking whiteness. In Chapter 2, I argued that Asian international undergraduates' competitive choice of institutions is linked to White universities. Many students repeatedly remarked that they chose Mid U not only because of its ranking and cost efficiency but also because of its predominantly White student population. Lewis (2003) contended that Whiteness can become a form of symbolic capital since it signifies position, power, and privilege in education. Moreover, Lifen's interpretation of American-ness that is identified with Whiteness also indicates how Asians have become "perpetual foreigners." Of course, there were a few students who studied in California with much satisfaction; however, a number of participants told me that they did not go to universities in California for the same reason as Lifen.

The interview with Hyongsik shows how Asian international undergraduates are aligned with White students and perceive a 'good' educational space as a White-centered institution.

SH: How do you feel about having 80% of White students here?

Hyongsik: I regard it as positive sign. Well, maybe because I am from the White-dominant society, I think predominantly a White school has much less racial discrimination and also those schools are more stable.

SH: What do you mean by stable?

Hyongsik: Well, I would say, it's more comfortable. I don't know why, having more Whites means having more interaction with Whites. I say…those interactions are not uncomfortable for me.

SH: How about the interaction with Latinos or Blacks?

Hyongsik: Oh, well. I've never had any interaction with those groups…so..

Whiteness is a strong motivation for Asian international students in other ways as well. The large White community around Mid U was often understood as a safe place for students, especially in comparison to "the South." Minsu, a Korean male freshman, said, "It looks dangerous outside of the campus in Georgia. A black homeless man approached us and wanted to help us to carry our bags …" A few other students also explained that they did not go to South for their education because of the security issues while at the same time criminalizing people of color. International students perpetuated anti-black sentiments and further aligned themselves with Whiteness through these opinions and their choice of higher education institutions.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how neoliberal ideologies and color-blind racism shape Asian international undergraduates' understanding of race and racism. It is striking to note that Asian international students' perspective on race-related matters strongly resemble current American color-blindness. This indicates that the United States has successfully exported American racism to Far East Asia (i.e., Hollywood entertainment, public figures, etc.). As Leonardo (2009) argued "[a]s whiteness becomes globalized, white domination begins to transcend national boundaries." (p. 171). This also shows that neoliberal cultural logics are not limited to a particular local area but move worldwide

and have formed a perfect ensemble of new racism. Especially as an educational researcher, I argue that American higher education supports neoliberal cultural logics in its academic and social spheres. We still need to question what these students have learned from their experience on an American campus during their higher education. One of the troubling experiences I had with my participants was that some of them did not know what happened in Ferguson, Missouri (the shooting of Michael Brown, a young Black man, by a White policeman and subsequent protests), even though they were living in the United States at the time. This may indicate disinterest in current events of their host society, but also this means that none of the classes they were taking mentioned the shooting. Because it is not immediately related to the kind of profitable knowledge that students in contemporary higher education are pursuing, many Asian rarely had a chance in or outside of class to engage in learning about and/or discussing the social inequality regarding race and racial structure. Due to the neoliberal forces permeating higher education, the university classroom encourages color-blind racism while also focusing on tradable knowledge in the global knowledge economy. Past literature has pointed out that neoliberal forces in higher education place more value on market-oriented degrees and knowledge that is profitable and transferrable to the corporate world (Canaan & Shumar, 2008; Rhoads & Torres, 2006) Nonetheless, I encountered a few cases that indicate that the university atmosphere and classes related to race matters are important. Ting was the one of the students who changed her thoughts after she took an ethnic studies course. I also met Soyoung, a Korean female sophomore, at a protest on campus regarding the arrest of African American students during class. I was surprised to see her as she had once said she had not seen any cases of racial discrimination during her time at Mid U.

This indicates that the university should open more space for conversations regarding diversity and racial equality in and out of the classroom, to not only provide information and knowledge, but also to let students engage in the discussion.

On the other hand, although American White students share the frame of color-blindness with Asian international students, this may not mean White students regard Asian international students as equals. In interviews with American students, they described their study abroad experiences as cultural, fun, open-to-global experiences, whereas they described Asian students' choices to study in the United States as goal-oriented, maximizing opportunity, academically-driven. This clearly indicates the process of racial formation describing Americans as 'fully human' compared to the illustration of Asian students as the dehumanized other. Therefore, alignment with the dominant racial discourse of color-blindness hardly works for Asian international students as they cannot distance themselves from race.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined Asian international undergraduates' aspirations and educational experiences at a globalized U.S. university and their understanding of and response to race and racism in the U.S. society in the process. Overall, neoliberal logics as a macro political economy and micro subjectivity significantly shaped the Asian international students' meaning of education, social experiences, and their understanding of race. I argued that the neoliberal cultural logics enacted in Asian middle class families and students' decision for their transnational education project, their choice of institution, and practice of educational experiences. While neoliberal globalization often underscores the role of race in the transnational project for competitive knowledge, Asian international undergraduates are racialized as other and are often face scrutinized screening in the host society. However, within the framework of their neoliberal understanding of performativity and responsibilitization, students railed to recognize structure of race and racism in their experiences.

As the line blurs between the global market and higher education, middle-class Asian students' aspirations and educational experiences are no longer within their home country boundaries but have moved beyond national borders. This research focused on how Asian international undergraduates' lived experiences in an American university were shaped by the macro global context of neoliberal economic forces that have shifted the system and culture of higher education and the larger society. Based on 18 months of multi-cited ethnography, I explored how class, race, and neoliberal cultural logics are

intertwined to construct the strategic transnational educational process of Asian international undergraduates.

In Chapter 2, I discovered that Chinese and Korean international undergraduates' transnational educational education project of entering a U.S. college was motivated by the Asian middle-class's aspiration to secure socioeconomic status, or to even move upward through investment in their children in the globalized era. The transnational education project often starts early when students attend foreign language kindergartens that teach English. Often those institutions are only available for those who have sufficient economic and social capital to prepare them for participation the global stage. This not only mean entering the global market, but it also means that the Asian international undergraduates and their family members have a strong desire to join the 'imagined community' of highly educated global citizenry. In order to maximize the opportunities, families and students in Korea and China carefully research the value of knowledge and choose the United States as a destination while acknowledging its hegemony in the global higher education stratification. However, there were also students who didn't initially choose to study abroad but proceeded with it as 'plan B' after their unsatisfied outcomes in their home country's competitive higher educational system. Thus, although a U.S. degree has distinction in the current knowledge market, it does not have 'absolute' value; rather it is based on its relative competitiveness similar to the value of commodities in the economic market. For instance, admission to the top universities in China and Korean remains more valued than a degree from Mid U. It is also noteworthy that there has been a decrease in Korean international undergraduates that may indicate they found there is not much significant payback from a U.S. degree. Furthermore, the

choice of an institution and a major are also strongly based on the neoliberal logics of marketability and efficiency. Pursuing productive knowledge involves a variety of strategies, for instance, taking transferrable online courses at local community colleges which puts more value on credentials than education in Mid U itself. Whereas attending college in the United States requires a significant amount of economic resources, there is also a hidden cost— a psychological cost that includes anxiety, depression, and fatigue among students and also in their families. On the other hand, even though the decisions and experiences to attend a U.S. postsecondary education is based on its competitiveness in the market, it is also important to note that race is involved in the process of choice. Asian international undergraduates and families occasionally expressed their preference for predominantly White institutions that they feel would provide an more 'authentic' American culture and knowledge than some of the institutions in California that have a dominant population of Asians. Their choice suggested that the United States continues to be imagined as a White dominant country rather than a multiracial and multicultural country, and that Whites are regarded as the normative Americans in the global context. The dominance of Whiteness is not only influential in the U.S. context but it also moves transnationally.

In chapter 3, I analyzed the racialization of Asian students in the larger context of the racial structure and system in American society. Although the global boundaries have expanded, U.S. society in drawing an invisible line across racial groups has significantly limited students' social and academic experiences and opportunities. Mid U, as a predominantly White institution, is experiencing racial issues on campus such as the arrest of an African American student in class and the low retention rate of African

Americans and Native Americans. In this context, Asian international students' social experiences are significantly influenced by university policies and practices regarding race. On the first day at the university, international students are categorized as 'other' and excluded from of Mid U's major population and context. This not only occurs at the university's major events such as SOAR, but international students are often paired with co-internationals in daily life. In the residence halls, classes, clubs, student organizations, and dining halls, Asian international undergraduates are placed with their co-ethnic groups even they do not ask for or want such separateness from the university community. While acknowledging the tendency and benefits of Asian international students' co-ethnic-centered social relationships, it is important to understand that there were Asian undergraduates in my study who were willing to move beyond their comfort zone, but their attempts were not as successful as they wanted due to the existence of exclusive ethnic bubbles, mostly comprised of Whites.

Furthermore, I argued that Asian international students are racialized not only by their Americans peers, but also by Mid U's policies and faculty. Students are targeted for extra screening and regarded as 'untrustworthy' based on the high rate of academic misconduct. As a dominantly White space and also a gatekeeper, ESL policies raise significant questions on racializing Asian international students as unqualified and viewing them as a commodity to generate extra revenue. One distinctive policy is the re-testing transfer students' English proficiency even if they had completed ESL courses at their previous institution. This discrimination became more obvious when their American peers from same institution were able to transfer their English credit without restriction. If the university wants to maintain quality assurance, why are they targeting only

international students? Furthermore, the faculty's concerns about the high rate of cheating and plagiarism among international students does not take into account the larger context of U.S. higher education that is experiencing increased academic misconduct (McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2001). The micro-managing rules and patronization in ESL classes also reflects the othered experiences of Asian international students.

In chapter 4, I also analyzed how the neoliberal logics of self-responsibilitization and performativity shape Asian international students' understanding of and response to race and racism that aligns with American colorblindness. Despite their racialized and excluded experiences, the reality of race is often denied in Asian international undergraduates experiences as well as the existence of racism itself in Mid U. Although Asian international students perhaps do not fully understand the cultural and historical context and practices of racism and race, they their responses were similar to White American students on race in this research and the colorblind ideology in larger American society. To most participants in my study, racism is often regarded as an extreme matter involving both the perpetrators and the victims of uneducated and poor individuals rather than a pervasive structural problem. However, the lack of interaction between racial groups is framed as natural occurrence because of the incompatible differences among groups. Students would rather keep silent about race related issues. I argue that students' denial of racism and avoidance of race involvement are rooted in neoliberal cultural logics supported in the United States and in the larger global society. From my fieldwork, I found that students thought that talking about racism was regarded as blaming others rather than seeing their own responsibility in the issue, and acknowledged that their experiences of racism were often seen as a lack of performance.

In this context, if students experienced racism, it signified the following to them: (a) their education project was not very successful because it had trouble, and (b) they were not good enough to break though the racial prejudice. These logics perfectly align with the colorblind ideology that omits structural and historical racial inequality but instead focuses on individual merit and responsibility.

Overall, while neoliberal globalization in higher education expanded Asian international students' educational space into the world, it also framed their scope in very specific ways that narrowed their educational and social experiences. Yet, it is important to note that the American students also actively participate in the neoliberal higher education culture and seek competitive knowledge to prepare to participate in global business. Moreover, Asian international students are not the creators of or the sole participants in this system. However, they are active agents who strategize and negotiate with the system through their experiences but are working within neoliberal conditions. The globalized academic institutions and the larger societies in their home countries, as well as the host societies have promoted and sanctioned the market-like logics and practices. It is complex relationship conditioned by the neoliberal structure, that is, while Asian international students are seeking the optimal and efficient knowledge in their transnational education, U.S. universities are exploiting them as extra revenue resources in times of public budget shrinkage.

Policy Implication and Future Research Direction

Working toward a globally inclusive campus. International students are largely segregated from Mid U's mainstream campus. It might not be a surprising phenomenon since American higher education campuses have been struggling with hostile climates

toward racially marginalized students and the lack of integration of different racial student groups. In the era of globalization, the effort to enhance campus diversity must be developed with a deep understanding of international participants. While there is ample research on diversity and students of color in higher education, international students are mostly excluded or overlooked in the discussion on multicultural issues in the U.S. domestic setting. On the other hand, despite vast research on international students addressing various topics, race-related topics are under-researched even though the biggest population of international students is from the Asian continent. Although the higher education in the era of globalization is especially interested in recruiting international students from around the world, it often ignores the students' race, class, and identities. These gaps are often reflected in the current policies and practices that view international students as resources rather than people and as a 'different' segregated group than part of the larger campus. It is vital to recognize that Asian international students' 'culture' and distinctive experiences could provide valuable information in supporting them. However, this knowledge could also essentialize them as a group and overlook individual authenticities. International students' issues and concerns need to be located in the larger context of U.S. higher education rather than problematizing them as separated group. In fact, this is a very familiar argument pertaining to the policies and practices for students of color and diversity issues in U.S. universities. Thus, it is significant that universities expand their scope and perspective of domestic diversity to the globalized setting in order to create a globally inclusive campus.

Rethinking race and transnational migration under the changed political climate. There have been dramatic political changes between the data collection stage

and finishing the writing of this dissertation. The fieldwork for this research started in August 2013 and ended in December 2014 under the Obama administration. During the time America had its first Black president, post-racial rhetoric and colorblind ideology had flourished across the society and also on the Mid U campus. Students denied the existence of racism and avoided mentioning race because they believed racism was at an end and they needed to move forward into the future. Then, the United States elected their 45th president who actively endorses White supremacy and anti-immigration with strikingly undemocratic policies. The atmosphere in educational settings has been severely influenced by this powerful public figure's harsh, negative perspective on people of color and immigrants. Mid U campus is no exception. There has been a rapid increase of reports of violence and hostility toward students of color. As a result, the media has predicted there will be a decrease in the number of international students and tourists, and as an international student, I have also decided to go back to Korea since my husband and I no longer can envision our future in this country.

This context provides my future research questions: how will students respond to my questions on race and racism at this point in time? Do their future plans include staying in the United States have changedin the current political atmosphere at all? While the majority of them envisioned staying here at least for few more years, how will the current administration affect their decision? Given the understanding that they have been raised as transnationals from an early age, I also wonder how they will experience and view the shifted immigration policies and political atmosphere that have become more and more closed to the outside world. Because I know from a few cases that students more keenly understood race and racism after they took the Ethnic Studies

course or experienced race incidents on campus, this research could have been shaped in different ways. It is possible that their class status could alleviate some part of their struggles as Asian international students, but the recent tragic incident concerning the violence to Asian doctor and death of Indian engineer should raise some alarm that they cannot avoid racism even though they become ‘successful’. Then my research question can be framed as how does neo-fascism and neoliberal globalization intertwine to shape Asian international students’ experiences as transnational migrants.

Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Motivation, information, previous experiences of study abroad

When did you first come to the US?
Why did you choose the US to study?
Did you apply to universities in other countries? If so, which ones?
How did you decide to come to the Mid U?
What other colleges did you apply to?
How did you find information about colleges in the US?
Did you know anybody who previously left to study abroad?
What did you heard about study abroad?
Have you ever studied abroad before coming to the Mid U?
Have you ever attend in high school or any kinds of school in US?
If so, how was it?
How is it similar or different from your experience at the Mid U/US?

Settle-down experiences

Where do you live now?
Why did you choose that place to live?
What, if anything, was most difficult or surprising about when you find the place?
How was your experience with the housing staff or apartment manager?
Do you have roommate or housemate?
Who are they? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
How are they?

Daily routine schedule

Could you describe a typical day of yours?
What do you usually do after class?
Can you describe about your weekend?
Where do you spend most of time? Who else is in those spaces? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
What kinds of university facilities do you usually use? (gym..etc?)
What kinds of university facilities you never used?
Where is your most uncomfortable/comfortable place on campus? Why?

Where do you eat your lunch? With whom? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
Where do you study? With whom? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.

Education experiences

How is the US classroom?
What, if anything, was most difficult or surprising about it?
How do you feel in the classes?
How is it similar or different from your expectation?
Do you feel international students are welcomed in the classes?
How are the other international students doing in the classes?
What is your favorite class? Why?
Do you feel your international knowledge and experiences are valued in the classroom? Please give the examples.
If no or yes, why?
Does the department or your classes encourage you to hang with diverse colleagues? If s o, how?
How do you feel when you share about examples or experiences in your home country?
How is your relationship with your class mates?
How is it similar or different from your expectation?
How do you think other international students are doing?
Who gives you the support or information you need? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
What does your department give or do for you?
Does your advisor understand these? Has your advisor been helpful?
How is your relationship with other students and faculties?
How was it in your home country?

Funding, job experiences

Who pays your tuition?
How did you find funding?
Have you ever applied for any kinds of scholarship?
Do you have any concerns about paying your tuition?Have you ever applied for any job s in the US?
What is your experience with job searching on campus and elsewhere?
If you have a job, how is it?
What difference your job experiences makes in your life at the US?

Social Relationships

Who are your friends? Who are your close friends? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
How did they become your friend?
Who did you expect would be your friends before you coming here?
Did you expect to have friends from different cultural backgrounds?
What do you do with your friends?
Where do you spend your time to hanging out with your friends?
How are these similar or different from what you usually do in your home country?
In emergency situation, who do you contact? We would like you to tell us not to name names but rather provide a generic title or reference. If a name or information of a 3rd party name is given, we will delete it from the data and not use it for publication.
Do you study or closely hang out with American friends? If so, what do you do?
If not, why?

Social Network

Is there any organization on campus you participate in?
Have you ever seen other international students in the student organizations on campus?
Have you ever participated in departmental or university social events?
If not, why?
If so, how did you feel about that?
Have you ever seen other international students there?
How is it compared to your experiences in your home country?
Have you been at parties? How was that?
Who were the main guests?
If you have decided to stop going out, why?

Experiences as Asian man and woman in US

How do you feel as foreigner or person of color here at the Mid U and US?
Do you see any differences in your experience on campus and off campus?
How is it similar or different from your experience in your home country?
What, if anything, was most surprising about the Mid U and US as foreigner?
Have you heard any complaints about international students?
Have you experienced any race involved discrimination or uncomfortable situations?
How do you feel as foreign women or men?
How was/is your experience off campus?
What is your most uncomfortable/comfortable place off campus?
What made you feel that way?

Future plan

What is your plan after graduation?
Where do you hope to live? Why?

How are your experiences in US affecting your decision?
If you stay here, why?
What is your expectation of your position in job market in here?

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