

Asian graduate students as skilled labor force serving Empire:
A postcolonial analysis of the model minority stereotype shaped and ingrained through
transnational experiences

by

Eun Hee Kim

B.A., Sungshin Women's University, 1992
M.A., Kansas State University, 2011

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

It has been 50 years since the notion of the model minority was first used to describe Asian Americans in the United States (Petersen, 1966). In the past decade, there has been substantial scholarly growth in the model minority research, and researchers have identified racism hidden behind the notion. However, previous research has mainly addressed the model minority stereotype in the regional context with similar research topics that produce similar findings, which requires a new research paradigm to be established. To meet this theoretical and contextual need, this study locates the model minority discourse in postcolonialism, especially in the context of Empire as global sovereign power with no concrete form, viewing the model minority stereotype as Empire's controlling strategy that ethnicizes all Asians on the globe into its "global capitalist hierarchy" (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Empirically, this study examines how the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in the transnational experience of Asian international graduate students who pursue careers in the United States after their degree completion as a bridge to their future. Findings from participants' narratives show that they became aware of their Asianness through their transnational experience and gradually embraced the hardworking image of Asians through repeated environmental and interactional input of the image. Participants also expected higher economic and social status in their home countries as a result of their degrees and work experience obtained in the United States, with Orientalist values people in their home countries attach to their U.S.-earned credentials. Asian intellectuals educated in the West, represented by the United States, serve Empire's capitalist maintenance and expansion as a transnational workforce while seeking their self-interest and transnational competitiveness. This raises an interdisciplinary and intersectional need to empower higher education to be critically aware of the current context of Empire and globalization.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Kay Ann Taylor

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Him, who planted a desiring heart in me, inspired me for the direction, strengthened me in times of struggle, and guided me until the end.

Preface

We see ‘powers’ and ‘principalities’, ‘the rulers of the darkness of this world’, behind the visible and seen phenomena, and we see perplexed politicians trying to deal with the problems, and failing. We know they must fail because they do not see what is at the back of it all. We see it as the conflict between heaven and hell.

—D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 8:5-17 The Sons of God*, 1974

In the spring of 2016, I received a call for proposals from Dr. Taylor. It was for the special issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement* (JSAAEA) to mark the 50th anniversary of the model minority stereotype. I was preparing for my proposal defense later in that spring and had finished three chapters of the dissertation. As the theme of the special issue was aligned with what I was writing for my dissertation, I decided to respond to the call with Dr. Taylor based on the completed chapters including the literature review. I spent the entire month of June on summarizing the concepts and notions I used for the literature review and adding more literature to refine them for the contribution with Dr. Taylor’s feedback and suggestions. “The model minority stereotype as a prescribed guideline of Empire: Situating the model minority research in the postcolonial context” (Kim & Taylor, 2017) was the result.

I inform readers that I did not cite the article in my dissertation because the general themes that run through the article will also be found as major ideas and concepts in this work. In other words, both are based on the same theoretical and conceptual framework: the analysis of the model minority stereotype in the context of postcolonialism and Empire. Therefore, some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this work was used for the article, too. However, they are different in readership and directions. The article was intended for Asian and Asian American

researchers and scholars seeking new research paradigms in related fields in their quest of the post-model minority stereotype, while this dissertation appeals to higher education to raise awareness of the substance of Empire for educational purposes. Anyone who has had a chance to access the article first will enjoy reading how I identified the substance of Empire empirically through participants' experiences and psychology in this study.

This dissertation is the product of 10 years of my work and study in the United States. I would not have been able to reach this awareness without such a long time. Though we live in the world of Empire the Colonizer, the power of this dark world, which is the reason our struggle will never cease while on earth, our hope is in our citizenship that does not belong to this world. I hope readers will gain the same spiritual insight while sailing with me in this journey.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Who am I and where do I belong? As a Korean who has spent almost 10 years studying and working in the United States and travelling back and forth between two countries, I ask this unending, unanswerable question. I first came to the United States as an international student in 1997, studied one and a half years, went back to Korea, put my feet on this land again in 2009 for my master's degree, and got a job in 2011. In the meantime, my status has changed from an international student on an F-1 visa to a temporary non-immigrant worker on H-1B with an extension for another three years in 2015. It might change again to a permanent resident. In terms of my language proficiency, I was an English language learner in the beginning and became fluent enough to teach English to international students in the United States.

On the emotional side, though I define myself as a frequent traveler crossing borders every year, to be fair enough, the longer I dwell in the United States, the more I feel the ties I have to my country become weaker. It makes me try even harder to travel back to Korea every summer so as not to lose my ties to my origin. While traveling back and forth, different, related questions surface at certain times when I think about my life and where it leads me. Who am I and where do I belong? Do I belong to both places or neither? Was it my intention or decision that leads me to the current me? Or was it something that has situated me in the network of the "global knowledge economy" that produces and reproduces many like me (Cantwell, 2011, p. 426)? Am I insisting that I am a helpless and passive victim of globalization operating on the principle of capitalism (Nee & Swedberg, 2007)? If this is the case, isn't there any way to resist my being a victim and claim myself out of the force that has driven me to the current me? These questions arise when I think about myself as a transnational being with a constantly wandering mind in both or neither places, unable to decide where to settle down. They make me restlessly

and relentlessly investigate the source of the force or power that has placed me in the current context and how it operates in the shadows.

At the same time, when I look at myself within the geographical boundary of the United States, I am an international, more specifically, Asian female who is highly educated and skilled, to the point that I can make a living teaching English as a second language (ESL) at a state university. I was an international student, but as a graduate teaching assistant, I did not have to pay tuition. After I got a job as an ESL instructor, using the employee benefits at a state university, I could take free classes for my doctoral degree. A Ph.D. degree earned in the United States will further my career path with a higher salary and better benefits. At this point, however, a different set of questions haunt me. Is it fine to go on like this and take advantage of these opportunities? Am I not forgetting something important while I desire to improve my status and living conditions, taking all I have and will have for granted? As an intellectual who firmly believes educational equity should reach out to all people (Banks & Banks, 2013), what is the use of achieving the most advanced degree in Education, specifically with an emphasis in Multicultural Education, when I do not apply my belief to the betterment of underprivileged people and their lives? Shouldn't I regard myself as a *privileged* international compared to other immigrants because of my education and career opportunities based on my visa type categorized by U.S. immigration policies, which expect me to perform better than the less skilled and educated (Aydemir, 2013)? While trying to perform as expected or "prescribed" by the regime (Freire, 1970, p. 47), am I not unconsciously contributing to the widening gap between the educated skilled and uneducated unskilled immigrants, which will ultimately lead the privileged to be more privileged, consolidating the existing economic disparities in the U.S. immigrant labor market, and further in the global labor market?

This is my story and the stories of others who have taken and will take the same path as I have and will. These stories are a quest into the operating power behind *Our* transnationally lived experience and how it shapes our thinking and experience in the global era, where "the logic of a global economy" pushes workers into a "global labor market" (Yang, 2005, p. 137). Also, these stories seek to interpret the same experience in the social and economic realm of the United States, which is not "Empire" itself, but whose constitutional project is identified as the source of the "contemporary idea of Empire" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 182). The project aims for "global expansion" through "open space" and "diverse and singular relations in networks across an unbounded terrain;" therefore, Empire is "imperial" in its nature, not "imperialist" because imperialism demands linear power expansion through invasion and conquest of other lands (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 182). Empire's imperial nature tries to "include and incorporate minorities into the mainstream rather than simply expel or exclude them" (Loomba, 2015, p. 10).

The immigrant workforce has been a fast-growing portion of the U.S. labor market as a whole, with the decline of white labor force share from 81% in 2010 to 75% projected in 2050 (Toossi, 2012). These statistics indicate that more immigrant workers are expected to enter the United States powered by the global network. This study starts its investigation by viewing globalization and its expanding process in and as a historical context and, at the same time, a contemporary context where the impact of the past remains in people's lives and thoughts. This quest begins with a postcolonial perspective of today's world and requires understanding the past, the history of colonialism and its continuing impact (Krishna, 2009).

Colonialism, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism

This study seeks to understand the characteristics of Asian international graduate students who plan to pursue careers in the United States after the completion of their studies. By defining

Asian graduate students as prospective immigrants and a privileged group compared to their counterparts in the labor market, this study interprets their psychology as that of colonized intellectuals who function as agents of Empire expanding with the process of globalization. Within the same framework, the model minority stereotype is viewed as a guideline that prescribes cultural behaviors to Asian Americans and as a notion that is also imposed on all Asians today in the realm of Empire. To examine the process of how the model minority stereotype is shaped and developed in the transnational experiences of Asian graduate students, this study uses postcolonialism as its theoretical framework.

To understand postcolonialism, related terms such as colonialism and imperialism need to be explained first. From a historical perspective, colonialism, imperialism, and postcolonialism can be understood in continuation of the same colonizer-colonized context. However, each term needs to be examined in regards to what it means. How the terms intersect and interact under an overarching context that extends to the contemporary era is central to the examination.

Colonialism is usually identified with the European colonial era from the 16th century, but as it is defined as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (Loomba, 2015, p. 20), it has been a repetitive historical phenomenon from the Roman Empire in the second century, Mongols under Genghis Khan in the 13th century, the Ottoman in the 15th century, and to the 20th century when European powers covered 84.6% of the land on the earth (Loomba, 2015). These empires were characterized by "expansive, militarized, and multiethnic political organizations that significantly limit the sovereignty of the peoples and polities they conquer" (Steinmetz, 2014, p. 79).

Imperialism has been used with colonialism interchangeably; however, scholars have provided distinctions between the two (Loomba, 2015). Said (1994) made a distinction between

imperialism and colonialism: "imperialism means the practice, theory and a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism,' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements of distant territory" (p. 9). He stated that the historical colonial period has ended. However, its imperial impact remains in people's cultural, political, economic, and social practices as "the process of policy of establishing an empire" (p. 9). Similarly, Mattingly (2013) defined imperialism as "both the process and attitudes by which an empire is established and maintained" and a "dynamic and shape-shifting process" that is still applied today (p. 6). Therefore, imperialism as the formation, policy, practice, theory, process and attitudes of an empire is applied to all colonial periods of history with a general agreement on the term as a "conscious and openly advocated policy of acquiring colonies for economic, strategic and political advantage" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013, p. 139). The effect and shape of imperialism should be understood through its dynamic shifting in the current era as a continuum from the past to the future. The task is to identify what shape and effect it takes to manifest itself in today's context characterized by globalization. Its trace can be found in European imperialism, or "Europeanization," not led by governments and states, but shaped by ordinary people who migrate across borders becoming weakened for free trade (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 140). This discourse is furthered by attempts to identify how globalization can be viewed through the lens of postcolonialism.

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, postcolonialism entails many areas ranging from literature to research, from text critiques to economic theory (Loomba, 2015). Therefore, specific definitions for each area might exist, but the most general definition in social science is an "investigation into the ways colonialism continues to shape former colonies and metropolises and a new set of approaches to understanding historical colonialism" (Steinmetz, 2014, p. 81).

Postcolonial scholars try to figure out what shape the contemporary world is entering into and what the driving force is behind the move. They have attempted to investigate the source of the force through the notion of Empire. From an economic perspective, Empire is "materializing" along with "a global order" characterized by the "global market and global circuits of production" as a "new form of sovereignty," which effectively controls the global exchanges and politically governs the world at the same time (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xi). From a political perspective, Empire is "a system of interaction between two political entities, one of which, the dominant metropole, exerts political control over the internal and external policy – the effective sovereignty – of the other, the subordinate periphery" (Doyle, 1986, p. 12). Empire also involves social and cultural elements. As Doyle (1986) pointed out, it is a "relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society," which is "achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence" (p. 45). In addition, Empire is global as "a series of national and supernational organisms united under a single logic of rule," not limiting its power within certain territories, nor depending on national boundaries or barriers (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii). In concise terms, Empire is a global political force driven by today's global economy of capitalism, which leaves "the Other" socially and culturally subordinate to the system.

Empire as described above, contradicts what is known as the nature of globalization. Scholars in globalization studies insist that due to the autonomy that has developed from economic networks, the world is stepping away from a centralized political power, so the center-periphery relationship is declining (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Loomba, 2015). However, according to scholars in postcolonial studies (Ashcroft et al., 2013; Dirks, 1992; Doyle, 1986; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Loomba, 2015; Mattingly, 2013; Steinmetz, 2014), globalization is understood as a

process that Empire is gaining more ground as a centralized political power by integrating peripheries into the global economic system and making them increasingly subordinate to the system to consolidate its power, so that it can politically rule over the world in an efficient way. Figure 1 illustrates a postcolonial view of the context where imperialism is historically manifested through colonialism and globalization. Under colonialism, several empires existed as historical representations. In the current globalized era, however, Empire is identified as a single sovereign power that has no concrete form. Under these historically manifested empires/Empire, imperialism exists as the process, practice, theory, and attitudes that dynamically shift according to the contextual needs of history. Imperialism was partially practiced in sectors of the world in the colonial period in the form of invasion and conquest of other lands, but it is practiced globally under Empire. The nature of imperialism that is practiced under Empire is not “imperialist” but “imperial” because it is inclusive and incorporative rather than invasive and conquering (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 182; Loomba, 2015, p. 10).

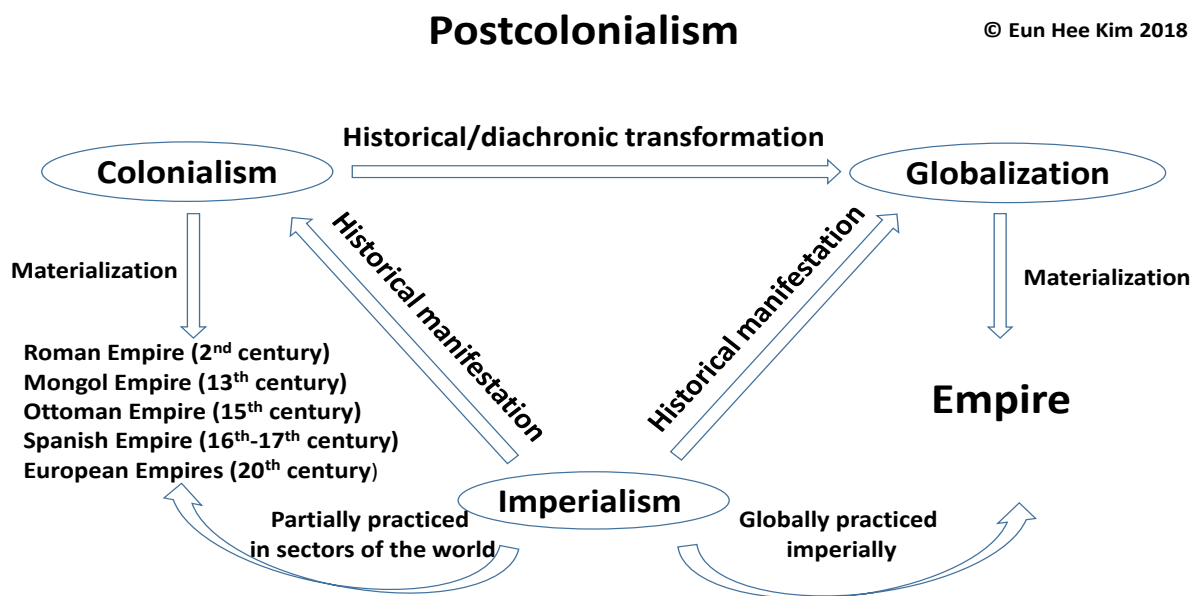


Figure 1. Postcolonialism. Copyright 2018 by Eun Hee Kim.

Model Minority Stereotype: History of Exclusion and Inclusion

In connection with postcolonialism, the model minority stereotype is defined as Empire's ethnicization strategy that prescribes specific cultural norms and behaviors to Asians and Asian Americans in this study. In the United States, Asians and Asian Americans have been depicted as a model minority due to their hard work and high academic achievement compared to other underrepresented groups of people (Kim & Aquino, 2015). For fear of failing to meet the expectations, Asians and Asian American students "feel compelled" to excel academically and in the process, they "implicitly embrace model minority stereotypes" (Kim & Aquino, 2015, p. 156). Let's note that the notion of model minority has been mainly applied to East Asian Americans such as Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, and Southeast Asian Americans are excluded from the notion, which indicates that the panethnicity of the model minority image has ignored the diversity of Asian ethnicity and actually burdened the Asian ethnic groups that do not meet the expectations of the model minority image (Chou & Feagin, 2016; Lee, Duesbery, Han, Thupten, Her, & Pang, 2017; Reyes, 2017). The following provides a brief overview of the social and political background of the United States, where the model minority myth was incubated.

Starting in the early 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement moved on with black power as the center, and by the mid-1960s, the U.S. government had increased its intervention in race relations (Osajima, 2005). In this social and political context, presenting Asian Americans as the model to follow carried three important messages to other minorities, specifically Blacks who were the leading force of the upheaval: (1) Asian Americans do not need federal welfare programs because they can make it by themselves, but Blacks do need them, (2) the United States is not a racist society, which is evidenced by Asian Americans' achievements through hard work, but Blacks do not have the same cultural values, and (3) American dreams can come

true in reality as seen in Asian Americans' success, which means the United States is the land of opportunity and judges people not by their skin color, but by their performance and behavior (Osajima, 2005).

In order to understand the term "model minority" better, it is necessary to revisit the history of Asian immigrants in the United States. In the mid-1800s when the first major influx of Chinese into the United States started, Asians were considered "yellow perils" to the nation's structures (Hartlep, 2013a; Lien, 2010). The fear of the perils was revealed through the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese workers from entering the United States. The Act said, "in the opinion of the Government of the United States, the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof" (Wu, 1972, as cited in Okihiro, 1994). When it expired in 1892, it was extended for another 10 years under the *Act to Prohibit the Coming of Chinese Persons into the United States*, also known as the Geary Act (Lowell, 1996). Under the Act, Chinese were required to register and have a certificate to prove their right to stay in the United States or otherwise deportation was reinforced. Several other acts followed it until 1943 when the *Act to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, to Establish Quotas, and for Other Purposes* was signed as the product of World War II when China was an ally of the United States. (Lowell, 1996).

In the meantime, the Japanese aircraft attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in December 1941 led to the internment of thousands of Japanese living in the United States (Tunnell & Chilcoat, 2014). At that time, 125,500 people of Japanese ancestry, called Nikkei, were living on the mainland of the United States, mostly on the West Coast. The United States' involvement in the war also meant confrontations with Japan's ally, Germany, but people's reactions were different toward German and Japanese. According to a Gallup opinion poll conducted in early 1942, Hitler

was the center of the hatred for Germany, but it was the entire population for Japan (Tunnell & Chilcoat, 2014), which indicates the Nikkei's non-whiteness played a major role in discrimination. Finally, through Executive Order 9066 that was signed in early 1942, about 120,000 Nikkei, including two-thirds who were American citizens, were sent to temporary "assembly centers" and then to permanent "relocation centers" (Kashima, 2003, p. 4).

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the internment of Japanese Americans during the war are two examples of "Asian maltreatment" (Hartlep, 2013a). Immigration acts kept being modified to regulate immigrants until the *Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act* of 1965 was signed, which allowed immigrants from Europe first and then from Asia and Latin America and changed the demographics of the United States in the following decades (Hatton, 2015).

Shifting the image of Asians in the United States from yellow perils to a model minority was initiated by media in 1966 when sociologist William Petersen first depicted Japanese Americans as a model minority in his article "Success, Japanese-American Style" in *The New York Times Magazine*. Petersen (1966) described how Japanese, out of the image of the discriminated yellow perils, could "climb over the highest barriers" of racism. He identified the success in their heritage through their respect for authority and strong work ethics, contrasting them with African Americans (Petersen, 1966, p. 43). Later in the same year, "Success Story of One Minority in the U.S.," published in *U.S. News and World Report* (1966), described Chinese Americans in the same way. The author encouraged readers to visit Chinatowns, where "an important racial minority pulling itself up from hardship and discrimination to become a model of self-respect and achievement in today's America" (p. 6) and "a thrifty, law-abiding and industrious people" are ambitiously "making progress on their own" ("Success story of one

minority in the U.S.,” 1966, p. 9). The presented thesis of the model minority in both articles was that Asian Americans are more obedient to authority and hardworking, and better assimilated into American culture, which brought educational and financial success to the group and, as a result, they are a better group than other minority groups in the United States (Kwon & Au, 2010). By the 1980s, prominent magazines such as *Newsweek*, *Fortune*, and *Time* published similar success stories of Asian Americans, which resulted in the model minority image of Asian Americans being “embedded” in people’s consciousness (Kwon & Au, 2010, p. 222).

Within the social and political context of that time, the expressions the authors used in the triumphant stories of Asian Americans, such as “law-abiding and industrious” or “making progress on their own,” were directed at Blacks who politically had to be blamed for the disorder they brought through perceived violence and not pursuing the same virtues as those of Asian Americans to promote their socioeconomic status. Since then, the model minority stereotype has been one of the growing subjects of Asian American studies, contributing many publications to the subject for the past 50 years (Hartlep, 2013b). Its major focus, as reviewed in the history of Asian immigrants in the United States, has been on how the model minority image of Asian Americans was created at a time of rapid social and political change, and how the stereotype causes disparities among minorities, invalidating the meaning of the Civil Rights Movement (Pak, 2013).

Research shows that the danger of the model minority stereotype hides problems that need to be addressed, rendering them an invisible group of people (Hartlep, 2013a). For example, statistically Asian Americans are known to make the highest income of all races, but the hidden reality is that there are more workers in their families than white families, which makes the group top the income level per household over other ethnic households (Wu, 2014). Therefore,

studies are needed to expose how the stereotype image has hidden the diversity of the Asian American population under the single label of model minority (Chou & Feagin, 2016; Lee et al., 2017; Pak, 2013, p. xi; Reyes, 2017), specifically in a way that reveals how it has concealed social, economic, and cultural disparities and inequalities among Asian Americans. Studies to date reveal that the disparities are best shown in educational resources among immigrant Asians, because education is considered "one of the few avenues they have to gain status in the new country and climb the socioeconomic ladder" (Zakeri, 2015, p. 245). This explains why academic achievement of Asians or Asian Americans is an important factor that has shaped the model minority myth and why it is implicitly embraced by Asians or Asian American students (Kim & Aquino, 2015).

The change of the image of Asian Americans from yellow perils and model minority has been dilemmatic to Asians and Asian Americans. It has granted them the "ambiguous middle position" that maintains "systems of privilege and power" and a "third" position that does not pertain to the dualized racial hierarchies at the same time (Espiritu, 1997, p. 109; Velasquez, 2015, p. 98). This ambiguous nature of their social and racial position, combined with the role of education, has made highly educated Asians and Asian Americans strive for better and higher ranks in the social ladder as rewards from their advanced degrees in the United States.

Orientalism

Orientalism is a concept or ideology that synchronizes with the colonial period. However, it is still effective today as a consequence of colonialism in different forms (Kumar, 2012; Said, 1978). Orientalism first started as text critiques, but it has shifted its form and shape interdisciplinarily for the past two decades (Kumar, 2012). Let's first look at how most searched dictionaries define Orientalism and what lacks in some of the definitions.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary online provides two definitions of Orientalism, with the first one more general and the second more academic. The latter is more relevant to this study. It said "something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians" and "scholarship or learning in Asian subjects or languages" ("Orientalism," n.d.). It is noted that the second definition does not provide the subject and the orientation of scholarship. *Oxford Dictionary* online said it is a "Style, artefacts, or traits considered characteristic of the peoples and cultures of Asia" and "The representation of Asia, especially the Middle East, in a stereotyped way that is regarded as embodying a colonialist attitude" ("Orientalism," n.d.). The orientation is added to the second definition this time, but it still lacks the subject. *Cambridge Dictionary* online provided only one definition: "Western ideas about the Middle East and about East and Southeast Asia, especially ideas that are too simple or not accurate about these societies being mysterious, never changing, or not able to develop in a modern way without Western help" ("Orientalism," n.d.). In this definition, the subject is identified as the "West." Also, "stereotyped" and "colonialist attitude" used in Oxford's definition are furthered with geographical and conceptual details. Therefore, Orientalism can be defined as a stereotyped view and colonialist attitude of the West toward the Orient, which is distributed with "geopolitical awareness" (Said, 1978, p. 12) for the purpose of "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 3). However, Orientalism not only represents the Western view of the Orient, but also affects the way the colonized view themselves. Said (1994) stated, "my basic point being that stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own identity" (p. xii).

While Orientalism is the Western view of the Orient, not filtered by criticism or reflection, postcolonialism can be viewed as a self-critical academic discipline, in which the West tries to reflect and examine "its oppressive and exploitative practices, indebted to Orientalism" (Williams, 2014, p. 50). Historically, Orientalism and postcolonialism received their inheritance from colonialism and imperialism that started from the relationship between Europe and its colonies in Africa. Today, various Orientalisms have been studied in different areas with the development of academic disciplines related to them. Out of them, internal Orientalism, inverted Orientalism and self-Orientalism will be addressed specifically in this study, which will be reviewed in Chapter 2 in relation to the model minority stereotype. Figure 2 illustrates how Orientalism is approached diachronically and synchronically and where the model minority stereotype is located in relationship to the other elements. In the colonial period, European empires used exclusion for its controlling strategy, under which Orientals were colonized objects. In the contemporary globalized context, Empire as the single sovereign power uses inclusion and ethnicization for its strategy. The model minority stereotype is depicted as an example of the inclusion and ethnicization strategy that socializes Asians and Asian Americans into the workforce for its capitalist system. The notion of the model minority stereotype is now applied not only to Asian Americans, but also to Asians under global Empire. They are identified as colonized objects and performing subjects or agents at the same time, because they embrace and perform the notion of the model minority stereotype, contributing to the expansion and maintenance of Empire. More details about Orientalism in connection with the model minority stereotype in the context of Empire are addressed in Chapter 2.

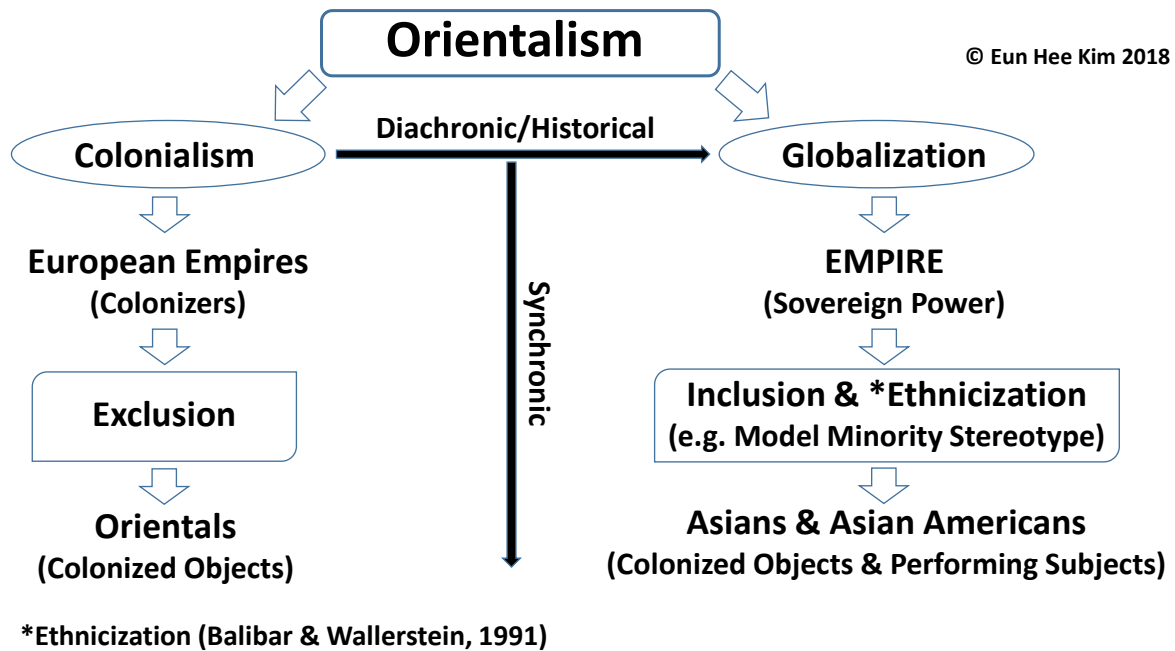


Figure 2. Orientalism. Copyright 2018 by Eun Hee Kim.

Transnationalism

Since the model minority stereotype is recognized as a strategy of Empire whose power is globally practiced, it is viewed as a notion that reaches Asians as well as Asian Americans in the contemporary era. To address this global nature of Empire and the contemporary model minority stereotype, transnationalism is used to understand how the model minority stereotype is shaped through the border-crossing experiences of Asian international graduate students in this study. Transnationalism is one of the terms coined to explain the process and consequences of globalization. It was first used to conceptualize migrants as "transmigrants" who live across borders but maintain their familial, social, economic, political, religious, and other relations that tie them to their homelands; thus, its central theme lies in dual or multiple involvements of immigrants in both home and host countries (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). The term gained traction from the late 1990s to the early 2000s (Cano, 2005).

Transnationalism, as a “deterritorialized concept,” has explored “more material, embodied, and cultural processes of transnational identity formations in and across different spaces” beyond power dynamics (Datta, 2013, p. 88). Recent studies show that transnationalism can be narrowed to take a micro-level perspective on a specific transnational group, their identity, and their social, economic, religious, political, and other ties they maintain toward their home countries (Beaverstock, 2013; Golash-Boza, 2014; Taylor, 2014).

Transnationalism has developed with empirical studies on immigrants and their experience and ethnic identities through observable phenomena based on context (Brettell & Hollifield, 2015; Faist, 2010; Schiller, 2010; Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 2001). This is why since its burgeoning, transnationalism has been questioned, especially when it comes to its independency as a theoretical concept or discipline, though it was coined as an academic term. Vertovec (2001) summarized major criticisms of transnationalism as follows.

- (1) It is nothing new as there are no clean-cut distinctions from previously existing theories on migration and migrant experience.
 - (2) It is not yet theorized in relation to existing theories or approaches to the same subjects.
 - (3) It is too general or broad a notion that spans too many phenomena and disciplines that fit more for case-by-case studies, so it cannot function as a single overall theory.
 - (4) How a transnational network is established has not been explained enough.
 - (5) Whether it should be approached in a mode of resistance or an integration pattern of globalization.
 - (6) Whether it can be applied to first-generation only or to the second-generation as well.
- (Vertovec, 2001, p. 577)

Transnationalism, therefore, is considered a fluid concept that reaches all border-crossing populations, including but not limited to immigrants. The concept is applicable to peripheral groups of people who cross borders for all possible reasons, when they contribute to "onward immigration" and maintain any form of ties with their home lands (Faist, 2010, p. 13). In this context, international students, when they pursue careers and stay in the United States, can be categorized as a transnational group considering the ties they maintain with their countries and their potential immigrant status.

Statement of the Research Problem

International students have not been categorized as immigrants from a traditional perspective because they make legal entries to the United States and do not intend to live or look for jobs in the United States. They are an undefined population in terms of their yet-to-be-decided career paths and preferred locations of living after graduation, which complicates establishing a concrete definition of their status. Another reason they have not been considered a potential workforce as immigrants is because studies of migrant careers have concentrated predominantly on low-skilled workers (Al Ariss, Koall, Özbilgin, & Suutari, 2012).

However, as more U.S. businesses seek highly skilled workers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, they increasingly rely on international students (Mithas & Lucas, 2010). For employment purposes, students apply for an H-1B visa, and eventually obtain permanent residency (a.k.a. Green Card), which can lead to U.S. citizenship when applied and approved. As a result, their *bridge* status in transition from students to permanent residents calls for understanding the connection between the immigrant labor market in the United States and the dynamics of global economy. Therefore, the scope of research on the

mobility of international students requires extension beyond the current academic setting to examine their status in a continuum in the regional and global economic context.

As Hartlep (2013c) suggested, researchers of the model minority stereotype need to project into the future and identify ways to map out practical strategies to refute the *status quo* reinforced by the model minority myth, instead of reproducing and revisiting the same knowledge already established. Major scholarship on the model minority stereotype has focused on academic performance of Asian or Asian American students, specifically in how the stereotype impacts their academic performance and whether Asian or Asian American students conform to the imposed image (Kim & Aquino, 2015; Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Trytten, Lowe, & Walden, 2012). Another group of scholars has tried to conceptualize the model minority stereotype through the framework of Orientalism (Ho, 2003; Kim & Chung, 2005).

To accommodate both research directions identified above and meet the need of the globalization era, studies need to situate the notion of the model minority stereotype in a larger framework, the globe, beyond the United States as the social, economic, and political context where it was incubated, while not losing the emphasis on locality contributed by previous research. This task requires exploring a more concrete theoretical foundation the model minority discourse can be based upon in the midst of competing concepts and theories geared toward interpretation of the process of globalization. The theoretical paradigm should deal with not only Orientalism, but situate the model minority discourse in a contemporary context where scholars are obliged to identify what the driving force is behind the dynamics of globalization, in pace with materialization and expansion of the force.

In order to identify how the model minority stereotype, the contemporary representation of Orientalism, acts upon its agents, its historical precedent incubated by colonialism must be

traced. It further requires situating the discourse related to the model minority stereotype and Orientalism in the current postcolonial context as another historical era represented by globalization. The inquiry starts by examining the experience of the agents in the global era, i.e., what they experience across international borders, which is informed through the lens of transnationalism.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to identify how the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in transnational experiences of Asian international graduate students studying and pursuing careers in the United States. This necessarily encompasses how their transnational experiences and ties they maintain between two countries affect their perceptions, performance and behaviors as Asians and job seekers in the United States.

From a conceptual perspective, this study locates the model minority discourse in the postcolonial framework, by defining the contemporary era as the accelerating process of the establishment and expansion of Empire. Specifically, by looking into Asian international students' transnational experience in the realm of higher education central in global competition networks (Cantwell, 2011), this study examines how the model minority image plays a role as a prescribed guideline for Asian international graduate students as potential immigrants by investigating whether they use it "to assert their own identity and existence of their own identity" (Said, 1993, p. xii) and contribute to "the conditions for the critical return of empire" (Bascara, 2006, p. ix).

Research Questions

This study originates from conceptual questions as they intersect with the model minority stereotype and postcolonialism as the theoretical framework. Under the two overarching

questions, sub-questions will investigate participants' specific transnational experiences and individual awareness of their status. Two areas are addressed as the research questions with their respective sub-questions.

- (1) How is the model minority stereotype shaped, developed, and ingrained in the transnational experiences of Asian international graduate students who plan to seek employment in the United States after the completion of their studies?
 - a. What do Asian international graduate students experience while they study in the United States and physically and emotionally travel between the United States and their home countries?
 - b. How do Asian international graduate students' transnational experiences shape their perceptions as Asians in a way that makes them think they should perform and behave in a certain way to be employed in the United States as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers?
- (2) How do Asian international graduate students perceive their immigrant employment status related to the U.S. immigrant labor market and the global labor market in the context of postcolonialism?
 - a. How do Asian international graduate students perceive their knowledge and expertise as a factor distinguishing them from less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States and people who earn the same degrees in their home countries?
 - b. How do Asian international graduate students think their present social and economic status will change in the future in the United States and in their homelands as a result of employment in the United States?

Methodology

This study examines what the participants experience about the world, specifically between international borders, and how their transnational experiences shape their view of the world. To meet this purpose, narrative inquiry is used for the methodology of this study. Data was collected from interviews with three Asian international graduate students who plan to find jobs or are already employed on Optional Practical Training (OPT) in the United States after graduation. Two additional participants were the wife of a participant who accompanied her husband and the researcher who used her self-narratives for data. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, based on their accessibility to the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In purposeful sampling, researchers “intentionally” select participants who can provide rich information about the questions under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 148). Three purposeful sampling strategies are used: convenience, snowball, and criterion sampling. To find information-rich cases, the researcher used her acquaintances and expanded the scope of the acquaintance until the most appropriate participants were identified.

As this research involved human subjects, it was reviewed and approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to meet ethical guidelines before the interviews were conducted (Appendix A). A consent form (Appendix B) was read and signed by each participant. They were free to withdraw from the research at any time without repercussion. Three interviews were conducted with each participant with follow-up questions were asked in person or through emails as needed. Field notes collected from casual conversations and the researcher’s relationship with the participants contributed to the data with the participants’ consent.

With the two research questions and their sub questions as guiding questions, open-ended interview questions were asked, but depending on the need, follow-up questions were added at the discretion of the researcher. The interview questions are in Appendix C, D and E.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using VoiceWalker, a transcription application, which allows the transcriber to repeat the sound of a segment a specified number of times. Data was interpreted based on thematic narrative analysis, in which the researcher identified themes that emerged in the data related to research questions (Bruner, 1986; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Riessman, 2008). In presenting and analyzing the data and reporting the findings, the researcher's autobiography was intertwined with participants' lived experiences based on common themes.

Definition of Terms

This section provides definitions of terms that are used in this study. Some of them were used in previous sections, and others are used in succeeding chapters. Both general and specific definitions are provided with their relevance to this study.

American Exceptionalism: is linked to “practices of US foreign and security policy that confirm, but also contest, established notions of American leadership in world politics” (Löfflmann, 2015, p. 308). American Exceptionalism is understood as the root of American Orientalism, which is derived from “indirect colonial contract; multicultural anxieties arising from the waves of emigration to the New World” such as yellow perils and Islamic perils, which started to emerge after World War II with the economic expansion and geographical interest of the United States (Kumar, 2012).

Asianness/Asian identity: Asianness or Asian-ness has been used to indicate Asian identity or “being Asian” in general in previous research. For example, Asianness was used to

describe Asian identity constructed and negotiated in its hybridity with the White culture as the mainstream (Chong, 2015), Asians as a racial group in the racial capitalism like Blackness meaning being Black (Cheng, 2013), or behaviors and tendencies of Asian learners in second language research (Kobayashi, 2011). In this study, Asianness or Asian identity explains Asians' self-recognized selves as a racial group distinguished from other ethnic or racial groups. The process of Asianness being developed involves a transnational shift from a racially and culturally homogeneous to a heterogeneous environment, where Asian individuals acknowledge themselves as a racial group and develop a group identity through interaction with other racial groups, specifically White Americans.

Border(s): are explained in distinguishing postcolonialism and transnationalism. Bhabha (1994), a postcolonial scholar, explained two aspects of the borders: "The borders of the nation Kristeva claims, are constantly faced with a double temporality: the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation (the pedagogical); and the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification (the performative)" (p. 219). The border(s) in transnationalism as part of migration and border scholarship emphasizes the experience of border crossers and the ties or connections they maintain to both the sending and receiving countries through a range of cross-border activities: political, economic, and cultural (Waldinger, 2013).

Bridge population: represents an in-transition status of international students on the F-1 visa on condition that they are contributing to "onward immigration" (Faist, 2010, p. 13) through employment and status change from temporary to permanent.

Colonized me: The idea taken from colonialism and postcolonialism, this term represents the cultural identity of the colonial subjects while the subjects and their home lands are identified as "margins and minorities" (Bhabah, 1994, p. 152) in Empire powered by the world system that

"integrates the center and the periphery through a network of markets" (Sanyal, 2014, p. 9).

Colonized me is not limited to the identity influenced by the dominant culture, but includes the identity that actively performs to meet the prescribed guidelines of the system in the form of "prescribed behavior" (Freire, 1970, p. 47). The term, "*me*" is used to emphasize individual experiences of the colonial subjects when interpreting their narratives.

Diachronic: Derived from literary studies, a diachronic or historical approach is used to examine the development of texts over time (Barton, 1998). In this study, a diachronic approach to the model minority stereotype investigates how Orientalism in the colonial period evolved over time to the present form.

Diaspora: Lavie and Swedenburg (1996) extended the concept of "the third time-space" into the definition of diaspora, which refers to "the doubled relationship or dual loyalty that migrants, exiles, and refugees have to places—their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with back home" (p. 14). Three key elements or criteria of diaspora identified are: (1) dispersion as "forced or otherwise traumatic dispersion" when strictly interpreted, or as "any kind of dispersion in space" more broadly, (2) homeland orientation that means "the orientation to a real or imagined 'homeland; as an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty," and (3) boundary-maintenance that involves "the preservation of a distinctive identity" in relation to the host society over time (Brubaker, 2005, pp. 5-6).

Empires/Empire: is the overarching term that has been used in all discourse regarding imperialism and colonialism (Steinmetz, 2014). Empires in the colonial period are defined as "expansive, militarized, and multiethnic political organizations that significantly limit the sovereignty of the peoples and polities they conquer;" therefore, the concept indicates

"hegemony, great powers, and international influence" at the borders (Steinmetz, 2014, p. 79).

While empires mean competing European powers, **Empire** as used in postcolonialism is a "new global form of sovereignty" or a "new form, composed of a series of national or superanational organisms united under a single logic of rule" and the "political subject that effectively regulates [these] global exchanges" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii). It is "a single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way, and treats them under one common notion of right that is decidedly postcolonialist and postimperialist" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 9).

Ethnicization: is in other words, "occupational reward and hierarchy" that is used to socialize minorities into workforce to maintain the capitalist system by prescribing a set of behavioral standards for them (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, pp. 33, 88). This social hierarchical system changes diachronically because the capitalist system requires flexibility for maximum operation in its nature (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). The model minority stereotype is considered as an example of ethnicization in this study.

F-1: is one of the two nonimmigrant visa categories for persons who wish to enter the United States as full-time students together with the M-1 visa for technical or vocational schools. Persons applying for F-1 must prove sufficient finances to support themselves during their course of study and maintain a foreign residence (USCIS, March 11, 2016). Regarding employment, USCIS stated that F-1 students are not allowed to work outside the campus during the first academic year, but may have on-campus jobs under some conditions and restrictions. After the first academic year, F-1 students may work off-campus in three types of employment: Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), and STEM OPT. Their off-campus employment should be related to their field of study and be authorized by the school and USCIS (USCIS, March 11, 2016).

Globalization: Globalization used in this study is an economic term, meaning “international capitalism and the trends towards a global economy” (Skeldon, 2014, p. 24) and the global economy is articulated by “the flows of goods, capital, and people” (p. 26). However, increasing border-crossing mobility and internationalization of labor markets have not moved together with the other two elements: the flows of goods and capital, as labor may not flow as fast as capital (Skeldon, 2014, p. 26). Among these three elements of the global economy, the mobility of people is focused for the purpose of this study. International students looking for jobs are regarded as highly skilled and educated human capital as the product of globalization.

Green Card (Permanent Residency): There are eight pathways to be a permanent resident: obtaining a Green Card through family, through employment, as a special immigrant, through refugee or asylee status, for human trafficking and crime victims, for victims of abuse, through other categories, and through registry (USCIS, September 12, 2017). USCIS (September, 12, 2017) lists three preferences for aliens who want to obtain a Green Card based on employment.

- (1) First preference: aliens with extraordinary abilities in science, arts, education, business or athletics, outstanding professors or researchers, and multinational executives and managers who meet certain criteria;
- (2) Second preference: members of professions holding an advanced degree or persons of exceptional ability in science, arts, or business, or those seeking a national interest waiver
- (3) Third preference: skilled workers with a minimum of two-year training or work experience, professionals with a U.S. bachelor’s degree or a foreign equivalent

degree with a profession in the field of the degree, and other unskilled workers with less than two-year training or experience.

H-1B: is a temporary work visa for foreign workers. International students can apply for it before their OPT expires. To be eligible for an H-1B visa, the job applied for must meet one of the four requirements: (1) a bachelor's or higher or its equivalent is required as the minimum, (2) the degree requirement for the job is common to the field or complex, so only a degree holder can perform the job, (3) the employer requires a degree or its equivalent for the job, (4) the duties are specialized and complex, so required knowledge is associated with a bachelor's or higher degree attainment (USCIS, April 3, 2017)

H-1B can be granted for three years initially and extended for another three years, which means the maximum number of years for the visa holder to stay in the United States is six years though there are some exceptions (USCIS, April 3, 2017). When the six-year limit is reached, H-1B visa holders should leave the country or apply for a Green Card based on employment while on H-1B ("H1B to Green Card Process," 2018). There was a great reduction in the H-1B visa cap in 2003 and the number dropped dramatically from 195,000 to 65,000 per year. The current cap includes 20,000 additional H-1B visas for international students who received a master's or higher degree from colleges or universities in the United States (Shih, 2015). Figure 3 illustrates the number of H-1B visas issues from 1991 to 2016 by USCIS.

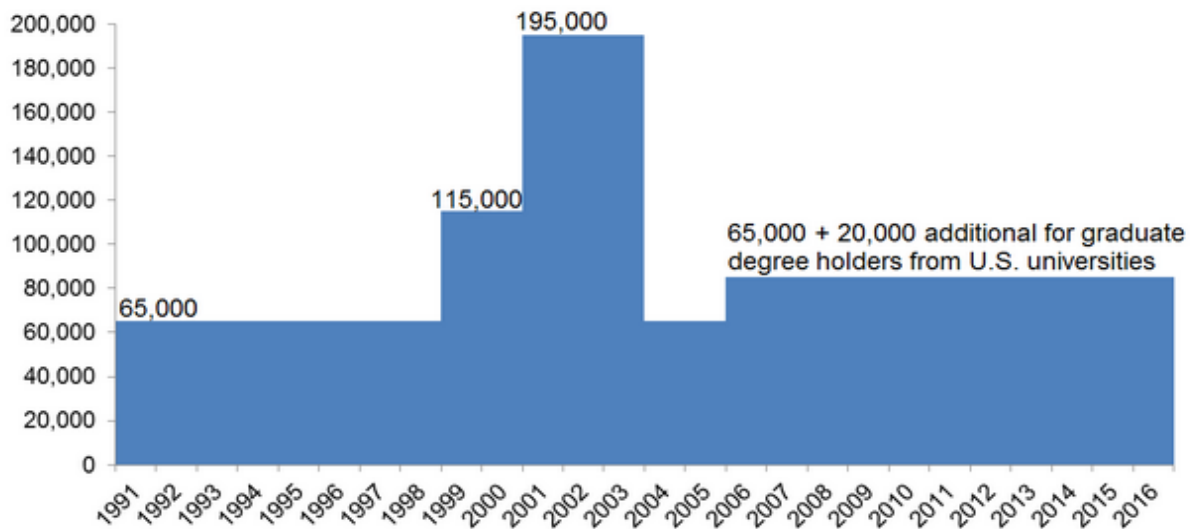


Figure 3. Annual fiscal year cap on H-1B visas, USCIS, as cited in American Immigration Council (2015, p. 2).

While the visa cap was reduced in 2003, since 2000, higher education and non-profit institutions that want to hire skilled foreign workers have been exempt from H-1B cap limits, which have opened doors to academic and research careers for master's and Ph.D degree holders (Shih, 2015).

Hegemony: is a term coined by Gramsci, who analyzed the interactions between peasants and the bourgeoisie in the early 20th century, referring to “oppression by a dominant group with the unknowing consent of non-dominant groups” on the side of the oppressed (Allan & O’Leary, 1993, as cited in Trytten et al., 2012, p. 441). On the side of the oppressor, it is “power that maintains certain structures but that is ordinarily invisible” (Lazarus-Black & Hirsch, 1994, p. 6). It “‘naturalizes’ a social order, an institution, or even an everyday practice so that ‘how things are’ seems inevitable” and sustains the dominant group’s interests, making the same interests vague to its subordinates (Lazarus-Black & Hirsch, 1994, p. 7).

Model Minority: was first used in the mid-1960s by media to describe Asian Americans as the most successful people of color among all underrepresented groups. Since then, Asians

and Asian Americans have been portrayed as a model minority and widely accepted as so by the public (Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). Most studies find the high academic achievement of Asians and Asian Americans as the reason they have been perceived as a “model minority” (Wong et al., 1998). Scholars see the problem of the model minority stereotype as racial since it creates disparities among underrepresented people and hides reality as Asian Americans “have been held up as the example that supposedly shows the absence of racial disparities, while also being encouraged to see themselves as victimized by efforts to help other minorities” (Wu, 2003, as cited in Hartlep, 2013a, p. 15). In this study, the term model minority is specifically applied to Asians and Asian Americans originated from the East Asian countries: China, Korea, and Japan because it was first used to describe Japanese as a model minority in the United States and extended to Chinese and Koreans. However, in the terrain of Empire, the term is inclusive of all Asians regardless of the region.

Modernity: is understood as the “unique quality and possession of Western civilization” in the postcolonial context (Shih, 2001, as cited in Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 298). Through modernity, the Orient pursues the West as the model, which results in ideological self-positioning defined as self-Orientalism. In the process of modernity, the Orientalist assumption of inferiority of the rest of the world except the Western civilizations is internalized by the Orient (Yan & Santos, 2009).

Optional Practical Training (OPT): is also called F-1 OPT as international students are still on F-1 when they apply for this. There are two requirements for OPT: (1) the kind of work they perform must relate to their major area of study and (2) they need to choose one of the three: pre-completion OPT while still taking courses, post-completion OPT after they graduate, or the two combined. On post-completion OPT, which is chosen most frequently, students are

given 12 months of full-time practical training, but those with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors who have received post-completion OPT can extend it to 24 months as of March 2016, which replaces the previous 17-month extension (USCIS, May 10, 2016). During post-completion OPT, the time limit they can spend without a qualifying job is 90 days and those with an approved 24-month STEM extension are given 150 days, which means they should leave the country if they cannot find a qualifying job by the end of the period (USCIS, May 10, 2016).

Orientalism: is used to describe the Western view and attitudes towards the East or the Orient (Said, 1978). Said (1978) provided several definitions of Orientalism: "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'" (p. 2); "A Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient," (p. 3); and "A distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" (p. 12). He explained three aspects of Orientalism: (1) "the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia with a 4000 year old history," (2) "the scientific discipline in the West according to which, beginning in the early 19th century, one specialized in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions," and (3) "the ideological suppositions, images, and fantasies about a currently important and politically urgent region of the world called the Orient" (Said, 1985, p. 90).

Orientalism, inverted/internal and self-Orientalism: These three types of Orientalism have been interchangeably used in literature. In-depth literature review tells the differences. Some scholars approach internal Orientalism spatially and geographically in the discourse of national identity, defining it as Othering of a certain region within a nation (Jansson, 2003, 2010; Johnson & Coleman, 2012). Inverted Orientalism deals with the way Asian intellectuals educated

in the West present themselves to the eyes of the West and conform to the Western values and ideas, which reversely influence people in their countries (James, 2012). Self-Orientalism addresses a more psychological aspect of Orientals as the consequence of modernity in their “desires and yearnings of seeking equality of the West,” which results in ideological self-positioning of inferiority to the West (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 298). Both inverted and self-Orientalism are cultivated by Orientals themselves, concerning modernity of their nations (James, 2012; Yan & Santos, 2009).

The source of inverted and self-Orientalism is in the mind of the colonized, where Western values are implanted, and it is specifically accepted, conformed to, and defended by colonized intellectuals (Fanon, 1963). Also *mimicry* presents the same idea, as mirroring act and thought of the colonized to imitate the colonizer and embrace the culture of the colonizer (Bhabha, 1984). For this study, inverted Orientalism and self-Orientalism are the most applicable because they explain Orientalism cultivated by Oriental intellectuals educated in the West, how their values and ideas influence people in their home countries, and how people in their countries self-position themselves toward their values and ideas brought from the West.

Postcolonialism: Inherited from colonialism and imperialism historically, and influenced by Said (1978) theoretically, postcolonialism is a "(self-) critique of the West, its oppressive and exploitative practices, indebted to Orientalism," and has partly developed through criticism and attacks on it (Williams, 2014, p. 50). As a contributing scholar, Fanon (1986) analyzed the colonized mind of the colonized subject and developed decolonization theory. Another contributor, Bhabha developed ideas such as *mimicry* (1984) as imitating act and thought of the colonized to resemble the colonizer, *hybridity* (1994) as how the cultural identity of the colonial subject is formed influencing and influenced by the culture of the colonizer, and *ambivalence*

(1984) as two contradicting minds of the colonial subject toward the colonizer: love and hate or positive and negative. Postcolonialism has been used in parallel with Orientalism, but its role is to take a different view of the dehumanizing, oppressive, exploitative knowledge built upon Orientalism, and produce different knowledge and use it for human rights and justice (Williams, 2014).

Prescribed behavior: Used by Freire (1970), this term is derived from "prescription" defined as "the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness" (p. 47). Therefore, "the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor" (Freire, 1970, p. 47). A prescribed behavior pertaining to the model minority stereotype is Asians' or Asian Americans' embracing of the model minority image imposed upon them as a prescribed guideline and their behavior to conform to the image by "performing the 'Oriental'" (Ho, 2003, p. 149).

Privileged me: Along with *colonized me*, *privileged me* refers to the identity of highly educated and skilled immigrant workers including international graduate students who are considered potential professionals. "*Privileged*" in the term does not indicate a fixed social and economic status or class, but a comparatively advantaged status that benefits from advanced degrees earned in the United States and high-paying jobs as a result, in comparison with the underprivileged status of the less skilled and educated immigrant workers. As in *colonized me*, "*me*" in the term is used to emphasize international students' individual experiences in interpreting their narratives. The context of *privileged me* is not limited to the United States, but includes their relatively advantaged status in their home lands, if there is any, in regard to how

the degrees achieved in the United States are recognized, collating with the equivalent degrees earned in their home countries.

Synchronic: is derived from literary studies with *diachronic*. While a diachronic approach is a historical examination of texts, a synchronic approach is to read the text “exactly as they lie before us” without historical consideration (Barton, 1998, p. 14). Depending on the purpose and need, both diachronic and synchronic approaches can be used legitimately (Barton, 1998). In this study, together with a diachronic or historical approach, a synchronic approach to Orientalism is used to examine its contemporary form, the model minority stereotype. Both approaches are used to view globalization and its process as historical and contemporary forms respectively.

Transnationalism: has been devised to emphasize immigrant experience when migrants “establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders,” and in this context, immigrants are defined as “transmigrants” (Schiller et al., 1992, p. ix). A more detailed definition of transnationalism can be derived from the definition of transnational activities that “take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants,” which “may be conducted by relatively powerful actors, such as representatives of national governments and multinational corporations, or may be initiated by more modest individuals, such as immigrants and their home country kin and relations” (Portes, 1999, p. 464).

U.S./United States: U.S. is used as an adjective form and the United States as a noun form in this study. The United States is identified not as Empire itself, but its constitutional project contributes to the birth of the idea of Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Loomba, 2015). Many scholars including conservatives have viewed the United States as a reinstated empire

(Loomba, 2015) as the "American imperium" has replaced the European imperialism represented by Britain and France (Said, 1978, p. 138; Schueller, 2004). However, considering the definition of Empire addressed above and its nature to absorb subject countries "into new international network," the United States solely cannot be identified as Empire itself despite its leading role in the establishment of Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 182; Loomba, 2015, p. 10).

U.S. Citizenship: Permanent residents can apply for U.S. citizenship to receive the same services and have the same rights as U.S.-born citizens. They are categorized as "naturalized citizens" to be distinguished from U.S.-born citizens (Hossain, 2014). To be qualified for naturalization, the applicant should (1) be a permanent resident for at least five years, (2) be a permanent resident for three years or more when filing as a spouse of a U.S citizen, (3) have qualifying service in the U.S. armed forces, and (4) the applicant's child may qualify for naturalization if the applicant is a U.S. citizen (USCIS, January 22, 2013). To obtain U.S. citizenship, applicants also need to complete a medical check-up, security clearances including finger printing, FBI clearance, and a criminal background check and pass the "Citizenship Test" that consists of reading, writing, and speaking in English and civics (Hossain, 2014).

Toward Onward Immigration: F-1 to H-1B

This section provides statistics and legal processes related to the status of international students and H-1B workers in the United States. As this study defines Asian international students who seek employment in the United States as a bridge population transiting from students to immigrant workers, it is necessary to examine pull factors (Lee, 1966) that affect their decisions regarding the immigration status.

The number of international students enrolled in U.S. institutions is growing every year as seen in the total number of international student enrollment: 974,926 in 2014-2015 to

1,043,839 in 2015-2016 with 7.1% of growth and again to 1,078,822 in 2016-2017 with 3.4% of growth (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2017a). International students composed 4.8% of a total of 20,300,000 higher education students in 2014-2015 and 5.3% in 2016-2017.

Graduate enrollment showed an increase in the total number of international student enrollment, from 362,228 in 2014-2015 to 391,124 in 2016-2017. Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is considered a transitional status from a student toward a temporary worker, also showed an increase in the total number from 120,287 in 2014-2015 to 175,695 in 2016-2017 (IIE, 2017a).

Table 1 shows changes in the academic level trends of international students from 2012 to 2017.

Though the Trump administration's anti-immigration principles and policies caused a sudden drop in the percent change from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, the total number of students itself showed an increase in all academic level throughout the years except the non-degree category.

This indicates that the United States is still a preferred destination for degree-seeking international students. Figure 4 illustrates changes in the number of international students in the United States from 1953 to 2017.

Table 1. Academic level trends of international students

	Under-graduate	% Change	Graduate	% Change	Non-degree	% Change	OPT	% Change
2012/13	339,993	9.9	311,204	3.6	73,528	5.7	94,917	11.5
2013/14	370,724	9.0	329,854	6.0	79,477	8.1	105,997	11.7
2014/15	398,824	7.6	362,228	9.8	93,587	17.8	120,287	13.5
2015/16	427,313	7.1	383,935	6.0	85,093	-9.1	147,498	22.6
2016/17	439,019	2.7	391,124	1.9	72,984	-14.2	175,695	19.1

Note. From Open Doors: 2017 "Fast Facts," by Institute of International Education (IIE), 2017a.

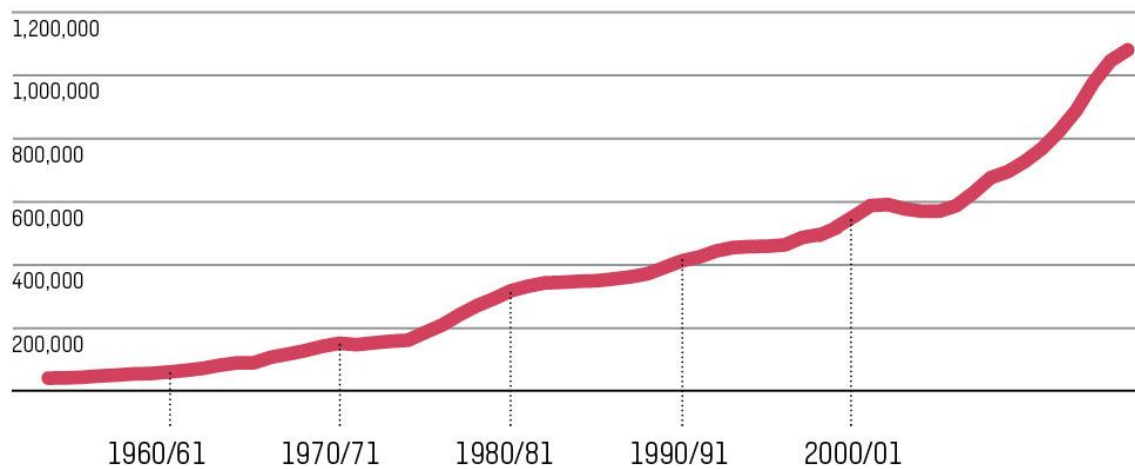


Figure 4. International students in the U.S. over time from 1953 to 2017. Open Doors 2017 Infographics: International students, IIE (2017b).

Top three fields of study selected by international students were Engineering, Business and Management, and Math and Computer Science, taking up 55.5% of all majors (IIE, 2017a). Forty-eight percent of fields of study were concentrated in STEM including 11.5% of other STEM majors except Engineering and Math and Computer Science. Figure 5 shows the growth change in the selected majors of international students from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. One notable change is a sharp increase in STEM majors with 6% in Engineering and 18% in Math and Computer Science while Business and Management remains the same.

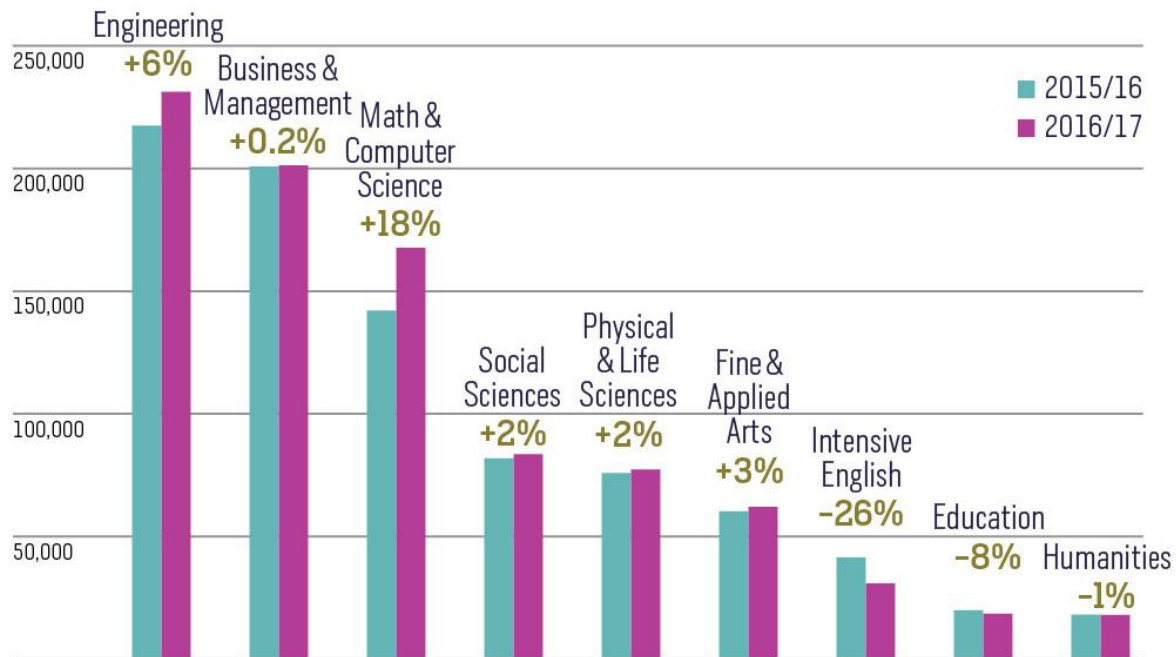


Figure 5. Growth in selected fields of study of international students. Open doors 2017 Infographics: International students, IIE (2017b).

Regarding the source of funding, personal and family funding was the top source of funding both in 2014-2015 and in 2016-2017. U.S. colleges or universities were the second funding source in 2014-2015 and the third in 2016-2017. Instead, current employment was identified as the second source of funding in 2016-2017. A possible reason for the change in the second funding source is the limited budgets from U.S. institutions due to the decreased number of international students since the Trump administration. More international students are coming from middle-class families in sending countries (IIE, 2017a).

A big growth in OPT was reported in 2016-2017 with 19.1% of increase from the previous academic year. This indicates that there are more international students seeking employment in the United States after completing their studies. Figure 6 illustrates the trend of continuing international students by academic levels.

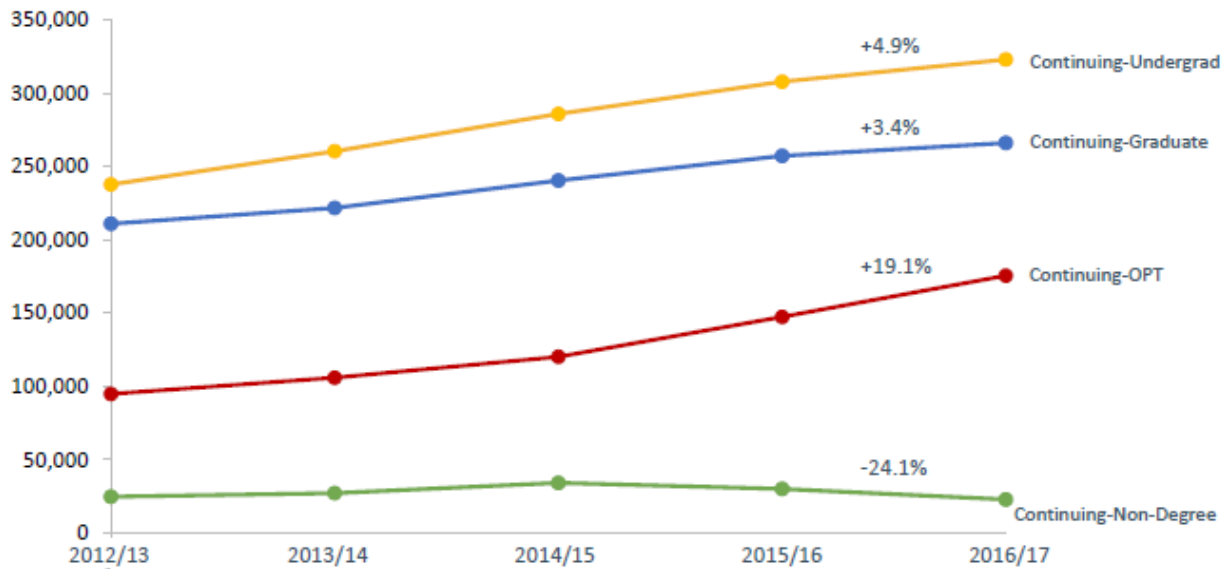


Figure 6. Continuing students by academic level. Open Doors 2017: Report on international education exchange, IIE (2017c).

Alberts and Hazen (2005) define these international students as professional migrants. In a study that investigated the motivation factors for international students to stay in the United States, they found that international students decided to stay in the United States due to professional factors, while societal factors such as migrant experiences or racism in the United States and personal factors such as family ties in their home countries made them choose to return home (Alberts & Hazen, 2005). The findings suggest that opportunities for employment are strong factors that encourage international students to choose the United States as their destination after the completion of their studies (Alberts & Hazen, 2005).

As an example, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) received record-high 236,000 H-1B visa applications for the 2017 fiscal year when 85,000 are granted as mandated by law, including 20,000 petitions granted to international students who received master's or doctoral degrees in U.S. colleges and universities every year (USCIS, April 12, 2016).

Table 2. Percent of H-1B petitions approved by level of education: FYs 2013-2016

Level of Education	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Education known	100	100	100	100
Less than a Bachelor's degree	1	1	1	1
Bachelor's degree	45	45	45	44
Master's degree	41	43	44	45
Doctorate degree	9	8	7	7
Professional degree	3	4	3	3

Note: Sum of percent may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Note. From “Characteristics of H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers: Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress,” by USCIS, 2017.

In academic employment, U.S.-educated doctoral degree holders in Science and Engineering have increased continuously since the 1970s, from 12% in 1973 to 26% in 2010, reaching 49% in Engineering and 51% in Computer Sciences in 2010 (National Science Foundation [NSF], 2014). They especially show a higher rate of postdoctoral employment than of full-time faculty employment, taking 49% of postdoctoral positions (NSF, 2014). Of the 46,000 U.S.-educated Asian or Pacific Islander doctoral degree holders in Science and Engineering employed in U.S. academia in 2010, non-U.S. citizens were 51% (NSF, 2014). In the same year, Asians or Pacific Islanders represented 52% of foreign-born full-time faculty in Science and Engineering, with nearly 70% of them employed in postdoctoral positions (NSF, 2014).

The above trends delineate that international students in higher education in the United States are a labor pool for both academia and businesses, especially in STEM fields. These trends are understood as part of the processes of globalization, in which the mobility of resources and ideas are concentrated in U.S. higher education (Taylor & Cantwell, 2015). As Said (1978) mentioned, the United States recruits international students through “the patronage system in scholarship, business and research,” which makes the United States a “virtual hegemonic

commander of affairs” (p. 323). A trajectory study that analyzed the global mobility of about 7,000 graduate students in Science and Engineering proves that the world university rankings are a pull factor in choices of higher educational institutions among international students (Furukawa, Shirakawa, & Okuwada, 2013). The findings support the fact that the United States dominates higher education since top-ranked universities are mostly in the United States (Furukawa et al., 2013). According to the best world universities rankings of 2018 based on academic research performance and their global and regional reputations, of the top 10 universities, eight were located in the United States (Smanik, 2017).

Mobility of international students as potential highly skilled workers and H-1B visa issues, therefore, should be discussed in the context of a global flow of human capital. In response to this need, related scholarship has centered on brain drain in their home country and highly skilled labor concentration in the United States (Cantwell, 2011; Furukawa et al., 2013; Sahoo, Sangha, & Kelly, 2010) and the U.S. government’s immigration and retention policies regarding highly skilled workers and issues related to them (Gower, 2011; Schuck & Tyler, 2010). Once international students are hired while on OPT bridging to H-1B, they are categorized as “non-immigrants” or “foreign-born nationals” based on the U.S. immigration policies that designate their status for a specific period of time for a specific purpose, but mostly “temporary migrants” or “temporary workers” are used to refer to them generically (Sahoo et al., 2010, p. 299).

On H-1B, they can stay up to six years in the United States with an extension after the first three years, travel between the United States and their homelands, bring their families under the H4 category, and obtain real estate in the United States (Sahoo et al., 2010). Most importantly, H-1B can be the first step toward a Green Card depending on the holders’ decisions

(Sahoo et al., 2010). In their study about Indian H-1B visa holders in the United States, Sahoo et al. (2010) summarized the advantages and disadvantages of having temporary workers from the perspective of the host country and home country and the impact on H-1B holders as follows:

- (1) They help the host country with labor shortage and reduce unemployment in the home country.
- (2) When they return to the home country, they bring knowledge, skills, expertise, and wealth, which help the economy in the home country.
- (3) They enter the host country at times of economic booming, and leave the country during economic downturns.
- (4) Their benefits are limited compared to those of permanent employees.
- (5) When H-1B expires or is terminated, they are left with the psychological and socioeconomic impact of “neither here nor there” (Sahoo et al., 2010, pp. 305-306).

These characteristics show that temporary skilled workers on H-1B are flexible in their nature in making decisions on which place to choose between, the host country or the home country, and these decisions are influenced by economy and capital (Mallick, 2010). Other factors such as high skills and education add to the economic factor. According to a report about characteristics of H-1B workers in the fiscal year of 2016, 44% of H-1B workers had a bachelor’s degree, 45% had a master’s degree, 7% had a doctorate, and 3% had a professional degree (USCIS, 2017). Sixty nine percent were given to workers between the ages of 25 to 34, 69% were given to computer-related jobs, and the median salary of H-1B visa holders increased from \$79,000 for the fiscal year of 2015 to \$82,000 in 2016 (USCIS, 2017). They earn higher wages than non-H-1B workers in the same occupation with similar experience (Rothwell & Ruiz, 2013). The reasons for their higher wages are H-1B requests for STEM occupations are

extremely high especially in the metropolitan areas, and STEM job vacancies are hard to fill with the growing need in the industry (Rothwell & Ruiz, 2013).

These conditions have led to the myth about H-1B visas: foreign-born temporary workers are taking away jobs from native-born workers (American Immigration Council, 2015; Mallick, 2010; Schuck & Tyler, 2010). However, research shows that U.S. companies add five new employees to their workforce for every H-1B position (Mallick, 2010). H-1B workers do not compete with native-born workers; rather, the U.S. government creates a powerful human capital management system that attracts high-skilled workers across the globe to fill its employment gap and bring more job opportunities even for native-born workers, which eventually leads to the nation's economic expansion (American Immigration Council, 2015). The H-1B visa program expansion is expected to add 1.3 million jobs with over \$158 billion added to gross domestic product by 2045, which is estimated to grow for all states and in all years (Treyz, Stottlemeyer, & Motamedi, 2013).

The H-1B visa expansion program is a pull factor (Lee, 1966) that attracts high-quality international students to the U.S. universities. A study shows that restrictions on H-1B visas reduced the average SAT scores of international applicants, which might result in lowered average academic quality of international applicants who want to pursue higher education in the United States and would encounter reduced career opportunities in the United States consequently (Kato & Sparber, 2013). Kato and Sparber (2013) suggest maximizing skill-based immigration and H-1B-related policy reassessment to recruit high-quality international students as a solution. It means the purpose of the H-1B visa program is to recruit talented internationals, train them through higher education, and retain them for the high-skilled labor market by providing them with high-paying career choices. It conveys that the nature of the H-1B visa

program is capitalistic, serving incessant economic expansion of the system, eventually deepening the economic disparities between high skilled and educated H-1B workers and the rest in the labor market.

However, H-1B visas are non-immigrant temporary visas, granting limited rights to the visa holders, while permanent visas provide the same privileges to the holders as U.S. citizens (Hossain, 2014; Lowell, 2000). While on H-1B, workers are tied to the sponsoring firms and institutions due to the employer-employee match condition, and H-1B workers must leave the United States at the end of the term and stay at least one year outside of the United States unless they petition for a Green Card through their sponsoring firms or institutions (Kerr & Lincoln, 2010). In addition, H-1B workers earn 25.4% less than permanent residents (Mukhopadhyay & Oxborrow, 2012). Due to these restrictions, many H-1B workers eventually choose to become permanent residents, which means H-1B “implicitly” encourages them to obtain a Green Card (Lowell, 2000, p. 6). It is the pathway to highly-skilled immigrants with more choices of location for professional and financial advancement (Barakat & Parhizgar, 2013). Figure 6 shows the change of immigration status from F-1 to permanent residency.

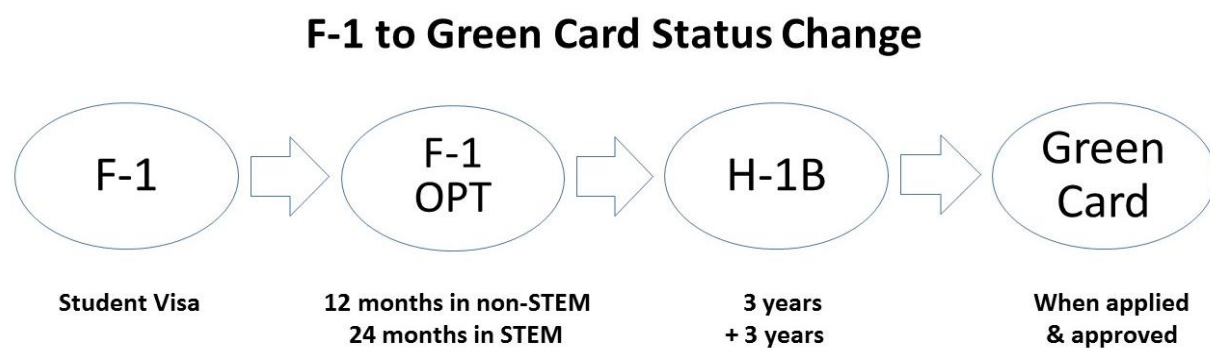


Figure 7. From non-immigrant (F-1) to immigrant (Green Card) status change. Copyright 2018 by Eun Hee Kim.

However, choosing to obtain a Green Card does not always lead to settling in the United States permanently (Barakat & Parhiagar, 2013; Qin, 2011). Permanent residents become

“transnational” as they work, and within the global labor mechanism, these highly skilled workers are viewed as part of “brain circulation” rather than “brain drain” from their home countries because they choose to reside in more than one country, maintaining economic and financial ties to the host country while contributing to their home economies (Saxenian, 2005, p. 36). In this sense, their U.S.-earned degrees are not only necessary for their careers in the United States, but also highly valued in their home country, regarded as a “ticket to better employment” either in domestic or multinational companies in their homeland (Qin, 2011, p. 79).

Transnational experience of highly-skilled migrants, therefore, is deeply related to socioeconomic factors, with loose ties to both countries because of their advanced degrees and skills leading to increased mobility (Barakat & Parhiagar, 2013).

On the Other Side of the Labor Market

These characteristics of highly-skilled immigrant workers are compared to those of low-income Asian immigrant workers. It is found that immigration has brought a positive impact to the U.S. economy in general though it is hard to make generalizations due to varying empirical studies on the impact of immigration on the U.S. economy (Mar, 2010). A study that analyzed the long-term impact of immigration on the productivity of the U.S. economy indicates that immigration is significantly related to the growth of productivity (Peri, 2012). However, it presents a different picture for low-income workers, who make up the majority of the U.S. labor market. Major factors identified as the reasons for low wages are lack of education and work experience, limited English proficiency, unsuitability of skills as human capital or deficiencies in employable job skills, and other issues related to refugees (Lee, 2010). They experience high unemployment rates, difficulties in finding economically self-sufficient jobs, or poor labor conditions such as long hours and low wages, or part-time jobs with no benefits (Lee, 2010).

Especially, Asian immigration tends to show heavy concentration in states such as California that are already populated with existing Asian immigrants; the impact of low wages, low employment and poor social welfare in these areas is even greater (Mar, 2010). In these Asian-concentrated areas, long-term unemployment is higher among Asian workers than Whites with similar skills (Flippen & Kim, 2015; Kim, 2010).

Globalization is another factor that risks the job security for low-income Asian immigrants (Lee, 2010). It has economically benefited high-skilled workers, especially business startups in Silicon Valley, by creating a “transpacific highway” for the transfer of human capital and knowledge (Hom, 2010, p. 112). Hom (2010) explained that globalization has helped Asian businesses build networks, which have significantly influenced Asian American economies by (1) providing access to business capital that has not been allowed for Asians due to discrimination, (2) removing the glass ceiling for Asian American managers and executives, (3) allowing Asian entrepreneurs to cross borders easily between the host country and home land and create more networks and access to jobs, capital and human resources, and (4) increasing the economic and political ties between the host country and the home country (p. 114).

At the same time, however, globalization has reduced low-skilled jobs in the United States, causing the sectoral shifts from manufacturing to the service industry and creating more jobs and competition in the service sector (Lee, 2010). As a result, the wages have been lowered in the service sector in addition to the increasing unemployment rate in the manufacturing industry, while the influx of new immigrants and refugees furthers the competition and lowers wages (Lee, 2010). These conditions suggest that the global economic system has doubled its impact on low-skilled workers, combined with the issues created by the structure of the U.S. labor market, while providing more career choices for highly skilled and educated workers.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations of a study are conditions intentionally imposed by the researcher regarding the scope of the study, while limitations occur out of the boundary the researcher can control (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). For delimitations, as this study is a narrative inquiry that examines how the model minority stereotype is shaped and developed through Asian international students' transnationally lived experiences and their consequent plan to pursue employment in the United States, the scope of this research is delimited to Asian international graduate students who are studying at a U.S. university or on the post-completion OPT status that will advance to the H-1B visa. It is reported that there are more master's and doctorate degree holders who receive H-1B visas when the numbers are combined than bachelor's degree holders alone (Table 2, Chapter 2). The higher H-1B visa issuance rate for graduate students than for undergraduate indicates that graduate students are considered more highly skilled and qualified for specialty occupations than undergraduate and expected to have highest earnings in the immigrant labor market. This will serve the purpose of this study that examines Asian international graduate students' perceptions of their status as highly skilled and educated elites in the labor market.

Second, the interview language was standardized in English for fairness among participants. If the researcher had used her native language Korean with the Korean participant, more in-depth emotional and psychological understanding of the participant would have been possible, but at the same time, it means the interviews with Chinese participants should be conducted in Chinese, which requires a Chinese translator participate in the interviews and the interviews be recorded and transcribed in Chinese and translated into English. A third-party interpretation or translation poses issues of misinterpretation or distortion of the interview data (Polkinghorne, 2005), while the same risks can be reduced when the researcher speaks the

participants' language. Therefore, to make the level of data quality general and even among participants for data reliability, the interview language needed to be standardized in English, and all interviews were conducted in English.

As limitations of this study, due to the limited number of participants, the findings of this research will not be generalizable to the entire Asian international graduate population or international students of other countries at the research site. Another limitation is participants' language proficiency, which could limit this study as they are international students who speak English as a second language. They may lack language skills to explain their lived experiences and related themes. In the same vein, the use of participants' second language requires the researcher refine the language for data presentation, which might affect the accuracy of data. For example, habitually repeated words or expressions were simplified, as in "very very" or "really really" to "very" or "really." This might reduce the intensity of the words originally intended by participants.

Third, the research site limits this study because the participants are from a university with 75% Whites, 8% internationals, and 1.7% Asians (Office of the Registrar, 2017); therefore, findings of this study may not be applied to Asian international graduate students in other cities or states where more diverse races and ethnicities are identified. Lastly, this study uses the researcher's autobiographical story as part of the data, which can create subjectivity and a biased view of her life story derived from her experiences.

Statement of the Significance of the Study

Washington (1896) and DuBois (1965), two well-known African American intellectuals and activists, suggested industrial progress and education as their respective solutions to racial discrimination against African Americans. The common argument found in both is that

discrimination and prejudice will be overcome through elevation of socioeconomic status, and industry and education will make it happen.

Since then, scholarship on racism and discrimination has cultivated the subject beyond economic and educational betterment, but still today race-related discourse is misleading as an outcry for better and more educational and economic opportunities, as evidenced in a recently published magazine article, “The model minority is losing patience” with a subtitle, “Asian-Americans are the United States’ most successful minority, but they are complaining ever more vigorously about discrimination, especially in academia” (2015, October 3). To some degree, despite developing scholarship on the model minority stereotype, it still prevails and does not go away due to the revisited subjects and the same narrow approaches, which need to be combated to set a new paradigm (Hartlep, 2013c). To meet this need, first, this study seeks to unmask the source that operates behind the notion and identify the origin through the historical context that has nurtured the notion in its present form. In other words, this study goes beyond the context where the notion of the model minority stereotype was incubated to determine its root from the current postcolonial context as a continuum of previous colonial periods throughout history. In order to do that, this study adopts both diachronic and synchronic views to Orientalism (Koshy, 2008), approaching the model minority stereotype as the current contextual representation of Orientalism, the result of colonialism over centuries, and investigates how the notion is operating today as part of the dynamics that moves and maintains the regime behind the globalizing process.

It also means Asians and Asian Americans need to be understood in the same context, in terms of how they are availed to support the expansion and maintenance of the force. Therefore, this study examines Asians not only as the objects the model minority image is imposed upon,

but also as the subjects that perform and conform to the imposed image as the prescribed guideline to maintain the regime.

Finally, this study addresses how the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in an academic setting and further in the social and economic context in continuation through their border-crossing transnational experiences. This study provides a basis for future conceptual and empirical studies to frame the model minority discourse on a continuum from academia to society, which will bridge model minority research on students and on immigrants while broadening the scope of the related discourse.

Researcher's Assumptions

There are several assumptions the researcher makes when conducting this study. Due to the nature of narrative inquiry, first, it is assumed that the students who agreed to participate in this study will answer the interview questions with honesty, about their feelings, experiences, statuses, and decisions and preferences regarding their future plans. If the participants are in the status of employment on F-1 OPT, the researcher assumes that they are also willing to share the experience of their employment and how it is influencing their perceptions as Asian workers in the United States.

In addition, based on the researcher's previous statuses as an international student on F-1, F-1 OPT, and H-1B, the researcher assumes that the stories and experiences of the participants overlap with those of the researcher in many ways. Therefore, it is assumed that the participants of this study have maintained strong ties to their family in the home country and received emotional or financial support through the ties while studying in the United States as international students. Another assumption is that they will have options to choose between their home country and the United States after they graduate regarding their jobs and locations. In the

same sense, it is assumed that they are competitive enough to secure employment in both countries with their graduate degrees obtained in the United States. Finally, the researcher assumes that the model minority stereotype is conformed to by the participants through the virtue of hard work, whether in their studies or careers, to improve their living conditions and social and economic status in the future.

Summary

This narrative study examines individually lived experiences through stories told by Asian international graduate students who are planning to pursue their careers or employed on OPT in the United States and interprets their experiences through the lens of postcolonial theory. This study views the model minority stereotype as a transformed representation of Orientalism, the product of colonialism that continues today in the form of globalization. It seeks to identify the source of the power that operates Empire and how the power uses the model minority stereotype to maintain and expand its regime. As appropriated to expand and maintain Empire, the model minority stereotype is studied in terms of how it is shaped, developed, and ingrained through the transnational experiences and career decisions of Asian international graduate students.

In Chapter 2, postcolonialism is introduced as the theoretical underpinning of this study in relation to Orientalism and the model minority stereotype in today's context. The status of international students who pursue careers after graduation will be defined through the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora. How the model minority stereotype is embraced by Asian American students and professional workers will be the focus of the empirical literature. This study consists of five chapters: Chapter 1 Introduction; Chapter 2 Review of the Literature;

Chapter 3 Methodology; Chapter 4 Findings; and Chapter 5 Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter delineates postcolonialism as the theoretical underpinning that binds the concepts and notions of this study together. With postcolonialism as the overarching theory, foundational scholarly works are reviewed. Globalization is explained as the ongoing expansion of Empire in the postcolonial context. How globalization and its process are identified in the flows of people and knowledge as capital is addressed (Skeldon, 2014). A review of literature on the model minority stereotype as the present representation of Orientalism in the realm of Empire follows.

In addition, the status of international students who are planning to pursue careers in the United States after the completion of their studies is determined in light of “onward immigration” through the lens of transnationalism (Faist, 2010, p. 13). After that, studies on international students as potential immigrants are reviewed with the U.S. immigrant market as the local context, which is understood in the global economic system and knowledge network as the larger context. Finally, adding to the history and background of the model minority stereotype already addressed in Chapter 1, empirical studies that have been conducted related to the model minority stereotype are reviewed, with emphasis on how Asians or Asian Americans perceive themselves or distinguish themselves through the image of model minority.

This chapter is organized into the following sections and ideas: (1) theoretical framework: postcolonialism, (2) globalization and Empire, (3) Orientalism and the model minority stereotype in the discourse of Empire, (4) transnationalism or diaspora, (5) the model minority stereotype embraced, (6) summary, and (7) contribution of the study.

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonialism

For the theoretical framework, postcolonialism is chosen because it provides a common ground where the concepts and notions of this study can be interconnected and intertwined. This section is dedicated to tracing the origin of postcolonialism as an academic concept and its development as a theory and reviews how colonialism is approached in the postcolonial context in connection with its imperial impact on today's world.

In order to understand postcolonialism, colonialism, imperialism, and empires/Empire need to be understood first. Colonialism is considered one historical form of imperialism, whose manifestations vary in different contexts (McLeod, 2010), which suggests that it can be manifested in another form in the contemporary world. Understanding the common theme of colonialism can inform imperialism's manifestation in the present context. The common theme of colonialism is the commercial operation that brings wealth to the Western world by exploiting others economically motivated by the pursuit of economic profit, which is grounded in capitalism and concerns the settlement of people (McLeod, 2010).

With the beginning of the 21st century, many areas under the British Empire were decolonized. As a result, colonialism as a historical period and its colonizer-colonized relationship does not exist any longer (McLeod, 2010; Said, 1978). However, its political, economic, and social consequences remain as an on-going process, which is acknowledged as the process of expansion of the empire/Empire (Dirks, 1992; Mattingly, 2013; Said, 1994).

Interconnecting these concepts is the start of the inquiry and investigation into today's world from the perspective of postcolonialism, which requires viewing the current global processes historically to identify the "current and shifting configuration of power" (Rizvi, 2007). Therefore, postcolonial approaches call for not only investigating how the present is historically

or diachronically connected with the past to find out the consequences of the past in the current context, but also looking into what is shaping the contemporary context synchronically in terms of power relations that constitute the context (McEwan, 2009).

While post-colonialism in the hyphenated form refers to a historical period or epoch after colonialism, unhyphenated postcolonialism refers to a way of thinking and perceiving and a method of investigation and inquiry related to colonialism and its effect involving global developments in previously colonized locations, people, and all areas of their lives and thoughts (McLeod, 2010; Quayson, 2000). This study uses unhyphenated postcolonialism because it is discussed not as a historical period, but as a scope, through which both colonialism and the contemporary world are interpreted interconnectedly.

Postcolonialism encompasses various approaches and strategies with no specific origin identified, but it started in the 1980s and 1990s with postcolonial literary and cultural criticism and theory, now recognized as comprehensive scholarly inquiries of colonialism and decolonization (McEwan, 2009). Its emergence as a theory is identified with non-Western modes of discourse (Quayson, 2000), Third World intellectuals (McEwan, 2009; Quayson, 2000), and geographic approaches to the modern world to identify center and margin, Self and Other, and here and there (Jacobs, 2002).

Influenced by three major movements: writers in anti-colonial politics in Africa, anti-colonial feminist movements and critiques of Western feminism in the 1970s, and the Subaltern Studies in postcolonial India in the 1980s (McEwan, 2009), postcolonialism appreciates its development as an academic discipline through the works of major scholars such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabah, and Franz Fanon (McLeod, 2010). Their works are reviewed with relevance to the themes of this study.

Orientalism Serving Empire

Said's (1978, 1985) concept of Orientalism is a key to understanding postcolonialism and its development as a theory (McLeod, 2010). Said (1978) explained the impact of the colonial period of European powers over the Middle East and how the colonizers shaped the view of the Orient, or the East. The fundamentals of the relationship between the West or the Occident as the colonizer and the Orient as the colonized are represented as follows.

The Orient and the Occident are facts produced by human beings, and as such must be studied as integral components of the social, and not the divine or natural, world. And because the social world includes the person or subject doing the studying as well as the object or realm being studied, it is imperative to include them both in any consideration of Orientalism, for, obviously enough, there could be no Orientalism without, on the one hand, the Orientalists, and on the other, the Orientals. (Said, 1985, p. 90)

In this quote, he posited the necessitated existence of each other to constitute the colonizer-colonized relationship, in which he included intellectuals such as writers, philosophers, and economists who contributed to forming Orientalism as “a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire” (Said, 1978, pp. 202-203).

Said (1978) used “imperial agents” (Arendt, 1973, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 240) to describe the role of intellectuals as “the servants” of Orientalism as “the collective academic endeavor” (Said, 1978, p. 240). In this way, the “new Imperialism” was promoted through the work of imperial agents like T. E. Lawrence who attempted to move the Orient into action, so the Orientals could actively serve the empire (Said, 1978, p. 240). Said (1978) asserted that Orientalism was successfully integrated into the new imperialism with no competition among the

ruling paradigms unlike in the past. As a result, it continues to design Asia based on the imperial map, where “the accommodation between the intellectual class and the new imperialism might very well be accounted one of the special triumphs of Orientalism” (Said, 1978, p. 322).

Said (1978) identified the United States as a new leading imperial power occupying the intellectual world. The United States is turning regions where its power is influential into its “intellectual, political, and cultural satellite” through the higher education system, which attracts promising international students with patronage such as scholarship (Said, 1978, p. 322). This system makes the United States a “virtual hegemonic commander of affairs” (Said, 1978, p. 323). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994) reconfirmed the United States as the empire replacing empires in the past, historically inheriting Europe in the 20th century as the “surviving superpower” of the post-colonial period and the “last superpower” after the Cold War (p. xxiii). However, scholars show varying opinions on whether to view the United States as Empire, the sovereign one (Loomba, 2015). For example, scholars such as Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004) viewed Empire as a supranational sovereign power emerging in the process of globalization. More views will be reviewed in the next section: globalization and empire.

Through *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994) extended the discourse of Orientalism and addresses how imperial power is consolidated through cultures globally today. He asserted that modern imperialism works as a system “so global and all-encompassing that virtually nothing escaped it” (Said, 1994, p. 68). In connection with culture, he said, “the enterprise of empire depends upon the *idea of having an empire*,” and “all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture; then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture” (Said, 1994, p. 11). Empire, therefore, is seen as a system that runs upon an idea of a common culture, through which it is expanding its

power globally with a common mindset developed in the mind of the ruled: we are no different than anyone else as long as we reside in the same cultural domain.

Colonized Intellectuals

While Said (1978, 1994) focused on the power relationship between the Occident and the Orient, Fanon concentrated more on the psychology of the colonized (McLeod, 2010). Through *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1986) discussed what the minds of colonized Blacks experience under the rule of White colonizers. Through self-conception of themselves as Blacks, which develops into “inferiority complex,” Blacks experience the consequence of the loss of their cultural originality, and as the colonized subjects they internalize and accept the superiority of the White colonizers (Fanon, 1986, p. 18). This inferiority complex is “particularly intensified among the most educated,” which results in a ceaseless struggle in their minds and assimilation efforts to the language and culture of the colonizers (Westermann, 1934, as cited in Fanon, 1986, p. 25).

Fanon’s analysis of the minds of the colonial subjects is similar to DuBois’ concept of double consciousness (Black, 2007). Double consciousness is a sense of looking at oneself through others’ eyes (DuBois, 1965). Black (2007) interpreted double consciousness as follows:

Having two antagonistic identities means that a lot of time and energy is spent negotiating and enduring the conflicts between who one is as a person and how one struggles to live with the misrepresentations of the outside world. Having one’s own sense of self and also having imposed contempt for an ascribed self, having twoness, is what DuBois calls double consciousness. (Black, 2007, p. 394)

Fanon (1963) developed discourse on decolonization, advocating violence as the only means of liberation of the colonized. He said, “Colonization or decolonization: it is simply a

power struggle” and “colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence” (Fanon, 1963, p. 23). Based on Marxism, Fanon (1963) specified the characteristics of colonized intellectuals in colonized countries. In his support for liberation through violence, Fanon said, “nonviolence conveys to the colonized intellectual and business elite that their interests are identical to those of the colonialist bourgeoisie” (p. 23). He viewed the urban proletariat as a privileged working class that has “nothing to lose and possibly everything to gain” in the capitalist countries, but “everything to lose” in the colonized countries (Fanon, 1963, p. 64). This class represents “the fraction of the colonized who are indispensable for running the colonial machine” and makes up “the most loyal clientele of the nationalist parties,” occupying the bourgeois circle of the colonized people through their privileged position (p. 64). For this reason, Fanon (1963) included colonized intellectuals living in relatively comfortable environments in the nationalist parties (p. 64). They are on the side of the colonizers, “modeling their attitude” of the bourgeoisie (Fanon, 1963, p. 103). They function as a “sentinel on duty” guarding the essential values or Western values that have been implanted in their minds (Fanon, 1963, p. 11).

Double Identity of a Hybrid

Bhabha (1984, 1994) introduced important terms to postcolonial scholarship such as hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and a Third Space. Meaning imitating act and thought of the colonized to resemble the colonizer, mimicry is defined as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge,” an “*ironic* compromise,” “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*,” and “the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). These characteristics of

mimicry present ambivalence in its nature; therefore, the ambivalence of mimicry lies in the partial, incomplete, and virtual presence of the colonial subject, which is made through “strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 127).

Bhabha (1994) connected the concept of *almost the same, but not quite*, i.e., ambivalent presence of the colonized with the subject of the ‘in-between’ state of the culture, which is identified with hybridity. Bhabha (1994) defined hybridity as the “sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities,” asserting that the effect of colonial power is expressed through hybridity rather than through blatant attempts to repress the culture of the Other (pp. 159-160). Therefore, hybridity is the “name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal,” which is “the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 159). It indicates that the identity of a hybrid cannot be explained through the self-and-the-other distinction, going beyond the exclusive either-or identity and always involving a double-identity “between the self and its doubles” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 159). This doubling identity of hybrids carries a threat to the source of authority, which requires an immediate and intuitive validation of the source in order for the colonized not to question the reason of dominance (Bhabha, 1994). The effectiveness of colonial dominance through the production of hybridity is well expressed in conventional academic wisdom established through the “non-exercise of private judgement and the exclusion of reasons in conflict with the authoritative reason” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 160).

Bhabha (1994) asserted that hybridity should not be understood as a term for resolution between two different cultures based on cultural relativism, but as “problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 162). Hybridity is a status of being with difference within, and its borderline existence

makes the subject live a life of a stranger at the crossroads, bridging the home and the world (Bhabha, 1994). This double status of being leads to cultural hybridity, or the emergence of an in-between space, or a Third Space, where the colonizer and the colonized form a unique cultural space. New cultural interpretations are made and negotiated through cultural influences on each other (Bhabha, 1994). In the current postcolonial context with the concept of globalization applied, a Third Space refers to a cultural space created by the “nonsynchronous temporality” between the global and national cultures (Bhabha, 1994, p. 312). As a consequence, the negotiation of the cultural differences creates a tension exclusive to borderline existences (Bhabha, 1994).

In terms of national discourses, the borders of the nation and borderline existences constantly experience a double temporality: the pedagogical and the performative (Bhabha, 1994). Pedagogical narratives are official, public, and normative and define the margins and minorities as a homogeneous group, drawing “strategically” on historical events of the people to make an official story about them (Janzen, 2006, p. 177). This official story is disconnected from what is negotiated in their daily lives, which is defined as performative narratives, or the processes of how identities are constructed individually through people’s lived experiences (Janzen, 2006). Therefore, borderline existences are one pedagogical object from the colonial perspective, and individuals are performative agencies that act out the pedagogical discourse, showing their “doubling and contingency” at the same time (Kapoor, 2003, p. 572).

In her analysis of a German novel, *Überfahrt*, Janzen (2006) suggested that both pedagogical and performative narratives work together to determine and are crucial for personal identity, and the subject position allows “humane, creative action,” a flexible “bottom-up” approach to a monovalent “top-down” (p. 178). In the same manner, Kapoor (2003) said that

people as a pedagogical object only emerge out of the static pedagogical categorization, “when they act as political agents, parading the heterogeneity and ambivalence” (Kapoor, 2003, p. 572).

Globalization and Empire

With its serving agents as reviewed above, Empire gains power in the process of globalization. Globalization is understood as a “movement that is suffusing the entire world with a form of production based on free-market capitalism and attendant ideology of individualist consumerism” (Krishna, 2009, p. 2). There has been an attempt to naturalize and depoliticize the process and logic of globalization, which is called neoliberal globalization (Krishna, 2009). In response to the movement, postcolonialism attempts to “denaturalize and politicize the logic of neoliberal globalization” (Krishna, 2009, p. 2).

The origin of the term “globalization” is traced back to the late 1920s, but it officially appeared in 1951 in Webster’s dictionary (Steger, 2014). It was used as an academic term in sociology in the early 1990s for the first time (Steger, 2014). The term became the major theme in social science and policy throughout the 1990s and started to be studied regarding its relationship to imperialism in the 2000s (Pieterse, 2004). In postcolonial studies, globalization has allowed various interpretations, but most often it is considered as the process of expansion of empires/Empire in a continuum of the history of imperialism (Everill, 2016; Iadicola, 2008; Said, 1978, 1994; Steinmetz, 2014; Wink, 2004). From a biblical perspective, the history ranges from Sumer as the earliest empire to Babylon, Assyria and Egypt, then Greece and Rome (Wink, 2004). The Ottoman Empire and Great Britain—see Figure 1 for major historical empires in chronological order—succeeded to the throne, and now it is a “new empire whose reach is co-extensive with the world itself,” which is manifested as globalization (Wink, 2004, p. 25).

Everill (2016) said that common themes such as migration, trade, and cultural convergence are found between the process of globalization and the expansion of the European power in the 16th century, which proves a strong lineage between the colonial period and the current era. Similarly, Idadicola (2008) posited that empires are the key determinants of the forces of globalization throughout history, defining empires as the “chief globalizers of the world” (p. 5). Petras and Veltmeyer (2001) found three ways international capital flows and trade took place as the essence of globalization: (1) through imperialist and colonial conquest, which led to unequal labor accumulation and distribution, causing economic prosperity in imperial countries and vulnerability to raw materials in the colonized countries, (2) trade and investment among advanced imperial countries, which benefited the imperial cores through free trade worldwide, and (3) exchange among Third World countries limited by imperial powers (as cited in Idadicola, 2008, p. 4). In this flow and structure, the process of globalization did not benefit the world equally; rather, it deepened unidirectional concentration toward imperial cores (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001, as cited in Idadicola, 2008). This linkage between globalization and empires indicates that globalization occurred during the Roman Empire, or during the last 500 years of European empires (Idadicola, 2008).

Scholars found a trace of globalization in something common between the Roman Empire and European empires. The word empire originated from *imperium*, which refers to the authority to exercise control over its subjects (Weber, 1978, as cited in Steinmetz, 2014). Analogically meaning Rome's right to command obedience from the subjected people (Lieven, 2000, p. 8, as cited in Steinmetz, 2014), empire, as a term, started to refer to "large territorial political organizations forged by the conquest and to the overseas possessions of a single state"

in the 19th and 20th century (Pagden, 2003, as cited in Steinmetz, 2014, p. 79). This was when France and Britain started to call their colonies their empires (Steinmetz, 2014).

Steinmetz (2014) found six causal mechanisms in the current sociological discussions on empires: (1) capitalism; (2) geopolitics, war, and violence; (3) cultural representations and subjectivity; (4) resistance and collaboration by the colonized; (5) institutional dimensions of empires and colonies; and (6) conflict and compromise among colonizers at the heart of colonial states (p. 77). Considering these characteristics of empires and the overreaching pervasion of the present manifestation of globalization, empires are understood as “encompassing states” and as “having emergent properties that cannot be reduced to the properties of states (Steinmetz, 2013, p. 3). In his extensive diachronic study of empire, Steinmetz (2013) provided a sociological trace of empires envisioned by scholars and political, economic, cultural and social determinants of empire. He uses a small “e” for empire to refer to it as a generic term in his scholarly review in the paragraph that follows.

First, empire is defined as a unitary world state with centralized political power, and this concept was also supported by renowned international relations scholars such as Francisco Suárez, Christian Wolf, and Immanuel Kant (Tarde, 1899, as cited in Steinmetz, 2013). However, imperialism is identified not as a primarily political phenomenon, but mainly as an economic phenomenon driven by “overaccumulation, underconsumption, and finance capital’s search for new markets and investment outlets” (Hobson, 1965, as cited in Steinmetz, 2013, p. 22). According to Weber’s analysis of the Roman Empire, politics is the determinant of economic facts, but at the same time economy can be the core foundation of empire (Steinmetz, 2013). It was agreed by Weber when he said, “one might be inclined to believe that the formation as well as the expansion of Great Power structures is always and primarily determined economically”

(Weber, 1978, p. 913, as cited in Steinmetz, 2013, p. 25). These scholarly remarks confirm what Iadicola (2008) mentioned: empires in history provide keys to understanding the characteristics of the process of globalization, which is primarily driven by international capital flows and trade.

Now, let's turn to scholarly efforts to identify the manifestation of Empire in the present context. In search of the manifestation of Empire—note that capital E is used from now on as per Hardt and Negri (2000)—in the contemporary process of globalization, many postcolonial scholars including Said (1978, 1994) saw the United States as the leading power at the center of globalization and its imperial expansion (Iadicola, 2008; Kalb, 2006; Pieterse, 2004; Smith, 2003, 2005). The United States emerged as the center of globalization and transnational capitalism in the postcolonial scholarship in the early 1990s (Schueller, 2004). The emergence of the United States as Empire was first proposed after World War I by Carl Schmitt, a German political theorist, who predicted the “US-centered” unipolar hegemony contrary to competing multi-polar European powers (Loomba, 2015, p. 7). Iadicola (2008) argued that “the Empire of the United States of America” was the center of the integrative forces of globalization, defining the United States as the most powerful nation state leading political, economic, cultural, and military integration and control (p. 13). Similarly, Kalb (2006) said the United States was leading the transnational capitalist class through finance and global corporations, which was a signifier of globalization.

However, after 9/11, the discourse on the U.S. Empire diverged on whether or not the United States could be viewed as Empire itself. To scholars such as Wallerstein (2003), it was a crisis of the United States. He said, “the eagle has crash landed,” predicting a continuous decline of the United States in the next decade (Wallerstein, 2003, p. 13). In contrast, Maira (2009) said that the notion of Empire became more applicable to the United States as a global power due to

the aftermath of 9/11, citing various media sources. She viewed the United States as the new Empire and discussed what form of Empire the United States should take. In the discourse presenting the United States as justice punishing evil, she pointed out that the word Empire was rewritten to mean a “just, necessary, and benevolent force” (Maira, 2009, p. 45). Similarly, Steger (2005) viewed that with 9/11 as the turning point, the soft market globalism in the 1990s shifted to imperial globalism in the 2000s as military power was involved led by the United States (Steger, 2005).

Boswell (2004) presented a mixed view. He said that the U.S. military power would remain the most powerful in the world, but its economic power was in decline. As a result, the U.S. hegemony in the world economy was weakening, which explains no evidence of the U.S.-built core-wide empire or core state that directly controls other territories to establish client states (Boswell, 2004). At the same time, he said, despite its colonial imperialism over Iraq, the United States was losing its political control over Europe, which was emerging as a viable competitor (Boswell, 2004). As of 2018, however, Europe’s power seems in question due to a series of issues currently occurring in the continent: the influx of more than a million migrants and refugees, which has caused a crisis to cope with throughout the continent (“Migrant crisis,” 2016), being the recruitment base of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the major target of their attacks simultaneously (Bremmer, 2016), the Euro Crisis primarily caused by unemployment and the EU’s political incapacity to solve it (Thimann, 2015), low birth rates imperiling economic growth (“Europe needs many more babies,” 2015), and the UK’s decision to leave the EU (“Brexit build-up to a referendum,” 2016) and its aftermath on domestic politics weakening its foreign policies in gear with Trump’s “America first” (“Britain’s decline and fall,” 2017).

Questioning the role of the United States as single Empire since 9/11, Okur (2007) saw the United States as one of the nation empires as power shifts took place toward a new world order from single Empire to multiple nation states. He said these “nation empires” appear through either re-regionalization of global power by nation states such as the United States, China, and Russia, or multistate-regionalization by Europe, Latin America and South East Asia (Okur, 2007, p. 61). He suggested that imperial power is not manifested in a centralized form in a single nation state, but in a more scattered form of power based on regional hegemony. Buzan and Lawson (2014) argued that the roots of the current change, or power shifts, should be traced back to the 19th century modernity, which prompted the “rise of the West” and a “highly unequal global political economy” (p. 71). However, they said, the same modernity is prompting the rise of the others; therefore, it is difficult for a single nation, or cluster of nations to dominate the globe, which is evidenced in the emergence of the G20 with the decline of the G8 (Buzan & Lawson, 2014). They posited that the world is shifting from centered globalism to decentered globalism based on politically differentiated capitalism with ideological difference shrinking, and the core-periphery global order of the past two centuries is no longer valid to explain the global mechanism (Buzan & Lawson, 2014). Similarly, Brzezinski (2013) viewed that the emergence of three Asian countries—Japan, China, and India—has dramatically changed the global power ranking, dispersing geopolitical power that has concentrated in the West. These power shifts were reflected in the remarks of Barrack Obama at the United National General Assembly in 2009.

In an era when our destiny is shared, power is no longer a zero sum game. . . . No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. No balance

of power among nations will hold. The traditional divisions between nations of the South and the North make no sense in an interconnected world (Obama, 2009).

Obama's remarks reflected the changing foreign policies of the United States and signaled the acceptance that the United States is not a single power as a nation state. It is contrasted with foreign policies under the Bush administration in the 2000s, when the United States was declared as a single power of the world, as seen in Bush's address on the 9/11 attack: "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining" ("President's address," 2001).

In connection with the United States' leading role of the world order, there is another piece of discourse that needs to be reviewed: American Exceptionalism. Nayak and Malone (2009) defined American Exceptionalism as a mode of thought aimed at granting a unique identity to the United States as a place politically, socially, and economically distinguished from the rest of the world. They said that American Exceptionalism is understood in relation to America's othering of Europe in their competing relationship (Nayak & Malone, 2009).

American Exceptionalism has been shown in the United States' direct and indirect political intervention: responses to terrorism, policy positions on situations of countries such as Russia, Iran, Israel, Cuba, and North Korea, and attempts to control emerging economic powers such as China and India (Nayak & Malone, 2009).

However, Löffmann (2015) viewed that under the Obama presidency, the world's political environment was being reshaped into a more cooperative, and less military centered one, which created a paradox between conventional American Exceptionalism and less hegemonic power of the United States. This reduced hegemony of the United States was seen in the actions the nation took toward the Ukraine crisis, for which Obama left the role of negotiator

with Russia to Germany, and the ISIS advance in Iraq and Syria, for which the United States limited its attacks to air strikes and weapon supplies and training for Iraqi and Kurdish fighters against ISIS (Löfflmann, 2015). Löfflmann (2015) suggested that less military intervention of the United States did not mean the nation gave up its leadership, but it employed strategies to comply with the world order increasingly becoming multipolar. These “leading behind” (Löfflmann, 2015, p. 320) practices characterized “post-American Exceptionalism” under the Obama administration (p. 328).

Since Trump’s inauguration in 2017, however, American Exceptionalism has taken different shape. Rather than leading behind, as clearly stated in the “America first” policy, the United States under Trump’s administration is giving out a message that its adversaries have a “brief window to negotiate a deal, or force may follow” (Sanger & Harris, 2018). On the other hand, the hard-line policies of the two strong men, Xi in China and Putin in Russia, share a common interest: checking the U.S. hegemony and balancing the power out in international geopolitics (Bolt & Cross, 2018). While these two men’s long-term seizure of power is expected (Chung-yan & Mai, 2018), Trump’s second-term is yet to be decided. This changing dynamics in global politics confirms that the United States, in spite of its uncompromising policy, is not to be defined as the single biggest empire.

With the decline of the traditional power or powers that were once considered empire or empires, and with the United States’ weakening power in the multipolarized world order, where and how is the manifestation of Empire identified? Contrary to empires whose boundaries were set by nation states through economic expansion, Empire as the currently manifested form is a “*decentered* and *detrterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers” by managing “hybrid identities, flexible

hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. xii-xiii). It is a totalizing process of juridical formation, and established through ethical justification of the necessity of world order, or justice and peace for all, as seen in the supranational role of the United Nations and its affiliated organizations (Hardt & Negri, 2000). It is “called into being” for the judicial and ethical order of the world, based on “international consensus aimed at resolving existing conflicts” and its task is to “enlarge the realm of the consensus that support its own power” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 15). Hardt and Negri (2000) saw the United States’ constitutional project and global expansion as the foundation of the contemporary idea of Empire. They said the evidence is found in the United States’ military intervention under its constitutional jurisdiction: peace and order, in major conflicts in the late 20th century as in Haiti, Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Bosnia (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Additional evidence is seen in the United States assuming the key role in establishing a new world order requested by international organizations such as the United Nations, international monetary organizations, and humanitarian organizations (Hardt & Negri, 2000). However, Hardt and Negri (2000) did not identify the United States as Empire itself though they acknowledged the imperial authority of the United States and its leading role in establishing the new world order. It is because from their view, Empire is sovereignty globally constituted, based not on one nation state with ideological dominance, but operating on global capitalism (Hardt & Negri, 2000). They found the most essential characteristic of Empire in its open space, where “power finds the logics of its order always renewed and always re-created in expansion” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 167). The space of imperial sovereignty is “smooth” and there is no identified “*place*” of power, which is “everywhere and nowhere” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 190). The controlling system of Empire is explained in its triple imperative as follows:

- (1) Inclusive: This represents the universally inclusive aspect of imperial control, blind to differences, welcoming all within its boundaries, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, etc. It sets aside any differences that might cause social conflict, which leads to ignorance of differences. Inclusion, therefore, requires all subjects to live “peacefully” in “universal integration.”
- (2) Differential: Juridical differences are set aside, while cultural differences such as languages, traditions, and arts, which are nonconflictual in their nature, are celebrated due to their function as a “force of peaceful regional identification.” The celebration of ethnic and cultural differences under the name of multiculturalism is one example.
- (3) Managerial: This follows the differential moment, explaining Empire’s economic control. While colonialism prospered on identity separation, Empire draws on movement and mixture, effectively and pragmatically managing multiple variables continuously changing. As an example, in the early 20th century, New England factories and Appalachian mines carefully managed European immigrant workers by their national backgrounds to make them produce a powerful command system. Empire’s real power is on “contingency, mobility, and flexibility” rather than on cultural assimilation. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 198-200)

Hardt and Negri (2000) asserted that the juridical concept of Empire began to take its shape in the formation and operation of the United Nations and its affiliated institutions, when they work toward the project of international order not as an end, but as a historical process pushing the world forward into a more globalized one.

Orientalism and the Model Minority Stereotype in the Discourse of Empire

As briefly overviewed in Chapter 1 with a figure (Figure 2, Chapter 2), incubated in the colonial period, Orientalism is a fabricated series of images by ways of viewing and thinking of the Orient by the West, shaped by the binary division between the Orient and the Occident and the West's fantasies over the Orient (McLeod, 2010). It is legitimating and self-perpetuating as a pervasive system of representations subject to imperial domination, and Orientalist representations function as a crucial part of the arsenal of Empire (McLeod, 2010). In the same manner, Said (1978) asserted that Orientalism is a "system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire" (pp. 202-203).

Said (1978) made a distinction between *latent* Orientalism as the unconscious, untouchable premises, which remains unchanged over time, and *manifest* Orientalism as the different historical representations of the latent premises (as cited in McLeod, 2010). In other words, the manifestations of Orientalism may be different based on historical contexts, while the underlying ground remains the same (McLeod, 2010). For example, the notion of the model minority stereotype that was revisited through the history of exclusion and inclusion of Asians in the United States addressed in Chapter 1 represents the particulars of manifest Orientalism. However, the fundamentals that underlie the historical manifestations do not change. The latent views and thoughts that remain unchanged are: (1) Orientals' being aliens in the Western society, viewed not as citizens, but as members of a subject race, and (2) Orientals' representing the female side in the gender binary in the male-represented Western world (Said, 1978). In other words, racism and sexism are the underlying causes of latent Orientalism and its historical and

contextual manifestations, with a series of fabricated images being created by and serving the ideology of Empire (McLeod, 2010).

Labeling Asian Americans as aliens or foreigners has brought advantages to the dominant society throughout history, justifying the exploitation of cheap labor and hiding issues of discrimination (Saito, 1997). Saito (1997) said foreignness has tied together the model minority and yellow peril images of Asian Americans through the social and legal history, enabling the society to shift the images easily from one to the other as needed, in a way that helps “support and maintain racial hierarchy and relationships of social and economic subordination” (Saito, 1997). These shifting patterns, also known as differential racialization, are still developing in the contemporary society, as evidenced in the immigration history of Asian Americans in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Saito, 1997). Saito’s (1997) argument supports that the model minority stereotype has served the managerial or hierarchical moment of the imperial control, as explained by Hardt and Negri (2000).

Kim and Chung (2005) showed how latent Orientalism is represented through sexism. They studied how consumer culture industries have evolved to include more Asian and Latino/American characters in advertising campaigns to appeal to global imageries. They argued that such trends in the global economy are based on sexism and racism reflected in global culture, which employs “resurrected themes of colonialism and American Orientalism” under the mask of multiculturalism, and concluded that Orientalist ideologies are reaffirmed in the current context of global economy (Kim & Chung, 2005).

Osajima (2005) analyzed the image of Asian Americans portrayed as the model minority by the popular press in the United States in the 1960s and 1980s and how the image was shaped by the social and political contexts. He argued that the success image of Asian Americans in the

1960s was created by racial politics and social and historical conditions prompted by the Civil Rights Movements (Osajima, 2005). In the 1980s, the model minority discourse emphasized demographic changes from Japanese and Chinese in the 1960s to Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asians, to reflect the changes of Asian population for the past two decades (Osajima, 2005). In addition, more complex and diverse images of Asian Americans appeared: negative impact of parental pressures on Asian American students, criticism of the success image and Asian Americans' resentment against the image, and their advancement into political and cultural arenas, and median family income (Osajima, 2005). The discourse about the median family income, however, is misleading because Asian families have more income earners compared to families of other races, and the actual income level of Asian families is far below that of equivalent white families (Osajima, 2005). Osajima (2005) pointed out that the discourse in the 1980s showed a more critical and balanced view of Asian Americans while it was less political than in the 1960s, with hard work as the same indicator of success, which leads, for example, high academic achievement and its subsequent reward in occupation (Osajima, 2005). In addition, the discourse in the 1980s mainly contrasted Asian Americans' success with that of white Americans, using non-racial terms, while the discourse of the 1960s compared Asian Americans with other minorities from a more racial perspective (Osajima, 2005). It carries three important racial implications: (1) the blame for failure on the family rather than on the social system, (2) justification of the conservative school reform following Asian models, and (3) growing anti-Asian sentiments, especially in higher education, as the representation of resentment and fear (Osajima, 2005). These changes in the discourse of the model minority stereotype from the 1960s to the 1980s suggest that the model minority stereotype exemplifies the triple imperative of Empire. That the model minority discourse has become more critical shows imperial control

functions on flexibility and inclusiveness, even accepting criticism and resentment brought by the model minority image. Political advancement of Asian Americans was addressed in the 1980s, but the less political discourse in general in the 1980s explains the differential moment of Empire that nips any potential resistance or conflicts at the onset not to make them develop into a more serious phase. Let's note that politics was not the only topic, but one of the diverse topics discussed as more diverse and complex images of Asian Americans emerged in the 1980s. It suggests that politics became confined in the realm of discourse with other issues, deprived of its real power to organize opinions and move masses like it did for the 1960s' Civil Rights Movement. In addition, the focus of the discourse on hard work for the reason of success of Asian Americans in both the 1960s and 1980s implies that Empire uses the model minority stereotype for the managerial moment of its imperial control, whose purpose is to maximize its workforce to bring profits to the capitalist regime (Hardt & Negri, 2000). As seen in the changes of the model minority discourse from the 1960s to the 1980s, Empire's strategy is not fixed, rather it transforms according to the contextual need, and the model minority stereotype can be understood as one strategy that carries the triple imperative of Empire: inclusive, differential, and managerial.

Empire's strategy to use the model minority stereotype, specifically related to the managerial moment, can be analyzed through the discourse of imperial racism. Hardt and Negri (2000) said in the new concept of Empire, modern racism based on biological differences has been replaced by "sociological and cultural signifiers as the key representation of racial hatred and fear" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 191). Chou (2008) confirmed that contemporary racism has replaced physical appearances with cultural differences, and racial groups' performance in American capitalism decides race relations in the United States and even "vitalize American

capitalism” (p. 225). Balibar and Wallerstein (1991) also stated that racism is not defined by genetics or social criteria that involve disdain and fear; rather, its practice is understood through the logic of the “capitalist world economy” (p. 32). When racism is practiced in a way that ejects foreignness, it will make the environment free from having to deal with difference, but it means a loss of labor power at the same time (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). It results in a loss of a historical system, especially when the structure and logic of the system is established upon capital, whose nature is on-going expansion through a circle of production, realization, accumulation of goods, and more capital brought by labor force (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). The logic of the system requires maximizing the accumulation of capital, minimizing the costs of production and labor power on the economic side, and minimizing the costs of political conflicts on the political side (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). Racism is the “magic formula that reconciles these objectives” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, p. 33).

Balibar and Wallerstein (1991) used “occupational reward and hierarchy” to explain the complex hierarchy of the labor force of the capitalist system, which operates with “ethnicization” of work force correlated with social criteria (pp. 33, 83). Different sets of behavior need to be taught to different ethnic groups, because work forces need to be “socialized into reasonably specific sets of attitudes” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, p. 83). Therefore, the “culture” of a specific ethnic group prescribes the set of rules and guidelines to be taught and learned through generations in schools and home for the purpose of maintaining capitalism as a historical system (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, pp. 83-84). The hierarchical system or ethnicization of work force that runs under capitalism, therefore, requires constant inequality based on constant reconstruction of its economic processes. (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). It indicates that social

hierarchy and ethnicization can change from today to tomorrow, because the system requires flexibility to maximize its operation (Blibar & Wallerstein, 1991).

This suggests that there is a reason for the shift from traditional racism to the racism defined by Balibar & Wallerstein (1991), and it is connected to the concept of Empire explained by Hardt and Negri (2000). In other words, Empire is supported by racism, which is “anti-universalistic in doctrine that it helps to maintain capitalism as a system” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). Therefore, at the core of the notion of model minority is the ideology of assimilation as a way of socialization, whose degrees are measured by economic escalation among minority groups in the occupational reward-hierarchy or ethnicization (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991; Chou, 2008). It indicates that assimilation is not cultural as thought traditionally, but more economic in its nature, determining social class, and Empire’s capitalist system operates under the logic. Therefore, the “divide-and-conquer” strategy identified in the notion of the model minority functions through cultural differences to consolidate the system, ironically under the slogan of “beyond of all differences” (Chou, 2008, pp. 226-227).

Most importantly, the model minority image is unconsciously, consciously, or actively embraced and internalized by Asians and Asian Americans, especially by the highly educated, which is shown in empirical studies on how Asian Americans conform to and perform the model minority image as prescribed or imprinted on them (Chou & Feagin, 2016; Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003; Trytten et al., 2012). The underlying cause of the model minority stereotype is “reinforcement and celebration of European American hegemony at the expense of Asian Americans;” therefore, Asian Americans’ efforts to act upon the model minority image and attempts to bring achievements based on the image in fact marginalize them racially because they will never achieve “Whiteness” (Ho, 2003, p. 150). These Asian Americans are a privileged

group with better access to education and employment opportunities compared to their less educated peers (Ho, 2003). They are colonized from the imperial perspective, and privileged from the view of race relations among minorities, which resembles what Anderson (2006) explained regarding the nature of the ambivalence of the American Creole.

They constituted simultaneously a colonial community and an upper class. They were to be economically subjected and exploited, but they were also essential to the stability of the empire. One can see, in this light, a certain parallelism between the position of the creole magnates and of feudal barons, crucial to the sovereign's power, but also a menace to it (Anderson, 2006, p. 61).

Especially, Ho's study (2003) indicated that highly educated Asian American professionals are not aware that their performances reinforce their image as a model minority and further their marginalization at the same time. Ho (2003) said it comes from their class privilege, which makes them ignore or deny racial politics in their workplace. In this way, the discourse of the model minority stereotype in the postcolonial context necessarily leads to psychological analysis of the colonized mind (Fanon, 1986), the double consciousness (DuBois, 1965), and the oppressed mind (Freire, 1970), which is the mind of the oppressed that want "at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them" (Freire, 1970, p. 62). It is a "colonial mentality" described by Memmi (1965):

Their constant and very justifiable ambition is to escape from their colonized condition, an additional burden in an already oppressive status. To that end, they endeavor to resemble the colonizer in the frank hope that he may cease to consider them different from him. Hence their efforts to forget the past, to change collective habits, and their enthusiastic adoption of Western language, culture and customs. But if the colonizer does

not always openly discourage these candidates to develop that resemblance, he never permits them to attain it either. Thus, they live in painful and constant ambiguity. (p. 59)

Asians or Asian Americans' embracing and conforming to the model minority stereotype, therefore, can be interpreted as a representation of the colonized mind, and at the core of the mind is this ambivalence, which is manifested in their struggle and efforts to be admitted to and approved by the system of Empire as performing agents by working and living up to the image as the social and cultural criteria. Freire (1970) said this phenomenon is specifically prevalent among the middle-class oppressed, who are eager to be equal to the people of the upper class. The model minority stereotype shapes their identity, because "the existence of the colonizer requires that an image of the colonized be suggested (Memmi, 1965, p. 124). The image portrays the colonized as lazy to the extent that laziness is "constitutional in the very nature of the colonized," which is to justify the colonizer's existence and control (Memmi, 1965, p. 125). The model minority stereotype, therefore, if interpreted based on Freire's pedagogical perspective, miseducates Asian and Asian American professionals, who become the "promoters" of the model minority stereotype according to the programs of action that teach how to "cast off the laziness which creates underdevelopment" (Freire, 1970, pp. 155-156). Empirical studies on how Asians and Asian Americans embrace the image of a model minority as a view of themselves and others and how they act upon it as a prescribed guideline are reviewed later in this chapter.

Internal Orientalism, Inverted Orientalism, and Self-Orientalism

Kumar (2012) put inverted and internal Orientalism in the same category "cultivated by Orientals themselves" by the critics of Orientalism, professionals and elites educated in the West in general (Mazumdar, Kaiwar, & Labica, 2009, as cited in Kumar, 2012). However, they have been adopted differently as seen in several studies. Internal Orientalism has been approached

regionally and geographically, especially in the “mutual construction of regional and national identity” (Johnson & Coleman, 2012, p. 33). On the other hand, inverted Orientalism addresses how Orientals view themselves through the image imposed by Western conceptions of the Orient (James, 2012). It is mostly cultivated by intellectual Orientals and Western scholars (Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 1998). Self-Orientalism is Orientalism actively cultivated, participated, and promoted by Orientals, especially in their pursuit of modernity of their nations with “desires and yearnings” for the West (Yan & Santos, 2009). The differences among the three terms can be identified better by examining research that has been done respectively.

Schein (1997) adopted internal Orientalism to describe a “relation between imaging and cultural/political domination that takes place interethnically within China,” through the process of which Chinese elites emerge as Orientalists othering non-Han people (p. 73). Similarly, in a study of the construction of national identities, Janssen (2003) used internal Orientalism to refer to spatial othering of the South in the United States. He said it creates an image of the South as a region fundamentally different from the North and America (Janssen, 2010). In another study that uses a spatial approach to national identity, Johnson and Coleman (2012) examined how internal others were formed in Italy and Germany in the 19th century, leading to consequences of perpetual economic and cultural differences of the regions. As shown in these studies, internal Orientalism is defined as othering practices of ethnic minorities within a certain region, specifically within a nation.

Inverted Orientalism, conversely, more concerns the impact the romantic Western view of the Orient has on the way Orientals view themselves and how the view affects the way Orientals present themselves to the eyes of the Westerners (James, 2012). An example is the Javanese artist Raden Saleh, referred to as “the father of Indonesian modernity,” who studied

painting in Holland when Indonesia was a colony of the Dutch (James, 2012). He became a representative figure of Orientalism in Europe, both presenting Asia as an exotic place and praising Europe in the conventional European style in his art, which appealed to Europeans in high class. He also drew Prince Diponegoro, who led the Java war against the Dutch rule in the early 1800s. This painting is celebrated in Indonesia as the symbol of patriotism and modernity of the nation (James, 2012).

Self-Orientalism is a form of Orientalism “inversely adopted” by its object (Hosokawa, 1999), a definition that is also applied to inverted Orientalism. Hosokawa (1999) examined the inverted form of Orientalism in Japanese music by discussing how Hosono, the founder of the Yellow Magic Orchestra, revived Martin Denny’s music that became popular using exotica in the 1950s and 60s with white Americans as the major audience. He argued that Hosono used Denny’s sound to recall the U.S. occupation of Japan as the beginning of Japanese rock music (Hosokawa, 1999). He described Hosono’s Trilogy as “mimicking the exotic image of Japan and the Japanese made by previous North American musicians and composers” (Hosokawa, 1999, p. 115).

Yan and Santos (2009) provided clearer definitions and examples of self-Orientalism. They defined self-Orientalism as a “reconfiguration” and “extension” of Orientalism, with the Orient itself participating in its formation, reinforcement and circulation (p. 297). They discussed two approaches to self-Orientalism: (1) a historical approach that views the images of the Orient as self-produced, being influenced by Western conceptions, and (2) a consequence of modernity the Orient experiences as the “unique quality and possession of Western civilization,” which results in the Orient’s “desires and yearnings of seeking equality with the West” in its effort to acquire the same version of modernity (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 298). The second approach

results in “ideological positioning” that brings an implicit assumption that the Orient is inferior, not being able to produce the same modernity as that of the West (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 298).

Based on the discourse of self-Orientalism, Yan and Santos (2009) analyzed the first national Chinese tourism promotional video, “China, Forever” to find out how the Western view of the Orient has been internalized in tourism, with the process of modernity influenced by the Western system. In the process, the Orient “conforms to Western representational practices” in two ways: (1) China is changeless, nostalgic, mythical, and feminized and (2) a modern China is subject to the Western view and authority over modernity (Yan & Santos, 2009, pp. 295-296). They asserted that the China represented in “China, Forever” reconfirms Western perceptions by depicting it fragmented, with the first part appealing to the Orientalist fascination and the second part to modernized China being subordinate to the Western modernity (Yan & Santos, 2009). The same content and construct was not limited to “China, Forever” but also found in a promotional video of South Korea, where the nation was depicted as ancient first and modernized later, along with Orientalist symbols and music (Yan & Santos, 2009). This demonstrates that self-Orientalism is practiced and circulated by the Orient, with the Western-perceived “traditional/modern binary” internalized and manifested (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 312).

Feighery (2012) found the usefulness of self-Orientalism in “recollecting as well as reinventing, or staging traditions in the discursive construction of the nation or national past” (p. 271). He analyzed the tourism promotional film of Oman, “Welcome to My Country,” where he found diverse experiences of people were compressed and Oman and Omani people were beautified and simplified as “timeless, lost and waiting” (Feighery, 2012, p. 280). Feighery (2012) noticed that Bedouin people, the internal Other, were depicted as tradition bearers confined in the past, away from modernity, which serves Omani elites’ desire to break with their

traditions leading to desire for modernity. He concluded that self-Orientalism in Oman was used to provoke “commercial aspirations” in the global economy of tourism (Feighery, 2012, p. 282). The review of the above studies shows that the discourse of self-Orientalism is connected with how the Orient is self-positioning and presenting itself conforming to the image of the Orient imposed by the Western conceptions, with active participation in reproducing and reinforcing the image, which also results from its yearning for the level of modernity it perceives the Western civilizations possess.

Lastly, an interesting example regarding the usage of self-Orientalism and inverted Orientalism is found in the approach to the *Nihonjinron* literature, which discusses the uniqueness of Japanese and Japanese culture compared to those of the West, particularly of the United States (Iwabuchi, 2010). Based on scholarly discourse on *Nihonjinron*, Iwabuchi (2010) said it is self-Orientalist literature as it was developed to present Japan and Japanese culture distinctive from the United States and U.S. culture when Japan’s economic power increased in the 1980s, and declined in the 1990s with its economic downfall. On the other hand, Eisenstadt and Schluchter (1998) used “inverted Orientalism” for the same critical approach to the *Nihonjinron* literature, as they saw the approach was developed to analyze the genre of literature in terms of how it has influenced Japanese’s historical and modern experiences in ways that Japanese see and present themselves through the view of the West (p. 16). They viewed the Orientalist approach by these scholars as “paradoxical” because it hinders the exploration of some Japanese schools of thought (Eisenstadt and Schluchter, 1998, p. 16).

As above, internal Orientalism, inverted Orientalism, and self-Orientalism show different or similar usages in research and have developed their own lines of discourse under the umbrella of Orientalism. Internal Orientalism has been discussed to deal with geographical Othering,

through which a national identity is formed and maintained. Inverted Orientalism addresses West-educated Oriental elites who themselves conform to and adjust themselves to the Orientalist view as individuals or as groups in general, whose thoughts and ideas have major influence on their nations' culture and other areas. Self-Orientalism has developed its discourse in how the Orientals self-position themselves toward the ideas and values of the West.

Of the three, inverted Orientalism and self-Orientalism are applicable to this study. Inverted Orientalism explains Oriental elites' conformity to the Western ideas and values, as applied to Asian international graduate students who conform to the thoughts and ideas of the West represented by the United States, through which they view their culture and lifestyle, which again affect people in their home countries. Self-Orientalism is used to interpret how Asian intellectuals and people in their homeland react to American values and lifestyles, which is expected to be represented in their attitudes towards Asian international graduate students and their life in the United States.

Transnationalism or Diaspora

This section reviews transnationalism and diaspora to define the characteristics of Asian international students based upon their border-crossing experiences and immigration status. To understand how scholarly efforts have been made to conceptualize transnationalism, it is necessary to address another term that has been used in parallel with transnationalism, which is "diaspora." These two terms are inseparable as "dance partners," which indicates they share similarities, but at the same time differences can be identified since scholars have attempted to figure out "what kind of dance partners" they are when they dance together (Faist, 2010).

The origin of the term "diaspora" can be traced back to when it was first used in the Bible. It refers to Jewish exile in Deuteronomy 28:25, "thou shalt be a dispersion in all kingdoms

of the earth” (Brenton, 1844, p. 221). In the 19th and early 20th century, black writers and scholars borrowed the meaning from the Bible to describe the African context, and “African Diaspora” first appeared between the First International Congress of Negro Writers and Artists held in Paris in 1956 and the International Congress of African Historians in Dar es Salaam in 1965 (Wilson, 1997, p. 118). From then on, it has spread to ethnic and immigration studies on other ethnic minority populations and their immigration experiences. For example, Brah (1996) examined Asians' culture, identity, and social, political, and economic status from the 1950s in post-war Britain to the late 20th century. Here she asked an important question of why the concept of diaspora comes into scholarly attention and interest as a subject: "The question is not simply about who travels but when, how and under what circumstances? What socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys? What regimes of power inscribe the formation of a specific diaspora?" (Brah, 1996, p. 182).

As seen above, diaspora and transnationalism overlap in their usage, and it seems there are no clean-cut boundaries (Faist, 2010; Quayson & Daswani, 2013). It is partly because these two terms have been used together since transnationalism has become popular during the last decade, though diaspora started to be used far before that both academically and publicly (Faist, 2010, p. 11). In order to provide some clarity, Faist (2010) explained that diaspora is focused on a "community or group . . . heavily used in history and literary studies" and transnationalism on "*processes* that transcend international borders" (p. 13). Therefore, it is inferred that the term diaspora can be traced back from its actual usage in history and literature, and transnationalism from academic inquiries into what causes globalization, how it is happening, and what the consequences are. In the same sense, transnational "non-state agents" include not just people identified currently as immigrants, but those who will contribute to "onward immigration" (Faist,

2010, p. 13). As a result, transnationalism spans a wide range of groups and organizations including immigrant associations in the home country, religiously identified communities, employers' organizations, and other social formations (Faist, 2010, p. 13). It ranges from British expatriates in Singapore and their club activities (Beaverstock, 2013) to the British Indian Punjabi community and the diasporic identity of the members (Taylor, 2014). The former is more transnational, while the latter is more diasporic, but both studies have been done under the title of "transnationalism," which indicates the inclusive and comprehensive nature of the concept.

Bruneau (2010) saw diaspora as a notion that functions as a hinge between various spaces and geographical scales; therefore, it implies "being able to live simultaneously on the transnational world scale, the local scale of community and the scale of the host or home country, thereby combining the three scales" (p. 48). This view does not seem to make any distinction from what Faist (2010) clarified above. However, Bruneau (2010) took spatial and temporal aspects of territoriality as distinct features of diaspora, which is characterized by "the reproduction of memory" or "shared memory" through recreation of their own place while spending generations and building monuments and other symbolic places as instruments for a "re-rooting" in the host country (pp. 39-40). In terms of transnationalism, he categorized transmigrants, cross-border entrepreneurs or even smugglers together, whose priority is elevating their socioeconomic standing, remaining dependent on their home country and immigrant group network, not promoting a secure attachment to the host country (Bruneau, 2010).

Similar to Bruneau (2010), Quayson and Daswani (2013) found the distinction in the space, noting that "the concept of diaspora space includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion," while transnationalism focuses on "various flows and counterflows" that encompass

"the movement of people, notions of citizenship, technology, forms of multinational governance, and the mechanisms of global markets" (p. 4). They view transnationalism as a concept extended from diaspora (Quayson & Daswani, 2013).

In general, the debates regarding distinctions between diaspora and transnationalism can be summarized in three areas as follows: the scope, identity, and emphasis of the time dimension.

(1) Transnationalism is a broader term than diaspora in regard to the scope of groups.

The concept of diaspora is generally used for religious, ethnic, and national groups while transnationalism spans a wide range of group formations socially identified.

(2) Transnationalism focuses on cross-border mobility and identity while the concept of diaspora deals with dispersal. As a consequence, diasporic identity might appear traumatic, but in general it relates to collective identity. Identity in transnationalism derives from cross-border mobility, so it is more represented through "network" promoted through "flows of ideas and goods."

(3) Transnationalism emphasizes recent flows of mobility in its time dimension while diasporic analysis concerns experience over multiple generations. (Faist, 2010, pp. 21-22).

For the third distinction, it is more appropriate to include the spatial dimension based on what Bruneau (2010) and Quayson and Daswani (2013) noted above because experiences from one generation to another are represented through diasporic attachments to places or space over a long period of time. It in turn indicates that transnationalism addresses a more mobile, fluid, and flexible dimension of space in the host country driven by other socioeconomic factors while their identity is more strongly anchored in the home land. A good example of this distinction between transnationalism and diaspora in usage is found in Gardner (2008). He provided an ethnographic

description of Indian elites in Bahrain. In this study, he used both transnational and diaspora to describe the characteristics of the Indian elites as in *diasporic elite* and *transnational proletariat* (Gardner, 2008, p. 56). He used “transnational” to explain their social ties maintained between two nations, and “diasporic” to focus on their subcommunity that has existed for centuries regardless of their long or short tenure in the place (Gardner, 2008, p. 56).

Transnationalism has found some conceptual ground for the last decade mostly through its connection with and distinction from diaspora as described above, and on-going efforts are being made to contribute to the development of the concept as a theory. However, scholars still say it is not the current goal to provide absolute definitions of these two notions. Rather, they hope these concepts can be furthered academically in the capacity of future research (Bauböck & Faist, 2010; Quayson & Daswani, 2013). One thing that seems clear is that while previous studies on migration and migrant experience have mostly focused on how immigrants live their lives, how their identities are formed, and how they struggle with the label of “minorities” in the host country, transnationalism addresses the same questions with the inclusion of *foreign* people of other social formations that do not belong to the category of immigrants in the scale and process of globalization. In this sense, transnationalism well defines international students in this study. In other words, the usage of transnationalism in this study does not lie in theorizing the concept, but in extending the concept academically to be inclusive of international students who are pursuing careers after graduation as potential highly skilled and educated immigrants.

Therefore, through the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora, the status of international students can be identified based on different focal points. International students are categorized as a transnational group when they pursue employment in nations that are not their home countries. They might have cultural ties that bind them linguistically, emotionally, and

even financially to some degree to the local immigrant community, but they show more transnational characteristics. They can be prospective members of the immigrant community, but their ties to the community are weaker compared to those of immigrants due to their flexible status. It is because international students are basically “foreign-born, attending college with a student visa, and intending to return to their country of origin” (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). Still, many of them choose to stay in the United States and look for jobs, further contributing to the demographic makeup of the local immigrant community though they may not develop as strong attachments to the community as a space of settlement due to their fluid status. Even when they settle down in local immigrant communities, their characteristics show more resemblance to what describes a transnational group than a diasporic one since their notion of place is not decided by “the shared memory” accumulated and shared through generations, which diasporic immigrant community members typically have in common (Bruneau, 2010, p. 39). Rather, as prospective high skilled immigrants, they choose their locations by “pull factors” that are primarily socioeconomic (Barakat & Parhizgar, 2013, pp. 106-107) such as salaries, types of jobs, social standing, merits of the place, and so on. This leads to less collective identity formation in general compared to stronger group identity developed by diasporic members as explained, and these characteristics give them a transitional status. Therefore, this study views international students seeking jobs in the United States as a *bridge* population regarding their status as a “stepping stone to ‘permanent’ skilled migration” (Guellec & Cervantes, 2001, p. 77).

The Model Minority Stereotype Embraced

In this section, empirical studies on the model minority stereotype are reviewed from the perspective of how Asian or Asian American students and professionals use the imposed image

“to assert their own identity and existence of their own identity” (Said, 1994, p. xii). How the model minority stereotype is perceived and embraced by Asian Americans has been studied mostly about Asian American students in higher education settings related to their academic achievement (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Trytten et al., 2012; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). Similar studies, though rarely done, are found on young Asian American professionals regarding how they embrace the model minority image as workplace strategies (Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003).

Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) studied how Asian American undergraduate students feel about the model minority label. The study found approximately 52% out of the 162 respondents viewed the label negatively because the label peripheralizes or marginalizes Asian Americans and reduces opportunities. About 26% viewed it as positive, expressing pride in Asian heritage and the reputation established by previous generations, satisfied with being recognized as good students. Around 16% said they feel ambivalent because it labels Asian Americans as a minority, but it is a good stereotype at least, taking pride in the accomplishments of Asian Americans. Those who expressed positive views of the model minority label showed higher scores in collectivism than individualism, with an attachment to tradition and heritage, recognition of achievement as part of ethnic identity, and connectedness of group identity with self-definition. The results indicate that those who tend to accept the model minority stereotype show stronger group identity, valuing the traits the label gives to Asian-ness: hardworking, high-achieving, intelligent, etc. (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). The findings imply that Asian international students may show positive attitudes toward the model minority label because they are likely to be more collectivistic than individualistic due to their stronger ties to their

homelands than to the United States, compared to Asian American students who have been more exposed to the individualistic culture in the United States in general.

Trytten et al. (2012) examined to what degree academic data supports the assertion that Asian American engineering students conform to the model minority stereotype and what the students say about the impact of the facets of the model minority stereotype on their lived experiences. Facets of the model minority stereotype include: (1) being extremely intelligent, especially in math and science, (2) hardworking with good work ethics, willing to work long hours and being exemplary employees and students, (3) setting high economic attainment goals, desiring financial stability and upward mobility, (4) seeking education prestige, viewing education as the pathway to success by studying at elite institutions and achieving high GPAs, and (5) being silent about race-related issues and problems, passively accepting racism and discrimination as “model citizens” who do not complain about inequities (Trytten et al., 2012, p. 442).

Though the academic performance data of the students does not support the hypothesis that Asian American engineering students conform to the model minority stereotype, most participants in the interviews reported the impact of the facets of the model minority stereotype on their lived experiences (Trytten et al., 2012). Even though they asserted the model minority stereotype is not true for Asian Americans, many of them expressed their belief that the United States is a society with racial equality and color-blind meritocracy in general. In addition, hegemonic use of the model minority was reported even by the participants who showed the most sensitivity to their ethnicity, which means they applied the stereotype to other Asian Americans, separating themselves from the stereotype (Trytten et al., 2012). It signifies oppression is occurring even among the members of the same group, as intended by the

dominant group to set competition among minority populations (Aguirre & Lio, 2008, as cited in Trytten et al., 2012).

Wong et al. (1998) categorized the cultural values of Asian Americans as a model minority as the middle class characteristics, which include strong work ethics, motivation for high achievement, perseverance, discipline, respect for authority, and conformity. They conducted a survey of 1,258 college students across five ethnic groups to see if the model minority stereotype is accepted by Asian Americans. According to the results, Asian Americans perceived themselves as more prepared, motivated, and more likely to have greater success in careers than Whites. These three areas were perceived in the same way by Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, while the other three minority groups viewed themselves as inferior to Whites in the same areas. Contrary to the perceptions, the actual data did not indicate Asian Americans do any better than other groups in academic performance. Wong et al. (1998) argued that the false perception that Asian Americans are high academic achievers makes them strive to “keep up” the “good student” image, and as a result, it will lower their self-esteem when they fail to satisfy the perceptions (p. 113). Therefore, the model minority stereotype functions as a standard to keep up with, making Asian Americans “conform to the norms and values” of the dominant group (Wong et al., 1998, p. 100). It serves the power of the regime in three ways: (1) controlling minority groups, not limited to Asian Americans, but including other minorities, (2) validating and reinforcing the norms and values of the dominant group, and (3) delivering other minorities a message that the same level of success can be achieved by conforming to the values and norms of the middle class (Wong et al., 1998).

Another set of studies on how Asians or Asian Americans accept the model minority stereotype and perform the image has been done on young Asian American professionals

(Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003). Eguchi and Starosta (2012) conducted a study on how eight college-educated Asian American male professionals respond to the model minority image in their performance in the workplace and found that participants think people base the participants' performative construction of identity on the model minority stereotype. In addition, the participants felt that they embrace and perform the model minority image to survive in their workplace and move up the social ladder (Eguchi & Starosta, 2012). However, while acting out the model minority image may be perceived as a way to gain a privileged position in the workplace, it results in a disadvantage in their professional advancement due to prevalent racial attitudes experienced at work (Eguchi & Starosta, 2012). This study shows that adopting the model minority stereotype as a survival strategy does not promote them professionally; rather, it functions as a trap that confines them in a status longing for higher positions, but not being able to reach what they desire even though they conform to people's perceptions of their Asianness.

Ho (2003) conducted a qualitative study on 22 highly educated young Asian American professionals who immigrated to the United States with their parents when they were young as the 1.5 generation or were born in the United States as the second generation. He found their conformity to the model minority image is reinforced by their transpacific experiences between the United States and Asia. These Chinese American and Korean American professionals show ignorance or denial of racial politics in the workplace in the United States, which demonstrates the connection between their embracing of the model minority image and ambivalence as colonized intellectuals (Ho, 2003). Ho (2003) asserted that these Asian American professionals construct a cultural identity by conforming to the model minority image, expecting that their conformity and performance based on the image will promote themselves professionally in the United States. However, they were generally not aware that they were acting upon the model

minority image, and their performance as a model minority facilitates their “marginalization as the Asian ‘Other’” (Ho, 2003, p. 169). Their unawareness comes from their class privilege in the United States developed from an early age without criticism, being children of a professional parent or parents, socializing with similar age peers, and having better access to education and transnational opportunities compared to their less privileged peers (Ho, 2003). They actively embraced “meritocratic individualism” and ambivalently adapt “essentialized Asianness” that shapes their Asian cultural identity influenced by the U.S.-centered Orientalist view, and their Asian identity was “ironically” reinforced partly by their transnational or transpacific experiences (Ho, 2003, p. 170). Their transpacific experiences include international phone calls, regular visits to their relatives in Asia in their childhood arranged by their immigrant parents for the purpose of preserving their East Asian cultural heritage, and travels to the Pacific Rim for business, fun, or temporary careers in multinational companies (Ho, 2003).

Ho’s (2003) findings signified that the tendency to embrace the model minority image for professional success and gains among U.S.-educated Asian professionals can be reinforced through their border-crossing experiences between the United States and their home countries. Though the Asian American professionals studied by Ho (2003) and Asian international students are different in terms of the cultural and linguistic background, Ho’s (2003) findings are significantly relevant to this study because this study views Asian international graduate students who seek employment in the United States as prospective Asian professionals whose status is moving toward immigrants and the model minority stereotype as a notion not limited to Asian Americans regionally, but applied to all people of Asian heritage globally under the realm of Empire.

Therefore, this study asks several questions concerning the findings that transpacific or transnational experiences reinforce the tendency to conform to and embrace the model minority image: what Asian international students studying in the United States as potential professionals experience on the other side of their border-crossing life, in other words, in their homeland, how their perceptions of themselves as promising “Asian” intellectuals and professionals are shaped by the way people in their homeland perceive them and their particular status in the United States, and how the perceptions of themselves and of people in their homeland reinforce their tendency to conform to and embrace the model minority image. These questions will illuminate how the model minority stereotype as *manifest* Orientalism is shaped and inverted in the minds of Asians under Empire and its globalizing power reaching all corners of the world.

Summary

With postcolonialism as the theoretical framework, this chapter addressed the discourse of Empire and the model minority stereotype as the present manifestation of colonialism and its practice. It explained how Empire has been established, maintained, and expanded with the process of globalization based on the notion of Empire by Hardt and Negri (2000). The minds of colonized intellectuals were examined through the works of major postcolonial scholars. The model minority stereotype was viewed as a prescribed guideline of Empire via its triple imperative: inclusive, managerial, and differential. In addition, transnationalism was reviewed to explain the onward immigration status of international students who seek employment in the United States. The characteristics of their ties between two countries were distinguished from the ties maintained by diasporic immigrants. Lastly, empirical studies on how the model minority stereotype is embraced by Asian American students and professionals were reviewed. Specifically, it was found that the model minority image is strategically adopted for personal and

professional success among Asian American professionals and this tendency is reinforced through their transnational experiences (Ho, 2003).

In sum, this chapter provided a review of literature that informs how the model minority stereotype is conformed to and embraced by Asian or Asian American intellectuals through the lens of postcolonialism, in which colonized intellectuals act out the prescribed guideline of Empire as the performing agents. In relation to Empire's control accelerated by the process of globalization, this chapter addressed literature on how the notion of the model minority stereotype can be shaped and reinforced in Asian identity through transnational experiences.

Empire's global context makes it necessary to understand the model minority stereotype not only in the U.S. immigrant labor market, but in the global economic system that pulls the most highly educated and skilled workers into its hierarchy of ethnicization. This chapter examined the capitalist dynamics that operate in the global context, guiding a further investigation into how Asian professionals function as agents serving the globally constituted sovereignty, which is Empire.

Contribution of the Study

It has been 50 years since Petersen first depicted Asian Americans as the model minority in 1966 (Hartlep, 2013a, 2013b). Research shows that Asian Americans were intentionally selected as the model minority for a political and functional purpose (Hartlep, 2013b). What has been revealed by research is that the model minority stereotype has silenced and concealed racism against Asian Americans and maintained the status quo (Hartlep, 2013a, 2013b). Due to high expectations imposed by the stereotype, mental health of Asian Americans has been challenged (Hartlep, 2013a, 2013b). However, as Sakamoto, Takei, and Woo (2013) pointed out and Hartlep (2013a) agreed, the discourse of the model minority myth has focused exclusively

on racism, which is why it has distracted attention from major issues such as deepening class disparities and economic exploitation in the immigrant society. In connection with the issue of racism, major discourse has been centered around the over-education view, which contends that Asian American workers are disadvantaged, not receiving enough income for their education compared to Whites (Sakamoto et al., 2012). It implies that Asian Americans need more education to earn as much as white Americans (Sakamoto et al., 2012). Refuting it as a defective hypothesis, Sakamoto et al. (2012) warned regarding the tendency that the model minority discourse centered on the over-education view only serves highly educated Asian Americans, who are actually the most advantaged in the immigrant labor market. This contrasts with previous research that has dealt with highly educated Asians or Asian Americans as an underprivileged group as reviewed in literature. In this regard, viewing Asian international students seeking employment in the United States as an privileged group moving toward highly educated immigrant workers is the basis of this study, which contributes to what is lacking in existing research.

The model minority stereotype is not a phenomenon limited to the United States, but also exists in Asian countries (Hartlep, 2014). It means the concept is applied to not only Asian Americans, but to Asians living and working in today's globalization era. Hartlep (2013b) said the model minority discourse needs new paradigms, not reproducing the same results from the same narrow approaches. This research seeks to meet the contemporary need of the globalized era by situating the model minority discourse in the postcolonial context in connection with globalization and suggesting a new paradigm to the research of the model minority stereotype. In the next chapter, the methodology of this research is explained in detail: research design, participants, and data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This study was conducted to understand Asian international graduate students who plan to pursue their careers in the United States after completing their studies and their transnational experiences between the United States and their home countries. This research examines how the model minority stereotype is shaped and reinforced through their transnational experiences. In previous chapters, with a brief review of the model minority stereotype, the status of Asian international students was defined as a bridge population toward onward immigration when they pursue employment in the United States, and as a privileged group when they are compared to less skilled and educated peers in the immigrant labor market in the United States, which is part of the global economy.

To understand the characteristics of Asian international graduate students as a privileged group, the psychology of colonized intellectuals was reviewed within the framework of postcolonialism, in which they function as agents contributing to the maintenance and expansion of Empire accelerated by the process of globalization. This study defines the model minority stereotype as a guideline that prescribes cultural behaviors to Asian Americans and as a notion that is also imposed on all Asians today in the realm of Empire. Through examining the process of how the model minority stereotype is shaped, embraced, and conformed to in the transnational experiences of job-seeking Asian international graduate students, this study explores if the model minority stereotype functions as a strategy for imperial control that reaches people's bodies and minds. In this chapter, details of methodology are explained: (1) suitability of the research design, (2) purpose of the research, (3) research questions, (4) research design of the study and rationale, (5) research site, (6) participants, (7) data collection, (8) data analysis, (9) ethical considerations, (10) trustworthiness, and (11) summary.

Suitability of the Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain when qualitative methodology is appropriate. Creswell and Poth (2018) provided a list from which I extract the following based on the relevance to this study. Qualitative research is appropriate when:

- (1) there is a problem or issue to be explored, a group or population to be studied, variables to be identified and measured, or silenced voices to be heard;
- (2) a complex understanding of the issue in detail is needed, which requires direct interaction with participants and listening to them;
- (3) researchers want to empower individuals to share their stories, listen to their voices, and minimize the power relationships between a researcher and participants;
- (4) researchers want to write without being restricted on the style of writing;
- (5) researchers want to understand the contexts or settings where participants experience the issue or problem;
- (6) quantitative measures and statistical means cannot capture individual uniqueness.

(Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 45-46)

These reasons provided suitability of qualitative research for this study because Asian international graduate students are identified as *a group* to be studied in terms of *a problem*, the model minority stereotype. The nature of the issue required detailed understanding of the participants and their experiences, which could be extracted from the researcher's interactions with the participants. Specifically, the researcher sought to identify the specific context or setting that relates the model minority stereotype to the border-crossing experiences of the participants. Therefore, the general process of this study could not be conducted quantitatively or statistically

due to the measuring limitations of quantitative methodology, which made qualitative research most appropriate for the nature of this study.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) also provided several characteristics of qualitative research, which are (1) natural setting, (2) researcher as key instrument, (3) multiple sources of data, (4) inductive data analysis, (5) participants' meanings, (6) emergent design, (6) theoretical lens, (7) interpretive inquiry, and (8) holistic account (pp. 181-182). In this study, the researcher interviewed and interacted with participants, told her autobiographical story, interpreted both sets of data, and accounted for the stories as a whole. The researcher's ultimate purpose of conducting this study was to find meanings of her life and participants' lives through the lens of postcolonialism. This process required the researcher as the key instrument of this study, which renders qualitative design best suited for this study.

Purpose of the Research

This narrative inquiry explored how the model minority stereotype is shaped, ingrained, and conformed to in Asian international graduate students' transnational experiences while they study and plan to seek employment in the United States after the completion of their studies. Further, it explored what it means to the U.S. immigrant labor market as part of global economy in the framework of postcolonialism.

Research Questions

Two research questions were addressed with two sub-questions each and they are:

- (1) How is the model minority stereotype shaped, developed, and ingrained in the transnational experiences of Asian international graduate students who plan to seek employment in the United States after the completion of their studies?

- a. What do Asian international graduate students experience while they study in the United States and physically and emotionally travel between the United States and their home countries?
 - b. How do Asian international graduate students' transnational experiences shape their perceptions as Asians in a way that makes them think they should perform and behave in a certain way to be employed in the United States as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers?
- (2) How do Asian international graduate students perceive their immigrant employment status related to the U.S. immigrant labor market and the global labor market in the context of postcolonialism?
- a. How do Asian international graduate students perceive their knowledge and expertise as a factor distinguishing them from less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States and people who earn the same degrees in their home countries?
 - b. How do Asian international graduate students think their present social and economic status will change in the future in the United States and in their homelands as a result of employment in the United States?

Research Design of the Study and Rationale

Narrative Inquiry

Humans live storied lives individually and socially, and narrative inquiry studies how humans experience the world (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). In other words, people live their daily lives and construct stories about their being and experience, so

story is a “portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479).

This study used narrative inquiry for its research design because it studied individuals and their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). More specifically, it studied individual experiences in the form of lived and told stories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Narrative inquiry begins with the need to create meanings in human lives (Clandinin, 2006). The subject matter of narrative is human action that expresses human existence (Polkinghorne, 1995). However, beyond telling stories, narrative inquiry contextualizes individual life stories socially, culturally, and institutionally (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Therefore, participants of this study were viewed as humans who express their existence through actions, and their actions were brought into stories, which were interpreted according to the social, cultural, and institutional context where they were situated.

Creswell and Poth (2018) defined narrative studies by providing general elements narrative projects have in common, which are also found in this study:

- (1) Narrative researchers collect lived and told experiences in the form of stories from individuals and these stories are “co-constructed” between the researcher and the participants, which requires strong collaboration and interaction between them.
- (2) Narrative stories are about individual experiences, which might elucidate individual identities and their view of themselves.
- (3) Narrative stories are collected through various forms of data: interviews, observations, documents, pictures, and other qualitative sources.
- (4) Narrative stories are often organized chronologically by the researcher.

- (5) Narrative stories are analyzed in various ways: thematically based on what was said, structurally based on the nature of the telling, or dialogically based on who the story is directed toward.
- (6) Narrative stories include turning points, tensions, or interruptions, emphasized by the researcher.
- (7) Narrative stories take place “within specific places and situations.” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 68-69)

In this study, the researcher narrated her own story with the stories of the participants, which means autobiographical narrative was used as part of the data. She appeared as one who understands the participants’ stories derived from similar experiences, which advocates that narrative is not only about telling, but about knowing (McQuillan, 2000). It suggests the role of a narrator as one who knows as well as one who tells (Kim, 2015). The autobiography of the researcher as a knower and teller of the stories including hers, provided a “narrative construction of identity that discusses how a life came to be what it was, or how a self became what it is” (Martin, 1986, as cited in Kim, 2015, p. 123). Autobiography is not only about describing a self already known, but about putting stories of the past together to construct the present self (Martin, 1986, as cited in Kim, 2015).

Narrative also concerns “human attempts to progress to a solution, clarification, and unraveling of an incomplete situation” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). Of special importance is that it is about *progressing to a solution*. Bruner (2002) said, “great narrative is an invitation to problem finding, not a lesson in problem solving” and “it is deeply about plight, about the road rather than about the inn to which it leads” (p. 20). Viewing the current time in the historical continuum of the past connected to the present and future, this study did not see the

contemporary world as final; rather as an *incomplete situation* where problems to address exist. Therefore, the purpose of using narrative for this study was to unravel these problems to audiences as a way of raising awareness, and it was not to *provide solutions* that are final and complete. It is a *process to progress* to getting somewhere or something that is ideal. In sum, using a narrative, a necessary part of human life, as a research method is a path-finding journey with no end and requires endless efforts to explore lived and told experiences of human beings on the way aiming for better.

Autobiographical Narrative

In this narrative study, the researcher's story was intertwined with the stories of participants, which means the researcher was engaged in the study as a participant with her autobiographical narrative. Autobiography as a "text of a life" exhibits an individual's life "before" and "after" transformations as the result of a "*transformative*" change in the "characteristic qualities and societal relationships of the principal persona" (Barros, 1998, pp. 1-2). Similarly, Brockmeier (2001) used "autobiographical process" to refer to "human life" that "has taken shape in time," by which he meant human identity is constructed through time (pp. 247-248). The researcher's autobiographical narrative, therefore, is her life story that shows how her identity is constructed, how she has changed in the process, and what has caused the change. It is also a way of inviting audiences through "autobiographical truth" residing in the "intersubjective exchange between narrator and reading aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life" (Smith & Watson, 2010, p. 16). This intersubjective or dialogic exchange makes it possible for readers to put the emphasis on "observing processes of communicative exchange and understanding," rather than judging the story true or false (Smith & Watson, 2010, p. 17).

Research Site

The research site for this study was a public university located in a mid-sized town in the U.S. Midwest. The university has three campuses, and this research was conducted at the main campus. According to the university's enrollment summary by ethnicity (Office of the Registrar, 2017), the total number of students' enrollments was 22,795 as of 2017. The three largest student populations were Caucasians with 17,155 (75%), internationals with 1,820 (8%), and Hispanics/Latinos with 1,503 (6.6%).

Of the total 1,820 international students, the top three populations were Chinese with 623, Saudis with 180, and Indians with 143. International undergraduates were 843, occupying 46.3% of the total international enrollments, and graduates were 829, consisting of 45.5%.

Table 3. Top 10 places of origin of international students at the university research site, fall 2017

Country	Total Number of Students
China	623
Saudi Arabia	180
India	143
Paraguay	80
Kuwait	55
Iran	52
Sri Lanka	45
Nepal	43
South Korea	42
Japan	26
Others	531
Total	1,820

Note. International Student and Scholar Services (2017) of the university attended by the participants under study.

Participants

Participants were chosen by purposeful sampling, which is the most common sampling strategy in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In purposeful sampling, researchers

“intentionally” select participants because they can “best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 148). There are several purposeful sampling strategies, and convenience, snowball, and criterion sampling was used for this study.

There are three things to consider when selecting participants using the purposeful sampling strategy: (1) who and what to sample, (2) what form of sampling to take, and (3) how many participants or sites to sample (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

First, regarding who and what to sample, researchers can sample at the level of the site, the event or process, or the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the participant level was considered the most important because the status of the participants and their lived experiences were the first criterion for selecting samples. The criterion was Asian international graduate students who are seeking employment in the United States after they complete their studies. The reason graduate students rather than undergraduate were chosen is that they are considered more highly educated and skilled workers than undergraduates when they enter the job market. Compared to other types of Asian immigrants, they were expected to show more stark contrasts in the income level, career development, social status, people’s expectations on their performance and behavior in workplaces, and their endeavor to meet the expectations imposed on them. These characteristics made them better informants for the purpose of this study.

Second, for what form of sampling to take, criterion sampling was used for this study. In criterion sampling, participants are chosen because they meet some criterion for quality assurance (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criteria participants needed to meet for this study were the years they spent in the United States and their confirmed decisions to seek employment in the

United States after degree completion. For the first condition, they should have completed most of their studies with one year remaining for a master's degree and finished coursework for a doctoral degree or be on OPT. For the second condition, they should be planning to receive OPT or already on OPT, which allows them to find careers or work in the field of their majors while maintaining their F-1 status before changing to H-1B.

Finally, for the sample size, researchers vary in the number of samples to be selected according to the type of qualitative research, but what should be considered in general is to collect extensive details about the individuals or sites to be studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In narrative inquiry too, the sample size can vary depending on how extensive details the sites or individuals can provide. It means the sample size could be one or more. This general recommendation was applied to this study, so the sample size for this study was decided based on “what” and “how much” the participants have experienced.

Three participants were selected: two Chinese and one Korean. Two additional participants were the wife of a Chinese participant who came along with her husband, and the research herself who narrated her own story. At least one of the three participants originally chosen was in the STEM major given 48% of fields of study are concentrated on STEM as reviewed in Chapter 2 (IIE, 2017a). Two Chinese were selected because Chinese make up the largest international student population at the research site, making them easily accessible to the researcher. A Korean student was selected as the last participant, so the participant's lived experiences could be comparatively approached on the same basis of the researcher's ethnic and cultural background presented in the autobiographical narratives.

For the subset sampling techniques, convenience, snowball, and criterion sampling strategies were used to access participants. Convenience sampling is efficient in terms of time,

money, and effort, but it risks information and credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To augment information richness and credibility that lack in convenience sampling, snowball or chain sampling was used to identify information-rich cases from people the researcher knows (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, snowballing continued until enough participants who meet the criterion were identified to assure the quality of informants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on these three sampling strategies, the researcher started to search information-rich cases among her acquaintances and kept expanding the scope of the search until she found participants who meet the criterion: Asian graduate students who plan to find jobs in the United States or on OPT.

For confidentiality, participants were asked to choose pseudonyms before the first interview was conducted. Participants' identities were known only to the researcher.

Data Collection

As this study involved human subjects, a research proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval (Appendix A) for any ethical issues impacting participants before data were collected. Each participant received an email invitation. The first interview was scheduled if he/she agreed to participate. Reminder emails were sent to participants until the first interview was confirmed. If there were any participants dropping out or withdrawing from the study, email invitations were to be sent to the next potential participants.

A consent form (Appendix B) was given to each participant to review and sign. The consent form consists of the right of participants to withdraw from the research at any time without repercussion, the main purpose of the study, the data collection procedures, confidentiality, any known risks to participants, the expected benefits to accrue to the participants, and the signature of both the participant and the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data were collected through one-to-one interviews primarily. At least three interviews were conducted with each participant with the fourth one as a follow-up interview at the researcher's discretion based on the need to fill any gap in the information collected in the first three interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The length of the interviews were slightly shorter or longer than designated depending on the need to ask follow-up questions for clarification and not to interrupt the participants' thought process and the natural flow of the interview.

Demographic information of the participants was obtained through questions at the beginning of the first interview with each participant. The first interview (Appendix C) was designed to collect the participants' life story: childhood, families, school life, process to decide to study in the United States, life in the United States, travels back home, and future plans. The second interview (Appendix D) and the third interview (Appendix E) were more structured compared to the first interview in order to connect and theorize their ethnicity with the model minority stereotype. Follow-up questions were asked through emails or in person in the event that participants' responses required clarification or expansion to the previous three interviews.

In addition to data collected through formal interviews, the researcher's field notes from casual encounters, conversations, and acquaintance with the participants in the past and now if the researcher already knew the participants, were used as another important part of the data with the participants' consent.

Recording files were securely stored on a computer with a password only the researcher can access. Field notes were destroyed after they were converted into PDF files and stored with the recording files. All data will be kept for three years after the completion of the study and

destroyed, unless the participants allow the researcher to keep them for further research or publication.

Reciprocity is an aspect to consider for good data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is important for participants not to feel abandoned after the interviews and to be recognized in their time invested in the study, so rewards in the form of gift cards were provided for participants after the final interview as a strategy for reciprocity (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For debriefing, member checking was used. Interview transcripts were sent to the participants to have the opportunity to correct any misconceptions or inaccurate information. After the completion of the research, the researcher shared the findings with the participants, who may view the final version of the dissertation and ask questions. A debriefing statement for participants is in Appendix F. The major professor and other members on the researcher's doctoral committee will provide peer debriefing.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews were conducted from November 2016 through February 2017 after the IRB's review and approval of the research proposal. Each participant received an email consent form that explains the details of the study before the first interview took place. Two paper copies of the consent form were signed by each participant and the researcher before the first interview started, so that each could keep one for future reference.

Interviews were conducted in an environment that made both the participant and the researcher comfortable. All interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, and transcribed for data analysis. Refining language is common in thematic analysis, in which the researcher turns what is not easily readable into more readable language (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, considering the participants are non-native speakers of English, when there were

needs to refine language to make the data more readable and understandable, the researcher identified the most appropriate language to deliver the participants' intention based on the context subjectively. Member checks ensured accuracy of participants' statements.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Narrative stories are analyzed in three ways: thematically, structurally, and dialogically as briefly explained above in the sub-section for narrative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Regardless of the means of analysis, narrative inquiry concerns the content or what is told and represented (Riessman, 2008). However, in thematic analysis, the primary concern is the content rather than how the story is told or to whom the story is told (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Riessman, 2008). In other words, the main focus of thematic analysis is the “informants’ reports of events and experiences” (Riessman, 2008, p. 54). Therefore, the researcher interprets data based on the themes related to the theories, the purpose of the inquiry, the content of the data, and other factors (Riessman, 2008).

In structural analysis, the major focus is on the nature of the telling: how the narratives are organized to persuade readers, so the way of communication is emphasized (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, language is considered important because the researcher wants to study how the participants use the language to construct their stories (Riessman, 2008). Finally, dialogic analysis concerns how dialogue among speakers is performed interactively, so Riessman (2008) uses performance analysis as an interchangeable term for dialogic analysis. It focuses on “who” the story is directed toward, “when” and “why,” so the contexts or environments that affect the interactions are another major concern (Riessman, 2008, p. 105).

Out of the three types of narrative analyses, this study drew on thematic analysis, which is the most commonly used means of analysis in narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008). It means data were analyzed through the process of coding and categorizing to find themes from what was told by the participants.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell & Poth (2018) use the data analysis spiral to explain the general procedures of qualitative data analysis as depicted in Figure 7.

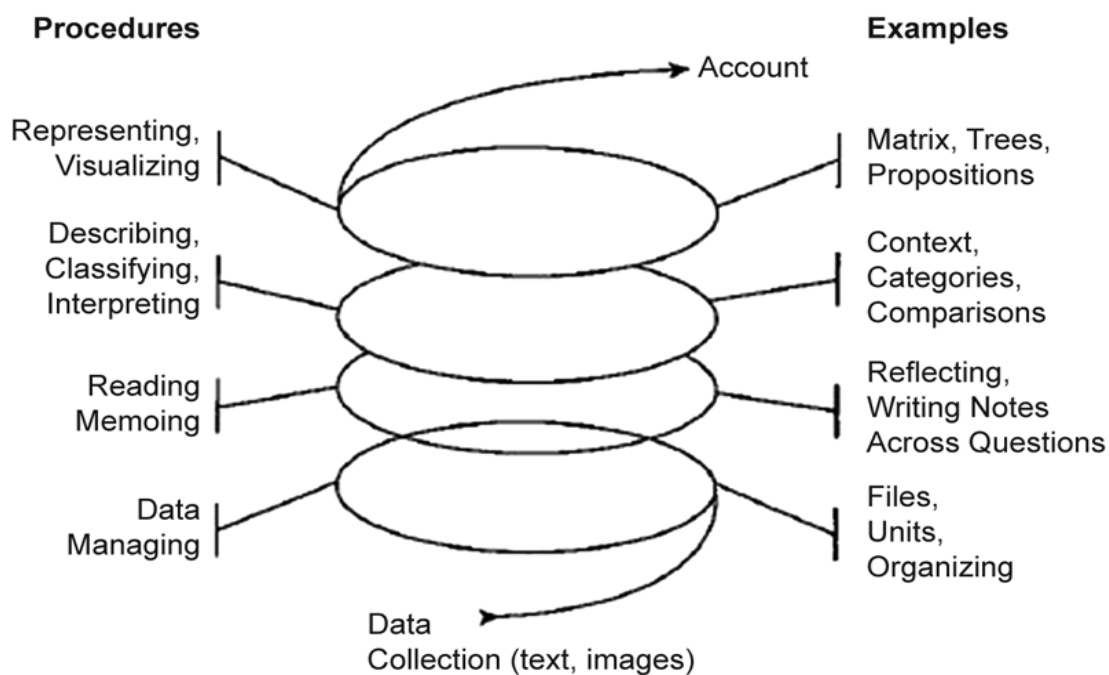


Figure 6. The data analysis spiral, Creswell & Poth (2018), p. 182.

The data analysis spiral begins with data management, in which researchers organize data in ways that can be easily accessed for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It requires researchers read the transcripts comprehensively and thoroughly to “immerse” themselves into the data while memoing in the margins (Agar, 1980, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 187). In describing, classifying, and interpreting, researchers describe and develop codes or categories into themes, and interpret them based on their theoretical perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the last

process, researchers present the data in text and figures. Out of the four loops of the procedures, Creswell and Poth (2018) specifically focus on data coding as the central step of qualitative data analysis. He recommended starting with five or six categories and expanding them as data review is furthered, but not developing more than 25-30 categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher of this study first developed two to three essential categories under each sub-question with a theme to be investigated based on the interview data, which resulted in eight to 12 categories. And then, the researcher interpreted them based on the relevant theoretical or conceptual perspectives and derived analysis toward the overarching theme for the purpose of this study: how the model minority stereotype is shaped and ingrained through the border-crossing experiences of participants in the postcolonial context.

Data Analysis Procedures in Narrative Inquiry

Creswell and Poth (2018) furthered the general qualitative data analysis into five different approaches. He summarized four elements commonly found in data analysis for narrative inquiry: (1) collecting stories of lived experiences of individuals through multiple sources, (2) retelling the stories based on narrative elements, (3) rewriting the stories chronologically, and (4) integrating the settings in which participants' experiences occur. Creswell and Poth (2018) see these common elements also found in biographical narratives. He takes Denzin's (1989) biographical analysis as an example. Denzin (1989) suggested looking for objective experiences in the participants' biography (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). The following process was suggested by Denzin (1989) and outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018).

- (1) Look for stages or experiences in the course of life, e.g., marriage or employment, to find a chronology of life events.

- (2) Find stories and epiphanies, in other words, specific, contextual biographical content through data.
- (3) Theorize the life stories by expanding the stories in various perspectives. This can be done during the interviews by asking the participants to theorize about their lives.
- (4) Separate narrative segments from the stories to find patterns and meanings.
- (5) Reconstruct the participants' biographies.
- (6) Identify factors that have shaped participants' lives.
- (7) Write the highlights of the individual life processes, the theories related to the lived individual experiences, and the unique or general qualities of the individual life.

(Denzin, 1989, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 198-199)

Referring to the data analysis procedures suggested and research questions, the researcher of this study first looked into the participants' life process until they reached the current pre-employment stage. This life stage was configured by the factors that had affected their decisions regarding their education and employment in the two separate but interconnected experiences between two countries. This requires identifying life events and epiphanies from what they have experienced and are currently experiencing transnationally. The participants' lives were theorized through interview questions, especially through the second interview, about what they experience between two countries as potential highly educated and skilled workers in the United States and in the global job market, and how their Asianness functions as a prescriber for their performance and behaviors. These questions helped theorize how the model minority stereotype is shaped in the transnational experiences of the participants. From these stories told, narrative patterns and meanings were elicited in terms of the theoretical framework: postcolonialism and its controlling mechanism through Empire. And then, the researcher reconstructed the

participants' life stories based on the patterns and meanings discovered, by anchoring them in the theory. This way, common factors that have shaped the participants' lives were identified. Finally, the researcher represented the reconstructed biographies of the participants in the same way that relates them to the theoretical framework, inviting readers to find meanings in the lives of the participants and the researcher through the framework, through which readers can also reflect the meanings of their lives.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues can arise in all phases of a qualitative study, not just limited to the data collection phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) said ethical issues should be considered in the following aspects:

- (1) Researchers' role as both insiders and outsiders to the participants
- (2) Assessment of issues regarding disclosure
- (3) Establishing relationships without having stereotypes or labels the participants do not want to embrace
- (4) Acknowledgement of whose voices are to be represented in the final study
- (5) Involving researchers into writing with reflection on researchers themselves and the people under study
- (6) Awareness of the vulnerability of the populations
- (7) Power imbalance in relationships
- (8) Placing participants at risk (Hatch, 2002; Weis & Fine, 2000, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Regarding the list above, ethical concerns of this study arise from the researcher and the participants being from the same race, and the researcher seeks similar transnational and career

experiences to hers in the participants. Specifically, as this study includes the autobiographical narrative of the researcher, it requires writing the researcher herself into the major part of the study. These concerns may make the researcher lean more on the insider's role than on that of the outsider.

Another concern is that the researcher bases the framework of the study on the notion of the model minority stereotype that has labeled Asian Americans in the United States for the past half a century. This may risk building trustworthy and respectful relationships with the participants who do not want to be stereotyped or labeled by the model minority image. In addition, this study defines Asian international graduate students as a highly educated and skilled group in the U.S. and global labor market, which puts the participants in a privileged status compared to their less skilled and educated counterparts. This view might place the participants at risk of their voices not being represented well, contrary to the existing research that has viewed and studied Asian international students as a marginalized group. It also raises a concern that the researcher's voice might overpower the participants' voice.

Therefore, trustworthiness needs to be established to address these ethical issues. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested some solutions for the ethical issues such as receiving institutional and local review and approval, informing participants of possible risks and their right to withdraw from the study at any time of the research process, and obtaining appropriate consent forms from the participants. The following section addresses how trustworthiness of this study was insured systematically.

Trustworthiness

Many perspectives have developed to establish validation in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Alternative terms replacing validation have been used from these

perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For example, some naturalistic researchers propose and consolidate terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Creswell and Poth (2018) summarized different perspectives and provided his own stance for the term “validation” in qualitative research as follows.

- (1) Validation is an “attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings.”
- (2) Validation is a distinguished feature of qualitative research in terms of time the researcher spends in the field, detailed description of the work, and intimacy between the researcher and the participants.
- (3) Validation is about a process, rather than about verification.
- (4) There are no distinct approaches to validation for five qualitative approaches; different applications are applied with more emphasis in narrative studies and less in others.
- (5) Validation in qualitative research implies that researchers employ accepted strategies regarding “accuracy,” or “validation strategies.” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 259-260).

Grounded on the above stance, this study followed seven strategies out of eight suggested as the most frequently used ones regarding trustworthiness of qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018). One strategy that was not followed is negative case analysis that recommends the researcher refine working hypothesis as negative or disconfirming evidence emerges. It is because the researcher thinks the original hypotheses can be also supported through negative or disconfirming findings. The following seven strategies address credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability comprehensively, which are equivalent to

internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in quantitative research (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Each strategy is followed by specific methods the researcher used to ensure trustworthiness in this study.

- (1) **Prolonged engagement and observation to build trust with participants:** The researcher of this study developed intimacy with the participants through various ways, interacting with participants through casual encounters and engaging in casual conversations with the participants about their studies, life in the United States, and travels back home.
- (2) **Triangulation:** Researchers used various sources, methods, investigators, and theories to verify evidence for themes or perspectives to secure triangulation. In this study, data collected through different sources such as interviews, transcripts, and field notes were compared to secure data triangulation and analyzed to verify evidence regarding postcolonialism.
- (3) **Peer review/debriefing:** This is an external check of the research, which is equivalent to “interrater reliability” in quantitative research. This study was conducted under the supervision of the major professor who reviewed and debriefed the entire process of the research. The proposal and defense were reviewed and approved by the members of the doctoral committee.
- (4) **Clarifying researcher bias:** Researchers’ biases that can influence the interpretation or approach to the study need to be clarified for readers. The researcher of this study addressed biases, assumptions, prejudices, or past experiences that can affect the interpretation of the data in the section for ethical considerations. Some biases and assumptions are from the researcher’s being from the same race as one of the

participants, similar lived experiences, and defining the target population as a privileged group.

- (5) **Member checking:** Researchers seek credibility of the study through participants' checking the findings and interpretations. The researcher of this study asked participants to review the data, data analyses and interpretations, and findings for the credibility of this study. For example, participants of this study received interview transcripts, data analyses, interpretations, and findings of this study.
- (6) **Rich, thick description:** This allows readers to decide whether the findings of the study can be transferred or applied to other similar settings. The researcher of this study compiled information collected through multiple sources of data and methods and used them to describe each participant and relevant settings in detail to allow readers to have the holistic picture of the study and determine the transferability of the study.
- (7) **External audits:** An external consultant, an auditor who has no connection to the study can audit the process and the product of the study to check accuracy. The doctoral committee of this study includes a professor from outside of the department, whose role is similar to that of an external reviewer. The professor will participate in the defense of this study and provide feedback for accuracy of the study. Her role as an external reviewer is compared to that of three other committee members from the department, who will contribute to interrater reliability. (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 256-260)

Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended researchers meet at least two strategies out of the eight in the list. This study utilized seven. As a result, this study provides multi-dimensional and multi-layered trustworthiness or validation.

Summary

This study used narrative inquiry as its methodology because it involves narratives of lived experiences of individuals as the primary data source and concerns “narrative reality,” (Bruner, 2002, p. 8) which is represented through the stories told. In this chapter, the details of the methodology have been addressed. It started with two research paradigms and provided the rationale for the suitability of the qualitative research design for this study. Further rationale for narrative inquiry as the specific research design was explained. The research site, participants, data collection, and data analysis were described in detail. Ethical issues and concerns that can arise in any phase of the study and the necessity of establishing trustworthiness were delineated. Finally, the methods and process of insuring trustworthiness were illustrated following the recommendations by Creswell and Poth (2018). In the next chapter, findings and analysis of the data will be discussed.

Chapter 4 - Findings

This chapter presents findings and analysis based on the research questions and related themes with the purpose of the study as the anchor: identifying how the notion of the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and reinforced in the transnational experiences of Asian international graduate students pursuing careers in the United States. To meet the purpose, participants' perceptions of themselves as Asians are examined through their life stories and physical and emotional ties they maintain transnationally between the United States and their homelands. With the narratives of the four participants including the wife of a Chinese participant, the researcher's autobiographical narrative is intertwined and threaded, so four sets of stories compose the Story as a whole.

Stories are presented and analyzed pursuant to the three-dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Based on Dewey's concept of experience (Dewey, 1938), Clandinin & Connelly (2000) defined three elements that make up the three-dimensional inquiry space: temporal, spatial, and personal-social. The temporal means a time continuum that connects participants' past, present, and future in chronological order. The spatial indicates the setting or situation where participants and the researcher are located and interact with each other. Finally, the personal-social delineates how each participant and the researcher relate to and identify themselves in connection with the world. These three elements are applied as fundamentals that underlie the Story presented in this chapter as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) for analysis and representation of narrative research.

The Story is a composition of narratives of five people: three Chinese, Naomi, John, and John's wife, and two Koreans: Paul and the researcher "I." The life story of each participant is introduced first to facilitate understanding of the participants' ethnic and cultural backgrounds,

current statuses, and future plans. Life stories are followed by the themes projected through research questions, and sections are organized by relevant findings and analysis under these themes. Each theme is introduced by the researcher's autobiographical narratives as a trigger. To show the themes, two research questions are used as the titles, and two respective sub questions are paraphrased to introduce the themes briefly.

In data presentation, the researcher uses parentheses to add missing words or phrases in the interview excerpts to facilitate better understanding of the data. Parentheses are also used to paraphrase questions the researcher asked rather than inserting the questions directly, so the natural flow of the themes is not interrupted for readers. Some words or phrases are punctuated with quotation marks as in "the United States," and this is for readers to sense the researcher's intention to show cynicism in the usage by emphasizing them. Some phrases and sentences from the interview data are also quoted when they are used in the analysis without paraphrasing.

In data analysis, the researcher's interpretation is given first, and a data excerpt that pertains to the interpretation follow as the evidence of the interpretation, so readers can see how the interpretation matches the data. Sometimes the researcher provides interpretation in both places, before and after a data excerpt, when a transition is needed for the next interpretation.

Finally, one of the important terms frequently used in this chapter is "middle class." Distinguished from the term used by Wong et al (1998) to categorize the cultural values of a model minority stereotype as middle-class characteristics as reviewed in Chapter 2, "middle class" in this chapter suggests participants' self-categorical definition that shows participants' way of thinking as middle class that originates from their professionalism: freely networking or socializing without any cultural and language barriers in a social setting and economically self-sufficient enough to afford frequent international travels and be able to support their families.

Who Are We?

An Opportunitive Gridlock

Here I am standing again before the greeting sign written in multiple languages. Two women keep shouting at people who are lining up for arrival inspections. “Visas, here! U.S. citizens, Green Cards, keep going!” Lines keep being stacked up with more people piling up at the end. Moving slowly toward my turn, I look at people at customs putting their fingers on the scanner and answering the inspector’s questions with a look of nervousness crossing their faces. Then I look at the other lines to my left for U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Almost empty.

Finally it is my turn. I give my passport to the officer. As directed, I get my fingertips scanned, take off my glasses, and look at the camera. A usual conversation occurs. “What do you do?” “I teach at a university.” “What do you teach?” “I teach English to international students.” Then he swipes my passport through the machine in front of him. Immediately I notice a subtle change in the way he looks into the monitor. Here it comes again. A red flag. Before he asks, I pass him a worn-out piece of paper I received from the court. I have carried it for years whenever I travel internationally since I got held in the immigration office after that incident. I explain what happened six years ago. I got pulled over due to malfunctioning taillights, but that was when I realized I hadn’t renewed my car insurance. Not to give any bad impression, I add that it was because I didn’t receive the renewal notice due to my address change. He nods his head as if he understood everything. However, he takes out a walkie-talkie and calls the security as expected. I do not panic any more as I did seven years ago. While waiting for the security to arrive, he talks to me first. “The only way to avoid this is to get a Green Card.”

A policeman arrives and takes me to the immigration office. People behind me throw a look of sympathy at me. I am used to this. In the immigration office, under the sign “U.S.

Customs and Border Protection” as usual, I endure long wait with others who might have similar or different issues. Then I receive my passport back and am finally told, “You’re good to go.” Leaving the office hurriedly not to miss my next connecting flight, I think to myself. Why am I hesitating? Let’s get a Green Card. I’ve already been given several chances, and time is ticking away. But once I get it, I cannot stay outside the country as much as I want. Then what if I get a job in Korea or in another country? I should wait and see what’s to come in the next phase of my life. With so many what-if questions and possibilities crossing my mind, I think the reason I cannot decide right away is that probably I have choices. With a doctoral degree I will earn in the United States, basically I will be able to go anywhere I want. There is something in me that makes me pursue what is higher and better though I cannot tell what it is exactly.

I, the Researcher

My father was an elementary school teacher in a county that consists of islands in the southern part of South Korea. I was born on one of the islands. I lived on three different islands until I finished my first year of middle school as my father relocated every four years. When my father was promoted to principal and assigned to another school, my parents decided to move to his hometown because it was close to his school. It was a small city inland, but it had a lot more choices of schools than on the islands. They also made that decision for me and my two younger brothers as we were growing up.

I was an ordinary student in the sense that I spent my middle and high school years studying for the national college entrance exam. I did not study too hard or too little, spending time on reading and writing miscellaneous stuff, dreaming to be a novelist, playwright, comic book writer, or something like that. So my score was not good enough to get me into a high-ranking university, but I could make it to one of the colleges in Seoul, the capital city. Not

knowing what to major in, I followed what my homeroom teacher recommended based on my score, which was German. I studied German in high school as a foreign language, but I was not really into German at that time. Majoring in it in college, I became interested German language and literature and studied two more years at Goethe Institute in Korea after I graduated. I even dreamed of going to Germany to study in a graduate school.

However, as a German major, it was hard to find a job. English was always in the highest demand, so I started to study English by myself in my senior year. After college, I got a job at a private institute and started to teach English to elementary and middle schoolers. After a year, I became a job hopper, not because of money, but because I could not stay in a job for long. Moving from one place to another, but all related to English, I realized that I needed to be “credentialized” to keep working in the field of English in Korea. The United States was the answer.

I spent about one and a half years in Colorado, first as an ESL student for three months and then as a college student majoring in English Writing for another year. However, I could not continue due to the financial crisis that hit several countries in Asia in 1997. Anyway, I did not want to stay longer. I thought the major, English Writing, and one and a half years of stay in the “United States” would credentialize me enough, and it did. I could get a couple of freelance jobs as a translator and dispatched instructor teaching English test prep classes at universities. Later, one of the universities headhunted me for a stable teaching position. The pay was good with not much stress. Life was smooth sailing. However, I could not stay there long either. I knew it was time again to change the environment. So I applied for two graduate schools in Korea, neither of which accepted me. An answer came from the United States again. I received admission to a master’s program at a state university in the Midwest with a graduate teaching assistantship.

When I landed in the United States again in 2009, my plan was to go back to Korea upon finishing my master's degree. Even while working as a teaching assistant in the ESL program affiliated with the degree program I was in, getting a job in the United States was not on my horizon. However, the chance came and I took it. The ESL program was hiring instructors in the year I graduated, and I applied and was hired as an instructor. Though the starting salary was lower than in Korea, I thought this teaching career in the United States would be indispensable to my future career whatever I would do later.

I was on OPT in the first year, which then was changed to H-1B through a sponsorship of the program. Having it renewed in 2015 for another three years, I am reaching the maximum six years on H-1B in 2018. Now I am at a crossroads: leave the United States or get a Green Card. If I choose the first, I should stay outside of the United States for one year and can come back with another job on H-1B. If I want to keep working here, I need to apply for a Green Card, which will give me freedom to work anywhere I want within the country.

A Green Card is a big deal to internationals like me. However, it is not without its limitation: staying outside of the United States over one year needs special requirements for reentry (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2016). I cannot decide. It is all because of the doctoral degree I am getting soon with this dissertation as the last hurdle. This highest degree achieved in the "United States" will equip me with eligibility to teach at a university anywhere in the world. It doesn't have to be the United States as long as it can enhance what I am pursuing. My choice is in the world, not only in the United States.

John and His Wife, Susan

John and his wife Susan are from China. I got to know Susan in 2013 when she was a graduate student. I first contacted her to see if she could be a participant because I was looking

for someone on OPT and I heard she got a job at a company after she finished her master's degree. I thought she was still working, but when I contacted her, she was back in school for another master's degree after one year of working on OPT because she could not get H-1B sponsorship. So she decided to enroll in another master's program while applying for doctoral programs and waiting for the results. So I had to eliminate her from the list of possible participants. I asked her if she knew anyone who would be a qualified participant, and she recommended her husband, John. He was a science major, so I thought he would be a good choice because I had planned to include at least one student from STEM majors. This way John became the first participant. His wife Susan was with John throughout three interviews, so I received a consent form from Susan, too. During the interviews, Susan sometimes interpreted Chinese to English and English to Chinese between John and me and expressed her opinions in some parts.

John was born and grew up in a middle-class family in a small town in the north of China. His grandparents lived together in the family until he finished middle school, and he received good care as the single son in the family. He spent his childhood in a neighborhood with close intimacy among people. He said he did quite well in elementary and middle school in terms of performance, but not in high school. Teachers cared about "good" students only. Whether "good" or "bad" was determined by performance.

Not competitive enough to aim at a high-ranking university, he went to a college in his hometown. He did not have any specific field of study in mind though he liked to do things by hand. He applied for computer science without knowing much about it. When he received admission to the college he applied for, he just accepted it because it was the most popular major

that year. Computer science did not involve that much handwork, but he gradually liked it, especially the logical and creative parts of it.

After he graduated, he found a job in Beijing and worked at a tech company for three years. Then he moved to another company in the same field and worked there for one more year. However, his working life was not easy. Working with high-performing coworkers from top universities and taking part in Microsoft-affiliated projects in both companies, he felt a strong need to enhance his educational background and professional competence. His choice was the United States.

It has been five years since he came to the United States in 2012. He started from undergraduate studies, which took three years to finish. Now he is in the master's program in computer science with one semester left before graduation. He is leading a very busy life without much time for socializing with his friends, studying and preparing for his job search. He thinks work experience in the United States will give him better and more opportunities for later though he sees great potential of growth in his field in China.

He plans to work as an intern during the summer before he graduates to add more to his resume. Then he will apply for OPT and look for a company that will sponsor an H-1B visa for extended stay and work in the United States. His wife, Susan is waiting for the result of her application from several doctoral programs in other places, so he will decide where to get a job after Susan's location is decided. Though they want to stay together, if circumstances do not allow, they are even thinking about living separately if John finds a job in a different city. Family is the most important to him, and he wants to take care of both his parents and his wife's parents either in China or in the United States if they want to come to the United States.

Naomi

I met Naomi at a weekly church event that lasted for about 10 weeks. She looked really young, so when I first met her, I assumed she might be an undergraduate student, probably freshman or sophomore. Later I found out that she was on OPT and working at a non-profit institution after she finished her master's in education. During the event, we became closer, talking about Korean TV shows and her H-1B process. She was temporarily hired on OPT for a new position, and the institution was refining the title and duties of her position for the job description to make the position more formal, permanent, and eligible for a H-1B petition. Her OPT was supposed to expire in early 2017, and she needed to apply for H-1B before the expiration date. Then she would be able to keep working until H-1B is approved even after her OPT expires.

Naomi was born in a very small town in the southern part of China. When she was young, her family moved several times even in the same county because of her parents' business. She started to take care of her seven-year younger brother when she was in elementary school because her parents were busy. For the same reason, her parents sent her to school two years earlier than her peers. They first wanted to see how she would do in the first school year, but she was a very smart kid. Relieving her parents' worries, she continued from then on as the youngest student in her class though she was bullied in elementary school due to her younger age. She had a strong mom who protected her from such issues in school.

She transferred to another elementary school in sixth grade, and it was quite a prestigious school in that area with teachers who graduated from high-ranking universities. Kids had expensive backpacks and brand name school supplies. She was once asked, "Why do you wear

pajamas when you come to school?” Her middle school years were full of fun after she became friends with a classmate.

Naomi topped the entire grade level that consisted of 700 students when she entered high school though her score dropped later, which disappointed her parents. In high school, she spent most of her years studying for *Gaokao*, the nation-wide college entrance exam in China. The achievement gap between high and low-performing students was so big that it even divided the class into two: front rows for high performers and back rows for low performers.

When applying for college, she could decide which university to go to depending on the *Gaokao* score she received, but she had no idea what to major in. She wished to have one or two years in college before choosing a major as American students do. So she randomly chose one, and that was Chinese though she did not like the major at that time.

Approaching graduation, unfortunately, there were not many career options for her as a Chinese major. Students were going to graduate school, preparing for government jobs that required national exams again, or planning to study abroad. She chose the last one though her father did not want her to go abroad. With her mother’s strong support and encouragement, she took several TOEFL exams and finally received two admissions: one from England and the other from the United States. She chose the United States because she had friends studying there, and the master’s program was six months longer than in England. She thought a longer program would help her learn more English and learn things more profoundly.

She started to live with three other Chinese girls, but six months later they decided to separate for an academic reason: improving English. Still they lived in the same apartment complex, sometimes did things together, and traveled together during the breaks. She studied hard though she had to go through tough times specifically in interacting with classmates and

doing assignments. The last semester was her favorite because she learned a lot while taking electives focusing on her area of interest. While she was finishing her degree, a friend recommended her to apply for a position at the current university, and she was hired on OPT.

She talks with her mom about every four days. She once made a photo book about her life in the United States and sent it to China. She feels that the family bond is becoming stronger in spite of the distance. As she received full financial support from her parents while studying in the United States, she is planning to pay them back soon. However, saving money is not her priority at this point. She wants to accumulate more experience in her field for three or four years before she moves to the next step, though she cannot make a long-term plan due to her current status.

Paul

Paul is a Korean. I remember it was fall 2014 when I first met Paul at a coffee shop on campus. He was with a group of Korean students, and one of the students I already knew introduced him to me. We briefly said “Hi” to each other, but I could feel he was cautious not to exchange any more than that. In spring 2015, I met him and his wife at a Korean church I started to attend. Though we were attending the same church, it took some time to build up intimacy with them. A turning point came after the summer when we had to find another church to attend because of the pastor’s sudden resignation. Later, I became close to his wife through a Bible study. We became close enough to have meals and coffee together. Later, I asked him to be a research participant through his wife. Through the interviews, I could understand why he acted distant at the first encounter. Throughout the story, Paul’s major will not be mentioned to protect his confidentiality.

Paul has spent a total of eight years in the United States, including two years on his master's degree, one year on OPT, and two years on H-1B. Then he went back to Korea, worked for about one and a half years, got married, and came back to the United States for his doctoral degree in 2014. He anticipates his graduation in 2018 and plans to look for a faculty position at a university in the United States.

Paul was born in one of the major cities in southeast Korea. His father was a soldier, and his mother was a small business owner. He describes his father as very strong and conservative, representing typical baby-boomer fathers after the Korean War. Paul inherited his strong self-discipline and goal oriented disposition from his father, a tiger dad, who used strict parenting until he graduated high school. His mother was very supportive, always sacrificing herself for her children, especially for Paul the oldest. He has a brother and a sister who are very respectful to him. His father was concerned a lot about his study. His concern started when Paul was a fifth grader, which changed Paul's attitude, making him study hard. Much later, Paul realized that it was because his father had experienced disadvantages throughout his career life due to not having a college degree.

Paul spent his entire middle and high school years studying only. Not just because of his father's pressure, but because he himself was aware that the name value of the university he would go to was to decide his life path, he even reduced his sleep to study, taking classes at private institutes after school and spending weekends in a small cubicle in a reading room called *Dok-suh-sil*. He said the reason he is smaller than his younger brother might be his sleep deprivation at that time. He even experienced weight loss when exam weeks were approaching due to too much stress.

However, he did not have any idea what to major in college. His father wanted him to become a high school teacher or a doctor, so he applied for education and veterinary medicine. He couldn't make it to either of them because his score was not enough. His third choice was tourism management. He did not know why, but he felt interested in it anyway and his father had no objection in spite of his preference. From then on, he said he would leave all decisions to Paul, respecting him as a full grown-up who knows what to choose for his future. His responsibility for his son's education was over with his high school graduation though he would keep supporting Paul financially until he graduates college. Paul went to a newly established college in his hometown through it was not a highly ranked one and majored in tourism. He understood his father's disappointment at the level of the college, but there was an implicit mutual agreement between them.

However, his study life was not over yet. He knew there was nothing much he could do with the major. He wanted to change his major to something more promising in the job market. So he stayed in the college for two years to meet the requirement for a transfer student, postponed his graduation, and studied one more year for a college transfer exam. It was very competitive. After not being accepted by any of the colleges where he applied, he went back to his college with great disappointment. After one year, there came another chance. His professor recommended him to apply for a master's program in Hong Kong, which offered a tuition waiver for students who met the minimum TOEFL score. He studied again to get the score, and when he was finally ready to hit the road, Hong Kong was returned to China. It changed the program's tuition waiver policy he was applying for. He had to revise his plan again.

With his father's agreement, he finally decided to go to the United States. He started to study again, traveling six hours back and forth between his hometown and Seoul to take weekend

classes for the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). He applied for four graduate schools in the United States and received three admissions. He was 22. It was the first moment he felt he achieved something in his life “academically.”

Paul still spends most of his time studying. However, he feels stable with his wife. This mental stability gives him energy and motivation to keep going. He thinks whatever the result is, there is always a route he can take. Now he tries not to do too much or give himself too much pressure. Through his experience, he learned life is not all about study. A life lesson has been learned: “I lose something if I gain something.” Achieving higher academic performance is meaningless, he said. Still he knows he should strive for what he wants: a happy family.

**RQ 1. How is the Model Minority Stereotype Shaped, Developed, and
Ingrained in the Transnational Experiences of Asian International Graduate
Students Who Plan to Seek Employment in the United States after the
Completion of Their Studies?**

We were all born and grew up in Asia. China and Korea are racially homogenous countries, so the surroundings around us were not diverse, which means we have lived in the same racial group of people who speak the same language. Does this fact shape our identity as Asians?

I wondered if we recognized ourselves as Korean, Chinese, or Asians when we lived in our countries. I spent my childhood catching frogs and caterpillars, playing baseball with kids in the neighborhood, going fishing with my father, and helping my mom gather wild spring greens. Then I studied for exams, graduated schools, went to college, got a job, and worked, dating a couple of guys, and so on. My realization is that my identity as a Korean or Asian did not come

into my awareness while I was living, studying, and working in Korea as a typical kid, school girl, and woman.

Then when and where did our perception as Asians start? More specifically, how did we start to recognize ourselves as Asians and how was the identity shaped and developed? Was that ingrained in us when we were born? Was it something that was not revealed until we became conscious of it? What is it that makes us act and think like Asians? Who or what defines us as Asians? Is it us or something or someone else? Is our Asian identity natured or nurtured?

1. a. Experience in the United States While Travelling Transnationally

I was born, grew up, and lived in Korea only, until 1996 when I first left the land. My transnational travels since then, mostly between Korea and the United States, have happened every couple of years on average even when I thought I permanently settled down in Korea. My frequent travels and life between two countries gradually made me an international being, and I started to question my sense of belonging. Now I feel I belong to neither and both the countries. When I am in the United States, I miss home in Korea, and when I am in Korea, I want to go back to the United States. I sometimes feel uncomfortable interacting with Koreans as I feel culturally different. Yes, in a “cultural sense.” I used to criticize those who studied or lived in foreign countries, especially in the United States, and say they have difficulty in adapting back to how people talk and behave in Korea, but I am now one of them.

At the same time, my awareness as a foreigner came into my perception not only in the United States, but also in Korea ironically. Being a foreigner, however, does not mean I am helpless in opportunities related to jobs, living conditions, and the future. The fact is that I am a highly educated foreigner eventually. In other words, I have wider and better access to both countries or even to other countries with my degree and experience. Physical distance between

countries, therefore, does not really matter to me. My current job gives me freedom to stay wherever I want during the summer or winter because I work nine months. Once there was an offer to change my contract from nine months to 12 months when I got a release-time position in the program I work for, but I could not give up the three-month break. It was because I can sometimes choose to work here or travel elsewhere depending on the situation. Due to the budget problem for the recent couple of years, summer work in the program has been limited. So I haven't been able to work through the summer even when I want to, but still freedom to travel is more important to me than three months of salary.

I think it is a privilege to travel back to Korea during summer vacations to stay with my family. As my parents are getting older, I feel more responsible for them. Especially my mom's health is getting worse, so I feel more emotionally attached to her. I want to do what I can do for her now because I know the time will come when she is not there anymore. Tears swell up every time I think about it. I often consider settling down in Korea to spend more time with her before it is too late though it might mean a loss of better job opportunities somewhere out there.

In some summers, I teach in intensive English programs at universities in Korea because I can make extra money and interact with Korean colleagues and students, teaching and speaking in Korean. In such cases, I often feel respected and admired by people because I am visit-teaching in Korea from the United States. To be honest, there is something in their reaction that secretly satisfies me. At the same time, I try to be self-critical enough not to indulge in such feelings, maintaining an inquisitive mind into the origin of such reaction and my secret enjoyment of it. Still, I cannot deny my visit to Korea and what I experience there offsets my feeling of "being inadequate" in a foreign land where I am categorized as a minority and energizes me back to work in the United States, where I will be a foreigner again in a real sense.

John's transnational experience

I was supposed to meet John for the second interview before the winter break. Knowing he was visiting China during the break, I suggested postponing the second interview after his return from China. The second interview was about participants' transnational experience, so I thought his trip to China for the first time in three years would enrich the data. The second interview was conducted about a week after he came back.

John communicates with his parents every week. When he first came to the United States, he missed his parents, but now he feels close to them. He has travelled back to China three times since he came to the United States in 2012, and he just came back from his third visit about a week ago. Though he has traveled to China only three times, he does not seem to feel the physical distance that lies between him and his parents. Technology and freedom to travel contribute to his emotional intimacy with them.

When I came to the United States, maybe in the first or second month, when I talked with my parents, I missed them. But currently, I feel, they just like talk to you face to face. . . . Even with the long distance between them and me, I feel very close. . . . I can send messages or send the video request to them every time. The distance is not a problem between us. . . . You know we have winter breaks or summer breaks. . . . So if I want to go back to visit my parents or family, very convenient.

One month of stay in China in three years showed him a lot of changes in China. He noticed serious air pollution, economic growth, high living expenses, and growing salaries. He thinks that these changes are good in general, which can lead to a better life allowing people to enjoy themselves. Rapid economic growth in China also means more opportunities to him. He

checks the Internet and reads news focusing on the economic situation and jobs in China to see what will work better for him when he graduates.

I read a lot of news about good things and bad things. What I currently more focus on is economy and opportunities. If I graduate, if I want a job in China compared to America, which is better?. . . However, not only for job opportunities, but also for the development in my field: computer technology such as machinery or artificial intelligence. What the situation is currently like in China. Not just for job opportunities.

He emphasized that a better salary and benefits are not the deciding factors for a job. It is “good potential,” or a gauge of how much the job will contribute to his professional development. He thinks work experience in the United States will offer him the potential in this sense. I asked him if he still would want to stay in the United States for a job in spite of economic growth and more job opportunities in China.

Yeah, yeah. I want to stay here. Like I said, first I want to get some experience. I’m not sure about other fields, just for my field of interest, computer science, computer technology. America is still the top one. So that’s why I want to stay here even though China is economically developing very well currently. . . . Want to get some experience in my field. And then I will consider going back to China or doing something I am interested in.

John’s perception about education and work experience in the United States is related to why he thinks people in China, especially parents, want to educate their children in the United States. Education in the United States is associated with power, knowledge, and a better future.

It’s not easy consideration for parents to send their children to get education in the United States. If they decide, I think all of them want their children to get a better future, to learn more about, more things about the United States, whether about the culture, people, or

knowledge of the major. It's gonna be better. . . . Just only one purpose is make their children more powerful and more knowledgeable in the future.

I asked him to define what “powerful” means. He said, “Powerful means they have stronger background than people who just get education in China.” Such perception puts pressure on him to meet his parents’ expectations because he should prove being educated in the United States is more worthy and valuable than being educated in China.

I think sometimes it's gonna be high pressure because when I cannot do things, when I cannot get good results, I will think about the expectations from my parents and family. Because they think I can do better even though they don't know what exact things I am doing currently. But for the general idea, they think I can do better. So sometimes, I get high pressure.

As a way to meet the expectations, John said he needs to get a job in the United States. At the same time, he thinks, even if he cannot get a job in the United States and goes back to China, his parents will be happy because he is the only son and they have wanted him to come back to China after graduation. In this sense, the expectations from his parents are not the kind he feels forced to meet or afraid of failing to meet, but the kind he puts on himself. That the pressure is inward pressure he places on himself becomes clearer when he was asked if pursuing a higher degree would meet his parents’ expectations.

Not their expectations. Only me. Just for myself. They don't care much about my education. Just for my consideration, not my family. . . . The expectation of my parents currently, just they hope I will be healthy. They don't care too much about my grade.

Family obligations, therefore, are not the major source of pressure that makes John try hard. Rather, he has his own plan, looking for ways to improve it. He is even thinking about getting a doctoral degree if he cannot get a job to stay longer in the United States legally. Still the

future is vague to John because he is not sure if a doctoral degree would lead to something positive in the future. John's current plan is to work in the United States for about three to five years after his degree completion, but he sees "better opportunities" in China too as his wife Susan does. Their visit to China during the break changed their thoughts.

Susan: We came to study abroad, find a job in the United States, and make our life a lot better, but nowadays except the weather like air pollution and food safety, lots of things got better in China. And people's minds changed a lot. . . . Many of them think going back to China, finding a job, and living a life there is better. So we are not completely affected by the thought, but a little bit changed.

John: Yeah, I agree with that. A little bit changed. Especially after visiting China this time.

Susan: We don't think staying here is the only way to we can make our life better.

John: Yeah, like Susan mentioned, we have a little bit changed. But I also want to get a job offer in the United States after I graduate. Maybe we will consider going back to China, but I want to get some experience before I go back to China.

Susan added that the reason John wants to get work experience is he wants "proof of job ability instead of the improvement of life in the future." It indicates work experience in the United States will verify him as a skilled worker eligible to get a job in China.

To summarize, John's emotional ties to his family in China remain strong in spite of the physical distance between China and the United States due to frequent communication and convenience of travel. Frequent travel to China and news feed provide him and his wife with chances to observe changing situations in China for their future decisions. John sees his study and work in the United States as a bridge or a stepping stone that will lead to his future life in

China. To achieve his goal will meet his parents' expectations, but the pressure he feels is more related to what people in China expect from people with U.S.-attained degrees and work experience. His goal, therefore, will be achieved based on the advantages of his degree and work experience in the United States, which will function as "transnational power" that equips him with eligibility as a highly skilled and educated worker, transferrable from the United States to China.

Naomi's transnational experience

Naomi was more descriptive about her emotions and feelings compared to the other participants. She likes reading poems and spending time alone. Her interviews provided a deeper understanding of her identity as an Asian that is shaped through transnational experience. She tried to answer even simple questions with a philosophical insight, and I believe it is because of the influence of her majors, literature and education.

Naomi visited China for three weeks in the summer of 2015. Though she had lived in China for about 20 years and spent only one year in the United States when she visited China, she felt reverse culture shock. Her life in China before she came to the United States was all she knew, but she started to be aware of her identity as Chinese while in the United States. This racial and ethnic awareness, ironically, made it difficult for her to adapt herself back when she traveled back to China. Though her stay in the United States made her more appreciative of her culture and language, the reverse culture shock was a strange experience to her.

All the things I know and learn about are from my family and from those years I spent in school. It's part of me and it's my personality. So while I study in the United States, I have a really clear recognition that I am a Chinese and different here. I am a foreigner here. . . . For three weeks (in China), I really enjoyed that time. But still got kind of reverse culture shock a

little bit. . . . I was living there for like 20 years, but I only live here for one year or so, but it changed a lot of my habits or how . . . my views about how people think or the ways they do things.

Her decision to study in the United States, contrary to what I assumed due to her quiet personality and high academic achievement in her school years, was not her parents', but her own. Her father did not want her to study abroad, but she persuaded her mother to support her. Interestingly, her parents' influence on her has increased a little bit as she feels more responsible for her aging parents while in the United States. She said, in turn, her own influence on herself has decreased from over 90 percent to 70 or 80 percent. However, the "generation gap" between her and her parents is not overcome because of changing values.

It is basically my decision, either stay here for a longer time, have a job, or go back to be closer to them. They want me to make much more money. . . . I do think their expectations affect me, especially on my future planning. But it's only 20 or 30 percent cause our generation is a bit different from theirs, so we have our own choices. We cannot just build up on their suggestions or their values. And the society is changing a lot in China. . . . So for that reason, I just stick to my own plan a lot like 70 or 80 percent instead of being affected by their expectations.

Her way to overcome the communication barrier with her parents is to make a compromise because she understands them and knows that their expectations regarding her job and status always change. Though making more money is not important to her at this point and her current job is unstable, she expects getting more work experience in the United States will prepare her for a better future job or potential to be competitive on the job market in China.

I try to explain what I'm doing here right now cause my father does not really like what I'm doing. But the problem is the position right now is not stable. And I cannot go back, so I try

to explain what my job looks like. And I can benefit a lot from that. I learn a lot from that. But they can barely understand.

Not being affected by her parents' expectations leads her to a more individualistic perspective to her future in case of failure. Especially when it comes to the matter of "making money," she is concerned with how she feels about herself rather than worrying about having egg on her parents' face.

If it is about the salary I got every year, I think it should be fine for five years if I fail. They would still tolerate. But after that, cause it's also my own expectation on my career that supports myself. And maybe pay them back with more economic support for my family. I think it will be my fault to be like that to fail the expectations. Maybe being frustrated.

Though she said that her decisions are not much affected by her parents' expectations, she feels the family bond is getting stronger because she is away from them as she mentioned in the first interview about her life story. Meanwhile, she knows that her future career in China is somehow related to what people in China perceive of education and experience attained abroad. People's perceptions toward being educated or living in the United States are shown through their reactions. Naomi explains why people show positive attitudes toward her.

Cause it always feels studying abroad is an advantage for people who are going back to find a job. They will be more competitive in the market. Or they could be really proficient at language speaking. I don't know, like people are measured . . . mainly think they are more competitive in the market.

Naomi analyzed what sits behind people's thought. It comes from people's fantasy about the Western world and system they have not experienced, and it leads to stereotypical

perceptions such as products made in the United States are more reliable than those made in China.

It's really about the Western influence in China. Values, theories, products, TV shows . . . all of them are from Western countries, especially from America and European countries. Even educational ideas and systems. . . . It's just like a trend that people pursue those things from the Western world. There's a debate going on about that, because some people think they need to go back to Chinese culture and values. But a lot of people try to be westernized. It's like being closer to the foreign thing. . . . They do not know much about it. So they kind of stick to their stereotype, so they react . . . ask a lot of (stereotypical) questions about that.

In spite of this powerful insight to see through people's perceptions and attitudes toward her as a mirroring reflection toward the Western world, she seems to project what people perceive of the Western world or at least something similar on herself. It is indicated through her feelings at the airport when she came back to the United States after her visit to China.

When I saw the English billboards and all the landmarks, the marks in English, I felt like, wow, it's so good to be back. I only stayed like three weeks in China, and I felt like I cannot speak English any more. When I came back and went to Starbucks, I felt so good, cause the size, it's more, it's larger than the Chinese version. It's the same brand, but they are different. I feel, yeah, honestly, I felt happy to be back rather than stay there. It's just more comfortable and people are more polite.

She said the happiness was “just superficial” at that time though she did not think about why. The happiness, however, became a turning point that made her decide to stay longer to get a job in the United States.

At that time, I remember that I started to think of getting a job here instead of going back right away after I graduated, probably because I found it's hard to fit in the Chinese society again after I went back once. So, at that time I started to think about living here for a longer time.

To summarize, Naomi felt her ties to her family became stronger due to the distance. Also her sense of responsibility for them is growing as the eldest. As a way to be responsible, she plans to pay back financial support she has received from her parents. However, feeling responsible does not lead to having to meet her parents' expectations. In other words, the expectations from her parents do not affect her future career plan. Similar to John, Naomi does not see failing the expectations as a shame on her family as opposed to a stereotypical perception that Asians' cultural orientation is collectivistic based on shame and honor (Louie, 2014). Rather, her future career plan seems to be contingent on what she perceives from people's attitudes and reactions toward the educated in the United States as found in John. She is also aware that her experience in the United States will work as an advantage that will equip her with better English proficiency and competitiveness in the job market.

Paul's transnational experience

As a participant who has the most working and studying experience next to the researcher, Paul has a lot to say about his transnational experience. He worked in Korea and in the United States, so he is accustomed to workplace cultures and lifestyles in both countries. He has spent eight years in the United States on various statuses: F-1, OPT, H-1B, and F-1 again. His experience with non-immigrant statuses and their restrictions made him realize the importance of U.S. citizenship.

I have experienced a lot of barriers in the United States due to my visa status such as F-1. There are lots of barriers such as a scholarship. I can't even work when I want to. I need CPT (Circular Practical Training) while I'm studying. After I graduate, I need to use OPT, right? And only one year. If I want more, I need to be qualified and supported by the U.S. government and by a company too. So with an H-1B approval, which allows me to work, I can have maximum six years. So that's what makes me feel like how important a citizenship is.

However, the importance of citizenship does not lead to a plan to get it, which will be explained later. Paul's work experience tells something interesting about different work cultures and values between the two countries. As he first had a job in the United States and then in Korea, he could experience how his degree and work experience obtained in the United States was viewed by people in Korea.

After spending about six years: two years for a master's and four years for work, I had a chance to go back and I can tell the difference exactly. Back then, I had no working experience (in Korea). I had experience (in the United States), but I didn't know that was good or bad. There was no certain standard that I could think of. But after having experienced the United States' work environment and how people treat me, I could tell, from the perspective of work environment, the United States is way better, but in the way of treating me, I think my country is a little bit better.

Paul explained the reason for better treatment in Korea is that English is a beneficial skill while not in the United States. He said he could have high "self-actualization" and "self-esteem" in Korea though he had a tough work schedule. He generally sensed jealousy and respect as the feelings people have toward him because he is studying for a doctoral degree in the United States and its benefits.

There was, oh, now Dr. X is coming, that kind of reaction. Studying in my country, they're not jealous of it at all, I think. But due to studying in the United States and pursuing a Ph.D. course, they seem pretty jealous and also show a little of respect as well. . . . I think in my country, a professor's job is kind of respected. . . . And also I am running toward achieving the goal. I think the fact that I can speak English is one of the things they feel jealous as well. . . . The third one is somehow people think America is number one country, number one nation in the world. So people maybe think everything is good in the United States.

In the third interview, he mentioned “jealousy” again because studying in the United States is thought as a rare opportunity only given to rich people, which shows that studying in the United States implies social and economic privilege in Korea. This will be presented later.

Paul thought meeting the expectations of his family is one of the “big motivations.” However, it does not function in a forceful way. Considering that studying in the United States was Paul's decision, not his parents', it seems that his life process since he started to study in the United States has gradually reached his parents' expectations, especially his father's. His father's expectations on him, as seen in Naomi's parents, are constantly changing. In other words, as Paul progresses in his studies and careers, his father's expectations on him also change in favor of his plan. His father's backing of him seems based on two concepts combined: how a professor's job is recognized in Korea and how it is valued when achieved in the United States.

I'm trying to do what I want cause it's my own life. But even though it's my own life, one of the motivations is to satisfy my parents as well. . . . I think if I become a professor in the United States, I wanna see how my parents will be proud of me. . . . My father, I think he really wants to see his son become a professor in the United States. . . . That is the thing that really makes me feel responsible.

Paul also plans to send some money to his parents to pay for what he has received as a way to show courtesy and respect to his parents. However, failing to meet their expectations does not lead to shame on the family. Though his failure might bring shame on his father, it does not seem to be much related to the collectivistic shame-and-honor culture. Paul thinks it will be his father's personal matter he has to deal with.

If I do my best and fail, I am sorry to them, but it is what it is. . . . I do not believe they're gonna be that much serious about the fail. But at least I tried, and probably my parents feel disappointed. But there's nothing I can do about their disappointment. I will try to find better ways to do for living. . . . If I fail, he would probably be a little bit shameful for what he said, due to what he said. So that makes me feel kind of sorry. And they, my parents might not say anything, but inside, my parents will probably be a little bit sad about my failure.

However, he did not think he would fail. Seventeen months of working in Korea proved his choice of was right. When he came back to the United States for his doctoral degree, he felt at home in the United States due to no distractions, better environments, and the fact that he could concentrate on what he wants. He felt "confident" about his study and future career plan, while feeling challenged and motivated.

I felt like, Ah! I came home. Nobody distracts me. Here is the real place that makes me feel alive. . . . Heaven. Very cozy, you know. . . . I felt confident (about) my future career and studies. Confidence, fun, and challenge. It brings a lot of challenges to me, but every time I confront challenges, I try to see them as challenges, try to do better. And cause I know this path, I have to go through it to live the life that I want.

As seen in John and Naomi, he also recognized that his work experience in the United States will bring in a similar or better life condition when he returns to his country, especially when it comes to a faculty position.

For my future career, I just want to stay more here. And I hope this similar lifestyle can be achieved in my country with a professor's position. I believe if I get a faculty position in my country, the life will be way better. . . . You know, as I mentioned, I just want a life that I can do work for myself, self-achievement, rather than work for somebody. And a little more comfortable life, better life than a very company-oriented life. So by achieving a faculty position here, I can enjoy the life in my country.

In spite of the restrictions he felt due to visa statuses, he is not planning to get U.S. citizenship eventually. It is because he feels like a stranger in the United States, which makes him more attached to his parents as time goes by. Since his siblings' statuses have changed, his nostalgia has been directed more toward his parents, not the entire family.

Especially my brother doesn't seem to understand how lonely I feel and how much I miss there. They're living in South Korea, have lots of friends, family, of course, and they are all Koreans. And here I think I feel more like by myself even if I have a wife. I think I'm a kind of alien here. I feel more attached to my family, but more toward my parents. . . . And one thing that makes me really wanna go back is to live around my family members. . . . I feel more the importance of my family after feeling the deficiency of family members near me.

Compared to John and Naomi, Paul's transnational experience has made him more goal-oriented with a clear vision about his career plan. It seems because he has worked in both countries, gone through various non-immigration statuses in the United States, contemplated his in-and-out status of both countries, and, as a result, shaped a more concrete and conclusive

concept about who he is and what he wants. As a result, Paul showed a stronger bond to his family than John and Naomi did and more definite ideas where he wants to settle down and what kind of life he wants in the future. As Paul experienced how his work experience in the United States was perceived in his country, his future plan represents a closer transnational connection between what is achieved in the United States and how it will affect job opportunities in Korea.

1. b. Asianness Shaped Through Transnational Experience and Its Influence on Participants' Performance and Behaviors as Prospective Employees

My Asianness did not enter my awareness until I went abroad. I was new to the United States, but things in the land looked familiar ironically. The small regional airport where I landed from the plane through the ramp, the arrangement of houses with green lawn in front, street signs in English, including those often used in TV commercials in Korea, and blond-haired students lying on campus grass enjoying the sun. I was amazed because I felt like I was in the movie scenes I grew up watching. I was in the United States of America! Still I was not an “Asian” yet in my perception in spite of my race and ethnicity. Maybe I was too excited to recognize it, or it was too early to sense it. Even while in the ESL program for the first three months, I was not there yet. Most students were from Japan, a few from other Asian countries, and very few from other continents. We Asians were dominant in the program.

My full-scale awareness as an Asian came later when I started to attend university classes. After finishing the ESL program, with some transferred credits from Korea, I enrolled in a couple of electives and some required courses in English with Creative Writing emphasis. It was a small-sized college in a Midwest town with a high percentage of Whites, so I was the only foreign and Asian student in almost all classes. On top of that, it was very rare to find an Asian international student majoring in English, even with writing emphasis.

In every class, I was conscious about my being Asian. It was not through my willing awareness, but through the environment that made me realize how different I was, through the eyes of the people around me. In a math class taught by a Japanese-American professor, I stood out only because I was an Asian even though math was my least favorite subject in my school years. They would have never known I once received a zero in a quiz and scored less than half several times in tests. Here in the United States, students were even asking me questions about math. Strangely and interestingly, their expectations or perceptions, though stereotypical, made me work hard and excel. For the first time since middle school, I got an A in math.

A couple of cases were quite strong in the way to force me into my ethnicity. In a class, the professor mentioned how important the role America was playing for the world. In the midst of it, he said “we” protected South Korea during the Korean War, but now Korea was economically invading “us,” occupying the steel industry—it was the late 1990s when Korea was strong in steel. It was not only in classes. My host lady was accommodating several Asian students, and she once took me and another student to her church. I had no idea why she picked that specific Sunday. No invites before or after. At the beginning of the service, I figured out it was a Memorial Day service. Of course we stood out among the White congregation, especially when she asked us to stand up to introduce ourselves as the first time visitors. We said where we were from. Their eyes on us. I was Korean and the other was Japanese. Now I know we human beings are all imperfect, so I understand her.

Such vigorous awareness of my Asianness sometimes came from strangers. A couple of times, guys in passing cars yelled at me in their language I couldn’t understand when I was just walking. One of them even threw a coin to me. Instead of yelling back in my language they couldn’t understand, I endured it with silence and tried to understand the message he might have

carried in the penny, which unfortunately missed the target and fell to the ground. Another case was when we took a trip to a national park in Utah. We stopped by a small Wild West town for lunch and were passing by a pub, talking about menus. There, from a group of guys, we heard “You Japs, go back!” We suddenly stopped talking and were silenced.

Like these occasions, my foreignness came from everywhere, attacking me both subtly and blatantly when I was defenseless. I thought about why. Maybe they were interested in different “us,” and they wanted to test it. Maybe they knew we would not talk back and just pass things in silence. I also thought why I or we could not say anything in response. Maybe due to the intensity of the aggressiveness they showed implicitly or explicitly. Or due to the lack of language register to address them with the same context they used.

The problem was I was gradually fitting myself into what I perceived from people. There were certain expectations people were placing on me consciously, unconsciously, or tacitly, and I was behaving based upon the perceived expectations—what an Asian is supposed to be or do. I was studying math hard to show competence that did not exist in me. Silence became my defense mechanism when I was offended. What I took for granted about myself in my country when I was among those who speak the same language and have the same appearance became what made me different. As a way of dealing with the attention to my differences, I quieted myself down not to stand out “as expected.” I was looking at myself through the eyes of people around me. This way, my Asianness was being shaped with concerns about how people would see me. My acceptance of their perceptions of me became what constitutes my culture and identity as an Asian.

What was shaped at that time gradually settled down as certain behavioral patterns in me. I have not negated them; rather I have behaved upon them while studying and at work. Basically

they are centered on a strong work ethic: putting extra time and efforts on class preparation and follow ups, doing whatever is assigned to me, not calling in sick, and not voicing my opinion too much. I still believe if I did not have a chance to work as a graduate teaching assistant in the program, I would not have been hired. I think those two years gave me a chance to prove myself as an employable teacher, to compensate for my not being a native speaker of English as an ESL teacher in the United States, and to show how hardworking I am. I was complying with the stereotypical images of Asians to the extent that I was even confused whether they originally existed in me or were shaped through my experiences in the United States.

John and Susan: Dilemmatic compliance with Asianness

John had a certain stereotypical image of Asians before he came to the United States, mostly through media and what people in general say about Asians and Americans especially in math competency. However, his encounter with American students in classes made him undergo a big change. Now he thinks it is not a matter of Asians' special competency in math, but a matter of interest regardless of race.

Before I came to the United States, a lot of people told me, and also from the news, I was told American students' math skills are low. And (Asians are) smarter in the math field than American students. . . . When I came here, I enrolled in some math courses when I was an undergraduate student. And I changed my mind. I was totally wrong. I think the thing is not whether they are smart or not. It's whether they're interested. If they are interested in math, I think they are still good at math. . . . Asians or Americans, it doesn't matter.

His experience did not just change his thinking, but his view of the way he was educated in China. While taking advanced math classes with American students, the simple stereotypical image of Asians regarding math competency he did not personalize or apply to himself came into

conflict with what he experienced in reality. He said Asian students lack creativity and independence. Both John and Susan said it is because students study only for *Gaokao* to enter high-ranking colleges and universities in China, while American students are encouraged to develop diverse extracurricular interests in school.

John: *Compared to Asian students, American students are more creative. Asian students can follow the rules of the class, like, they can do better homework assignments. But for some creative things, maybe Asians students are not good. . . .The only thing (Asian) students do is just follow the professors. They don't need to think much about what they should do by themselves.*

Susan: *Because most teachers will teach you like this because of the entrance exam.*

John: *In the United States, when children go to school, they have other activities out of class according to their interests. They can choose what they like and get more ideas and knowledge about that field.*

It seems that this changed view through his experience gives him motivation to work hard to compensate for what he feels is lacking as an employable and competitive applicant in the job market. He mentioned specialized skills, language, and field experiences such as an internship as what he needs to have to be employed in the United States.

I'm engineering major. When you have a job interview, I think the most important thing companies consider is whether you can do the job. They don't care much whether you can communicate with people very well, because the major thing for tech jobs is work with computers. . . . I think the second thing is language, whether you can work with team members, because the team members, Americans and people from other countries, speak English. . . . A better thing is some real experience. Real project experience, not only school project experience.

Though he mentioned low English proficiency as a disadvantage for Asian job seekers, John put more emphasis on skills as a selling point of Asian candidates. In his logic, better skills can be used to compensate for lack of English in Asian workers.

I think the only way is you have higher abilities than other races. Because that is the only way you can compete with other candidates. . . . Better skills are not a little better. I mean huge better.

For advantages of the stereotypes about Asian workers, John stated a tendency to work hard and be quiet. Susan said, on the other hand, the same stereotypes can negatively affect Asian job seekers. Her logic is stereotypes make employers assume that Asian applicants will meet their expectations built upon the stereotypes.

Susan: People may have stereotypes about Asian people. Especially companies and hiring managers. They may have higher expectations for their (Asian) candidates. If you're Asian, you're supposed to be better at math and stuff, all those kinds of things than other candidates. If you don't reach their expectations, you're not going to be hired. So it's not an advantage. It's a disadvantage.

Susan said stereotypes especially affect the hiring process negatively because employers already have some stereotypical expectations of Asian applicants even before the interview and expect better answers from them than from applicants from other races.

Susan: People still need to pass the interview. If they cannot, they wouldn't think you're smart. . . . Even though you give the same answers as American candidates, they wouldn't choose you because they have higher expectations (on Asians). Only if you are better than other candidates, you can be hired.

Agreeing with Susan, John found the problem in the mind of employers and saw the need for employers to change their view. However, both John and Susan said the only way to overcome the stereotypes that negatively affect their employment is to comply with the stereotypes imposed on them.

John: *They already have stereotypes. It's hard to change their mind. It's not only about the Asian job seekers. It's about the company, HR managers, or interviewers. They need to change their mind. They need to understand Asian people and change the situation.*

Susan: *I think overcoming this, the only way is to improve yourself, to make yourself better than others to get a job. This is the only way.*

John: *Yeah, the only way you can do is you need to do better in whatever, skills or language. In any field, you need to do better. . . . Because you need to compete with the entire candidates, not only with Asians or Americans.*

Besides language and skills, John said companies will consider their visa status when hiring internationals because they have to provide visa sponsorship, which he thinks might work as a disadvantage. John's concluding remark in this section addressed how the stereotypes influence Asian students and what strategies would be adopted in reality as a measure to overcome them.

John: *(Stereotypes about Asians) sometimes work in a good way. They can push you to do better and meet high expectations. The bad thing is they are gonna bring high pressure on students. You will worry if you fail or get a bad result. Maybe you will lose your confidence. It's bad because you worry about it every day, not just one semester or in one class because you want to find a job. You need to start to prepare in the first semester. You have to prepare the whole thing to meet the requirements of the company you want to receive an offer from.*

Whether or not the stereotypes will affect the possibility to get a job, both John and Susan said it depends whether they can overcome the stereotypes, or reaching the expectations.

John: I think it depends on whether you can overcome the stereotypes.

Me: Overcoming the stereotypes means you don't care about that?

Susan: Reach their expectations.

John: Yeah, reach the expectations. . . . If candidates graduated from top universities such as Stanford, MIT, or Harvard, I think whether Asians or other races, they don't care about the future. Easy to get an offer. They just consider the best offer. But for other universities, as Susan and I mentioned, you need to overcome the stereotypes. It means whether you can meet the high expectations of the company.

In John's case, preexisting ideas about Asians before he came to the United States started to be challenged when he was exposed to a racially diverse environment. This made him aware of himself as an "Asian" in comparison with Americans in terms of academic capacity and performance. Through this racial awareness, not only did he see himself in a critical view regarding what he lacked from a comparative perspective on himself and Americans, but he even applied it to the way he was educated in the past. As there was no other race he could compare himself with when in China, though he had indirectly shaped some stereotypes of Asians through media, they did not have that much influence on him in China.

Now in the United States, both John and Susan understand that there are certain stereotypes of Asians. They are real and experienced, directly affecting them when they look for jobs. As "the only way" of dealing with the situation to be employed, they cannot but conform to

the expectations imposed on them. It takes strenuous efforts, and long and stressful preparation that still might not pay off as expected.

Naomi: Stereotypes through the eyes of others

Naomi did not have stereotypical images of Asians before she came to the United States. When asked about any stereotypical images of Asians, she identified a collectivistic or collaborative tendency centered on relationship. Rather than a stereotype, more precisely, it was an image of Chinese she started to have while studying and working in the United States. Now she can tell the differences between Chinese and American work culture through her experience.

I think it's after I came here I realize a lot of stereotypes toward Asians. But before that, I was in the group. So I didn't really see or think about that a lot. But especially for Chinese, they consider the relationship with your colleagues or your boss, supervisors. And they will have meals together. But it's all about collaboration. I mean it's just another way to get a job done. . . . So I didn't know exactly what I was thinking about Asians at that time, but right now I do have some images of Chinese. Like I said, they will maybe ask questions that may be uncomfortable or they will gather together. . . . They will just hang out with Chinese friends or the same group all the time.

Like John, Naomi analyzed the school system in China through her newly developed view, which comes from her experience in a racially and culturally diverse setting. She said relationship centeredness of Chinese derives from strong government policies and regulations on schools and universities. She tried to explain the system objectively and not to express criticism of education in China, but there was some nuance she delivered.

In the Chinese society, especially in higher education, students need to build relationships with supervisors. They need to follow the regulations of the government cause the

government involves a lot in universities. Even the presidents of the universities may have roles in the government. Or a lot of supervisors majored in Chinese politics.

Naomi explained what she started to see in Chinese. She found some characteristics in Chinese coworkers and some in students or both: hierarchical, collectivistic and relationship-centered, ethnocentric, not interested in the world outside, and extremely opposite in ways students spend money. Interestingly, she said how Americans view Chinese affects how she views Chinese. This way, through her contact with Americans and their view, she started to shape stereotypes of Chinese in her perception.

I realize how other groups or races, or like Americans, how they view Chinese. Actually I learn more from Americans about the stereotypes toward Chinese. . . . It's more about various things cause I didn't know those things could be stereotypes before. . . . I was commented once. One of my American friends told me that my views are really different from other Chinese people. I said, uh? She mentioned that cause I see the value in every culture, especially I had interactions with different groups, people from different countries. I realize how the Chinese, as a Chinese, I was ignorant. Even right now, I am ignorant about what is going on in this world.

In the excerpt above, Naomi's American friend sets her apart from Chinese in general as a person who has "different" views about other cultures. In this comment, Chinese are stereotyped as a group of people who have a view opposite of Naomi's, which means Chinese are ethnocentric. Through the way her friend sees Chinese, Naomi perceived a stereotype Americans have about Chinese. In response, she self-criticizes Chinese and her being ignorant of other cultures. This indicates she could not have had that awareness without her friend's view, which affected Naomi's shaping of stereotypes of Chinese.

Naomi wants to change people's stereotypes of other races or religions, seeing "more advantages or good merits of people." Probably the distinction that was made about her as a person open to other cultures has made her feel responsible to do something about stereotypes. She tries to keep balance between cultures.

I tend to think that stereotypes could be totally wrong. . . . specifically for Chinese and Americans. Sometimes Chinese could have stereotypes toward other races. I want to be the one who teaches or shows them that is not true, or you need to appreciate the differences or just talk to them, they will teach you a lot of things. . . . It's interesting people teach me a lot about Buddhism and Hinduism. That's not something I can learn from Chinese textbooks.

In line with this awareness, Naomi takes flexibility or open-mindedness as the most important quality Asian job seekers should have. It is related to a self-critical view of the educational system she was part of in the past. Again, this view was developed through her experience of a new educational system and others' feedback on her and her people's group.

More flexible and open-minded (is needed) cause we've been brought up as students at schools where teachers keep telling us there is a wrong or right answer for each question. But that is not true when we think about real life. So I guess Asians tend to stick to the norms, stick to the usual way or the previous knowledge they have. . . . But there could be another way to do it. And we may not prefer to take risks sometimes. . . . So I would say being flexible to ourselves or to the environment. We need to be adapting to that cause we could be wrong about the stereotypes.

Like John, Naomi found lack of language proficiency as a disadvantage of Asian job applicants. However, speaking Chinese is a requirement for her position, so she thinks her being Chinese is an advantage in her current workplace. She also considers her study and work

experience in the United States as another advantage as an Asian job seeker over people who have not been abroad and speak Chinese only. However, she recognizes a general concern employers in the United States have about foreigners.

It's more like an advantage for me to be an Asian and to be a Chinese. Speaking Chinese is one of the requirements for the job. But still, I think employers might value experiences. But they will worry about much more trouble to hire an alien worker instead of local people.

Referring to open-mindedness and language proficiency as what Asian job seekers should be equipped with, she mentioned some benefits of Asian job applicants compared to people of other races. The question did not include words that signaled her to answer based on stereotypes of Asians, but she responded with stereotypes as the basis.

If it is based on stereotypes, I think Asians are more mild or moderate. Or it's more like the characteristics we show. . . . maybe physically we are smaller. . . . They are maybe more diligent. . . . And consistency. Not making sudden decisions to go after or just leave the job. Yeah, it's more, maybe more consistency. And being responsible. . . . I didn't mean that other races are not responsible. I mean, I don't know, I can't, it's really difficult for me to picture stereotypes cause I didn't think about that.

Adjectives such as *milder, more moderate, physically smaller, and more diligent and consistent* were used to describe stereotypical images of Asians. By “physically smaller,” she probably means Asians’ small stature that makes them look non-threatening. Interestingly, the adjectives she used to describe “Asians” have positive connotations mostly, while more negative contextual connotations were used when she referred to Chinese as a group.

After mentioning the stereotypical images of Asians, she looked hesitant to explain further by saying she hadn’t thought about stereotypes, which seems related to her balanced

attitude toward stereotypes. Her balanced attitude led to a critical view of ethno-centrism of Chinese, which then developed into a more general, all-embracing, universal perspective of races in the most ideal sense. Her cultural balance is shown in comments such as “*I see value in every different culture,*” “*I tend to see more advantages or good merits of people. They’re amazing,*” and “. . . *different accents . . . it’s a kind of beautiful thing here.*” Still, she understands the reality alien workers are not preferred to Americans. She said more time in the United States will improve her English while accumulating work experiences.

Like John, as things she needs to prepare or be aware of as an Asian worker, she identified immigration policies because they will affect her work status. She was preparing an H-1B application, paying attention to possible changes to the H-1B visa program under the Trump administration as of 2017.

Paul: Strive for what is wanted

Like John and Naomi, Paul did not have any stereotypical images of Asians before he came to the United States. However, he said, as a Korean, he had some stereotypes about other Asians from underdeveloped countries at the beginning, which seemed to have been carried over from the stereotypes Koreans have toward other Asians in general. His stereotypes have changed due to full exposure to a multi-racial environment for many years. Paul emphasized “Asians” to categorize all Asians as aliens in the United States. English proficiency of the people he once thought “lower” played a major role in changing his thinking. It makes sense because the primary reason he decided to get a job in the United States after he got his master’s degree in 2009 was to improve English.

(The image) was kind of lower class. But after spending years here, there’s no lower class. . . . My perception has changed a lot in the fact that they speak fluent English. There are

so many Filipinos and Indonesians who are fluent. Cause I was one of the second-class people or lower class in the United States in terms of speaking English. You know, everybody looks at me like an alien, right? And after that, we all same. Asians all same. We are here, specially as aliens. We are “Asians” really.

On the other hand, Paul showed a strong critical view of Korea and Koreans, which explained why he distanced himself from getting acquainted with other Koreans. John and Naomi also showed similar attitudes, but Paul’s reason was more revealing. It seems Paul’s improved images of other Asians led to lowered images of Koreans, placing all Asians on equal footing as aliens, contrasted with Americans.

Even I have really negative stereotypes about Koreans. They gossip too much. Sometimes I rely on nationality. But I know they can be “enemies” in a really small society. They want to hurt others’ feelings and try to step up. They should compete with Americans rather than Koreans, but they seem to like to compete with their friends by stepping on them. So I don’t have that much good feeling, and that’s one of the reasons that I don’t really want to interact with Koreans.

Paul even feels more comfortable with interacting with other Asians and helping them rather than Koreans, reflecting on what he experienced in the past by putting himself in their shoes when it comes to being alienated due to the language barrier. Though the episodes he shared cannot be presented here due to confidentiality, they helped me understand why he emphasizes English proficiency as an important quality he values as an Asian.

Chinese or whosoever, I really want to support them cause I know they feel kind of alienated, cause they stay away from the main group. . . . I feel like if Asians speak English a little bit well, it looks like . . . well-educated. It’s a really good talent, I think, as the same

international student. They are different, right? So I can kind of respect that part. In the beginning. I still respect that.

Regarding qualities to secure a faculty job in the United States, Paul identified three things: ability to teach in English, research skills, and social skills with American faculty. Social skills, he said, come from cultural understanding, which is again from living experience in the United States. By social skills, he meant he can hold conversations with an understanding of American culture. To him, English skills are not just about language proficiency, but the most essential element for his career in the United States.

Conversation is really important. But I was commented a lot: you should select better words, kind of thing. Probably back then, I had limited understanding of conversations. Now I understand better, so I can get more engaged in the conversation to maintain relationships. So the fundamental skills may be speaking skills and cultural understanding. Speaking skills are related to teaching. . . . When you teach, in order to do some jokes, you should know some American culture. You cannot teach only the subject. (There'll be) conversation during the class. In order to do that, you might need to have more cultural background. I think this comes from experience in the United States.

For prospective Asian job seekers, Paul recommended confidence as the first quality to have. As he emphasized in previous excerpts, English proficiency is his highest concern that affects his work performance and socializing with American coworkers. So, what he meant by confidence is also related to language ability. For other qualities, he listed humility and endurance of low salaries and heavy workloads to accumulate experience for later.

Better be confident, you know. It is really difficult for Asians to be confident because I think there're a lot of things that attack the confidence level from the language barrier. In order

to overcome that, maintain the confidence level, try to . . . accept my limitation. And students and other people seem to understand the fact of . . . not speaking English perfectly. But if I deliver the contents that they want, then that will be fine. . . . Be humble. As an Asian job seeker, it's more about after getting a job. . . . Some international faculty, when they're in higher positions, they seem like show off what they've done. So I learned that, Oh, I think I need to be careful, not to be proud, to look like a humble man. . . . It's all about experience, meaning that the entry-level salary will be kind of low. I was kind of shocked by the reality. It was not easy to work in a facility that opens 24 hours, 365 days.

Regarding the advantages of Asians, he mentioned specific fields Asians are needed. The same was said by John and Naomi: being Chinese is an advantage at companies that do business with China and being able to speak Chinese as a job requirement respectively. Paul, as a prospective Asian faculty, also thinks that Asian professors will be needed for Asian students. Another advantage he mentioned is Asians' hardworking attitude. He describes it as a "win-win strategy" for universities in his field to hire Asian faculty, which will benefit both Asian faculty and universities financially. Paul mentioned the same for the reasons Asians are preferred: the niche market demands and industriousness.

It is way better for universities to have Asian faculty who, you know, much more internally know the difficulties of Asian international students. And we will think more, advise better. . . . Another advantage may be there are many Asian hard workers. More than American faculty members, I think, overall. . . . diligent and hardworking. It doesn't promise more outcome, but eventually we'll be probably beneficial to the university. . . . Win-win strategy. So I think by hiring Asians in universities highly populated with international Asian undergraduates

than other races, there will be opportunities to have some more revenue a little bit. That makes the committee to hire Asian. That could be a benefit, I think.

When explaining the benefits of being an Asian job seeker compared to other races, he first wanted to use the word “stereotype” directly to explain what people think about Koreans or Asians, but he changed it to a more neutral expression by changing the verb to “consider,” which indicated he avoided using the word “stereotype” due to the negative connotation.

An advantage will be, as I mentioned, other people, other races have stereo...consider Koreans are very diligent. Hard workers. I don't know it covers everyone, but compared to other races, Asians seem pretty much hard workers. That is a benefit, I think. The perception that they work very eagerly.

For a disadvantage, he named a language barrier again concerning a faculty job. However, he implied that it can be compensated for by working hard. He made a contrast between language as a disadvantage and hard-working attitude as an advantage. As an Asian worker who was not fluent in English, Paul made his argument plausible based on his experience. Paul's job title and duties were omitted in this excerpt to protect his identity.

A disadvantage may be the class quality can be different because of a language barrier. . . I think the reason they kept me was diligence. I never skipped my work. But I believe there are so many Americans who skip their schedule for lots of reasons. . . . In our culture, we feel kind of sorry to skip the schedule, right?. . . So in terms of that, that is a good advantage, being diligent, but the disadvantage may be the quality can be different. But it will be overcome as time goes by, I think.

In spite of the language barrier, Paul believes merit-based “equal opportunity” is given to all in the United States, which shows his belief in hard work that eventually pays off. Still, as an

Asian, he recognized the existence of a glass ceiling for foreign workers within structures, making them stagnate in mid-level management positions.

I don't know that much disadvantage if the person can deliver what the organization wants. That's what I felt. In the United States, if I can do, that's fine. It's equal opportunity. But as an international student, that's an international Asian perspective, maybe it will be hard to get to the upper level. . . . It's kind of hard to be in the mainstream of the organization. We'll be kind of supportive, you know. That's what I feel.

As stated by John and Naomi, the non-immigrant visa status is mentioned by Paul as another disadvantage for Asian workers, which will affect their confidence level, silence voices, and alienate them from the mainstream, allowing employers to exploit labor.

A disadvantage will be this one. Because of visa, they may have a chance to use that fact. You know, you need to go back to your country if the company says good-bye. So that makes Asian people feel more uncomfortable while they're working and kind of not confident, keep their voices a little bit down, that kind of thing. Maybe kind of pressure, or feel kind of . . . uh . . . alienated, not a mainstream while they're working. That's a kind of disadvantage.

As a strategy to overcome disadvantages, Paul said, "Keep trying, never give up," doing more than others, which is similar to the strategy employed by John and Susan.

Keep trying, never give up. Never give up, just keep walking down the road. Maintain good health condition, do some exercise every day. Try to learn more, be diligent, and deliver more than others. Try. And try, try try to overcome. And always study English too. Try to get along with Americans as well. And do lots of conversations with American friends.

Paul's logics and reasoning were drawn from his personal experiences, which make his points persuasive and credible. As the participant who has spent the most time both studying and

working and has had the most number of non-immigrant statuses, Paul knows what limitations he has as a prospective Asian worker and what he has to do to overcome them. At this point of his life, he concluded that doing and showing more than others will be the solution. To him, the hardworking image of Asians is not just a stereotype that has been shaped since he came to the United States. It explains his identity in the present, and it will bridge his current life to his future career, family plans, and dreams.

RQ 2. How Are the Participants' Employment Decisions Understood in the Labor Market Locally and Globally in the Postcolonial Context?

We, categorized as Asians in ethnicity and as international graduate students in higher education in the United States, will soon receive our degrees and enter the labor market in the United States. As highly educated and skilled workers with master's or doctoral degrees achieved in the United States, our competitors will be those with equivalent degrees, either from other countries or from the United States. To win the competition and get what we want, we need to continuously strive to arm ourselves with what employers expect us to have: English proficiency, good GPA, work or research experience, teaching skills, etc.

While equipping ourselves with skills and knowledge for careers, however, I wonder if we ever think about ourselves as workforce in a bigger context. Wouldn't there be any relationship between our individually lived lives and the lives of others, for example, less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers? While striving for better salaries and benefits for our future, do we realize we are part of the transnational workforce, whose employment decisions can affect the local and global labor market somehow? Where are we located in the labor markets all networked in the global era: the United States, our home countries, and the world with respect to our job decisions?

2. a. Participants' Perception of Knowledge and Expertise as a Distinguishing Factor from Less Skilled/Educated Asian Immigrant Workers in the U.S. and from Those with Same Degrees in Home Countries

With the most advanced degree about to be attained through the benefit of working at a state university in the United States, I often look back on the path I have taken and ask this question: What am I living for? I spent all of my college years in Korea demonstrating against dictatorship and capitalist exploitation of labor. We spent nights making Molotov cocktails in the Student Union, ran through the streets clouded with tear gas, and gathered on weekends for group study and discussions. We even used nicknames to avoid police surveillance. Every summer, we travelled far to the South to reach out to marginalized farmers who lacked labor, helping them during the days and teaching children at nights. In one winter, we worked in factories to experience factory workers' life and poor working conditions. I was dedicated to the lives of the underprivileged. I thought that was how I should live to make my life meaningful.

Things changed, however. Reaching the second semester in my senior year, I started to worry about "me" and "my" future. In the year we graduated, the first civilian president was elected in 30 years. Still, some remained steady to be connected to social movement camps that were being established outside campus, but others like me were doubting if we would be as influential as we were under the changing circumstances. I had to find a job anyway. German was my major, but my GPA was too low to do something with it. So, I started to study English in my last semester. Like many, I got a job as an instructor at a small private institute. That way, another phase of my life began. At the beginning, there was a strong feeling of guilt because I felt I did not choose the "right" way. However, it slowly disappeared after some time. By the

time I decided to go to the United States to get a “title” or a “name value” as one that earns a living teaching English, it did not even come into my consciousness. It entirely vanished away.

It was not until I visited a city in the United States through a class project in 2010 when it hit me like a ton of bricks. Visits were arranged to several facilities in the city, which included a meatpacking plant. The sight in the building still remains in my head like a striking movie scene. From butchering to packaging, all processing lines were systematically arrayed, and the workers were repeating the same routine alongside the conveyer belts as they were moving on. Browsing inside the building as an international “graduate” student, having accidental, expressionless eye contact with workers, mostly immigrants or refugees of Asia, Africa, and South America, I thought about my college years. The system was still there. It was what we were fighting against. It was doing what it was supposed to do, fattening its body. It was the system we could never escape however hard we try, enslaving all human beings under its structure.

Now with another degree coming soon in hand, at this moment I need to decide where to go, what I thought was gone has revived, sitting in the corner of my mind. With all these years in the United States, it is hitting me on a much bigger scale. Now it claims the entire me, not superficially, not as a formality, not to my satisfaction, but as a way of life, as a calling or vocation, and as what will define me until the end of my life. It is the way I can realize the real me, not chained to norms that define me by my race, ethnicity, social status, and age. It is the way the same attributes can be used for something higher and deeper.

On the other side, the “me” in my senior year who was weak and afraid is still alive in me whispering, “You are worthy of a better life than that.” Yes, I know that. With all these U.S.-attained credentials, I will be able to get a job in Korea, probably with better chances than those who received the same degrees in Korea. As I have teaching experience in the United States, I

will be considered more eligible because it proves my English proficiency. I know how Koreans view America and treat Whites and people who speak good English because I was among them. It works in our psychology, though criticism is rising these days against Green Card holders due to double benefits they receive from both countries. This criticism is another reason I am hesitating to get a Green Card because a Green Card record might affect my career in Korea in a negative way. All in all, I can use people's psychology to live a more prosperous life in Korea. With all these thoughts, I mourn for myself and my being. How double-minded I am, still at a crossroads between the "great cause" and "me." Will there never be a way to bridge them?

John: Privilege and choices

John thinks his degree and work experience will enable him to get a more professional job compared to those who have lower degrees or no college degrees in the United States. As he mentioned, skills are the first considering factor, and English proficiency second in the STEM field, which will advantage him over those with no or lower degrees.

Only bachelor's degree or a high school degree. I think it's very hard for them to find high-level jobs. And maybe they only find jobs just like cleaners or some sellers because that work doesn't need employees to have some specific background or professional knowledge. . . . I have better professional background to have high-level job positions. . . . English skills are not too important for professional job positions such as software engineers. . . . we can practice or we can improve English skills in your life. The most important thing is the skill, yeah. And you don't need to speak just like native speakers.

A degree achieved in the United States can be a proof of his English proficiency, which can be a benefit when he looks for a job in China. It will make him more competitive and

employable compared to those educated in China, while his non-native English is a disadvantage in the United States as he said previously.

If it's about China, it'll be my benefit compared to a student who doesn't get a degree out of my country. Even my English is not very good, but compared to that person, I am better than him or her. That's the first benefit. I can apply for international companies. I think I will be a better candidate than other students who don't have abroad education experience. But here, it's not my benefit because I'm a foreigner, you know, compared to native speakers. Maybe in some companies looking for Chinese, I can have benefits. But English is not my benefit. But when I'm back in my country, English is a benefit.

In addition to the benefit of language, John thinks being educated in the United States has absolute advantage over “almost all” higher education institutions in China. However, John kept emphasizing it is only applied to his field of study. The United States' education extends its power to the industry, which results in more learning opportunities of technology than in China.

I am just talking about my field, computer science. I think the United States' education is better than in China. If foreign students study at top-level universities such as MIT, Stanford, Berkeley, or UCLA, their level gonna be higher than students from top universities in China. Almost all United States' universities are better than almost all Chinese universities. I am not focusing on one or two universities, almost all universities. The level of education is normally higher than universities in China. . . . And also here, not only for universities, also for the industry, if you have internship experience, you will have more opportunities to learn new technologies than in China.

Regarding Chinese' perception of those who receive degrees and work in the United States, John said more than half of Chinese think they are advantaged as the result of education in the United States.

I think not almost, but more than half of people will think the person who's working or living in the United States has better skills or better advantages compared with a person who's living in China. I mean the person who got education, working and living in the United States.

John further explained how people's perceptions are materialized in reality. While people in lower class "dream" about that idea that cannot be brought into reality, people in middle and high class actualize the same idea thanks to their economic affordability, which allows them to provide better choices for their children regarding jobs and living environments in the future.

I mean more than half in the lower level. Not even in the middle level. (They think) here (the United States) is better. Higher class or top level and some middle-class people maybe want to live in the United States. Some middle-class people send their family, wife and children to the United States. But they will work in China because compared to the United States, China has more opportunities for them. . . . Not everything. Only for jobs and money. They like the living style in the United States. Good environment, blue sky, clean water, and nice people. But they don't have strong enough skills to find better jobs here compared with China. They want their children to get better education, and they want their next generation to live in better environments.

John also wants to send his future child or children to the United States because he thinks there will be better opportunities in the United States than in China. When asked if he would, he said "if possible" though the future is uncertain.

I haven't found any better opportunities in China compared to the United States. . . . If possible, maybe I can. Yeah, if possible. But who know what will happen in 10 years or 20 years.

In addition to more job opportunities, people would choose to work in China because they have connections. Through Susan's translation, John said there will be easier access to jobs through connections without competition.

Susan: We have lots of connections in China. That's why they want to go back to China. . . . They can go to the company and work directly because of their parents', because of their friends' introduction, their connections. So they don't need to compete with others.

In spite of more job opportunities and connections in China, John finds his opportunity in the United States at this moment because work experience in the United States tops what China can provide, especially in his field. He wants to get a job as a software engineer first, get promoted, develop new technology, or find a partner to start a start-up.

I think here is better to find a partner. . . . I think currently in the computer science field, the United States is the leader in the world.

Finally, when asked what his plan would be if China excels the United States in his field in the future, John said his choice will be China. It indicates education and work experience in the United States is directly connected to "choices" about work and life.

John understands what his advantages are as a highly skilled and educated prospective worker compared to less skilled and educated counterparts. In addition, John knows his degrees and work experience in the United States will benefit him in case he seeks employment in China, making him more qualified than those who received equivalent degrees in China. English proficiency and work experience in the United States are the biggest factors that will benefit him

in China. The same language factor, however, works as a disadvantage, marking him as a foreigner in the United States.

Chinese people's perception of those who receive education, work, and live in the United States is connected with the idea that living environments and lifestyles in the United States will be better than in China. It means studying, working, and living in the United States seems acknowledged as a kind of privilege accessible to children from middle and high class because their parents can afford the expensive education for their children.

Naomi: Armed with cross-cultural competence

In the first part of the second interview related to the research question 2. a., Naomi did not specify the advantages of getting a master's or a doctoral degree over "less educated and skilled Asian immigrant workers" in the United States though the question included the phrase. It seems the phrase did not directly simulate associations with "less educated and skilled" in education, which is her major. Therefore, her answers were more general with some related to her field, mostly comparing the United States with China. The comparison gives enough understanding of how she perceives higher degrees and experience in the United States and China respectively.

Naomi mentioned "experience" as the first advantage of getting a master's or a doctoral degree in the United States. She indicated that the higher a person's degree is, the more the person is paid because employers pay equivalent for experience in the United States. She said the same experience in China, however, sometimes keeps companies from hiring people from higher degrees because they have to pay higher for the "skilled."

The first thing I really appreciate is a master's degree or a doctoral degree actually equals experience in America. So they pay equal things. They really value employment

opportunities for higher education level. . . . Chinese companies kind of want college graduates rather than people with higher degrees. They might need to pay more for them because they're quite well skilled compared to others. So they might be risky for companies. They might leave for higher wages. Yeah, that's my understanding. But here in America, I think, they value the knowledge and it's worth, more rewarding here.

This same experience gives her advantages over people who receive the same degrees in China. What makes the difference is “real working experience” or hands-on experience that can be practiced at work immediately. Therefore, graduate degrees earned in the United States mean better chances to get employed for high-paying jobs in China than the equivalent degrees earned in China due to practical experience the U.S. degree holders gained through their graduate studies.

They are not the same as Chinese ones. I have a lot of friends. They attained their master's degrees for three years in China or a couple of more years for a Ph.D. And they are facing the difficulty of finding jobs because they have been spending a lot of time on research and not on real working experience. So they are facing challenges when they try to find jobs in the market.

Her educational experience in both countries has allowed her to see education from more diverse perspectives. Naomi explained how “real experience” makes the difference in the United States. She mentioned several advantages of her degree in education in the United States: practice-based learning, familiarity with multicultural curriculum, and English proficiency.

Compared to people in China who earn the same degrees in education, I will say I have more perspectives in international education. So I know more about American education system and norms because I am pretty sure I really learned a lot in the Chinese education system from

basic to higher education. . . . I really appreciate my (graduate) program. They send us to local elementary schools, so I can really see theories I learned in practice. . . . I'm not sure if they have such internship opportunities in China. . . . And another benefit I can think about is when it comes to multicultural curriculum for people, for children from different backgrounds. Cause I feel like in China, there are a lot of international schools, but for the mainstream schools, they are quite mono with simple ethnic groups. And the last one I can think of is English proficiency.

Naomi said English proficiency and multicultural competence are specifically important to her future career in China. There are increasing demands for communicators between schools in China and overseas educational institutions, and she expects to work in the related field. The needs are from parents who send their children to the United States for education.

I think right now in a lot of higher education institutions, as well as middle schools or high schools, there are a bunch of Chinese kids or children who want to apply for schools or universities abroad. So there must be exchange process between Chinese schools or universities and universities all over the world. So if I were the human resources of a school, I would think maybe he or she with a master's degree received in America would be more useful or helpful for that kind of exchange process. And they can communicate with American educators if it is necessary because of English proficiency. They know more about culture compared to a person who lives in that country and studies all in the Chinese education system.

English proficiency and overseas experience, therefore, are specialized knowledge and expertise valued in this specific education market in China. Naomi has both, which means she will be in high demand by institutions and companies in the related field.

If I go back to China, I will definitely look for international schools regardless of whether it's a university or a K-12 school. I would be definitely looking for someone who needs people

like me, who needs international educational experience or English proficiency. And I will say a lot of companies require English proficiency or English skills.

Regarding how Chinese perceive people who study and work in the United States in general, Naomi said both respect and criticism exist as she explained previously. A loss of cultural value is one of the reasons for criticism, but most criticism seems to primarily come from envy of the privilege to have parents who can support education in the United States. The “class” issue from John’s interview is revisited here.

In a really general way, I will say they are quite skilled. And people will say it must take a lot of efforts getting there. . . . People might have stereotypes: you’re very good at English and you have a really good job like a higher salary than in China. . . . On the other side, there is a group of people who kind of don’t like that when they compare themselves to people who are working or living in the United States. . . . Maybe they will say I may not value my culture or why I would leave my own country. Some people will think it’s more about money, but not about the study or work we’ve done. . . . It’s a lot of details in life, but they cannot get that because (they think) everything is from parents who have already prepared for them.

Naomi said recent air pollution in China is the reason people are thinking about leaving China. As mentioned in the previous interview, she indicated that Chinese tend to mythicize America, and this tendency reaches the education field, too.

Especially for Chinese, they really value American education system. It’s about Western things. (They think) it’s giving children more choices or freedom. A lot of parents send their children to international kindergartens. They have been taught in English or are really good at both languages. I think they kind of have a stereotype that American children are more creative,

and they have better independent skills, something like that. Yeah, it's also culture. American culture is highly valued by Chinese.

As one who has experienced education systems in both countries and work life in the United States, Naomi especially wants to contribute to early childhood education in China. Also, she seeks to work in a field where she can utilize her multicultural competence, working on the stereotypes or myths people in China have about the American education system.

Naomi criticized myths or fantasies Chinese have about the American education system. At the same time, she recognized the advantages of her study and work experience overseas and English proficiency over those with the equivalent degrees attained in China. She also has some thought about what ideal education should be, specifically related to stereotypes Chinese have about U.S. education. At the same time, she recognized the reality she has to find an employer who values her overseas experiences and language skills when she goes back to China. Considering her future job in China will likely be in the education market, mostly for students from middle and high class, it seems to be her dilemma how to overcome the gap between her ideals and the reality.

Paul: Taking advantage of toadyism

Having worked in the United States on H-1B for several years, Paul realizes how important English is. Compared to less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States, he said the benefit of getting a graduate degree is a better chance to improve English, which is “critical” to survive in the United States. Paul explained how highly skilled and educated workers are different from the first-generation Asian immigrants who were less skilled and educated.

While I'm pursuing a master's and Ph.D., there are a lot of opportunities for me to study and present my knowledge to students, to present my school work in front of audience. So, all in all, I think it gives much more chances to understand and use English, which is critical in order to survive in the United States. As far as I know, my father's generation who came to the United States didn't know how to speak English well. They knew very basic survival English. I noticed their children trying to help them, like writing a contract or some complex things that require English skills. So in terms of that, English skills through a master's or Ph.D. are the number one advantage compared to less educated and less skilled immigrant workers.

English skills not only distinguish highly skilled and educated Asian workers from their counterparts, but increase chances for employment in the United States. According to Paul's logic, a graduate degree accompanies better English proficiency, relational skills with Americans, and higher level jobs.

A master's or doctoral degree will help me to develop English by learning along through the schoolwork or increase the chance to get a job in the United States. That will develop more skills related to how to handle, how to interact with Americans. Much more like Americanized, right? . . . I don't think the person who came here to pursue a master's or doctoral degree wants to do some very low level job. They want high level jobs. So that's why they're doing. So they are much more likely to look for jobs requiring a master's or doctoral degree, right? So it'll be really helpful, compared to less skilled, less educated Asians.

Paul's job searching experience in Korea after spending four years of studying and working in the United States made him realize the value of his time in the United States. From his experience, he knows there will be a higher probability of getting a faculty job in Korea when he has a doctoral degree achieved in the United States.

I went back to my country without any promise of finding a job. But I got a job within 15 days. . . . It's a very competitive job position. But as soon as I got there, within 15 days, they accepted me and asked me to start to work from the first day of April. So I had just one month to take a rest and started working, meaning that it's really really helpful, I think, not only benefiting from a master's degree, but also from my experience. . . . cause they seem like respect a master's degree very much, English skills, and experience. . . . If I get a Ph.D. degree (in the United States), there will be a really higher, much higher chance to get a faculty job (in Korea).

Paul gave three reasons why a U.S.-earned doctoral degree will make him more competitive in Korea than the same degree earned in Korea: (1) need for faculty who can teach in English for diversified students, (2) perceptions that getting a Ph.D. degree in Korea is relatively easy, which affects the third reason, (3) U.S. degree holders' better research ability.

Universities need to recruit prospective students from outside of the country due to the low birth rate. In order to deal with international students, future faculty members should deliver lectures in English. Programs are getting more globalized just like America. So they recognize the importance of faculty members who can deliver lectures in English. That's the first one. Second one is, in Korea, schools or colleges look for or prefer faculty members who got Ph.D. degrees in the United States. . . . You know, a Ph.D. degree in South Korea is, I don't know, but that's what I heard, a lot easier to get than in the United States. That's why people don't value it. . . . Maybe a person who got a Ph.D. degree in my country will have difficulty writing paper to publish in refereed journals in the United States. . . . But if I publish, if I get a Ph.D. degree, it almost means that I have ability to do research, my own research. So that's the third reason.

Paul said that Koreans' general perception of people who study, live, and work in the United States is expressed in two ways: respect and jealousy. Especially jealousy, he mentioned, comes from the issue of money, similar to what John and Naomi indicated.

First one is respect and a little of jealousy. They feel jealous of what I am pursuing, what I have been though. Regarding jealousy, they sometimes think, you know, because your parents have ability to support you, you can study in the United States. I don't think there are many Koreans who have opportunities to go to study in the United States. Even though there are a lot, but I think it's a very small portion of the total population. So there is a little bit of jealousy.

Opposed to the general perception of people, Paul does not think it is a money issue, but a matter of individual goal-orientedness to be able to study in the United States.

But as you know, what I believe is it is not the money question. It's your desire. Desire to achieve a goal for what I want to be. I think that is number one. . . . What I've seen is people who study in the United States are all struggling and try to be better people equipped with international mind, better English skills, and better degrees, you know, to live better.

Reasons to prefer the United States are severe competition in Korea's job market and more business opportunities in the United States. He thinks "there's no future" in Korea. To survive the competition when he returns to Korea, he needs to bring what is valued in Korea. While working in Korea, he got a clearer idea what is valued in Korea through people's attitudes toward him before and after they got to know him.

As far as I know, there were no people who got degrees from the United States at that time in my field. . . . So they speak very limited English. So I think that's why they kind of ignore those who came with their clients from abroad. So my first impression was like, the person in charge from Seoul neglected me and considered me like, "I think, Paul, you cannot handle this

client, MY client. I don't wanna give a bad impression to my client because of your broken English. So, he led the tour instead of me. But you know, after spending some time, when I introduced myself and had coffee with the members, they seemed to change their attitudes. Koreans, somehow, if they notice the academic background, they change attitudes, too. Very interesting. From very rude to sheep-like attitudes. . . . So I need to intentionally explain I got this, my degree and experience. . . . After that, most of them changed their attitudes, you know, in a very good way. Very supportive.

Paul used the word “stereotype” to explain Koreans’ changing attitudes by comparing their attitudes with those of internationals represented by Americans.

Human beings are really interesting species. When there is something that the person is better than themselves, they change their attitudes. Especially Koreans. International organizers don't do that. That was good. They are just like American people. There is not much preconception or stereotype. But my country has stereotypes of non-brands, non-capital cities.

Paul wants to do something to change Korean’s stereotypes. So, when he goes back to Korea, he wants to get a faculty job in his hometown, not in Seoul and promote the reputation of the university where he will work. He would like to help students who want to study abroad. That way, he can stay with his family and do what he desires to do through his career.

I am thinking about two years as a faculty member in the United States if I got a job. And then I will consider going back to my country. And then I want to help students in my hometown who want to study or work abroad. That's one of my goals. I just like the place I was born. . . . I want to be around my family. I wanna stay in my country, but not Seoul. It will be great if I can get back to my school, if possible.

Finally, when asked to describe himself as a prospective highly skilled and educated Asian worker in the United States, he could not answer immediately. So I slightly changed the question to what his life would be like as an Asian in the United States when he takes the career path he has in mind. Then he said it will be a “middle-class life” with family and work in balance with more chances and time to stay with his family, while working as a professor contributing to students’ learning at work.

Paul’s thought and future plan seem to have been affected by his work experience in Korea and the way people reacted to his educational and professional background. He showed strong sarcasm about their sudden attitude change toward him before and after they got to know his background. However, he knows that he needs to appeal to or avail their psychology using his educational and career background in the United States to get a faculty job in Korea because whatever is achieved in the United States is “respected” in Korea.

Overall, Paul has a clear idea how his degree will advantage him over less skilled and educated Asian workers in the United States and people who obtained the same degrees in Korea. Over both groups, he identified English proficiency as the number one benefit of a graduate degree attained in the United States. In addition, a U.S.-earned graduate degree will increase chances of employment in higher level positions in the United States. Compared to a doctoral degree attained in Korea, a U.S.-attained doctoral degree is also perceived to increase chances to get a faculty job in Korea because it accredits the degree holder with language and research ability.

2. b. Perceptions of Social and Economic Status Change as a Result of Employment in the U.S.

I do not pursue material gains through my degree and career experience I have gained in the United States. However, my general expectation, wherever I will be, is that my economic and social status will be improved in the future somehow, and it is mostly due to the result of my education and employment in the United States. It is because degrees and work experience in the United States will be highly valued or at least more valued than the same achieved in other countries. As a result, a better salary or reputation will follow, which is the reason I think so many international students are coming to the United States to study and find jobs. Many of them have gone through severe competitions to win opportunities to study in the United States, especially when they come through government scholarship programs that require strict screening.

So, chances to build future careers upon U.S.-earned degrees and U.S.-gained experience are not given to everyone. That is why H-1B visas are competitive though the visa program seems to be facing a major review due to Trump's executive order in April 2017, "Buy American, Hire American," which is based on his criticism of the H-1B visa program that replaces domestic workers with cheaper foreign labor (Iyengar, 2017). As Trump pointed out, foreign labor is cheaper. Still, H-1B is attractive to foreign workers because, to most, it pays more than they can make in their countries and to some, it provides better working and living conditions.

Plus, when considering the value of studying and working in the United States that will be acknowledged worldwide, whether in their countries or somewhere else, degrees and career

experience in the United States promise a comparatively higher social and economic status than the equivalents elsewhere.

Therefore, pursuit of money is not my current goal. Rather, I look at a better future that will lead me somewhere or something I can call a “destination” if there is one. I have wanted to work at a university in an underdeveloped country, and I believe what I am doing here in the United States will definitely get me there, like a bridge that connects my reality and dream, making the impossible possible with credentials internationally recognized: degrees, work experience, and English proficiency, all gained in the United States.

Though I expect my social and economic status will be improved generally wherever I will be, there will be a difference in the level of improvement when the same amount of time is assumed to be spent in each country. I can keep working in the United States, but I know I will be a perpetual foreigner here. Personally, I am not interested in climbing the social ladder, but for Asians in general, it seems hard to make it to the very top of the ladder however strenuously they work. I don’t know whether I am trying to be content with what I have, or I say this because I have given up my efforts to go higher after realizing reality. By reality, I mean the social and institutional structure that does allow Asians to reach a certain status as a reward of hard work mostly in material forms, but I wonder if the economic status guarantees the equivalent social status, which I do not think can be gained through money only.

John: Things endurable for the future

John has a dream. He wants to have a startup company and develop something influential on people’s life and behavior. He said China has a better environment for that because of his familiarity with the culture and people and more opportunities for startups. Above all, he has more connections in China. He identified himself as middle class in the future both in the United

States and China regarding his economic status, but in terms of his social status, he said it will be higher in China than in the United States due to his broad connections in China and limited network in the United States.

In the future, I think I can become middle class in the United States if I get a job because I saw some report about the salary in computer software engineering compared to the salary of the whole U.S. citizens. The salary level is in the middle class. Salary. Yeah, for the economic. . . . Socially, I think China is better than here because I know, even though I have studied in America almost four years, I have been living in China for more than 20 years. I have friends, parents, and a lot of related connections in China. If I want to find a job or get information, I can get some information or opportunities from them maybe if I go back to China. But here my social network is only focused on campus: professors, classmates, not too much.

Upon hearing his answer, I first thought John was confused between “socializing” and “social status.” He also kept emphasizing he is not a “social” person, so it looked like he did not understand the main point of the question about what his social status would be like in the future. In his logic, however, socializing is an absolute necessity to gain social status, and he indicated his social status in the United States is not as good as in China because he is not a social person. Therefore, his non-social character seems to affect his social status in the United States. What he meant became clearer when he said Indians are better at socializing than other Asians due to their English proficiency, which makes cultural interaction possible.

I like to focus on my work, coding or creating something with a computer. I am not good at social, making friends or communication. So if I can make friends or extend my connections in the United States, I will keep those connections. But I’m not a social person. . . . I think Indians are better than Asians from other countries, maybe. They are good at social. They can explain or

talk well. One thing is speaking English. Another thing is culture. Speaking English means probably knowledge about the culture.

John further explained how Indians are contrasted with Asians in terms of workplace behaviors. This time, he used “Chinese people” in general to explain their workplace tendency, but his personality of not being social is reflected in the generalization.

I know Chinese people working here. They only focus on their work. But for Indians, they not only focus on working hard, but also on social. They communicate with managers and leads. (If Asians want to go up to) the higher level, they have to do social, making social connections, meeting more people, and getting more opportunities.

Besides not socializing, the race factor affects his social status in the United States. When asked to identify himself as an Asian in the status hierarchy, he explained where Asians are located in the structural hierarchy in an organization. In his perception, the race factor positions Asians in middle management in the organizational structure regardless of their legal status.

Maybe I think Asians are better than Blacks, but below Whites. . . . The United States is still Whites’ country. White people host this country. Other races, Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and others are not, how to say, the top. . . . I heard from some Asian people who are working in the United States. It’s hard to get to the top-level positions. You can be a team lead or manager but it’s hard to be a VP. Just like the level of CEO. It’s very hard. I think it depends on the race. You’re not White. And you’re a foreigner. Whatever you are, American citizen or not, whether you have a Green Card or not. That means it just seems like there are some rules or something that blocks Asians guys from getting to the top position. I think that is the company culture in the Unites States.

John understands that better social status in China can be achieved through his working experience in the United States. Another reason that makes his social status better in China is there is no racial or cultural barrier to deal with in spite of more severe competition. Also, there is no pressure for socializing. The only thing he needs to do is to work hard.

If you have working experience in top IT companies (in the United States), it's very helpful for you to get a job in China because they are famous in the world. . . . But I think China has more pressure. More pressure means there is more competition. Because if I go back to China, I will consider having a job in big cities. Fewer big cities in China. But here in the United States, you can find a job in a lot of places. . . . In China, it's definitely Chinese who's gonna be the top one. So there's nothing like ranking as in the United States. . . . It's easier to get involved in the culture in the company or the country. But here if you are going to get involved in the company culture, maybe you need to get involved in the American culture first because the company has more Americans than foreigners, right? But in China, almost all are Chinese. . . . It's gonna be easier to move to the top level than here cause you don't have any problem with communication. The only thing is just working hard. But for here, besides hard working, you have to consider the different culture and the language.

For the legal status in the United States, John and Susan said it is hard to say something at this point, but the best possible plan is to get a job through a company that sponsors an H-1B visa. They also want to get a Green Card, and then they will think about other options regarding their families. They want to live close to their families wherever it may be.

First, one of us needs to get a job here and change the visa status from F-1 to H-1B. And then try to apply for a Green Card. But we need to wait, maybe five years. Five years is a long time. Yeah, so it means it's hard to say what will happen in these five years. (To the question,

where they want to raise their children) For me, the better thing is to have a Green Card, so I can be here or can be in my country. I can live in both of these countries. Very convenient with a Green Card.

Susan: I think the final plan is to live close to our parents especially when they are too old to take care of themselves. If we can invite them to live with us (in the United States), that will be perfect. . . . On the other hand, if it's not feasible, we will maybe think about going back to China to take care of them. That's my final plan.

For his career plan, John said his work experience in China will not be really helpful to get a job in the United States because he worked for a small company. However, he thinks if he has work experience in a small company in the United States, it will help him get a job in China because "Whatever it is, small or big, it's an American company." Despite all these plans, the future still lies in uncertainty. All they can say now is their hope and possibility.

A dream is, currently in the United States, I mean just get a stable job or a visa. . . . But I am afraid to think about that (a Green Card or citizenship). It's a long, long time. It's not easy to . . . yeah, you can think about that, but you don't know what will happen tomorrow.

It seems that they have a short-term plan, but the long-term future plan is not finalized yet. Their life will go on as things come up one after another. If the best possible plan does not work, they will turn to the second best choice. Even though their current goal is not money, they know that investment in time for some years in the United States will bring enough later, making a middle-class life feasible at least financially in both countries. Though John said the same level of social status he would possibly be able to have in China is not guaranteed in the United States due to the racial, cultural, and linguistic barrier, a Green Card for a longer stay in the United States is a preferred option because it will allow the couple to have ties to both countries for jobs,

opportunities, families, and travelling convenience. A foreigner status in the United States and its consequences seem endurable for the kind of life they pursue in the future.

Naomi: Beyond what money can provide

Naomi is preparing for an H-1B visa application, so her current plan is to stay three more years in her job until she gets enough experience. However, she is not thinking about staying in the United States further than that, so a Green Card is not in her long-term plan. It is because it is a long process and time and doesn't allow her to travel easily while waiting. Still she said it will not bother her to have a Green Card, but she does not seem to have much attachment to a Green Card.

I've heard about a Green Card. Once you apply for it, it's not recommended you leave this country, even travel. So it takes five or six years, even seven years right now to get into the line and then get all the materials approved. So, right now, I don't have a plan for that. . . . But a Green Card is better than nothing cause you could go back and forth and don't need to apply for a visa or worry about all the status thing. I think it's good.

Rather, she is interested in going to another country in the long term with chances to travel back to the United States or China freely. If it is China, it is because of her ties to her family and responsibility for her aging parents.

For a long term, I will definitely leave here. I mean leave here to another country or go back to China. . . . In 10 years, I will be maybe not in the United States, nor China. I mean I'm quite interested in living in another country like Australia, Japan, or England cause I'm quite interested in their culture there. . . . I don't have a long-term plan living in a place, but I will definitely prefer to be able to come back to the United States at some point. But I don't know if I have preference on living in the United States or in China after 10 years. I would prefer to be

able to go both. Travelling back and forth. But maybe living in China because my parents will need me to take care, yeah.

Naomi expects her financial status will become stable in the United States, but she wonders if her social status will be equally matched. Even if she might have a higher position later, it does not seem to change what she feels about her “real” social status.

I’m expecting the job here could provide full benefits including health insurance, that kind of thing. And then maybe better wage. I want to save money. Um . . . I have no idea about the social status. Feel like being a foreigner here. . . . Maybe better, because I’ll have a different title if I continue working.

In spite of her “foreigner” status, she thinks both of her social and economic status will be improved whether in the United States or China in the long term. A middle-class life is generally expected in both countries, but her expectations about herself and plans, if she is in China, show how her experience in the United States has changed her view of her future, even affecting her family plan.

Economically I will expect more than just support myself or my family in the future. . . . I would say middle class in the United States. . . . But maybe I’m expecting more than middle class in China. Cause in 10 years, I would definitely send my children to study abroad. Or maybe I could send my kids to an American kindergarten (due to) the same reason I evaluated the early childhood education in China and in the United States. They are really expensive. I think I need more financial support in order to send, to give better education to my children in China. So in China, I will expect more than just middle class.

Naomi's family plan spans the world. She wants her husband and children to have better understanding about the world. It looks like her experience in the United States has turned her eyes to the world, influencing her family plan as well.

I want my children to get better education rather than just send them to a public kindergarten in China if I live in China. I wish they could have travel experience as much as possible. I will marry around 30 and then have children. Afterwards, it's not necessary just to live in one place. . . . But it might depend on husband. A job is a big thing. (When asked if she would prefer if her husband's job requires travelling abroad) Yeah, that will be great. So it provides opportunities for family members to go with him for travelling. Yeah, it means he must have better understanding of different cultures. It's really important to me. Rather than just living in a country for like 30 years. . . . I prefer he has overseas or study abroad experience. That will be better because we can understand each other better.

Finally, Naomi explained what her life would have been like if she had stayed in China only and how her experience in the United States changed her values about life. She said economic prosperity to enter higher society would have been her aim, following what her parents want and living a life defined by the mainstream. She now owns what she would never have been able to gain without experience in the United States: a free spirit searching the real values of life.

If I didn't come here and if I stayed in China, I would run after a better job, better living place or house and car. . . . And my value will be more similar to people in their 20s or the values of my parents, running after financial status. . . . Pretty much like that, like expected by my parents and the mainstream of the society. . . . But right now in the United States, I will value more what I want to do individually regardless of my parents' suggestions sometimes. I have my own plan. . . . Not only focus on materials or physical living conditions. It's more like the dream

I want to fulfill. . . . If I were in China, I wouldn't think of how people think differently based on their different backgrounds. . . . I still want to have a better economic status, but still I value more spiritual values and plans.

Naomi's experience in the United States has given her a chance to reflect on her life if she studied and stayed only in China. Through the experience that broadened her vision, now her plan encompasses the world. She also expects she will reach a certain income level to afford costly education for her children. This is the same dilemma mentioned in the previous section: the contradiction between ideal education and reality. Sending children to an American kindergarten or abroad for exposure to diverse cultures is the ideal, while it can be afforded only by middle and high class in China. In this regard, it makes sense when Naomi said she would expect her economic status will be higher than middle class, but how to deal with the discrepancy between her ideal and reality still remains to be answered.

Paul: A middle-class life with a happy family

Paul envisions a middle-class life with work and family well balanced, and he thinks it can be achieved by attaining a certain level of economic status. However, material gain is not all he pursues. He is ready to sacrifice some part of it because he puts his personal life ahead of anything else. He does not want to come back to the United States even if a chance might be given.

I don't want to be too much workaholic. I want to spend more time with my family and friends. For five days, probably I need to work hard. On weekends, I wanna stay with my family. Probably middle class with a middle-class salary. (When asked if he would come back when another chance is given) No more. I feel this country offers me a lot, but this is not my country.

Thank you, but I want to go back. . . . Money is not important, but I want to make some. That's why I am striving to finish this journey. Want to maintain some work-life balanced life style.

Paul expects his social status in Korea will be higher than in the United States because of the racial barrier in the United States and better social recognition of a faculty job in Korea.

Yeah, will be definitely changed a lot socially. I will be a faculty member. It seems very respected. Socially, from a student to faculty is like jumping up to middle class. Salary-wise, and also from a social perspective, a faculty member is middle class, I think. (When asked if it is the case in both countries) In my country, I will be a lot higher than middle class, I think. A lot higher respect and social status than in the United States. . . . (After taking a long pause when asked why) Why? Why . . . cause I'm an alien in the United States. Asian. Even though I am a faculty member, there's a kind of some unseen ceiling when interacting with main people. But as a faculty member in Korea, you will be needed by the government and some business people who need advice from university faculty. They respect faculty members more. In terms of that, my social status will be higher than here cause they consider faculty members who got degrees here in the United States as some high-level, highly-educated people. And this perception is a lot higher in my country than in the United States. But here the area of influence will be only within a school, to the students and a little bit of research.

Though higher social status might be guaranteed in Korea, that is not the only reason he will choose Korea as his destination. Paul thinks he will have higher economic status with better benefits in the United States. However, in spite of the higher salary potential in the United States, he still wants to return to Korea because family and friends are the key deciding factor for him. It does not mean he would ignore the economic factor. He knows the importance of finance to maintain a certain quality of life.

Family is a key factor. Friends, too. I want to feel more like human beings in my country than here. Here I have very limited social network even if I hang around with Americans, and I have a feeling that it's not my country. Benefits could be good, but it's not my country. There's a certain deficiency that I feel. Hanging around with my family and friends is a lot more important than making \$20,000 more. That's not I'm looking for. . . . I don't care about social status. If I am respected, that's good. But I don't study to achieve a higher social level. And to the economic level, yes, I can say. I need to make money to maintain life-and-work balance. That's why economic value is important to take care of my family and my wife's family. . . . So economic status is a lot more important in terms of that than social status.

Paul wants to do something to change Koreans' capital-city centered perceptions by working at a university in his hometown, not in Seoul. He thinks his faculty experience in the United States will increase the reputation of the university he will work at eventually.

Let's say, at a university here, I have faculty experience. And I go to one of the universities in Korea and I will work there. Probably the reputation of the university will be increased by hiring me. We deliver a similar quality of lectures from the university in the United States to a local college in Korea. That will be one of the factors to recruit prospective undergraduate students. . . . And prospective students' parents will probably look at that and then recommend the university. It will change their perception of the education level, the name value of the university.

Paul said the values of his life are a better life with family, a life without material restrictions, and a life of self-achievement.

Family. It's all related to my family. Also family. And a little more comfortable and profound life with no feeling of deficiency of money. It's not about making a lot of money, but I

hope not to care much about money that restricts myself. With money, I can have parties for my family. So probably getting out of the restriction will be the second value. And self-achievement. In the beginning I started from nothing. I think I have a kind of feeling that I have to overcome my situation, the name value of my college. But that brings a lot of power for me to pursue other goals. So the third value is probably achievement.

Getting a faculty job in the United States is his imminent goal, but to obtain only teaching experience is not what he wants. While working in the United States, he wants to change people's perception of him as an Asian international faculty in terms of teaching and research performance.

One of my dreams is to be a faculty member in the United States who can be considered as a good teacher. I just don't want to be a member of faculty in the United States. I have something that changed people's perception. That's how I've been growing up. Hey, an Asian guy, you know, is teaching a class, and it's not gonna be that bad. It'll be good. I want to change the stereotype. I thought he's an Asian, but oh, he's teaching really well with very detailed explanation. It's very easy to understand, rather than, oh, he's kind of hard to understand. It's for research too. I want to be a person who can effectively help others.

Paul is strongly motivated to pursue what he wants. A better life with his family is the driving force behind it. Through many years of study and work experience in both countries, he has figured out what is best for him socially, economically, and professionally, which is a distinguishing factor from other participants who are somewhat uncertain about their future though they have similar goals and dreams. One common thing that is clearly identified from all five participants is that they expect their social and economic status in the future will be influenced by their degrees and work experience in the United States in a positive way in

general. However, due to the race factor described as a “foreigner” or “alien,” they do not think they can achieve the same social status in the United States as in their countries. They perceive that their social success is influenced by an “unseen ceiling” or “something that blocks Asian guys from getting to the top position.” On the contrary, they expect they will be upper middle class in their countries because of the same race factor and their educational and career experience in the United States.

Summary

In this chapter, data collected from five participants, including the self-narratives of the researcher, have been presented and interpreted based on their transnational experience, the shaping process of Asian identity, perceptions of themselves as highly skilled and educated prospective Asian workers, and expectations about their social and economic status in the future. The researcher’s self-narratives were used to introduce themes for each section following each research question.

Data interpretation showed that participants were maintaining strong emotional ties with their families in their homelands through frequent communication or travels. They chose studying or working in the United States on their own, not by family pressure or decisions, seeing their work experience in the United States as an opportunity for their future careers while being aware of their foreigner status in the United States. Participants perceived degrees and work experience in the United States as “power” especially in their home countries, which is associated with how people in their countries view the United States and degrees and work experience obtained in the United States.

One interesting finding is that, contrary to the general belief that collectivistic Asian culture leads to strong family obligation, and as a consequence, individual success and failure are

considered as family's honor and shame, participants did not show much evidence of connection between individual failure and shame on family. Rather, they attributed the responsibility for failure to themselves, with assurance of support and encouragement from family.

Participants did not have specific stereotypical images of Asians before they came to the United States. Even though they had some, the images were general or vague about themselves or Asians from other countries. While studying or working in the United States, however, they started to recognize themselves as Asians, and their perceptions as Asians have shaped or developed gradually, specifically affected by how Americans see Asians. Industriousness and high academic or work performance were the stereotypes participants perceived Americans, including future employers and colleagues, would have about Asians.

Though they showed differing opinions about whether stereotypes are positive or negative, they thought they should meet the stereotypes imposed on them to gain employment or agreed that the stereotypes were true about Asians and even beneficial, especially in terms of Asians' hardworking attitude. Social skills and cultural understanding of the United States were mentioned as workplace skills needed. They all implicitly and explicitly mentioned the existence of a "glass ceiling" that works as a barrier in workplaces, which led to the conclusion that their status is lower than Whites in the organizational structure. Still, Asians were ranked in the upper part of the social ladder compared to other races except Whites in their perception. Language barrier and visa status were the biggest disadvantages they identified at the time of employment.

Participants were aware of the benefits of their degrees and work experience in the United States over less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States and those who have equivalent degrees and work experience in their countries. It shows participants' perceptions that their degrees and work experience obtained in the United States will apply both

regionally and transnationally. English proficiency was an important factor that gives advantage to them over their counterparts both in the United States and in their homelands.

Finally, they expect their social status in the United States will be lower than in their home countries as a consequence of their foreigner status causing cultural and language barriers. Economic status was perceived to be higher or at least the same in their countries as a benefit of studying and working in the United States.

In conclusion, participants' work and study experience in the United States offers transnational credentials and qualifications as a highly skilled and educated workforce, which allows them to make choices based on their priority in the future. For future plans they envision, they think their current foreigner status and language and cultural barriers can be tolerated because what they will achieve in the United States will be a stepping stone that will help them reach their goals whether a startup, a life in another country, or a happy family. In the next chapter, discussion of the findings, implications and recommendations for future research, and conclusions will be addressed.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

In the previous chapter, interview data were presented and analyzed based on the research questions. As the last chapter of this research, this chapter provides discussion and conclusions by linking the major concepts and notions reviewed in Chapter 2 and data analyzed in Chapter 4. This chapter consists of four sections: (1) summary of the findings, (2) discussion, (3) implications and recommendations for future research, and (4) conclusion. The first section provides the summary of the findings by the themes. In the second section, findings from the data presented and analyzed in Chapter 4 are discussed through linkage to literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Themes are arranged in order as found in Chapter 4, and two or more sub-themes are addressed under each theme. Third, implications of discussed themes, areas to improve the research, educational implications, and recommendations for future research will be explained, followed by conclusions in the last section.

Summary of the Findings

This narrative study examined individually lived experiences of Asian international graduate students who plan to pursue careers in the United States after their degree completion with two research questions: (1) how the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in their transnational experiences and (2) what their career decisions imply in the local and global context. Each question looked into two areas. The first research question examined (a) participants' transnational experiences between the United States and their home countries and (b) how these experiences shape their Asian identity as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers. The second question investigated (a) participants' perception of their knowledge and skills over less skilled and educated Asian immigrants in the local labor market and same

degree earners in their home countries and (b) participants' projection of their social and economic status in the future.

RQ 1. How is the Model Minority Stereotype Shaped, Developed, and Ingrained in the Participants' Transnational Experiences?

Findings showed that participants' Asian identity was shaped, developed, and ingrained through their transnational experiences by environmental input, interactions with Americans and Asians from other countries, travels between the United States and their home countries, and encounters with people including family and friends home. These individual experiences affected their perceptions of themselves and shaped their identity as Asians. Their Asianness shaped through transnational experience further guided their thoughts and behaviors as Asian job applicants and prospective employees in the United States (Ho, 2003).

1. a. Participants' transnational experiences between the United States and their home countries

According to the findings, participants' emotional ties to their family home were strongly maintained regardless of the distance or the duration of their stay in the United States. Ties to families appeared to become stronger as they spent more years in the United States. Paul and the researcher, who spent the most time in the United States, showed the strongest ties to their families in Korea.

Considering the intensity of the ties participants maintain with their families, it was anticipated participants would have decided to study in the United States due to parental influence, but the choices were made by the participants themselves. In fact, despite their parents' hesitation, unwillingness, or opposition, they made their ways to the United States. For future plans, they were not much influenced by their parents' preferences, either, though they all

wanted to plan for the future in a way that they can maintain or strengthen the ties with their parents.

No participants had definite plans to acquire Green Cards or citizenships though they were aware of disadvantages of being foreigners in the United States. Eventually, Paul was planning to find a job in Korea to live with his family; John also had a plan to live with his and his wife's family either in China or in the United States; and Naomi said she would return to China or go to another country later. The researcher has decided not to get a Green Card and is planning to leave the country. This indicates that obtaining an immigrant status for longer or permanent stay is not their ultimate purpose.

On the contrary, participants' plan to stay in the United States on H-1B, a non-immigrant visa, showed that they recognize the value of work experience in the United States and its advantageous influence on their future careers. Participants perceived U.S.-earned graduate degrees as credentials that can bridge them to better job opportunities both in the United States and in their home countries. The reason was associated with the fantasy people in their home countries have towards the life in the United States, which was shown in people's attitudes toward the participants.

Participants perceived "envy" or "jealousy" from people in their countries when they travelled back home due to the recognition that only middle or high class families can afford education in the United States for their children. This suggests that being able to afford education in the United States is perceived as an indicator of participants' economic status in China and Korea.

Participants reported positive feelings toward the environment, lifestyle, and people in the United States, especially when they came back after travelling to their countries. They used

words such as “more polite” people, “clean,” “good,” “comfortable,” “heaven,” “very cozy,” “alive,” “confidence,” and “challenging” to express how they feel in the United States.

1. b. How these experiences shape their Asian identity as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers

Participants’ Asianness or Asian identity was shaped and developed through their transnational experience in the sense that the way of behaving or thinking like Asians was “imposed” on them through the environment and by Americans who categorize them by their race or ethnicity (Ho, 2003). The environmental change from racially homogenous countries to a multiracial country played a major role in shaping their identity as Asians. Specifically, participants perceived hardworking attitudes as stereotypical images Americans have toward Asians (Chou & Feagin, 2016; Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003; Trytten et al., 2012).

Their Asianness was further developed through their interaction with Americans in class, workplaces, and other social settings. Participants also accepted the same image Americans have toward them as a cultural trait that distinguishes themselves from other races. This Asianness became ingrained or rooted in their perception as they spent more years in the United States. Participants thought the hardworking image of Asians was true of themselves in general, adopting the image as an advantage over other races and as an appealing point to future employers (Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Wong et al., 1998).

Therefore, participants showed different levels of rootedness of Asian identity contingent on time spent in the United States. Naomi, who spent less time than the other participants showed less dependency on the stereotypical images of Asians; rather, she displayed a more balanced view or cultural stance toward stereotypes. However, her Asian identity was developing

through interactions with Americans, and their view was influencing how she viewed herself. John showed more compliance with the image of Asians as a strategy to be employed. To compensate for the racial disadvantage as an Asian job applicant, he emphasized “huge better” skills than candidates of other races, which implied more hard work and time invested in his studies and profile. Both John and his wife Susan were aware that stereotypes negatively affect them in the hiring process due to high expectations imposed on them, but they also recognized that meeting the higher standards set for Asians is the only way to get employed. The tendency to comply with imposed Asianness was most represented in Paul, who positively accepted and considered the images as a strength that appeals to his future employers. The images were not just stereotypical, but were true to Paul, who said the general perception that Asians work very hard is a benefit, and Asians are more industrious than other races (Eguchi & Starosta, 2012; Ho, 2003; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Wong et al., 1998). Therefore, to Paul, “work hard and do better” appears as the essence of Asians, which he thinks is not only perceived by Americans, but exists in him as an ethnic characteristic or attribute and as a way of life guiding him through his studies and work.

RQ 2. How are the Participants’ Employment Decisions Understood in the Labor Market Locally and Globally in the Postcolonial Context?

Participants’ employment decisions can be understood both in the Asian immigrant labor market in the United States locally and in their home countries transnationally. They perceived their degrees and work experience on H-1B in the United States as transnational credentials that will benefit them both socially and economically compared to less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States and to the same degree holders in their home countries (Barakat & Parhiagar, 2013; Qin, 2011). They projected lower social status in the United States

due to the language and cultural barriers in the United States, while expecting higher social and economic status in their home countries in general.

2. a. Participants' perception of their knowledge and skills over less skilled and educated Asian immigrants in the local labor market and same degree earners in their home countries

Participants were aware of the benefits of their graduate degrees compared to less skilled and less educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States because their degrees function as credentials that prove better English proficiency and skills, which lead to better job opportunities and higher salaries (Barakat & Parhizgar, 2013; Qin, 2011). Though participants mentioned English as a big or the biggest disadvantage of Asian workers when they seek employment in the United States, they perceived graduate degrees in the United States as what distinguishes them from less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers due to better chances to improve English and skills they can get through their degrees. Therefore, they expected that higher level jobs would be available for them as benefits of their specialized skills, knowledge, and language proficiency while less skilled and educated Asian workers can only access low or entry level jobs. This implies that the salary gap between the two groups will increase as these highly skilled and educated Asian professionals stay longer in their jobs and accumulate more experience and skills, which will allow them to move on to higher paying positions or jobs (Qin, 2011).

In addition, participants expected that their graduate degrees would advantage them over their counterparts with equivalent degrees earned in their home countries because their degrees prove their English proficiency. Work experience in the United States was identified as another contributor to participants' better job opportunities in their home countries because it will affirm

their competency in their fields of studies (Qin, 2011). In addition to English proficiency in common, participants mentioned technological competitiveness, multicultural competency, and research skills as the reasons their U.S.-earned degrees will be more valued than the same degrees earned in their countries depending on their fields.

Participants' expectations of better job opportunities in their homelands were associated with how people in their home countries perceive the United States and the life in the United States. Koreans and Chinese' perceptions of the United States and things related to the country were represented by their attitudes or tendencies to value U.S. culture and education, mythicize or mystify American lifestyle, and respect study and work experience in the United States.

2. b. Participants' projection of their social and economic status in the future

Participants expected their study and work experience in the United States would positively affect their future social and economic status (Qin, 2011). As a result of graduate degrees and work experience gained in the United States, participants anticipated a middle-class life in both countries. However, they showed different projections of the levels of their social and economic status contingent on the location. They expected their social status will be lower in the United States, while predicting their economic status to be the same in both countries or higher in their countries. Lower social status in the United States was projected because of their perceived "foreigner," "alien," or "stranger" status. Factors that influenced their perception of themselves as foreigners were their racial, linguistic, and cultural barriers, which they think make it hard to socialize with Americans. Therefore, how much they can socialize with Americans was an important indicator of their English proficiency and cultural and social assimilation.

Participants' choice of the United States as a job market after completing their degrees was not influenced by their expected lower social status in the country. In spite of social,

cultural, and language barriers, the “foreigner” status was tolerated for the sake of their professional development for a better life and future. However, a better life and future was not necessarily associated with better economic status. In other words, a materially successful life was not the deciding factor of their choice of country though higher economic status was expected in their home countries. Rather, pursuing an individual ideal life and fulfilling life goals were the key factors that influence their choice of country.

Discussion

This section provides discussion based on the findings of Asian international graduate students’ transnational experience and perceptions as Asians through the lens of postcolonialism. Viewing Asian international graduate students who plan to seek employment in the United States as a prospective highly skilled and educated labor force, the researcher explores the linkage between the major concepts and notions reviewed in Chapter 2 and findings from participants’ perceptions shaped through their transnationally lived experience.

Sub-sections are guided by projected themes in the research questions: (1) the model minority stereotype reinforced through transnational experience, (2) the model minority stereotype as a prescriber for Asian intellectuals’ attitudes, behaviors, and performance, (3) Asian intellectuals’ perceptions of themselves and the perceptions of people in their home countries about Asians educated in the United States, and (4) Asian intellectuals’ perceptions of their social and economic status. Each theme has sub-themes, through which concepts and notions such as transnationalism, the model minority stereotype, Orientalism, Empire, and globalization are discussed from the perspective of postcolonialism.

Theme 1. The Model Minority Stereotype Reinforced through Transnational Experiences

Two major sub-themes were found under this theme. First, participants' transnational experiences revealed their transnational characteristics, through which participants can be defined as potential immigrants or a *bridge* population considering their "onward" immigration status (Faist, 2010), regardless of their plan to return to their countries or attain a Green Card for extended stay in the United States. Participants share similarity with immigrants in the sense that they maintain ties to both home and host countries. In terms of the nature of the ties, however, they are different from immigrants in diasporic communities or contemporary immigrants (Barakat & Parhiagar, 2013).

Second, individuality was identified as the major motivation that made participants cross borders, while their transnational experience shaped their Asian identity at the same time. Their Asian identity was shaped and developed through their transnational experiences due to the shifting environment from racially homogeneous to heterogeneous (Ho, 2013). Specifically, the racially heterogeneous environment with Whites dominant in the United States was identified as the major factor to shape their Asianness.

Transnationalism and "bridge" population

Transnationalism focuses on the ties immigrants maintain to the home and host countries as the process and consequences of globalization (Schiller, Basch, & Blank-Szanton, 1992). As reviewed in literature, transnationalism in this study is used to understand participants' border-crossing experience and how their Asian identity is shaped through the experience. Transnationalism also supplements the notion of Empire and its power that reaches the world in this study because this study defines the model minority stereotype as Empire's controlling

strategy that pertains to not only Asian Americans, but Asians in a global sense, including those living border-crossing lives.

According to the findings, participants showed strong ties to their families in their home countries. The ties became stronger as they spent more time in the United States with the weakest seen in Naomi, who spent the least time in the United States, and the strongest in Paul and the researcher, who spent the most. However, their ties to the United States were not as strong as expected. Participants did not have specific plans to extend their stay in the United States beyond the years allowed by the H-1B status they will obtain in the future, contrary to the researcher's assumption that they would pursue a Green Card and then a U.S. citizenship to settle in the United States eventually. Except Paul, who determined to return to Korea after accumulating faculty experience in the United States, John and Naomi were uncertain about their future plans and open to possibilities that might transform their status to immigrants through a Green Card, but they were still inclined toward going back to their countries at the time of the interviews.

Participants' ties to the United States were temporary and centered on professional development in the sense that they want to accumulate work experience and improve their English proficiency in the United States, which will make them transnationally competitive in their fields (Barakat & Parhiagar, 2013). Their self-recognition as foreigners in the United States due to limited social connections and lack of language proficiency indicates that the ties they maintain to the United States are not social or cultural in the nature. On the other hand, participants maintained strong social and cultural connections with their home countries, which indicates that they feel compensated for their social and cultural rejection in the United States through their ties to their family and home countries psychologically.

That their ties to the United States are not social was evidenced in the pull factors in their choice of the United States. Though “pull factors” (Barakat & Parhizgar, 2013, pp. 106-107) such as salaries, types of jobs, and merits of the place were the major factors that affected their choice of location, social standing was not an influential factor on their decisions. It is because participants’ recognition of themselves as foreigners lowers their expectations for their social standing in the United States. Lower expectations for social standing in the United States were seen in Naomi, who was concerned about “troubles” employers go through when they hire alien workers; John, who recognized himself as a foreigner due to his not being a native speaker and White regardless of his legal status; and Paul, who reported a perceived “unseen ceiling” as a future faculty member in the United States. So, they recognized their race as an obstacle to their accessibility to the mainstream, which affected their perception of their social standing as Asians in the United States.

The nature of their ties to the United States is also explained by their self-interest activities in the United States. Depending on their fields, participants focused on skills that they think would be necessary for their future careers. In addition to English proficiency, John was looking for field experiences beyond his coursework, such as an online collaborative project or internship. For Naomi, multicultural competency was important, which she was gaining from interactions with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Americans. Paul’s interests were research skills, publications, and teaching experiences.

This suggests that participants have transnational characteristics as defined by transnationalism, not with the same intensity as those of immigrants to the host country, but of more fluidity and flexibility in the overarching aspect of the concept of transnationalism. In other words, they are not identified as the core group defined by the concept, such as immigrants in

diasporic communities characterized by religious, ethnic, and national communities of their own based on shared experience with collective identity through generations (Bruneau, 2010; Faist, 2010). Neither were their ties similar to those of contemporary immigrants who have “sustained regular or situationally mobilized involvements” in national or local economic, political, social and cultural events in their home countries (Morawska, 2014, p. 134).

Therefore, considering the pursuit of their self-interest through their degrees and work experience in the United States, these highly skilled and educated Asian intellectuals are different from diasporic or contemporary immigrants in their nature and characteristics, because their purpose of stay in the United States is to build their career paths through study, work experience, and professional development, contrary to immigrants who maintain not only economic, but also religious, social, cultural, and even political ties to both countries (Bruneau, 2010). However, in terms that they will enter the local labor market in the United States as high-paid workers that will constitute Asian labor force and are open to possibilities that will change their status from non-immigrants to immigrants, their “onward” immigration status (Faist, 2010) categorizes them as a *bridge* population or potential immigrants.

“Individuals” crossing borders

Findings revealed that participants have individual traits not influenced by their Asian family culture. Due to the stereotypical belief of Asians’ collectivistic and family-centered culture, it was assumed that family, specifically parents, would be the major influence on participants’ decision to come to the United States. Contrary to the researcher’s expectation, however, participants made their own decisions to study abroad despite their parents’ opposition or hesitation to allow them to go. Another finding that showed participants’ individualism was

that participants did not relate failure with the family-honor-and-shame culture that has been thought typical of Asian family (Louie, 2014).

Though parents' influence on participants' education was evident in their K-12 school years as obviously seen in Paul, whose father was actively involved in his academic performance and decisions, participants' parents generally doubted, worried, or were not willing to approve their decisions to go to the United States. John made the decision to study in the United States because he saw the need to strengthen his academic background in the competition with his colleagues. Naomi persuaded her father, who wanted her to get married and have a family, which means she made her way through a social norm that imposes a gender role on her. Paul pursued to study abroad, and he himself made the decision without his father's influence. The researcher also made her own way to the United States on both occasions, first for her undergraduate studies and for her graduate studies later. Nor were their decisions influenced by the factor that they had to depend on family support for their study abroad.

In addition, participants' individualistic tendency was shown in not associating their failure with the stereotypical belief about Asians' collectivistic family culture: success brings honor and failure brings shame on family (Louie, 2014). John said it was not about failing his parents' expectations, but about him and his decisions. Naomi said if she fails, her parents will tolerate it, but it will be eventually about failing "my own expectation on my career that supports myself" though she expected some frustration from her parents. Even Paul, who showed the strongest ties and family responsibility, said if he fails, his father would feel a little ashamed not because of his failure, but because what he told others about his son. He showed somewhat a carefree attitude as shown in "there's nothing I can do about their disappointment." Therefore,

there was not much connection found between failure and family shame in participants' perception.

Participants' individuality or independence identified in their decision making process and deviance from the values typically believed Asian families would have, imply that cultural stereotypes of Asians (Louie, 2014) have played a major role in generalizing Asians as one single homogenous group by making people attach the same typically believed values of Asians to all Asian individuals in spite of their individuality. Through stereotypes, in other words, behaviors, decisions, or tendencies individually made and shown outside the realm of culture or heritage are categorized as those made and shown with culture as the major drive behind the behaviors, decisions, or tendencies. Though participants grew up in Asia and were educated as typically thought about students in Asia under Asian parents, the fact participants made their own decisions to study abroad and are quite free from the family shame culture show that they are "individuals" who can determine their own values and life goals.

However, a specific "culture" started to shape the identity of these individual decision makers and goal setters as "Asians" after crossing borders. With their contact with American ideas, thoughts, and views, they started to see themselves as "Asians" distinguished from other races. In other words, their decisions and plans to come to the United States were made individually without awareness of their race or ethnicity, but repeated input of ideas, thoughts, and views of Asians from people, specifically from Americans, made "Asianness" develop and ingrain in them.

This explains the process of how stereotypes of Asians are shaped and developed as the identity of Asian international graduate students. As they spend more time in the United States, images, ideas, and views Americans have about Asians repeatedly enter into participants'

perceptions, and they are accepted as their individual and group identity. In other words, they started to view themselves through these reinforced stereotypical images of Asians, define themselves as prescribed in the images, accept them as true of themselves, and actively comply with or embrace the images as cultural values unique to Asians, making the values prescribed in those stereotypes relevant to themselves (Ho, 2013; Oysterman & Sakamoto, 1997; Wong et al., 1998).

Cultural stereotypes, therefore, tend to overgeneralize an ethnic group, making individuals and their personalities only meaningful when identified with the group culture or heritage. The researcher of this study was not an exception. She had the same stereotype, expecting stereotypical answers as “Asians” from participants. It indicates how powerful a stereotype can be in defining an individual by race, ethnicity, and language. It tends to remove individuality and stigmatize members of an ethnic group with stereotypical views and values attached to the group.

Theme 2. The Model Minority Stereotype as a Prescriber for Asian Intellectuals’ Attitudes, Behaviors, and Performance

Under this theme, two sub-themes are explored. First, the model minority stereotype represents two opposite images of minorities: laziness and industriousness. Under this theme, the image of the lazy locals that was developed as a ruling strategy in colonial history will be connected to the hardworking image of Asians depicted in the model minority stereotype. The other sub-theme addresses how both images are used to make minorities subordinate to the racial hierarchy.

Participants perceived the model minority image of Asians as a vantage point over other races. In general, they positioned themselves as a hardworking ethnic group in the racial

hierarchy with Whites at the top, themselves next, and other races below. Not only did they accept the hardworking image of Asians true of themselves, but they would appeal the image to future employers to gain the upper hand over their competitors of other races. Though participants showed different levels and intensity in accepting and embracing the notion, they used the model minority stereotype to meet the expectations people place on them.

Laziness and industriousness: Double face of the model minority stereotype

Participants were aware of how Americans view Asians, and the view was generally about the model minority image of Asians. Naomi used the most diverse adjectives to describe the advantages of Asian workers: *small figured, mild, moderate, diligent, consistent, and responsible*. She was the only participant who included the physical feature of Asians when answering the question about the benefits of Asian job applicants compared to people of other races. The generally implied connotation in these words is that Asians are non-threatening, compliant, and hardworking. As a participant who spent the least years in the United States, she was in the process of developing certain images of Asians.

John was found in a dilemmatic situation as his job search was coming soon. He was aware of the burden the model minority stereotype puts on him as a prospective Asian worker. His answer showed how dilemmatic he feels between ideal and fair job competition and the reality where he has to work to meet employers' expectations on Asian applicants. The ideal was revealed when he said it is the company, HR managers or interviewers who have to change. In reality, however, he has no choice but to submit himself to the expectations because he has to find a job, and the only way to overcome the stereotype is to "do better in whatever, skills or language. . . . to compete with the entire candidates, not only with Asians and Americans." What is noticed in John's case is that rather than actively embracing the model minority image of

Asians, he saw the problem with the stereotype and pointed out how the situation should be changed. However, as a prospective Asian job applicant, though he knows how burdensome it is to excel to comply to the stereotype as seen in his remark, “it is bad because you worry about it every day,” he decides to “prepare the whole thing to meet the requirements of the company.”

Paul, who spent the most time in the United States and has work experience on H-1B, embraced the model minority image of Asians with willingness. As seen in his life story, he has proved how diligent and perseverant he is throughout his life, especially when he was preparing to come to the United States. Though the researcher views his diligence and perseverance as his personality rather than as an Asian trait, the model minority image of Asians becomes magnified in Paul as it combines with his personal characteristics. As a result, the stereotype becomes true of himself as he thinks Asians work hard and it is a “benefit” to be perceived so.

As above, the degree participants showed in their compliance to the model minority stereotype was different based on the time spent in the United States, imminent job search, and H-1B work experience. However, what was commonly found in their perception was Asians are more hardworking than people of other races. Moreover, it was adopted as a strategy to appeal to employers when applying for jobs or in future workplaces as a way to compensate for the racial and linguistic barrier employers may consider as a disadvantage of Asian job applicants.

From the postcolonial view, participants’ perception that Asians are more industrious than people of other races stems from a colonizer’s strategy that places “laziness” as embedded in the nature of the colonized (Alatas, 1977; Memmi, 1965). According to Memmi (1965), the existence of the colonizer necessitates the “mythical portrait of the colonized” (p. 123). Typically, laziness is a trait used to depict the colonized because it exalts the colonizer’s position and humbles the colonized, and it is also “economically fruitful” (Memmi, 1965, p. 123). To

interpret participants' embrace of the model minority stereotype as a guideline of their thought, behavior, and workplace performance in the context of postcolonialism and Empire, it is necessary to examine how the image of laziness developed in the history of colonialism. It is because what was practiced on the colonized by the European empires are diachronically related to Empire and minorities in the current postcolonial context, and Empire and its nature can be traced in the historical empires and their nature as discussed in Chapter 2.

Laziness in colonial history

According to Alatas (1977), the image of the lazy natives developed under the Dutch rule in the archipelago by the mid-18th century. Westerners already existed in the 15th and early 16th century in the archipelago, but laziness as the image of the natives was not there yet because a native trading class was prospering, and they were an essential part of trading. Their commercial power also affected political relations, and there was no actual Western rule in the archipelago until then. The Dutch was the first empire there by the mid-18th century, and it is assumed that the Dutch began the “theme of laziness” (p. 22).

Interestingly, in his book *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, which is considered as a classic on Western Orientalism, Alatas (1977) reported until the late 1970s when he wrote the book, Southeast Asians did not know they had been discussed with laziness as the subject for such a long time. It was the European intellectuals including authors, administrators, priests, and travelers who brought the discussion of laziness of the natives to the West to “convince of the laziness and backwardness of the natives” for their home audience (p. 22). This image of the natives was then used for governing ideas generated in the West.

The image of the native is interwoven into the political and economic history of the region, the ethnocentricity of Western colonial civilization, the nature of colonial

capitalism, the degree of enlightenment of the ruling power, the ideology of the ruling group, and certain events in history affecting colonial policy such as the rise of modern liberalism. (Alatas, 1977, p. 22)

As Alatas (1977) said, throughout the whole process of discussing and generating the governing ideas, the majority of the natives were excluded, not being aware that they were the subject of the discussion and decision making. Alatas' (1977) discourse on the origin of laziness of the natives under the Western empires shows that the image of laziness was created, and there was a ruling purpose in creating this image without making the natives aware.

Industriousness in the model minority stereotype

The image of hardworking Asians signified in the model minority stereotype has the same root as the image of laziness of the natives in the colonial period. As found in participants, they perceived Asians more diligent than people of other races, which they thought can be positively accepted by employers. They also embraced it and complied with the notion to appeal to employers. It is easily embraced by participants because it promotes a seemingly universal virtue, "success through hard work," and there seems nothing problematic with the idea of achieving success through working hard. Therefore, it becomes a "benefit" to get recognized as a group of industrious people.

However, the implication that lies underneath the notion is that other minorities are not as diligent as or are lazier than Asians. By raising Asians as a symbol of diligence and industriousness amongst minorities, the model minority stereotype embeds "laziness" in the nature of minorities. It resembles the process of how the Dutch created the image of laziness in the natives for a colonial ruling purpose. Therefore, the model minority stereotype always conveys "comparison" between a model to follow and other minorities who are lazy and should

pursue the model. It was evident in participants who generally recognized Asians' industriousness as a comparative advantage over other races.

Let's note that during the Dutch rule of the archipelago, the majority of natives did not know they were being discussed as the subject of the imperial governing ideas and policy making, whose purpose was to maximize the profit for the West's capitalist economy through the natives. Like the majority of natives under Dutch rule, the majority of Asians who are represented as the model for other minorities to follow in the notion of model minority do not know they are the subject of the capitalist slogan skillfully and cleverly hidden in the seemingly universal virtuous notion, "success through hard work." Therefore, the image of hardworking Asians is easily embraced by Asians, even more by intellectual Asians such as the participants, because "success through hard work" is related to achieving degrees with high academic performance, getting high paying jobs, and prospering economically, and all these are more accessible to highly educated and skilled Asians than less skilled Asian workers.

The model minority stereotype prescribes certain patterns of thoughts and behaviors to Asians by tagging industriousness as a cultural trait to Asians as if it were originally embedded in their nature. However, it is a racist capitalist strategy because it hides race relations behind it and tactfully uses culture to gauge racial groups' performance for capitalistic production (Chou, 2008). Therefore, by embracing and acting upon the notion as their culture, Asian intellectuals unconsciously function as active agents who support and contribute to the maintenance and expansion of the capitalist economy (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991; Hardt & Negri, 2000).

Dependent on the dominant

Though hard work is promoted through the model minority stereotype, success is not guaranteed. Participants generally recognized the racial hierarchy, in which they placed Asians

as the second to Whites and above the other races. At the same time, they identified themselves as foreigners, being aware of the existence of a “glass ceiling,” “unseen ceiling,” or “something to block Asians from getting to the top position.”

By Kim’s (2010) definition, a glass ceiling is what prohibits people from being promoted due to their race and gender though they are qualified for higher management jobs. It is generally argued that the race and gender are not the discriminators, but lack of skills, so they will be promoted once they are equipped with required skills with time (Kim, 2010). Therefore, the argument implies that the reason Asians mostly take up middle management positions and cannot move up to higher management jobs is that they are not equipped with required skills.

This brings us back to the discourse of laziness and industriousness to see how this argument is related to the capitalist controlling mechanism. Memmi (1965) pointed out the image of laziness does not target only people of working class in the population, but the entire group including high skilled and educated workers. This way, the colonizers constitute laziness in the nature of the entire population, creating a deficient and needy image of the colonized, which brings the concept of a “protectorate” (p. 126). As a result, however highly skilled and educated the colonized may be, and however hard they work and try, they should be dependent on the colonizers constitutionally, and this way they are excluded from management positions and heavy responsibilities, which are reserved for the colonizers (Memmi, 1965).

The model minority stereotype shows the same mechanism of Empire as the Colonizer—note that capital C is used as per Empire. For Empire to effectively control all minorities, constitutionalized laziness implied in the model minority stereotype should be applied to all individuals of all ethnic groups under its system. With laziness as the grounding, the notion makes Asians stand out as the symbol of industriousness, and they work hard, and as a result,

they become educated, highly paid, and promoted. However, they cannot move higher than Whites because Empire places all minority individuals into its racial hierarchy that places laziness on all minority individuals.

What should be noticed in the model minority notion as Empire's project is that it imposes not only the image of hardworking Asians but other images such as humble, quiet, submissive to authority, moderate, and so on, as found in participants' perceptions of Asians in general. This way, the model minority stereotype effectively locks them in the image of needy, dependent, and deficient Asians in the racial hierarchy, who cannot have leading positions due to lacking such qualities required for leaders. Therefore, the reason Asians are rarely found in higher management positions is not their lack of skills as in the "glass ceiling" argument, but due to the effect of the stereotype as Empire's capitalist hierarchical strategy that deprives entire Asians of necessary qualities regardless of their education, skills, and personalities. The model minority stereotype, in this sense, can be considered an advanced contemporary version of the colonizer's laziness project from Memmi's (1965) time.

One finding that supports Empire's all-ethnicizing nature (Hardt & Negri, 2000) is that participants identified themselves in the racial hierarchy. They tend to acknowledge themselves as Asians in general more so than by their nationalities such as Koreans or Chinese. This was evidenced in Paul, who developed a strong Asian group identity after he came to the United States. Before, he recognized other Asians through a view of "Korean," but his experience in the United States changed it, making him recognize himself in a group of "Asians" and "aliens." The change of his self-recognition from a Korean to an Asian indicates that he now indexes himself in the racial hierarchy where his racial marker is more recognized than his individuality. In this system, what he pursues through his time and efforts, therefore, is not viewed with his

personality as the cause, but with his race and typical cultural traits attached to the race as the background. By categorizing all individuals of minority groups into the racial hierarchy regardless of their individuality, Empire's mechanism makes minorities remain minorities who need to rely on and need help from the dominant group. This was perceived as a "glass ceiling," "unseen ceiling," or "something to block Asians from getting to the top position" by participants.

The mechanism that operates behind the model minority stereotype orders Asians to exercise strenuous, unending efforts for the top, which they can never reach. A few Asians who made it to the top, such as Google CEO, Sundar Pichai, Microsoft's Satya Nadella, or Blackberry's John S. Chen, can be used as examples of success through hard work, solidifying the model minority image of Asians. It is Empire's nature that works through the racial hierarchy, making all minority individuals dependent on the dominating power socially and economically as deficient subordinates.

"Colonized me": Critical of my own origin through the eyes of the colonizer

A foreigner status was perceived in participants' perception while in the United States. Participants recognized themselves as a foreigner through the awareness of their race and lack of English proficiency. They specifically perceived lack of language skills as a primary impediment to socializing with Americans in the mainstream. Difficulties in socializing with Americans again led to difficulties in understanding American culture. As a solution to overcome the language and cultural barriers, they mentioned devoting more time and efforts invested in the language and interactions with Americans in general.

Another finding was that participants showed critical views of their culture, system of education, and people's mindsets and attitudes in general. This indicates that through their transnational experiences, including interactions with Americans and travelling back and forth,

“comparison” comes into play between two lives and systems, through which they accept American values and systems as the standard and develop a critical view of people, life, and system of their own, thrusting them into dualism.

This critical view of their own people, culture, and system seems to go with their assimilation efforts to overcome the barriers they encounter in the United States. First, the barriers come from not being accepted by the mainstream people and culture, which results in more assimilation efforts. In the process, they start to view their culture and system as inferior to American culture and system, seeing themselves through the eyes of Americans. In other words, comparison and contrast were made between the two cultures and systems through their cross-cultural experiences, and they accept the American culture and system as the standard, through which they see their own cultures and systems as deficient.

From the postcolonial view, participants’ feeling deficient and being critical of their own culture and system comes from “inferiority complex” (Fanon, 1986), “double consciousness” (DuBois, 1965), and “mimicry” (Bhabha, 1984). Inferiority complex is the “outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization” (Fanon, 1986, p. 13), which causes a feeling of “no good” for no reason (p. 139). Double consciousness (DuBois, 1965) is the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (p. 9). Bhabha’s (1984) “mimicry” poses a similar idea. It is “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other” and “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (pp. 126-127).

Interestingly, Westermann (1934) pointed out that this inferiority complex is particularly remarkable among the most educated people, who incessantly attempt to assimilate themselves to the language and culture of the colonizer (as cited in Fanon, 1986). It is because Western values are imprinted as essential values in the minds of the colonized (Fanon, 1963, p. 11). As a

result, “individualism” as a value and “cultural assimilation” are pursued at the expense of their independence as cultural and intellectual individuals.

And the first among them is individualism. The colonized intellectual learned from his masters that the individual must assert himself. The colonialist bourgeoisie hammered into the colonized mind the notion of a society of individuals where each is locked in his subjectivity, where wealth lies in thought. . . . In order to assimilate the culture of the oppressor and venture into his fold, the colonized subject has had to pawn some of his own intellectual possessions. For instance, one of the things he has had to assimilate is the way the colonialist bourgeoisie think. (Fanon, 1963, pp. 11, 13)

“Individualism” that is pursued as a virtue is clearly represented in the model minority stereotype. The notion emphasizes the importance of individual success through hard work; thus, it gives a message that all can achieve what they want, but it, in fact, forces Asians to make unending efforts for what they can never achieve to the fullest. It only makes Asians try harder to be assimilated to the dominant’s culture and way of thinking, while their own culture becomes rendered deficient as seen in Fanon’s (1963) quotation above. Participants’ feeling deficient and foreign due to cultural and language barriers, therefore, first comes from seeing themselves as a minority group within American values and system as the standard or model to follow. Actually, the “through-the-eyes-of-colonizer” view was already embedded in them and became activated through their transnational experience. This will be discussed in a later section.

As a result, they live in the dilemma that they will never become *quite the same* (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126) as Whites as they are always locked in the racial hierarchy that ethnicizes all individuals. Giving up or dropping out of the hierarchy is not allowed, either. It is because the mechanism makes them continuously and strenuously desire and work toward the top, as if it

was innate to them, demanding their being and existence appropriated for the hierarchical system. In this system where their being necessitated by Empire, the Colonizer, human efforts on the side of the minorities are only made to think and act like the people prescribed in the view of the dominant, resulting in a being *almost the same, but not quite the same* (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). This *not quite the same* status felt by the participants remains as longings for American culture, lifestyle, and system, while making them always condemn their own in the sense that it is not as the same as the dominant's. This psychology was found not only in participants, but also in participants' perceptions of people in their home countries in the form of yearnings and desires for the United States and its culture, which will be discussed in the next theme.

Theme 3. Asian intellectuals' perceptions of themselves and the perceptions of people in their home countries about Asians educated in the United States

Under this theme, two sub-themes are discussed: inverted Orientalism revealed through participants' anticipated social influence on their countries combined with people's perceptions of participants as Western educated intellectuals, and self-Orientalism revealed through participants' duality or dual attitudes and assimilation efforts toward the United States and people.

As explained in the review of the literature, inverted Orientalism addresses the way Western-educated Asian intellectuals present themselves to the eyes of the West and conform to the Western values and ideas, which adversely influence people in their countries (James, 2012). Inverted Orientalism was identified through participants' critical view of people and the system in their home countries, which was cultivated through their thoughts about the United States and its system. It was also revealed through participants' projection on their social standing in their home countries in the long term.

Self-Orientalism deals with the psychological aspect of Orientals as the result of modernity in their nations, in the process of which they develop “desires and yearnings of seeking equality of the West,” and this causes ideological self-positioning of inferiority to the West in the mind of Orientals (Yan & Santos, 2009, p. 298). Self-Orientalism is used to discuss participants’ dual perceptions toward the United States, its culture and system, which were identified through what they felt when crossing borders. In a broader sense, both types of Orientalism have the same root in the modernization process of the East when the Orient tries to follow the West as the model.

Inverted Orientalism revealed through Asian intellectuals’ social influence

As seen in the example of Javanese painter Raden Saleh in Chapter 2, inverted Orientalism is found in the way Western-educated Orientals influence people and modernity in their countries (James, 2012). After accumulating H-1B work experience, participants were planning to go back to their countries though John and Naomi were open to other possibilities to some degree. They recognized their degrees and work experience in the United States as transnational credentials that will enable them to find jobs that require English proficiency and skills in their fields. Participants perceived their degrees and work experience in the United States as “power” that will equip them with a “stronger background” than those who received education in their home countries. Paul’s job experience in Korea proves it. He could get a very competitive job within 15 days after he arrived in Korea. He said he benefited from his U.S.-earned master’s degree, work experience, and English proficiency. The other two participants also expected higher salaries and social status in their countries in the long run.

This indicates that people in China and Korea, especially employers, recognize U.S.-earned degrees and work experience as more competitive than the same earned in their countries.

As a result, participants' credentials are compensated for higher salaries as participants anticipated. In addition, higher social status was expected as a benefit of their degrees and work experience in the United States because of the value people in their countries place on them. For example, John decided to get a degree in the United States to survive the competition with his colleagues who graduated from high-ranking universities in China, which means a U.S.-earned degree would be valued higher than the same degree earned in China. This means U.S.-earned credentials will have both social and economic power that influence the perceptions of people in China and Korea.

This suggests that participants will become influential as they move to higher management positions, get paid higher salaries, and gain more social connections as they accumulate experience in their countries. What makes it possible is the value people attach to the Western education system as perceived by participants. In other words, their future social power in their countries first comes from their U.S.-earned credentials, which are combined with the value people place on them, and the value originates from people's tendency to mystify or mythicize America and its culture and system. It shows the same process Naomi reported, "They really value American education system. . . . American culture is highly valued by Chinese." Similarly, Paul said, "somehow people think America is number one country, number one nation in the world. So people maybe think everything is good in the United States." John also mentioned, "(they) think here (the United States) is better."

The social influence of Western-educated intellectuals on their countries has a deep colonial root. As an example, in the early 1900s, Korean intellectuals educated abroad influenced the formation of the national identity with their ideas and thoughts they brought from the West during the Japanese rule in Korea (Robinson, 2014). Their purpose was to transform Korean

society to a nation-state that resembled the West as a model (Robinson, 2014). Like this, Western-educated intellectuals like the participants can affect the direction and process of modernization of their countries, and their social power to do that comes from the synergistic effect of their Western education, credentials, and values attached to them by locals.

As their social power increases as they move up in the social hierarchy in their countries, their influence will also increase, affecting more people with their ideas and thoughts brought from the United States. As time passes, their ideas and thoughts will gradually bleed into politics, economy, education, literature, art, and other fields in their countries. The implication is that U.S.-educated intellectuals function as the medium or agents that deliver Western ideas, thoughts, and views of themselves to the society and people in their countries with their social power boosted by people's mystification of the West. The whole process grants them transnational power in the historical and Orientalist sense.

Self-Orientalism revealed

Self-Orientalism was revealed in both participants and Asians in their home countries. First, it was represented through participants' duality between positive feelings toward the United States and feelings of not belonging to the United States. Their duality is discussed based on Asians' self-Orientalist positioning toward the West. Second, participants' duality leads to their dilemmatic status between longings for the West and diverse barriers they encounter in reality. This results in assimilation efforts to American culture and people in a cultural sense.

Through duality

Participants showed positive feelings toward people and the living environment in the United States. As addressed before, they viewed their study and work experience in the United States as a bridge for their future careers. So, the researcher first thought those feelings might

stem from participants' thought that their needs can be met in the United States. However, in addition to "need" of the United States for their future, their psychological satisfaction and a sense of self-realization in this context seem solely originated from what they felt about being in the United States at the time of their arrival in the United States or from their image of the United States in general.

Naomi felt good and happy when she came back to the United States after travelling to China: "I felt happy to be back rather than stay there. It's just more comfortable and people are more polite." She said she could not understand why she felt happy, adding the happiness she felt at that time might have been "just superficial." However, that happy feeling made her decide to get a job and stay longer in the United States. Paul felt it was like "heaven" when he came back to the United States for his doctoral degree after working in Korea for one and a half years. He said he felt alive, cozy, confident, motivated, and challenged. In John's case, life in the United States is associated with a privileged life only accessible to middle or high class, while people of lower class can only dream about it. John used "good environment, blue sky, clean water, and nice people" to describe the life in the United States. In her self-narratives about her earlier transnational experience when she first came to the United States, the researcher also reported that she felt excited to be in the United States and amazed by the environment that looked like movie scenes.

As seen in participants' descriptions, their feelings toward the United States show that their presence in the United States brings about psychological satisfaction, and the country is perceived as a place for self-realization, for example, as an ideal location where clean living environments are guaranteed, and their efforts can be rewarded through jobs. Through

participants' descriptions during their interviews, the researcher had the impression that they felt they were in the place they had desired or longed for when they came back to the United States.

Next, they all reported their foreigner status as a reason for their lower social status in the United States, but neither did their feelings of not belonging to the United States affect their good and comfortable feelings toward the United States. Though they knew their sense of not belonging to the United States is caused by not being accepted by the mainstream culture and people, their positive feelings toward the United States and Americans were not affected by the barriers or any other social obstacles they experience in the United States.

For example, John and Naomi described Americans as nice and polite respectively. Paul did not think Americans have prejudice or stereotypes as much as Koreans, which was indicated in his contrast between international organizers including Americans and Koreans who suddenly changed their attitudes after they found out his background in the United States. It was implied when he said, "International organizers don't do that. That was good. They are just like American people. There is not much preconception or stereotype."

It may look ironic because participants expressed positive feelings toward the United States and Americans regardless of their academic and professional needs. Neither did these positive feelings match their being alienated as Asian minorities, which was identified through their current or anticipated experience with social, cultural, and linguistic barriers in the United States. Moreover, they were aware of the stereotypes Americans have about Asians, which makes the source of their positive feelings toward the United States and Americans more questionable.

This duality or dual mindedness toward the United States and Americans can be explained by the mixed feelings participants have as a minority group toward the West. As

discussed in the literature review and above, positiveness toward the United States and American people comes from the longings they have for the West and its civilization as Asians in general (Yan & Santos, 2009). It leads to people's fantasy or myth about the West as the world where the original version of modernity began and developed in its best form, causing Asians' self-positioning with the assumption that non-Western cultures and civilizations are inferior to those of the West (Yan & Santos, 2009). As a result, West-longing or pursuing perceptions have become inverted in people's minds, such as made-in-U.S.A. products are better than products made in China; American culture and education system are superior to those of Asian countries, life is better in the United States; and everything in the United States is good as reported by participants.

Considering participants grew up and lived in Asia except from about three to eight years in the United States studying or working, it is natural that participants have been influenced by this self-Orientalist view that is inverted in the minds of Chinese and Koreans until they came to the United States. In other words, it is rooted in participants' psychology as well as it has passed down from the past through the modernity process in their countries and inverted as a general sentiment among people in the form of yearnings and desires for the West. These yearnings and desires for the West are represented through participants' positive feelings toward Americans and the United States and preferences for American lifestyle, combined with feelings of satisfaction achieved through the realization of their presence in the United State, which people in their countries can only mystify or mythicize in their imagination.

Through cultural assimilation efforts

While their positive feelings indicate participants' self-Orientalist positioning toward the United States as Asians as a "group," their "individual" experiences in the United States tell

something different. Life in the United States envisioned by Asians in general does not seem to match what they experience in reality. As their awareness of a foreigner status indicates, the dissonance comes from their not being accepted by the mainstream due to their racial, linguistic, social, and cultural barriers. They know that they cannot belong to the mainstream through their individual experiences, while yearnings for the United States still remain in them as an ethnic group in unity with the desires for the West in common with people in their countries.

This dilemmatic status between longings for the West and barriers existing in reality results in frustration by feelings of not belonging to the mainstream culture and strenuous efforts for assimilation. Though these two aspects look contrasting with each other, they are like two sides of a coin. They exist in the place they have dreamed to be in, but it can never be their own, or they cannot belong to it either. Even with this awareness, their yearnings and desires make them incessantly work toward the dominant people and culture.

A relevant finding that supports participants' cultural assimilation efforts is participants' choice of pseudonyms. Before the first interview, each participant was given a chance to choose a pseudonym for confidentiality. Interestingly, all of them chose an English name even though the researcher encouraged them to choose either an English pseudonym or a name that can signify their nationality. They knew that their nationality would be revealed in the data, but not their real names, so confidentiality issues did not affect the choice of their pseudonym. A possible reason could be their past experience with Americans who had difficulty in pronouncing their names because the researcher has had the same experience. In such situations, they must have repeated their names several times. Repeated experience like this might have frustrated them. As a tactical measure, they may have decided to use an English name to ease the pressure Americans would have in memorizing and pronouncing their names.

In this context, English pseudonyms are devised not for participants, but for Americans, so that they can relieve their pressure to memorize names foreign to them. This way, participants yield and compromise their national and ethnic identity represented by their names for the sake of cultural assimilation and identify themselves closer to Americans and what they feel familiar with, such as English names.

To sum up, participants' positive views of Americans and the country derive from Asians' self-positioning attitude toward the West, whose origin is found in the pursuit of modernity, mostly the U.S. version, having led to mythicization and mystification of the country. While the United States remains as an ideal place beyond the reach of most Asians in Asian countries due to their lack of resources and opportunities, it becomes real to participants who can study or work in the United States. Therefore, feelings participants felt such as relief, comfort, refreshment, or determination for the future after travelling to their countries come from the materialization of what they have yearned and desired as Asians. However, their alien status experienced individually is not resolved in spite of the realization of what they have longed for; rather it leads to more relentless efforts for assimilation to the language and culture of the dominant. This dilemmatic status gives unique identity to participants as transnational beings with individual experiences, while sharing self-Orientalist positioning with Asians in their countries.

Theme 4. Asian Intellectuals' Perceptions of Their Social and Economic Status

This theme has three sub-sections: "respect" and "jealousy" participants perceived from people's attitudes toward them, English as a factor of higher social standing in participants' home countries, and increasing economic disparities between U.S.-educated intellectuals and their counterparts across the globe. First, feelings such as respect and jealousy were identified in

people's attitudes toward the participants, which indicates that people perceive participants' U.S.-earned credentials as the product of resources only available for the middle and upper class. Participants perceived that people showed similar attitudes toward their English proficiency. Finally, as participants accumulate experiences in their field, economic disparities are expected to grow between themselves and their counterparts in both the United States and their countries.

“Respect” and “jealousy”

Participants generally expected a middle class life in their countries as a result of their U.S.-earned degrees and work experience. More specifically, they anticipated a higher middle class life in their countries than in the United States. They expected the same or higher economic status and higher social status in their home countries. A reason participants anticipated higher social status in their countries was that there would be no linguistic, racial, and cultural barriers in their countries, while the barriers were the major reason they expected lower social status in the United States. What makes participants feel socially and economically elevated in their countries in the future was also connected with people's attitudes toward the participants. In addition to “power” and “strong background” people in their home countries attached to participants' degrees and work experience in the United States, feelings such as “respect,” “jealousy,” or “envy” were identified from people in participants' home countries. These feelings were related to Asians' yearnings and desires for the West on one hand as addressed in the previous section, and at the same time, they were reactions toward participants' resources that enable them to access costly education in the United States, which is associated with class issues in China and Korea.

Naomi reported both respect and envy from people she encountered when she travelled back to China. John related how people feel toward those who study in the United States with economic privilege and class issues in China. Respect and jealousy were also perceived by Paul who felt “changed attitudes” in people when they recognized his education and career experience in the United States. People’s attitudes toward the participants are related to how participants perceive their social status in their countries.

Participants saw the reasons for respect, jealousy, or envy in people’s perception that their degrees are the product of resources available for the middle and upper class. John reported that Chinese think people working and living in the United States are better skilled and advantaged because they could become educated in the United States due to their financial resources. He stated that middle and upper class people want to live in the United States, but due to their jobs only available in China, they send their family to the United States for education, supporting them to study and live there. Naomi said, “Some people will think it’s more about money. . . . (they think) everything is from parents who have already prepared for them.” Paul said people feel jealous, first, because of what he is pursuing, which means a degree he is working on in the United States, and second, because people think it was possible through his parents’ support for him.

This indicates that Chinese and Koreans perceive studying in the United States as a middle or upper class privilege. Their perception also affects participants’ self-recognition of themselves as prospective middle class or higher than middle class in their countries because people in their home countries think the U.S.-educated are more skilled and competitive than those educated in their countries, which will make better job opportunities available to them, and this will eventually guarantee higher social and economic status at home. Another finding that

supports participants' middle class mentality is financial resources they expect would be available for them. They mentioned paying money back to their parents, supporting families financially, or sending their children abroad for education in the future.

Therefore, participants' self-definition of prospective middle class or higher in both the social and economic sense in their countries mainly stems from their perception of themselves as U.S.-educated professionals or intellectuals. Combined with people's perception of middle class affordability of U.S. education, their U.S. credentials will be used for an economically self-sufficient middle class life first. And then their economic resources will be used to maintain or raise their social status in their countries, as found in John and Naomi who plan to educate their future children abroad.

“English” and social standing

Participants perceived English as an important or the most important construct in their careers. Paul's experience provides an example. Though the details were not addressed in the data presentation due to confidentiality, his general work experience in the United States showed that English was the biggest obstacle to him in his workplace. However, the same English proficiency, together with his degree and work experience attained in the United States, got him a very competitive position in only 15 days after he started a job search in Korea.

Throughout the interviews with participants, English was mentioned most frequently, even when not questioned about language specifically. For example, it appeared in their answers about how they prepared to come to the United States. It was mentioned as a reason they came to the United States or extended their stay in the United States. It was also mentioned as a big or the biggest challenge in their future job search as Asian applicants. In their countries, English was considered as an important or the most important skill that made or will make them more

competitive compared to their counterparts in their countries. Finally, it was perceived as a reason for respect and jealousy related to “class” in both China and Korea.

This suggests that English is not just a language, but a factor that influences participants’ social class status because it raises their perceived social status in their countries, while lowering it in the United States. Some studies conducted on Chinese and Koreans support this. In China, English learning was identified as a “means of promoting social mobility (Butler, 2013; Zou & Zhang, 2011, as cited in Gao, 2014), contributing to social hierarchies in China (Gao, 2014). Studies on Koreans also showed that class privilege and mobility were closely related to students’ overseas experiences to acquire English as capital (Park & Lo, 2012; Shin, 2014; Song, 2012), especially when it combines with the “symbolic power of the North American academic credentials” (Shin, 2014, p. 101).

This explains why participants perceived respect and jealousy from people in their home countries. Combined with people’s acknowledgement of participants’ U.S.-earned degrees as power and strong background and yearnings and desires for the West as defined by self-Orientalism, English acquired in the United States is a social indicator of class in Korea and China. This, in turn, raises participants’ expectations on their social standing in their countries due to its scarcity when it is acquired in the United States because it is a privilege only accessible to the middle and upper class.

Therefore, English proficiency, as perceived by the participants and as seen in the discourse above, is closely associated with how participants perceive their social standing in their countries. English competency credentialed in the United States gives rise to feelings such as envy, respect, and jealousy in people in China and Korea, who already have desires and yearnings for the United States rooted in them, making participants invest their time, money, and

efforts to acquire it. Acquiring English in the United States is acquiring social status in their countries, like lower English proficiency makes them feel socially deficient in the United States. In this sense, English is an example of how a language becomes capital and a social indicator with values and views people attach to it (Bourdieu, 2011).

Transnational credentials deepening global economic disparities

Participants expected higher economic status both in the United States and in their countries. This suggests that participants may contribute to economic disparities not just in the local market, but at a global level as a result of their education and job experience in the United States. Upon their entry into the U.S. domestic labor market as highly educated and skilled Asian workers, an income gap is expected between them and their Asian counterparts who are less skilled and educated. As they build a higher profile by accumulating professional experience in their field and advance in their positions, the economic disparities between these highly educated and skilled Asian group and less skilled and educated Asian workers will become greater. Participants also perceived better job opportunities in their countries, resulting in income disparities between them and those with equivalent degrees acquired in their countries. This means the economic gap between them and blue-collar workers in their countries will be greater.

Though the H-1B visa program has been controversial because of the debate that employers take advantage of cheap foreign labor, which, as a result, is believed to lower wages for U.S. workers (Chamberlain, 2017; Matloff, 2017), the reason it attracts highly educated and skilled workers such as the participants is that it benefits their future careers with the impact of the U.S. credentials when they return to their countries. This was also acknowledged by the participants. John said, in terms of a higher salary, he would choose China, but he was looking at better opportunities in the United States considering his long-term career goals and professional

development, which will eventually benefit his economic status in China. John's future is reflected through Paul's past job experience in Korea, which shows how big the income gap can be between U.S.-educated and skilled workers and their local counterparts with degrees and work experience acquired in Korea. John had a master's degree and less than three years of work experience on H-1B in the United States, but the position he was hired for was a senior management position equivalent to 15 years of work experience in the same field in Korea.

The indication is, despite the heated discussion on the nature of the H-1B visa program, the income level of Asian intellectuals with graduate degrees attained in the United States is superior to that of their less skilled and educated counterparts in the U.S. labor market, and by the time they return to their countries with H-1B experience, their income level will be higher than that of locals with equivalent degrees and work experience and much higher than low-income workers in their countries. As they spend more years in their fields and become more experienced, they will contribute to bigger economic disparities in both countries, which shows how Asian intellectuals can deepen class disparities transnationally with their U.S.-earned credentials.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

This study analyzed Asian international graduate students' transnational experiences and their perceptions from the perspective of postcolonialism, specifically in the context of Empire and globalization. The model minority stereotype was defined as Empire's guideline that prescribes "culture" specific to Asians to socialize and ethnicize them under its "global capitalist hierarchy" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 133-134). In this section, discussion is summarized with in-depth linkage of the model minority stereotype with the context of Empire for implications of

this study. And then, areas to improve the research, educational implications, and suggestions for future research are addressed.

Empire's Social Control through the Model Minority Stereotype

In the sense that the model minority stereotype prescribes a certain behavioral and thinking pattern “culturally” specific to Asians, and it is shaped, developed, and ingrained in the minds of Asian international graduate students through their transnational experience, the notion functions as a strategy for social control, which makes Asians subordinate to the command of Empire, envisioned as one totalizing process of the world under its supranational order by Hardt and Negri (2000). The command system is not forced into their minds; rather it looks natural, so the objects of the model minority stereotype accept the notion without repulsion or resistance. This process demonstrates a social control strategy of Empire, whose power mechanism is more “democratic” unlike the disciplinary society that exercised its power through corrective institutions and facilities, and works through people’s brains and bodies to make its control “increasingly interiorized within the subjects themselves” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 23).

It is neither taught in institutions as discipline, nor does it state normalcy or deviance of behaviors. Instead, the notion infiltrated participants’ minds through repeated social contact with people. In this way, it made individuals accept the notion as true of themselves. It was then internalized, and participants embraced the notion to the extent that it became their individual and group identity, not just letting the notion define themselves as hardworking Asians, but also activating the notion with their own free will by appealing to the stereotypical group image of Asians as an individual selling point to their future employers.

Therefore, the model minority stereotype represents Empire’s subtle, delicate, and crafty strategy to exercise its power. Based on the discourse of Empire by Hardt and Negri (2000), the

power of the model minority stereotype was manifested in three ways in this study: (1) the notion was “democratically” shaped and developed, in other words, through individual transnational interactions and environmental input, (2) it was ingrained and internalized in “individual” Asians as a group by Empire’s all-ethnicizing mechanism, and (3) it was “voluntarily” embraced by individual Asians as a group.

The process shows how individual “life has now become . . . an object of power” (Foucault, 1994, as cited in Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 24) through the model minority stereotype. Also, as confirmed by Hardt and Negri, (2000), the power functions in the most advanced form to “invest life through and through” with its key role “to administer life” (p. 24). The model minority stereotype, therefore, is a social control strategy of Empire directed to the lives of Asians as individuals and an ethnic group, in which 50 years has been invested since the notion first appeared in 1966 in the United States, “democratically” claiming the lives of Asians through generations.

Ethnicization toward “Global Capitalist Hierarchy”

The model minority stereotype is directed toward Empire’s ethnicization for the “global capitalist hierarchy” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 133). Ethnicization, or “occupational reward hierarchy” refers to the complex hierarchy of labor force, which is used to socialize minorities into the workforce to maintain and expand the capitalist system of Empire by prescribing specific sets of attitudes and behaviors in the form of culture to ethnic groups (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, pp. 33, 88). In this study, the model minority stereotype was identified as the Empire’s ethnicization project in three ways: (1) it prescribes industriousness to Asians as “culture,” which stigmatizes other minorities with laziness as innate to them, (2) it socializes Asians and other minorities into the racial hierarchy, and (3) it disseminates ethnicization at a global level.

First, in the model minority stereotype, “culture” replaces traditional biological and physical differences (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991; Chou, 2008; Hardt & Negri, 2000). It is referred to as “imperial racism” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991; Hardt & Negri, 2000). The “culture” prescribed to Asians in the notion of the model minority is industriousness, which in turn stigmatizes all minorities with laziness, which is bad and should be expelled. Therefore, by promoting the image of hardworking Asians as a model to follow among minorities, the model minority stereotype socializes all minorities into the system of the occupation and reward hierarchy, where the quality of labor force of ethnic groups is evaluated and rewarded for the sake of Empire’s capitalist maintenance and expansion. It was seen in participants’ self-ranking of Asians in the racial hierarchy, under Whites and above other minorities. Therefore, in the sphere of Empire, the notion of “culture” is tactfully used to maximize capitalist production through the labor force of minorities.

Finally, the ethnicization project hidden in the model minority stereotype is geared toward the “capitalist world economy” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, p. 32), which is operated by socializing all Asians in the world under the system. This represents Empire’s unterritorializing aspect. In this study, participants perceived respect, envy, or jealousy in the way people in their countries recognize their degrees and work experience acquired in the United States. It implies participants’ emergence in their countries brings the success image of Asians with U.S.-earned degrees and elite jobs to their countries, with the notion of model minority embedded in their presence. Their hard work in the United States evidenced in their degrees and professional experience is then rewarded with higher economic and social standing in their countries, combined with Asians’ self-Orientalist attitudes toward the West in their home countries, sending the same message as in the United States: success through hard work.

Therefore, ethnicization through the model minority stereotype does not only occur in the United States, but throughout the world, through transnational Asian population such as Western educated intellectuals and professionals like the participants. This way, Empire's power that rules the world is backed by global ethnicization that socializes all Asians on the globe into its global capitalist hierarchy regardless of where they are located and what Asian descent they have, which explains Empire's "flexible hierarchies" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xiii).

Empire Thrives on Identity Complexities

In this study, duality or dual-mindedness identified in the psychology of the participants and people in their home countries revealed that Orientalism serves Empire's controlling mechanism that thrives on the complexities of identity. From the diachronic view, their Orientalist attitudes were identified in the form of yearnings and desires for the West represented by the United States, which were generated in the process of modernity of their countries. From the synchronic view, it was shown in participants' complexities represented by their being alien and feeling positive in the United States with Asians' yearnings and desires as the origin. Orientalism was also identified in participants' critical view of their country, culture, and people with American values and systems as the standard, which indicates participants viewed themselves through the eyes of Americans, leading to assimilation efforts and conformity to the model minority image.

The complexities identified in participants' identity have been termed into words such as mimicry, ambivalence, hybrids, and double consciousness by postcolonial scholars (Bhabha, 1984; DuBois, 1965; Fanon, 1986). They revealed that Empire's real power is exercised through complexities or identity conflicts, which are welcomed in the terrain of Empire because they "affirm the multiplicity of differences so as to subvert the power of the ruling binary structures"

(Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 144-145). In the discourse of Empire, these complexities should be understood in connection with imperial racism, “not in terms of binary divisions and exclusion but as a strategy of differential inclusion,” in which there are “no people on the outside” and “no identity is designated as Other” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, as cited in Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 193-194). In other words, Empire uses differences to integrate others into its order compatible with its constantly expanding nature, making its subjects think they are one with the dominant in its domain when there are always racial and capitalist hierarchical barriers. Through this “differential racism,” differences are orchestrated in the system of control, which has to do with Empire’s three moments that consist of its command system: inclusive, differential, and managerial (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 195).

The complexities participants experience individually and as Asians, therefore, are the representation of their identity conflicts between Empire’s inclusive moment that welcomes all and differential moment that welcomes ethnic and cultural differences only, excluding any possibilities of political conflicts from its system of control. In other words, participants’ complexities are welcomed in Empire’s all-encompassing realm; however, the inclusion is only applied to their ethnic and cultural differences. However, the barriers participants felt as “unseen ceilings” or “some rules or something that blocks Asian guys from getting to the top position” are political in their nature, which need actions and cause conflicts consequently. Therefore, their foreigner status always remains unresolved due to Empire’s differential moment. Still, Empire’s managerial moment effectively uses their complexities for its capitalist economy, for example, through the notion of the model minority stereotype that makes them strenuously work hard toward the top in the racial hierarchy in the midst of feeling alienated politically.

Areas to Improve the Research

This study was conducted with narrative inquiry as the research method, through which the researcher listened to participants' life stories and looked into their perceptions as Asians and the process by which their Asian identity was shaped and developed. Through the investigation of the themes, the researcher could see the common ground among participants' perceptions. While in-depth investigation and analysis was possible through the method, however, the findings of this study cannot be generalized due to the limited number of participants. Quantitative research methods will help to validate the findings and results regarding this matter.

Second, the use of participants' language for the interviews will improve the data quality. As addressed in the delimitations of the study in Chapter 1, the interview language was standardized in English, which limited participants' full expression of their feelings and emotions. For example, John sometimes struggled to find appropriate English words to express what he thinks and feels and needed Susan's help for clarification. Considering this study used narrative inquiry as the method, in which the researcher looks into participants' psychology and emotions, the use of participants' native language for the interviews will enhance the quality of data as it catches subtle nuances that might be lost when the second language is used (Polkinghorne, 2005). A professional interpreter or translator who can carefully catch participants' emotions expressed both verbally and non-verbally will improve this area.

Third, participants' legal status needs to be carefully considered in case a follow-up study is planned with the same participants. Participants in this study were either on F-1 or OPT before obtaining H-1B. For example, one of the participants was on OPT and applying for an H-1B visa. After the third interview, however, the participant's return to China was suddenly decided because of the OPT expiration. Due to the uncertainty of non-immigrant visa types and

international students' flexibility after expiration of their stay on OPT, confirmation of their status transfer from OPT to H-1B should be secured, specifically if a longitudinal study is planned with the same participants. However, the same fact added credibility to a finding: international graduate students planning to work in the United States are mobile and fluid, which grants them transnational characteristics.

Next, it would help collect more effective and reliable data if interviews were conducted shortly after their travels to their countries. Naomi's "superficially happy" feeling when she came back to the United States, for example, could have been explained in more detail if she had been interviewed soon after she arrived from her country. This could be improved by adding a condition to the sampling criteria.

Finally, cross-cultural interviews will strengthen data credibility and reliability. If at least one of the three interviews with each participant can be conducted while they are staying in their countries, their immediate feelings and perceptions of their country and people will be examined in depth. Cross-cultural research collaboration will improve this area.

Educational Implications

This study revealed that Asian international graduate students not only accept the notion of model minority, but believe the notion is true of themselves as a guideline for their academic and professional life in the United States and future careers in their home countries. The influence of the notion is not only local, but becomes transnational through their U.S.-earned credentials. The model minority notion specifically poses a higher risk to Asian intellectuals like the participants because of their professionalism that gives them privileged thoughts about their social and economic status in the racial hierarchy. The danger lies in its connection with the hegemony of Empire, because its inclusive moment gives a false vision to Asian intellectuals

that they can be part of the dominance, ruling over other minorities, while making them blind to the “differential” moment strategically embedded in the model minority stereotype, which requires political concerns. Without understanding of how the model minority stereotype is shaped and developed in their psychology and how it makes them act upon the imposed image, they will keep working hard to climb the social ladder as prescribed by the notion, serving the capitalist economy of Empire as active agents without realizing it.

The researcher, therefore, suggests educators at all levels devise ways to equip students with a critical view of their status, so that they can see possibilities to view and live their lives as different beings. Students in the scope of this study are not limited to Asians or Asian Americans, but include other minority students and White students too all over the world because, in the domain of Empire that ethnicizes all people into its global capitalist order, everyone needs this understanding and awareness, which will be the start of becoming “responsible Subjects” who participate in the transformation of the reality (Freire, 1970, p. 89).

As the notions of ethnic stereotypes and Empire are interdisciplinary, related contents can be integrated into various academic disciplines such as education, sociology, psychology, history, geography, philosophy, anthropology, English, communication, multicultural and ethnic studies, migration studies, postcolonial studies, and so on. Especially, as the concepts are directly related to international students studying English in the United States or any other English-speaking countries, the researcher recommends relevant ESL curriculum be developed for the purpose of their awareness of the global capitalist hierarchy and empowerment through instruction. Lastly, due to the difficulty integrating the concepts into STEM majors and fields, campus-wide required courses such as Expository Writing and Public Speaking are strongly encouraged to include this content through curriculum development.

While students navigate through and inside the courses above, their awareness might come from or reach either “privileged me” or “colonized me” depending on students’ levels or statuses. Regardless of where the starting point is, they will “no longer remain as they were” as they move “toward every new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively” (Freire, 1970, p. 61).

Suggestions for Future Research

As pointed out in the section for Contribution of the Study in Chapter 2, scholarship on the model minority stereotype has mainly focused on racism (Sakamoto et al., 2013). As such, previous research contributed to revealing racism behind the notion. Scholars determined that the model minority stereotype is wrong because it has propagated a slogan of success through hard work, through which it has silenced Asians and Asian Americans against racism, and as a result has been used to maintain the *status quo* (Hartlep, 2013a, 2013b). However, the discourse has been directed to racism exclusively and focused on how Asian and Asian Americans have been disadvantaged; consequently, the over-education view arguing that they are underpaid compared to their White counterparts has been a popular direction of research (Sakamoto et al., 2012). Such directions have served highly educated and skilled Asian and Asian American workers and ignored important issues such as economic disparities in the labor market (Sakamoto et al., 2012).

To refute the over-education view and meet the contextual need for a new research paradigm in this globalizing era, this study situated the model minority research in a postcolonial context, where Empire ethnicizes all human beings through its global capitalist hierarchy to expand its ever-growing territory powered by globalization and transnational workforce. In the same context, Asian international graduate students as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers were viewed as the most privileged group both in the U.S. Asian immigrant labor

market and in their countries with their transnational eligibility. Therefore, they were defined as serving agents of the maintenance and expansion of Empire's world capitalist economy.

In the hope that more researchers will participate in the same direction taken by this study that revealed the substance of Empire and its ethnicization project through the model minority stereotype, the following directions for future research are suggested. To address the global facet of Empire, "Asians" is used to refer to all Asians including Asian Americans and Asians across the globe.

(1) How Asian students and faculty in academia and professionals in workplaces embrace and comply to the model minority notion in spite of their psychological struggles caused by the social barrier: Several studies have been conducted to address how the notion is accepted by Asian American undergraduate students as reviewed in literature (Oysterman & Sakamoto, 1997; Trytten et al., 2012; Wong et al., 1998). However, more in-depth research is suggested to make connections between Asians' compliance with the notion and perceived social barriers. This venue of research will reveal Empire's mechanism hidden in the model minority notion, which thrives on complexities and identity struggles while still managing people's minds and bodies through the notion effectively.

(2) How the model minority stereotype is accepted by Asians in Asian countries and in other parts of the world: In the ever-expanding realm of Empire that reaches all corners of the globe, the model minority stereotype is understood as an ethnicization strategy for its global capitalist hierarchy. As Hartlep (2014) confirmed, the model minority stereotype exists not only in the United States, but in Asian countries. Therefore, regional research, especially in Asian countries will contribute to disclose the supranational nature of Empire's ethnicization that is not limited to the United States.

(3) What transformation can be identified in the model minority stereotype with the effect of globalization: For example, Kaibara (2014) revealed a transnational network between Japanese professionals in Japan and in the United States to present the image of Japanese immigrants in the United States as a model minority that conforms to the mainstream cultural and social values in the United States. Such studies will be an indication of contingency and flexibility of Empire's transnational mechanism, which requires engagement of researchers who can work in international collaboration. This direction will contribute to a new perspective to the model minority stereotype, inviting scholars to see it not as a fixed notion or concept, but as a changing ethnicization strategy of Empire, which can be manifested in different forms depending on its future capitalistic needs.

(4) How the entry of highly skilled and educated Asians into the labor market statistically contributes to the economic and social disparities between them and their counterparts locally and transnationally: This area has not attracted much attention due to the over-education view (Sakamoto et al., 2013). Statistical review and research with quantitative approaches will help identify related issues. For example, H-1B workers are not considered as immigrant workers because H-1B is a temporary non-immigrant visa type. However, considering H-1B workers can either become U.S. citizens or returnees to their countries, detailed statistics that can track their careers and destinations with their income levels will be a great contribution to identifying the growing income gap in the United States and in their countries. This research direction will help to see how Asian intellectuals whether educated in the United States or not, become a transnational workforce, causing an income gap even in the highest rank of the occupational reward hierarchy in their countries with their work experience in the United States. As this

direction will involve big samples and data that require quantitative approaches, it will also help generalize the findings of this study.

(5) What pull factors are found in Asian international graduate students who plan to seek careers in the United States from the perspective of transnationalism: As prospective highly skilled and educated Asian elites, Asian international graduate students will have diverse career tracks based on their specialty, as seen in the participants. More research on factors that affect their career decisions will identify their transnational characteristics that distinguish them from traditional immigrants.

(6) What individual and environmental factors contribute to Asian international graduate students' decision-making process of studying abroad: This study revealed that participants made their own decisions to come to the United States, not affected by their parents. It implies that the trigger is to be identified from their individual characteristics or the environmental pressure other than family. For example, John had a need due to the pressure from the competition with his colleagues, while in Naomi's case, it was more of her individualistic personality. More in-depth research into the decision-making factors will help identify the variables that might affect the findings. For instance, the level of the expected social status in the United States might be different depending on personalities.

Conclusion

This study sought to identify the substance of Empire and its materialization through the process the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in Asian graduate international students as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian intellectuals through their transnational experience. Empire, which Hardt and Negri (2000) called the "enemy," is identified

as global dominating power that has no territories or boundaries (p. 145) and “effectively encompasses the spatial totality, or really that rules over the entire ‘civilized’ world” (p. xiv).

By situating the model minority stereotype in the postcolonial context and defining the notion as Empire’s ethnicization strategy, this study went beyond the contextual birth of the notion of model minority limited to the United States and attempted to open a new research paradigm in the model minority discourse in Asian and Asian American Studies to address the global facet of Empire that reaches all Asians irrespective of regions. More researchers are invited to contribute to this new research paradigm, especially in international collaboration to identify how Empire’s ethnicization occurs, for example, through the model minority stereotype becoming transnational and global with labor mobility and complexities, and how other ethnic groups are also ethnicized in the sphere of Empire.

From an educational perspective, by revealing how the model minority stereotype is embraced, complied with, and even accepted as a life guideline by Asian international graduate students, this study raised the need to bring socio-political awareness to Asian intellectuals as responsible selves who will contribute to awakenings of other Asians to the global capitalist motive behind the notion, no matter where they are located. The process of becoming a responsible self needs a transformation of all, from “privileged me” to “colonized me,” from “colonized me” to “decolonized me,” from “decolonized me” to “decolonized us and all” as a countermeasure to Empire’s inclusive moment that does not exclude anyone from its terrain as depicted by Hardt and Negri (2000). This requires sincere concerns from all parties in academia in their endeavor to bring enlightenment to individual students of all races and ethnicities. This study leaves the area of relevant curriculum development and instructional design to educators who are willing to take the interdisciplinary initiative to integrate what is proposed in this study

into their departmental disciplines. The researcher of this study will be one of them as she enters her profession as an enlightened “Asian” scholar and researcher. Through this study, the researcher hopes that interested researchers and scholars will be also “enlightened” and see the revealed intersectionality of history, economy, politics, society, culture, language, identity, and education in the hegemony lurking under the veil of Empire.

Empire exists. It has no form. It is only seen in the way its imperial strategy is practiced. What makes it hard to detect the form through its practice is that it is so immersed into people’s minds, bodies, and daily lives that they do not realize they are the subjects of the imperial control. While people are pursuing their self-interest and economic betterment to climb the social ladder, Empire keeps fattening its body through it all, continuously growing with no end. Our battle is not against what is visible, but it is surely against the invisible power that rules and reigns the world behind all these notions seemingly appealing to, but eventually demanding our minds, bodies, and souls to its captivity.

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Appendix A - IRB



University Research Compliance Office

TO: Kay Ann Taylor
Curriculum & Instruction
Bluemont Hall

Proposal Number: 8508

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 11/09/2016

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Asian graduate students as skilled labor force serving Empire: A postcolonial analysis of the model minority stereotype shaped and ingrained through transnational experiences."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for one year from the date of this correspondence, pending "continuing review."**

APPROVAL DATE: 11/09/2016

EXPIRATION DATE: 11/09/2017

Several months prior to the expiration date listed, the IRB will solicit information from you for federally mandated "**continuing review**" of the research. Based on the review, the IRB may approve the activity for another year. **If continuing IRB approval is not granted, or the IRB fails to perform the continuing review before the expiration date noted above, the project will expire and the activity involving human subjects must be terminated on that date. Consequently, it is critical that you are responsive to the IRB request for information for continuing review if you want your project to continue.**

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

- ☒ There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
☐ There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Appendix B - IRB Renewal



University Research Compliance Office

TO: Kay Ann Taylor
Secondary Education Curriculum & Instruction
Bluemont Hall
Number: 8508

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair KSAB
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB)

DATE: September 6, 2017

RE: Continuing Review of Your Proposal Entitled, "Asian graduate students as skilled labor force serving Empire: A postcolonial analysis of the model minority stereotype shaped and ingrained through transnational experiences."

Originally Approved by the IRB: 11/9/2016

Expiration Date: 11/9/2017

Federal regulatory officials (OHRP) have interpreted that human subjects protocols / activities can be approved by IRBs for only **ONE YEAR** at a time. For your current human subjects activity to continue past that one year **EXPIRATION DATE**, the protocol / activity must undergo "continuing review" and approval, if appropriate, by the IRB.

Consequently, if you want your project to continue past the expiration date, it is critical that you are responsive to this request for information for the IRB "continuing review." Once the expiration date has arrived, the activity involving human subjects must stop if continuing review and approval has not occurred.

1. Your project was classified by the Committee as involving

- ☒ No more than minimal risk to subjects
☐ Greater than minimal risk to subjects

The Federal definition of minimal risk is that "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests."

2. What is the status of this project?

- ☐ a. Project has been completed. (Approximate date of completion _____).
- ☐ b. Project was never undertaken and will not be undertaken in the future.
- ☐ c. Project has not begun but may be undertaken in the future (approximate starting date _____).
- ☒ d. Project is in progress. (Approximate date of completion May 1, 2017).

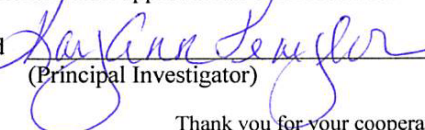
***If you checked (a) or (b) above, skip to Item 12. If you checked (c) or (d), answer the rest of the questions.

3. Do you have any information not previously reported to the Committee that suggests a need to reassess the level of risk to subjects in this project?
☒ No.
☐ Yes. If yes, please attach an explanation.
4. Please provide the current number of subjects enrolled in the project. 4
5. Have there been any unexpected withdrawals of subjects from the project?
☒ No.
☐ Yes. If yes, please attach an explanation for the withdrawal.
6. Has there been any change in your research protocol that affects the treatment of human subjects and has not been submitted to the Committee for review?
☒ No.
☐ Yes. If yes, please attach a description of the change.
7. To your knowledge, have there been any unexpected adverse events for subjects as a result of participation in this project?
☒ No.
☐ Yes. If you answer yes, give a complete explanation of each instance and immediately report the event to the IRB.
8. Have you made any modifications in the documentation of your informed consent statement or in your procedures for obtaining informed consent that have not been submitted to the Committee for review?
☒ No. If you answered no, please attach a copy of the current informed consent form.
☐ Yes. If you answer yes, attach a copy of the proposed revision.
9. Is the contact information on your informed consent form (i.e., Chair of the IRB) current?
☐ No. If no, please attach a copy of the proposed revision.
☒ Yes.
10. Please list all personnel working with human subjects on your project.

Name: <u>Eun Hee Kim</u>	Department: <u>Curriculum & Instruction</u>	Phone: <u>532.5525</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

11. Please provide a current phone number so the IRB can to reach the Principal Investigator, if necessary, to further discuss this review. 532.6974

12. Please read and sign the following statement.
 The undersigned certifies that the project under review is being conducted in accordance with the Kansas State University Assurance of Compliance With Health and Human Services Regulations for Protection of Human Research Subjects, copies of which are on file in the University Research Compliance Office, 203 Fairchild Hall. Furthermore, the undersigned certifies that changes in the procedures approved by the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, will be submitted to the Committee for review and will not be implemented until approval has been received.

Signed  Date 09/3/17
 (Principal Investigator)

Thank you for your cooperation. Please return this form to:
 Human Subjects Committee
 University Research Compliance Office
 203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine

Appendix C - Consent-to-Participate Letter

(Modified from “Sample Human Subjects Consent-to-Participate Form” from Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 154-155)

Research Subject: “Asian international graduate students as skilled labor force serving Empire: A postcolonial analysis of the model minority stereotype shaped and ingrained through transnational experiences”

Dear Participant,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you want to participate in this study. Please be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without repercussion.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the model minority stereotype is shaped, developed, and ingrained in the transnational experiences of Asian international graduate students who are planning to seek employment in the United States after the completion of their studies.

Data will be collected through interviews and field notes from casual conversations with me and my personal acquaintance with you in the past and now if you already know me. You will be interviewed at least three times: (1) your life story, (2) how your experiences between the United States and your country shape your Asian identity and influence your performance and behaviors regarding your eligibility for employment, and (3) how you perceive your social and economic status in the labor market. You will be contacted if the fourth interview is needed for any follow-up questions.

After the final interview, you will be provided a \$20 gift card you can use for groceries or a coffee shop depending on your choice for the recognition of your valuable contribution to this study.

Interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. Interview transcripts will be sent to you for review and you are free to make any appropriate changes as needed. Recording files and interview transcripts will be safely stored on a computer with a password only accessible to the researcher. Field notes will be destroyed after they are converted into PDF files and stored with the recording files. Three years after the completion of this study, all data will be destroyed unless you agree to allow the researcher to keep them for further research or publication purposes.

I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. You may view the final version of the dissertation and ask questions. Please be aware that the terms used in data analysis such as “model minority stereotype,” “postcolonial,” “labor force serving Empire,” “privileged,” or “colonized” might cause discomfort. Your name will not be revealed in research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant will be known only to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used when data and findings are presented. If the findings are submitted for publication or presented for conferences, your identity will be kept confidential. If you have any questions regarding confidentiality of your identity as a participant of this research, please contact the Office of Research and Compliance (203 Fairchild) at 785-532-3224.

Your participation in this study is expected to help understand Asian international graduate students’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding how the model minority image is developed, conformed to, and ingrained as part of Asian identity through their transnational

experiences, which will contribute to the research literature on the model minority stereotype for future research in Asian or Asian American Studies.

By signing below, you indicate that you understand the nature, purpose, and procedures of this study and agree to participate in this study. I truly appreciate your time as a research participant in this study.

Sincerely,

Eun Hee Kim, Doctoral Candidate
006 Bluemont Hall
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education
1114 Mid-Campus Drive
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-5525
eunheek@ksu.edu

Major Professor: Dr. Kay Ann Taylor
Director of Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Program
785-532-6974
ktaylor@ksu.edu

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the nature, purpose, and procedures of this study and I agree to participate in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D - First Interview Questions

(Modified from “Sample Interview Protocol or Guide,” Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 167)

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Participant's *preferred pseudonym:

*If not selected by the participant, the researcher will decide one for the participant later.

Time taken:

First interview: Demographic information and life story

Biography of the participant:

1. Country of birth:
2. Age:
3. Family composition:
4. Language(s) spoken:
5. Economic standing of family:
6. Length of time spent in the United States:
7. Length of time at the current university:
8. Degree and major pursuing:
9. Years remaining before degree completion:
10. Anticipated date of degree completion:
11. Type of assistantship if any:
12. Financial assistance from home country:
13. Frequency of travels to home country:
14. Plan on OPT:
15. Preferred field for career:
16. Preferred location for career:
17. Plan on H-1B:
18. Plan on permanent residency (a.k.a. Green Card):

Interview Questions: Life story (Atkinson, 2007)

1. Please tell me about your hometown, your family and neighborhood.
2. How did you spend your elementary, middle, and high school years?
3. What was your plan for college? For example, what were you interested in majoring in and where did you want to study?
4. What did your parents think about your plan for college?
What and how much influence did they have on your plan?
5. What made you think about coming to the United States to study?
Did you have any academic and financial concerns regarding your decision? Why or why not?
6. Please tell me about your life in the United States.

- (1) Personal life and
 - (2) academic life.
7. How often do you contact your family?
Through what methods?
What do you usually talk about?
 8. How are you preparing to get a job in the United States academically?
 9. What are you doing or going to do regarding the legal process as a job seeker, for example, to obtain a legal status?
 10. What do you think are the most important values in your life?
Where and how did you develop them?

Appendix E - Second Interview Questions

(Modified from “Sample Interview Protocol or Guide,” Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 167)

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Participant's *Preferred pseudonym:

*If not selected by the participant, the researcher will decide one for the participant.

Time taken:

Second interview: Research Question 1. How is the model minority stereotype shaped, developed, and ingrained in the participants' transnational experiences (Ho, 2003)?

Research Question 1-1: What do participants experience while they study in the United States and physically and emotionally travel between the United States and their homelands?

Related Theme: The model minority stereotype reinforced through transnational experiences

1. How do you feel about your family and homeland while you are studying in the United States?
2. Please describe how you feel when you talk with your family while you are here.
3. Please describe how you feel when you travel back home.
4. How do people in your home country react when they find out you are studying in the United States?

Why do you think people react in that way?

5. What expectations do you think parents, friends, or people in general in your country have on students who are studying in the United States?

How do the expectations affect you?

6. How do you feel about the expectations?

What are the ways you have tried to meet the expectations if there is any?

7. What if you fail to meet the expectations?

How would you feel?

8. How do you feel when you come back to the United States after visiting your country?

How do the feelings lead to decisions or determinations regarding your studies or future careers?

Research Question 1-2: How do participants' transnational experiences shape their perceptions as Asians in a way that makes them think they should perform and behave in a certain way to be employed in the United States as prospective highly educated and skilled Asian workers?

Related Theme: The model minority stereotype as a prescriber for Asian intellectuals' attitudes, behaviors, and performance

9. What made you decide to get a job in the United States?

10. What do your family and friends think about your plan to get a job in the United States?
11. What stereotypical images of Asians did you have before you came to the United States?
12. How have the stereotypical images of Asians changed while you study in the United States?
13. What are the stereotypical images of Asians you started to have since you came to the United States, if any?
14. What do you think is the most important quality you should have as an Asian job seeker? Please describe anything specific you need to be aware of or prepared for in your field of study or industry to get hired.
15. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of being an Asian when you look for a job?
16. What do you think you can do to overcome the disadvantages as an Asian job seeker?
17. What could be the benefits of being an Asian when you look for a job compared to other races if there are any?

Appendix F - Third Interview Questions

(Modified from “Sample Interview Protocol or Guide,” Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 167)

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Participant's *Preferred pseudonym:

*If not selected by the participant, the researcher will decide one for the participant.

Time taken:

Third interview: Research Question 2. How are the participants' employment decisions understood in the labor market locally and globally in the postcolonial context?

Research Question 2-1: How do the participants' perceive their knowledge and expertise as a factor distinguishing them from less skilled and educated Asian immigrant workers in the United States and people who earn the same degrees in their home countries?

Related Theme: Asian intellectuals' perceptions of themselves and the perceptions of people in their home country about Asians educated in the United States

1. What do you think could be the benefits of receiving a master's/doctoral degree in the United States when you find a job in the United States, compared to less skilled and less educated Asian immigrant workers?
2. What do you think could be the benefits of the degree you will earn in the United States when you want to find a job in your country compared to people who have the same degree attained in your country?
3. What could be the reasons?
4. What would Chinese/Koreans in general think about people who receive degrees in the United States, work, and live in the United States?
5. What do you want to do using your skills and expertise?
6. How would you describe yourself as a prospective highly skilled and highly educated Asian worker living in the United States?

Research Question 2-2: How do the participants' think their social and economic status will change in the future and in their homelands as a result of employment in the United States?

Related Theme: Asian intellectuals' perceptions of their social and economic status

7. What are your short-term and long-term plans regarding your job status in the United States?
8. How do you expect your social and economic status will change from now to the future in the United States?
9. What are the ways your work experiences in the United States will impact your job opportunities in your home country in case you look for a job in your country later?

10. How would you rank yourself socially and economically 10 years from now in the United States and in your home country?
11. Please describe your family plan, e.g., marriage, children, a place or places you want to live with your family, etc.
12. How do you define yourself based on your values, plans, and dreams?
How are your values, plans and dreams different in the United States and in your home country?

Appendix G - Debriefing Statement for Participants

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in the research titled “Asian international graduate students as skilled labor force serving Empire: A postcolonial analysis of the model minority stereotype shaped and ingrained through transnational experiences.” This study was conducted to examine how Asian identity is transnationally formed in Asian international graduate students who plan to seek employment in the United States after their degree completion. Data were analyzed through the framework of postcolonialism, viewing Asian graduate students as a privileged group compared to less skilled and educated immigrants in the labor market.

Findings showed that participants’ Asian identity was shaped and developed through their transnational experience. Repeated input of the hardworking image of Asians made participants embrace the image and adopt it as a strategy for employment and as an appealing point to future employers in general. In addition, participants expected their graduate degrees and future work experience in the United States would advantage them over less skilled and educated Asian workers in the United States and those with equivalent degrees in their home countries.

Linguistic, cultural, and racial barriers lowered their expectation of their social status in the United States, while they expected higher social and economic status in their home countries. Participants perceived respect and envy from people’s attitudes in their home countries toward their U.S.-earned degrees and professional experience. The results signify that the controlling mechanism of Empire as the globalizing power ethnicizes all Asians into its global capitalist hierarchy, making Asian intellectuals unconsciously serve the system.

Interview transcripts were sent to you for review and you were given an opportunity to make any appropriate changes as needed. You may view the final version of the dissertation and ask questions about the findings. After you review the dissertation, if you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at eunheek@ksu.edu or my major professor, Dr. Kay Ann Taylor at ktaylor@ksu.edu.

If you have any questions regarding confidentiality of your identity as a participant of this research, please contact the Office of Research and Compliance (203 Fairchild) at 785-532-3224. Thank you again for your valuable contribution to the research.

Sincerely,

Eun Hee Kim, Doctoral Candidate
006 Bluemont Hall
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education
1114 Mid-Campus Drive
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-5525
eunheek@ksu.edu

Major Professor: Dr. Kay Ann Taylor
Director of Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Program
785-532-6974
ktaylor@ksu.edu