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THE SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITIES OF CHINESE YOUNG DIASPORA IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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A doctoral thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education,
The University of Auckland, 2017.
Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the sexual subjectivities of Chinese young diaspora based on a sample in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). This research addresses a gap in existing scholarship around intra-ethnic dynamics between immigrant youth and international students in sexuality. It also critiques the dominant understanding of young Chinese in NZ as ‘sexually conservative’ and ‘reckless’. The central research question is “How do diasporic Chinese young people become sexual subjects in NZ?” Informed by feminist poststructuralism, this research was conducted using a quantitative online survey and qualitative interviews and focus groups, with photo-collage and participants’ personal photos utilised to elicit discussion.

Participants’ sexuality was explored in relation to sexual knowledge, gender relations, education and migration. The thesis argues for the importance of contextualising Chinese young diaspora’s sexual health within the structural absence of sexual information (as is typical in China), and patriarchal gender relations evident in sexual communication with family, peers and intimate partners. Findings on gendered patterns of sexual subjectivity reveal a sexual double standard restricting female participants’ sexuality, which appears narrowly defined by notions of sexual purity, and sometimes contradictory feminine norms (i.e., chaste but attractive). I argue the neoliberal discourse of sexual choice featured in some women’s talk depoliticises gender power relations and does not produce as empowered sexual subjects as it appears to. The findings also demonstrate participants’ sexuality as constrained between an academic focus which precludes sexual expression, and later in adulthood, a pressing notion of marriage. Between education and marriage as two normative life events, young women especially, are left with little room to explore their sexual selfhood. Young people are seen to resist racialised sexual norms by rejecting the sexually disparaging Asian nerd stereotype, or by using migration to evade the heteronormative marriage imperative. However, racial relations further complicate the sexual subjectivity of diasporic Chinese, as participants’ sexuality is often subject to racialisation from both NZ mainstream society and co-ethnic communities. As a multifaceted presentation of young Chinese diaspora’s sexuality in NZ, these findings have implications for the provision of sexual health services and contribute to discussions on gender equality and racial discrimination.
Dedication

献给妈妈和爸爸

谁言寸草心，报得三春晖。

To my parents, who are forever ‘home’ to a diasporic me.
Acknowledgements

I would like to give my gratitude to my supervisors Professor Louisa Allen and Emeritus Professor Manying Ip for their unwavering dedication, valuable input and generous support for me throughout the past few years. Thank you to Louisa for inspiring me academically, for always taking my thinking and writing to new levels and for being so positive throughout my doctoral journey. Thank you to Manying for your academic and emotional guidance, your nurturing energy and encouraging feedback. This project would not have been possible without the enormous time and work you both poured into my supervision.

I would also like to thank Associate Professor Barbara Grant, Associate Professor Carol Mutch from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, and Associate Professor Virginia Braun and Professor Glynn Owens from the School of Psychology. You have all provided me with much appreciated help and support along the way that led to my completion.

Teguh, Jamie and Mary-Anne, my dear ‘larrikins’, your presence, physical or virtual, has always been a grounding and driving force for me. Please know I am appreciative and always have a special place for you in my heart.

To all my past and present colleagues in N314, I have truly enjoyed your company and our conversations, which I am surely going to miss.

To my peers in the CRSTIE writing group, Larrikin’s Group, Glynn’s Gang, the critical/feminist psychology group, Manying’s ‘study’ group, and the PGSA committee group, I retain fond memories of the intellectual and social exchanges we have shared over the years. I feel privileged to have known you. You know who you are.

To Joanne, Jacques, Inken, Kei, Frauke, Fred, Benny and Jun, you are awesome. Please know you have all inspired me in some ways and I like you tremendously as individuals.

To my Chinese ‘queer comrades’, thank you for letting me be part of your lives. Let us continue to be the strength for one another.

To Markus, you have been my backbone throughout this journey. Now let me be yours.

Finally, thank you to all the participants who shared your life stories with me. You are the ones that made this happen in the first place.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I explore the sexual subjectivities of diasporic Chinese young people based on a sample in Aotearoa New Zealand (abbreviated as NZ throughout this thesis). This task sits at the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality and diasporic status (i.e., immigrant, international student). Of particular interest is the operation of power in these relations which both constrains and enables, disciplines and produces racial, gendered and sexual subjects. As the social, political and institutional structures in NZ and in the young people’s heritage societies (mostly mainland China) vary considerably, significant heterogeneity exits among diasporic Chinese young people in NZ. I explore such intra-ethnic differences in relation to sexuality, and in so doing, demonstrate how sexuality is a crucial means through which race is performed, and vice versa.

The guiding research question for my study is: How do young Chinese diaspora become sexual subjects?

Four sub-questions further elucidate the central research question:

1. How does the sexual information Chinese young people receive shape and influence their sexual knowledge and sexual subjectivity, especially in terms of practices of safer sex?
2. How do Chinese young people make sense of, embody, negotiate and resist the notion of female sexual respectability? How is it gendered and raced?
3. How do Chinese young people experience and reconcile their sexual selves in relation to a cultural emphasis on education?
4. How does migration impact on Chinese young people’s subjectivities, practices and discourses made available to them?

I start this thesis by introducing the research context that influenced the emergence of these questions, and underlies their importance. In the rest of this chapter, I introduce the conceptual foundations of this thesis, followed by an outline of the thesis structure.

Research context and importance

This research topic was generated from my personal experience as a Chinese international student, and later an immigrant living in NZ. From first-hand experience with Chinese diaspora
communities in NZ, I have observed how sexuality features prominently in young people’s everyday lives and how their views and experiences in relation to premarital sex, casual sex and intimate relationships both forge converging patterns in some ways and diverge greatly in others. Further informed by my academic training in sexuality and gender studies, this interest resulted in a desire to explore, formulate and theorise the patterns and differences in these young people’s sexual subjectivities. As I outline below, this project not only attempts to address gaps in existing scholarship of Chinese sexuality, but also bears implications for wider issues including the provision of sexual health services, gender inequality and racial discrimination.

**Chinese immigrants, international students and sexuality**

As the largest Asian population group in NZ, Chinese (including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and southeast Asia, with the majority from mainland China) make up 3.7% of the total population according to 2006 NZ national census (Statistics New Zealand, 2010) and 4.3% in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b). A 16% increase occurred in this group from 2006 to 2013, and the trend continues as the Asian population in general is the fastest growing ethnic group in NZ (Statistics New Zealand, 2013a). Between 1996 and 2006, the most extensive growth in the Chinese population is found within the tertiary education age group of 20-24, secondly in the 25-29 age group, and thirdly in 15-19 age group (Bedford & Ho, 2008). This reflects “a combination of international student flows as well as the immigration of families with children in their teenage years” (Bedford & Ho, 2008, p. 14).

Following immigration policy changes in 1986, there has been a dramatic increase of ‘new’ immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and later since 2000, mainland China (E. Ho & Bedford, 2006; M. Ip, 2003). The increase of Asian immigrants of reproductive age groups since late 1990’s also resulted in a major increase in children born in NZ during this period, who would now be in their early adulthood (Bedford & Ho, 2008). Among the Asian population born in NZ in 2013, Chinese make up 26.4% (E. Ho, 2015). In terms of international student flows, by 2006, the influx of Asian international students had led the Asian population in the 20-24 age group to exceed Māori, NZ indigenous people in that age group (Bedford & Ho, 2008). Mainland Chinese have consistently been the largest group of international students in NZ tertiary education over the last decade (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2013).
However, existing research about Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality in a given host society often assumes a homogenous group (i.e., immigrant youth) and overlooks increasingly diverse migration trajectories and experiences (e.g., educational sojourning, transmigration, return migration, see Chiang, 2011; Gomes, 2015; M. Ip, 2006). Immigrant youth and international students tend to be treated as completely separate subjects of investigation. Despite their large number, international students’ status as temporary sojourners often renders them excluded by wider Chinese migrant communities (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Albeit growing (Bista, 2016), current international scholarship on international students retains a focus on their academic needs (e.g., Blasco, 2015; Butcher & McGrath, 2004) or cultural adaptation (e.g., Bang & Montgomery, 2013; Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004; Glass, Gómez, & Urzua, 2014; Szabo, Ward, & Jose, 2016). These research patterns imply and reflect the foreigner status of international students (Houshmand, Spanierman, & Tafarodi, 2014). Their ‘student’ identity appears to receive more attention from the export education industry and academic research than their other identities as society members (Robertson, 2011), or sexual beings.

These considerations give rise to the urgency of my project, where both Chinese immigrant youth and international students are included in the sample. With different migratory trajectories, they may have distinct racial experiences, which impact on their sexual subjectivities differently. As I elaborate in Chapter 2, few studies have engaged in discussions of sexuality within racial power relations, especially in NZ (Simon-Kumar, 2006, 2009). There is also a dearth of research attending to racial minorities’ experience of school-based sexuality education in NZ, due to a ‘one size fits all’ approach to young people’s sexual health issues (S. Jackson, 2004). Considering the different diasporic statuses of Chinese young diaspora (i.e., immigrant, international student) enables me to explore similarities and differences between these two traditionally separate groups, and to ask “How does migration impact on the Chinese young people’s subjectivities, practices and discourses made available to them?” (Sub-question 4).

The integration of these two groups in my study also allows me to investigate a seemingly unifying aspect of Chinese young people’s life in relation to sexuality: academic commitment. A powerful mentality named “wishing for dragon children” (wangzi chenglong) which captures parents’ expectation for their children to strive to become ‘men above all men’ (ren shang ren) exists across Chinese societies (J. Wu & Singh, 2004). This expectation can be traced back to Confucianism in ancient China, which encouraged and allowed for common people’s upwards social mobility through achievement in education, as measured by success in the civil service.
examination system. Despite radical changes in contemporary Chinese history, this mentality remains strong, and better education for children is a major motivation for some Chinese diaspora families to emigrate (Davidson & Dai, 2008). Given the cultural emphasis on education, Chinese young people’s intimate relationships are often considered a distraction of academic accomplishment, and are more strongly prohibited by parents than their racial counterparts (J. L. Kim, 2005; J. Yu, 2007). This contributes to the stereotype of Chinese youth as asexual “working automatons” (Archer & Francis, 2005, p. 175). As academic commitment constitutes such a major part of Chinese young people’s daily life, how they experience and reconcile their sexual selves against this cultural emphasis on education (sub-question 3) becomes an important topic of discussion in the examination of their sexual subjectivity.

(Gendered) sexual health concerns and sexuality education

Chinese young people’s sexuality is predominantly portrayed as problematic in existing research. Research in China (including Hong Kong) consistently identifies Chinese young people as vulnerable to sexual risks (Abdullah, Fielding, & Hedley, 2003; Ma et al., 2006; H. Zhang et al., 2004; L. Zhang, Gao, Dong, Tan, & Wu, 2002) due to a lack of sexual knowledge (B. Chen et al., 2008; W. Y. Ip, Chau, Chang, & Lui, 2001). Rates of unplanned pregnancy and STIs have been rising amongst young people (Y. Gao, Lu, Shi, Sun, & Cai, 2001; B. Wang, Hertog, Meier, Lou, & Gao, 2005). Against these problematic statistics, there is a structural lack of formal sexuality education in schools (Y. Li, Cottrell, Wagner, & Ban, 2004) (see literature review in Chapter 2). Additionally, Chinese youth growing up in an overseas country still appear less sexually knowledgeable than Caucasian youth in the host society (J. Yu, 2010b), which suggests apart from school-based sexuality education, there may be racially related factors at play in the constitution of young people’s sexual knowledge.

In recent years, Chinese international students’, in particular young women’s reproductive health has drawn attention from researchers and health practitioners in NZ, as high rates of abortion and unsafe sexual practices continued to be observed among this group (Trinh, 2012). This is commonly attributed to these young people’s isolated status, language barriers and lack of knowledge of contraception and of available services (Burchard, Laurence, & Stocks, 2011; B. Lee, Kirk, & Reid, 2013). Moreover, the young women are perceived as immature individuals who “take advantage of the relative sexual freedom they experience in comparison with the situation in their home country” (Goodyear-Smith & Arroll, 2003, p. 7). This picture fails “to capture dynamic and evolving conceptions of sexual identity and agency” of these
individuals, especially young women (Simon-Kumar, 2009, p. 12). As such, not only does the current conceptualisation of Chinese young people’s sexual health issues not benefit service provision, it also reinforces the neoliberalist rhetoric of individualised risk and responsibility that current practice of sexual health service heavily relies on. As young people are understood as autonomous individuals capable of, and responsible for, their health outcomes, minority groups’ vulnerability to sexual health concerns is decontextualised and reduced to poor personal health choices (Terry, Braun, & Farvid, 2012).

Aiming to critically examine and challenge the assumption of young Chinese diaspora’s sexuality as ‘problematic’, I critique the current understandings of Chinese sexuality as simplistic and inaccurate throughout the thesis. I consider the structural factors that result in a relative lack of sexual knowledge, such as the absence of school-based sexuality education in China, and examine gender power relations that influence the acquisition of sexual knowledge and sexual safety practice. I also attend to the lack of young people’s voice in sexual health research by focusing on how participants make sense of their sexual safety practice themselves. These considerations led me to ask “How does sexual knowledge Chinese young people receive shape and influence their sexual subjectivity, especially in terms of safer sex practice?” (Sub-question 1). Understanding the complexity of this ‘problem’ is crucial, in order to inform policies and to facilitate culturally sensitive intervention programmes of sexual health.

**Racial and gender inequality**

Racism is well and alive in NZ (Bartley, 2010) and sexuality is an important venue for its expression. Being a racial Other subjects young Chinese people to negative or disempowering sexual stereotypes such as asexual or nerdy (Archer & Francis, 2005). Asian young men are easy targets ofemasculating constructions of masculinity, which can lead to social alienation or bullying (Barber, 2015). Asian young women are burdened with the symbolic role of guarding cultural values and integrity (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005; A. Y. Chung, 2016), and their sexualisation often reflects racial exoticification and fetishisation (e.g., yellow fever). Coloured young women in general report being more constrained (i.e., having less sex) in sexuality compared to Caucasian women but are still more likely to be considered sexually unrespectable (Armstrong, Hamilton, Armstrong, & Seeley, 2014). My project is committed to challenging these monolithic representations and by doing so, fostering a deeper understanding of racism faced by Chinese young diaspora in NZ. In this way, my research incorporates a political stance. It is driven by a transformative intention to make visible Chinese young
diaspora’s marginalisation as sexual subjects, to challenge dominant sexual and racial discourses and to facilitate social change. This aim is advanced through exploring Sub-questions 3 and 4, where race is a focal point of investigation.

Gender inequality is another crucial aspect of this transformative agenda. Research on gender relations in China is limited, but it is conclusive that gender inequality remains (Shu & Zhu, 2012) and the development of feminist movement has not been promising (J. Zheng, 2016). Moreover, a neoliberal post-feminist female subject seems to have arrived in China, who actively rejects any suggestion that their actions (e.g., dress, makeup, consumption) “are compelled by wider social influences and institutions such as media or government”’ (Stuart & Donaghue, 2012, p. 101) or subordination to patriarchy (S. Jeffreys, 2005). Within this post-feminist context, heteropatriarchal constructions of femininity are depoliticised and therefore sustained (L. Z. Li, 2015). Feminine norms continue to idealise women’s subordination to male partners, which undermines women’s sexual agency, autonomy and safer sexual practice (Gavey, 1992; Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1994). International research further shows how gender and race intertwine in producing submissive and passive sexual subjectivity for Asian diaspora women (i.e., lower expectations of pleasure and self-efficacy in sex than Caucasian and African counterparts), which has negative implications on their sexual health, physical and mental wellbeing and even future socioeconomic standing (Cheng, Hamilton, Missari, & Ma, 2014).

My project therefore has a specific task to demonstrate the way gender relations shape young Chinese’s sexual subjectivity, especially young women’s, including their negative impact and young women’s actions of resistance to such influence. To do this, I ask “How do Chinese young people make sense of, embody, negotiate and resist the notion of female sexual respectability? How is it gendered and raced?” (Sub-question 2).

**Concepts and definitions**

In this section I clarify some key concepts and terms featured in my research questions and analytic framework. As the meanings of these terms are contested, here I establish how I employ them for my analysis.
‘Chinese’

Context-dependent, ‘Chinese’ can be used to refer to one’s ethnic identity or national identity, two constructs entangled yet different from each other (Wiley, 2008). As a national identity, ‘Chinese’ (Zhongguoren) is associated with People’s Republic of China as a nation-state and political regime, referring to Chinese nationals (i.e., people holding citizenship of People’s Republic of China) (D. Y. Wu, 1991). As an ethnic identity, ‘Chinese’ (Zhonghua Minzu) more widely refers to people who share Chinese ancestry and heritage, irrespective of their citizenship. Due to deeply imbedded beliefs about Chinese civilisation as old, advanced and with a common lineage traced to the Yellow Emperor (a mythical ancestor to the dominant Han ethnic group in China), the term ‘Chinese’ as an ethnicity invokes a sense of unity and belonging among Chinese around the world (A. Louie, 2004; D. Y. Wu, 1991). For example, ethnic Chinese with a long history of settlement in Southeast Asian countries would identify as Malaysian, Filipino or Indonesian nationals, but may also identify with a Chinese ethnicity and associated cultural traditions (M. Ip, 2003). Overall, the term ‘Chinese’ is contentious and especially so in the context of diaspora research (Yeh, 2000). As Chinese young people in this study may have varied citizenship allegiances (e.g., NZ, PRC), I use ‘Chinese’ to refer to one’s ethnicity.

There is significant overlap between meanings of ‘Chinese’ as ethnicity and as race. The discourse of ‘Chinese race’ assumes a common ancestral ‘bloodline’, as well as racial markers (i.e., yellow skin, black eyes) in constructing racial cohesiveness (A. Louie, 2004). These essentialised representations of ‘Chinese’ are prevalent among modern diasporic Chinese and enable the passing down of Chinese culture and languages. Similarly, the key features of an ethnic group include a common ancestry or history, as well as shared culture, such as traditions, customs, beliefs (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b).

Additionally, the notion of ‘race’ (as Chinese/Asian) is crucial in my discussion about racism or discrimination faced by Chinese young people in NZ. Therefore, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’ may be used interchangeably in this thesis, as both refer to an embracing of ‘Chineseness’ based on ancestry (past) and/or cultural heritage (present practice).

In recruitment, I limited the sample to Chinese young people from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, or those with parents born in these places. Statistics suggest people from these three places make up the largest groups of Chinese immigrants in NZ in recent decades (53%, 18% and 14% respectively, among ‘recent immigrants’ according to E. Ho, Au, Bedford, &
Cooper, 2003). Large and steady numbers of Chinese international students also come from these three places (The University of Auckland, 2014). However, it is important to recognise this sample is not homogenous. Their varied ancestries in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan produce diverse linguistic and cultural differences and complicated migratory trajectories (Benton & Gomez, 2014). Additionally, the taken-for-granted allegiance with the ‘motherland’ could be experienced as an imposition by diasporic Chinese long removed from China and feeling little affinity with ‘Chineseness’ (A. Louie, 2004). Compound identities (e.g., NZ Chinese) are increasingly common for Chinese young people born or raised in their settlement society (Yeh, 2000, 2013). Similar diversity in self-identification is observed in my sample (see Chapter 3 on methodology), and is a point of interest in my analysis in relation to racialisation of sexuality.

‘Diaspora’ ‘sojourner’ and ‘settler’

Diaspora is a term that has historically referred to “displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile” (Braziel & Mannur, 2003, p. 1). In contemporary globalist discourses, the term includes also those that leave homelands voluntarily for endeavours (e.g., education, lifestyle, commercial trade) (Cohen, 1997). Some distinguishing characteristics of diaspora have been theorised as: firstly, “a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—it’s physical location, history, and achievements”; secondly, tension with the host society in terms of acceptance, belonging and identity; and thirdly, continued relationship with their co-ethnic communities in the host society, which facilitates “their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity” (Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991, pp. 83–84). These meanings of ‘diaspora’ are invoked in this thesis in relation to the roles of cultural values, racial identity, NZ mainstream society and co-ethnic community in Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity. As demonstrated below, participants including international students and immigrant youth share a common identity of diaspora, characterised by their physical or cultural border-crossing and (re-)orienting to a culture other than their heritage culture. However, I also point out the discrepancies contingent to their different diasporic statuses.

The features of ‘diaspora’ pertain to immigrant youth in the sense that, historically, the notion of connecting to one’s ‘motherland’ or ‘roots’ has always been strong among Chinese people (L. L. Wang, 1994). Such shared (imagined) connections form the basis of co-ethnic Chinese communities overseas (A. Louie, 2004), where social/historical memories symbolised by social
practices and cultural icons are reproduced (Davidson & Kuah-Pearce, 2008). Particularly, family serves as an important site of dispersing diasporic memories, transmitting cultural heritage and reproducing Chinese identities for immigrant youth (Davidson & Kuah-Pearce, 2008). However, this mediated reproduction also renders the immigrant youth’s ‘Chineseness’ less authentic, impure and diluted (Ang, 2005). At the same time, as immigrants, they are perpetually ‘not at home’, or displaced (A. Louie, 2004). Immigrants’ construction of ‘self’ therefore always involves negotiation between ‘homeland’ connections and “becoming a fully pledged member of the host society” (Davidson & Kuah-Pearce, 2008, p. 1).

In comparison, Chinese international students’ experience in NZ is characterised by less networking with the local society, a higher tendency to associate with co-ethnics and a lack of family supervision (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Different from Chinese immigrant youth whose memory of the homeland may be mediated by their family’s or the diasporic community’s reproduction of cultural narratives, international students’ collective vision of their homeland is more immediate, first-hand and personally lived. Additionally, given their stay in NZ has a specific purpose that is education, international students are more likely to perceive their stay as temporary, therefore less motivated than immigrants to integrate in the host society.

This heterogeneity contingent to different diasporic statuses is important to address because it appears to produce differences in the young people’s sexual subjectivity. As diaspora, young people’s subjectivity as sexual and gendered beings is always configured through racial relations and identification in the host society (Dwyer, 2000; Espin, 2013). The differences outlined above distinguish Chinese international students from Chinese immigrant youth in terms of racial/cultural identification (Holmes, 2005; Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013). Additionally, the two groups’ difference in migratory trajectories is often manifested in schooling experience, as immigrant youth tend to have received much less, if at all, schooling in their place of origin than international students prior to arrival in NZ. As presented in Chapter 2, formal sexuality education in schools in China and NZ is drastically different in terms of availability and the types of sexual messages delivered. The discrepancy in schooling experience among diasporic young Chinese can therefore lead to possible differences in sexual views and knowledge.

As I address such intra-ethnic differences, however, I find using the labels ‘international students’ and ‘immigrant’ to organise sub-groups problematic, as they would potentially leave out participants who share the migratory trajectory and hence host society experience with
either group (M. Ip, 2011). For instance, some young Chinese stay in NZ on a working holiday visa rather than a student visa, and some participants born in NZ may not identify with an ‘immigrant’ identity. Therefore, I employ the terms ‘settler’ and ‘sojourner’ instead to distinguish the two sub-groups.

Yang (1999) summarised the definitions of the two terms: sojourner is characterised by a mental orientation towards the home country and unwillingness to organise themselves as a permanent resident in the host country (R. H. Lee, 1960; Siu, 1952); settler is defined by a tendency to see the host country as home for themselves and their descendants (Glick, 1980; P. Q. Yang, 1999). Immigration can thus be seen as a process of transformation from sojourning to settlement, the two states representing the two extremes of migrants’ commitment to the host country (P. Q. Yang, 1999, 2000).

As this conceptualisation matches the theorisation of immigrants and international students as introduced above, I borrow this division to organise ‘immigrant youth’ under ‘settlers’ and ‘international students’ under ‘sojourners’. Using the variable of secondary schooling experience, I distinguish participants who have attended secondary school in NZ as settlers and the rest as sojourners. Though I am not claiming the experience of NZ secondary schooling defines a young person’s orientation of ethnic/cultural identification, literature does indicate schooling in a host society plays a significant role in young diaspora’s acculturation (Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, & Rosenthal, 1992; Patthey-Chavez, 1993; Tokunaga, 2016). I provide further justification for this categorisation in Chapter 3, where I match the variable of schooling experience in NZ onto other demographic features distinguishing international students and immigrant youth (e.g., family supervision). Finally, using this variable also allows me to compare school-based sexuality education in China and NZ, and its role in young Chinese’s sexual subjectivity more conveniently.

**Theoretical framework**

This research is primarily informed by Michel Foucault’s theorisation of power and subjectivity or subjecthood. I am interested to find out how power operates to shape participants’ subjectivity, in other words, how relations, discourses and material conditions (e.g., migration) operate on individuals and constitute them as sexual subjects. I see young people’s sexuality as constituted by the cultural, social and institutional contexts, but also acknowledge them as active sexual subjects with agency to rework and resist the power enacted in social institutions.
(e.g., school, marriage) (Allen, 2005b). In the following sub-sections, I outline the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, and how poststructuralist conceptualisations are implicated in my analysis of Chinese young diaspora as sexual (as well as racial) subjects.

**Feminist poststructuralism, discourse and gender**

Epistemologically, this thesis is grounded in feminist poststructuralism (Weedon, 1997). As a movement that arose from the critique of Enlightenment humanist ideals (McLaren, 2012), poststructuralism is closely associated with “the insurrection of subjugated knowledges” in challenging mainstream science (Foucault, 2003, p. 7). This grants poststructuralists a voice to critique essentialist understandings of gender (Davis, 2008), and question positivist notions such as ‘objectivity’ in science (Du Bois, 1979) or neutrality of knowledge (Caplan & Caplan, 2015).

Particularly concerned with gender power relations, feminist poststructuralism provides useful tools for analysing how social organisations and resulting power relations are constituted, reproduced and contested (Weedon, 1997). Language is viewed as constitutive of realities and our ways of being, rather than neutrally reflecting or describing a pre-existing reality or a person’s internal state (Gavey, 1989; McLaren, 2012; Weedon, 1997). Through feminist poststructuralism, I seek to not access the ‘truth’ delivered in language, but to explore how a truth is constructed through participants’ use of language and to what ends. An ‘action’ itself (Potter & Edwards, 2001), language incurs meaning making, and discursively constructs the object being spoken of (Foucault, 2012; Gavey, 1989). Discourse is thus formed, as “systems of statements that provide the socially understood ways...for talking about something and acting in relation to it” (Gavey, 2013, p. 84). People are hence understood as occupying various subject positions made available by discourses, rather than possessing an inherent, fixed, essential self or identity (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

Accordingly, Chinese young diaspora as sexual beings are constituted through culturally or historically specific discourses and do not exist ‘objectively’ as an entity outside these moments or spaces. These discourses enable or exclude their ways of being sexual and in doing so, produce sexual subjectivities (Weedon, 1997) and regulate their sexual bodies (Foucault, 1977). As part of these sexual subjectivities, sexual practices themselves therefore “carry symbolic meaning” and “constitute a form of communication” of how someone positions themselves “within a network of social meanings and significations” (Willig, 1999, p. 112). By examining
participants’ sexual subjectivities, dominant sexual discourses and their positionings can be made visible (and potentially problematised).

How participants experience and negotiate gendered subject positions is a major part of my investigation. Certain gender ‘truths’ produced by discourse are more powerfully positioned and privileged (i.e., normative masculinity and femininity) than others, making (im)possible certain ways of performing gender, hence shaping gendered disciplined bodies (Paechter, 2006, 2007). Particularly, Chinese young people’s intelligibility as sexual beings is configured by how they present their gender selves in the context of racialised norms. For example, while young men who do not display a normative masculinity (i.e., heterosexual, hypermasculine) are often subject to negative social consequences such as exclusion or bullying, Asian young men are particularly vulnerable due to racial stereotypes that render them effeminate (Eng, 2001). Poststructuralist theorisation of gender allows me to expose how these discourses operate through producing racialised gender norms and making them appear as ‘natural’ ways of being (Weedon, 1997).

Additionally, the existing rigid gender discourses produce and maintain unequal gender relations in sexual activity. As I discuss in Chapter 5, female sexuality continues to be restrained by normative feminine ideals (i.e., chastity, emotional commitment) and sexual double standards. The way female participants make sense of their bodily experience in the context of contraceptive use and abortion is also discursively constructed and informed by gendered meanings (e.g., women not using condoms because male partners dislike it). I demonstrate this in Chapter 4 with a discussion of the gendered patterns in sexual knowledge and sexual safety.

Aside from discourse and body, feminist poststructuralism is intimately associated with conceptualisations of power, knowledge and subjectivity (Gavey, 1989), which I elaborate on below.

**Power, discipline and knowledge**

As an aspect of discourse, power operates on individuals’ actions through setting up certain ‘truths’ which mandate what practices or views are to be included or excluded (Foucault, 2000). This kind of power, as theorised by Foucault, exists in terms of relations that permeate all aspects of social realities, and regulates social practices through societal institutions and production of subjected and practiced bodies (Foucault, 1978). However, discourses are also
able to “conceal their own intervention” while constituting objects (Foucault, 2012, p. 49). Foucault theorised this inconspicuous mechanism of controlling and regulating individual behaviour as discipline, and the power exercised this way as disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977). Rather than repressive, disciplinary power is productive and constitutive, producing meanings, desires, behaviours and practices, as well as conceptions of normalcy and deviance (Bordo, 1997b; Foucault, 1977; Gavey, 1992). Its imposition of social norms is exercised in an invisible way, as it is not possessed by any entity or groups to level against another, but rooted in “the network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain” (Bordo, 1997b, p. 92). Normalisation is achieved through disciplinary techniques such as normalising judgment which punishes transgression and rewards compliance with dominant norms (Foucault, 1977). Subjected and practiced bodies – "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138) are produced, which appear to actively engage with, and willingly accept various norms (Bordo, 1997b). A state of self-surveillance “assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 201).

Linking to my research, gender and sexual bodies are a crucial site for the workings of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977; Gavey, 1992; McLaren, 2012). A social constructionist view theorises sexuality as ‘deployed’ as a domain of regulation and normalisation, where sexual practices, desires and subjectivities are produced through relations of power (Foucault, 1978; Tiefer, 2004). It is therefore of interest what sexual practices, desires and subjectivities are encouraged, prohibited or negotiated in participants’ articulation. As power is only seen when it is put into action (Foucault, 1982), how power operates can be observed in the relations between discourses (e.g., sexual chastity) and the young people’s sexual practice or expressed views (e.g., premarital sex). While the young people’s accounts of these relations would demonstrate the disciplinary effect of normalising judgement or self-regulation, they may also suggest transgression or resistance.

In line with his assertion about ‘truth’, Foucault also proposed the dual concept savoir-pouvoir to analyse the inseparability of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1978). As power and dominant knowledges reinforce and legitimate each other (e.g., medical discourse and sexual disorders), power produces knowledge and is implicated within knowledge through discourse, which determines what knowledge is considered as ‘truth’ (Foucault, 1978). Certain knowledges which represent particular norms are more dominant than others and more likely to prevail or be sustained (i.e., régime du savoir, Foucault, 1982). The degree to which a knowledge is able to perpetuate public understandings depends on the social process of its communication more
than its inherent or empirical validity (Garfinkel, 2003). Therefore, Foucault aligned with Nietzsche’s scepticism about ‘truth’ and asserted knowledge was not a neutral, innocent path to ‘truth’ but an accomplice in injustice maintained by hegemonic power relations (Foucault, 2001; McLaren, 2012).

This perspective is helpful for my analysis of sexuality education as it allows critical consideration of taken-for-granted sexual knowledge, making visible what knowledges are privileged and why. The type of sexual knowledge most likely to be recognised as ‘truth’ in sex/sexuality education is scientific knowledge promoted by the state in the interest of population planning (Foucault, 2003). As a “disciplinary block”, school is a major institution where dominant sexual knowledge regimes are disseminated and reproduced (officially and unofficially) through which sexual subjects are produced, corrected, and trained (Foucault, 1977). As I demonstrate in Chapters 2 and 4, young people in both China and in NZ typically report a lack of erotic sexual knowledge (i.e., sexual pleasure) in school-based sexuality education, due to a dominant desexualised construction of youth. For Chinese young diaspora in particular, the limited school-based sexuality education available in China tends to adopt an abstinence-only approach. Through a discussion of participants’ conceptualisation of sexual knowledge based on what knowledge is silenced or promoted, dominant sexual discourses in Chinese and NZ societies can be identified, in relation to their effect on shaping sexual subjectivity.

However, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Resistance is always present and it comes from within, and not external to power (Foucault, 1978). I now introduce the poststructuralist ‘subject’, which is deeply implicated in ‘resistance’.

**Subject, resistance and freedom**

Poststructuralist theorists negate the Enlightenment informed humanistic understanding of ‘subject’ as a rational, unified and autonomous being (McLaren, 2012). However, a poststructuralist ‘subject’ is not theorised to destroy the humanist subject, or as the ‘anti-humanist subject’. Rather, it is to “enable us to see the subject’s fictionality, whilst recognising how powerful fictions are in constituting what we take to be real” (Davies, 1997, p. 272). This ‘fictionality’ refers to the constitution of subjects by discourses, disciplines, and power. Constituted through competing discourses and subject positions, a subject is “fragmentary, inconsistent, and contradictory” (Gavey, 1989, p. 465), while subjectivity is understood as
multiple, contextually produced and constantly being reconstituted (Weedon, 1997). Without an a priori subject, subjectivity as a way of conceiving the self, is engendered through norms and institutions that are culturally and historically specific (McLaren, 2012). A poststructuralist subject therefore “only exists as process” (Davies, 1997, p. 275).

In my research, Chinese young diaspora are situated in discursive relations of power that constitute them sexually. As sexual subjects, they are subject to “the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures” (Foucault, 1982, p. 785). This means, they are marked as individuals with their own identity through being categorised, hierarchised, normalised, and at the same time, they engage in self-surveillance in recognising such imposed ‘truth’ on themselves and others (Foucault, 1977, 1978). Young women who either engage in casual sex or choose premarital abstinence are both subject to normalising sexual norms that inscribe them with certain sexual identities. Depending on the cultural, social and historical contexts, the former could be considered (and perhaps self-identify) either as sexually liberal, or ‘sluts’, while the latter could be seen as either sexually virtuous or ‘prudes’ (see Chapter 5). While their sexual subjectivities are recognised as split, contradictory and contextual, their meaning making and negotiation of these ‘identities’ must be explored in consideration to constant dynamics of power relations, as well as possibility of resistance.

Though constituted socially, the subject is not determined by power. There is “room for resistance by subjects who refuse to identify with the subject position which they are offered and to which they are forced to conform at least externally” (Weedon, 1997, p. 97). As “power is relational, discourses are polyvalent, and disciplines are multifarious”, subjects produced are “likewise complex, both she who is speaking and she who is spoken of, both dominated and resisters, both constrained and enabled by various disciplines, practices, and institutions” (McLaren, 2012, p. 59). In other words, the subject is “both an effect of power and a vehicle of power” (McLaren, 2012, p. 66). As much as subjects are constituted, they also have an active role in their own constitution. A poststructuralist subject is able to see and make visible their own constitution, see the self as in constant shaping through discursive possibilities, and therefore reconstitute themselves and their world in less oppressive ways (Davies et al., 2006 on Weedon, 1997). Resistance against totalising dominant norms becomes possible through this (re-)constitution of the subject (McLaren, 2012), and in the constitutive power of discourse lies individual agency (Davies, 1997).

While discourse prescribes ways of being, it also exposes power, “rendering it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). My analysis aims to unpack dominant
discourses and identify alternative ways of doing gender and sexuality. I want to explore what resistance and subversion would look like among Chinese young people, given the constraints of possible ways of being. For example, while a Chinese young woman could enact a ‘good’ Chinese female subject (e.g., sexually passive, chaste, subordinate, heterosexual), she could alternatively respond to this dominant discourse in ways that undermine it, by appropriating what is recognised as a ‘bad’ sexual subject (e.g., sexually active, non-heterosexual). Chinese young men may (re)constitute their masculinity through disengaging with dominant discourse of conventional masculinity (Connell, 2005) in western societies and seeking out ‘softer’ ways of being masculine informed by alternative discourses available in Asian cultures (K. Louie, 2002). Therefore the very position that constitutes them as Other allows them the agency of disobedience. Through recognising and claiming their ‘Otherness’, redefining and negotiating new sexual subjectivities become possible. Through such resistance, power relations are brought to light, their point of application and methods used identified (Foucault, 1982). For example, investigating young Chinese women’s experience of interracial dating reveals not only a monoracial assumption of intimate relationships, but also its underlying intertwining of patriarchy and nationalism (see Chapter 7).

Foucault recognised resistance of norms is crucial for the ethical practice of freedom, the ultimate goal of which is “the expansion of behavioural options” (McWhorter, 1999, p. 182), or possibilities of new subjectivities (McLaren, 2012). He conceived freedom as the precondition of power, as power can only be exercised over free subjects, who can choose from several possible ways of being in the first place (Foucault, 1982). Freedom is also the permanent support of power, as “at the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom” (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). When freedom disappears, there is only a relationship of domination, not of power (Foucault, 1997). In Discipline and Punish, Foucault argued that some social practices and institutions intended to increase freedom actually increased domination (McLaren, 2012). To minimise domination and expand freedom involves individuals being self-aware of the power relations they are located in and actively resisting normalising practices and discourses (Foucault, 1997). Rather than a final state outside of power, freedom takes place within power relations and “occurs only in its exercise through reversal, resistance, and other practices of freedom” (McLaren, 2012, p. 41).

This theorisation is helpful for my discussion of migration in relation to the production of sexual subjectivity. Migration itself could expand possibilities of living and being (Manalansan,
Chinese young diaspora’s capitalising of new found sexual liberty in NZ, which is implied in some existing research as ‘problematic’ (e.g., Burchard et al., 2011), may suggest their exercise of freedom. However, migration is not necessarily a liberating movement as young minority diaspora are subject to constraining relations of domination in a host society in terms of race, gender and sexuality (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006; M. Song, 2013). In this case, freedom is also present in the young people’s resistance against such domination as they challenge or distance themselves from negative racial stereotypes (e.g., nerdy, asexual). This research explores the role of geographical border-crossing in the constitution of sexual subjectivity for Chinese young diaspora, and the complex (racial and sexual) power relations it invokes as an important dimension of the inquiry.

Race and ethnicity as performative

The concepts of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ have been typically confined by essentialist dominant discourses which render racially or ethnically categorised groups as static and ‘natural’, with shared ancestry and fixed cultural values and heritage (e.g., Confucianism) (Gilroy, 2013). As outlined earlier, the notion of ‘Chinese’ has been subject to this understanding. In the context of ongoing racial discrimination and prejudice faced by diasporic Chinese in western societies, embracing and preserving traditional culture may be a way of cultivating racial pride and countering negative stereotypes (Francis, Archer, & Mau, 2010; Lu, 2001). However, this also results in Chinese communities’ engagement with “self-Orientalisation” (Ang, 2005, p. 32), potentially reinforcing their image as cultural outsiders with static differences from mainstream societies.

Hall (1990) asserts cultural identity is reflective of a person’s positioning in the narrative of history, rather than a retrieved essence. This flexibility in identity formation is crucial for us to understand our post-colonial experience (Hall, 1990). Making of history itself is constructed through relations of power, including relations of domination (i.e., colonisation), as well as resistance (Foucault, 1978). Cultural identity is subject to continuous negotiation with dominant regimes of representation (Hall, 1990). Additionally, identity is closely linked to memories and myths about one’s culture and traditions that are often idealised or imagined (Chun, 1996; Hall, 1990). Hall (2000) further suggests ‘Chineseness’ may be better understood in terms of ‘routes’ instead of ‘roots’ (L. L. Wang, 1994). He explains, the nostalgia for an elusive past origin invoked by “Chineseness” which is believed to represent who we are should be replaced by an understanding of what we might become and how we might represent
ourselves. While the idea of authentic ‘Chineseness’ (i.e., language ability, customs, values) is profoundly challenged, a ‘Chinese’ subject is believed to be discursively produced (Hall, 2000).

In this thesis, I deploy Hall’s poststructuralist perspective of ethnicity and race, which are viewed as performative (Butler, 1990), produced discursively (Foucault, 1978), and as a social process (Chun, 1996). Like gender, race/ethnicity is viewed not as an innate or fixed attribute a person possesses, but as performatively constructed through an active process of cultural and social negotiation and memory construction (Butler, 2010), the congealing of repetitive and continual ‘doing’ of appearances or acts associated with a race (Butler, 1990). However, there is no ‘doer’ behind the deed, no performer performing an act. Performativity stresses the ‘doing’ itself, as ongoing and never finished, shaped by discourse, and producing the self-understanding and perception of a (gender or racial) identity (Butler, 1990).

Like a sexual subject, a racial subject is produced in various, shifting and sometimes competing power-knowledge relations (Foucault, 1978), and presents fluidity and flexibility in its constitution. By stating ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are socially constructed, I do not mean to negate the ‘realness’ of people’s experience of racially based adversities. As seen in my analysis chapters, these notions have a real impact on participants’ social world and subjectivities. Acknowledging racial subjectivity as fluid and constantly shaping allows me to better explore young people’s negotiation and resistance in relation to sexuality. I discuss young Chinese diaspora not as passive bodies on which a stable ‘racial identity’ is inscribed, but as agents who engage in their racial identity construction actively and reflexively. Sexuality is investigated in this thesis as one dimension of participants’ racial selves, one site where racial stereotypes and discrimination are produced (e.g., Asian men as effeminate). Conversely, race is a site through which sexualisation occurs (e.g., exotification of Asian women). Configured through each other, race and sexuality are inseparable in Chinese young diaspora’s narratives as (racial or sexual) subjects (see also Dwyer, 2000).

**Thesis overview**

In Chapter 2, I situate my study within broader scholarship from a number of fields, including gender studies, youth sexual practice, sexuality education, Chinese sexual history and migration (aka diaspora) studies and show how they bear importance on answering my research questions. This chapter orients the reader to literature my analysis later draws on in Chapters 4 – 7. I identify and critique how Chinese sexuality has been constructed as a ‘problem’,
especially in western research, and challenge this sexual profile by demonstrating how it is produced through gender relations, racial relations and sexual knowledge.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the research methodology, including the practices of recruitment, data collection, analysis, and the underlying theoretical principles (i.e., feminist poststructuralism). A detailed description of the study sample is given, with a brief comparison between sojourner and settler participants, outlining the significance of their different profiles.

Chapters 4 – 7 make up the analysis section of the thesis. These four chapters are separately guided by the four sub-questions that have been introduced at the beginning of the chapter:

1. How does sexual knowledge Chinese young people receive shape and influence their sexual subjectivity, especially in terms of practices of safer sex?
2. How do Chinese young people make sense of, embody, negotiate and resist the notion of female sexual respectability? How is it gendered and raced?
3. How do Chinese young people experience and reconcile their sexual selves in relation to a cultural emphasis on education?
4. How does migration impact on Chinese young people’s subjectivities, practices and discourses made available to them?

In Chapter 4, I focus on the role of sexual knowledge in shaping sexual subjects. This discussion is guided by the aim of dismantling the negative image of young Chinese in NZ as ‘sexually reckless’ and ‘ignorant’, as suggested by high abortion rates in this group (Trinh, 2012). I argue the concern of Chinese young diaspora’s sexual health practices in NZ public health sector must be contextualised within the structural absence of sexual information (as typically experienced by young people in China), and patriarchal gender power relations that are evident in Chinese young people’s familial, peer and intimate relationships. Implications for young people’s sexual health are then discussed.

I further discuss the gendered pattern in Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity in Chapter 5. Sexual reputation continues to regulate women’s sexual life, but the gauge of what constitutes sexual transgression has shifted over time and modern women in this study appear less constrained by the notion of premarital sexual abstinence/chastity. However, I show that the seemingly expanded space for female sexual desire is less than transformative or revolutionary, as the Virgin-Whore dichotomy has simply been replaced by a Virgin-Slut spectrum. The young women as sexual subjects are still defined by their placing on this spectrum. As a result they are observed to occupy contradictory subject positions (i.e., as
empowered female sexual beings, and as sexually respectable women) in the meaning making of their own, and others’ sexual experience. In particular, I give a critical discussion of the female participants’ presented agency in relation to neoliberalism and post-feminism, and emphasise the need for (re)engaging with feminist politics to achieve real expansion of women’s sexual freedom.

In Chapter 6, I explore young Chinese’s sexual subjectivity in relation to two normative life events considered of paramount importance for young people in Chinese societies: education followed by marriage. Participants commonly prioritise academic achievement over sexual interest or expression to the point being academic appears to foreclose the possibilities of being sexual. The academic pressure is followed by a pressing notion of marriage once the parents consider young people ‘old enough’ (i.e., often when they finish university study), leaving little room for the participants’ sexual exploration. Some participants show resistance by presenting sexual selves that are not precluded by academic pursuits, and in doing so, rejecting the stereotype of ‘Asian nerd’. Nonetheless, many report doing so without jeopardising their academic success, suggesting increasing pressure for modern young people, especially young women to ‘have it all’: being sexually attractive and also academically successful.

Chapter 7, the last analysis chapter parallels the temporal perspective (i.e., life events) in Chapter 6 with a focus on border-crossing movement, where I explore the role of migration in relation to sexuality. I portray the complex sexual landscape participants face in NZ by outlining the racial relations they are situated in as diasporic or transnational sexual subjects. Living in a western society as an Asian young person could be sexually freeing as well as restraining, as their sexuality is subject to racialisation from both the mainstream society and co-ethnic communities.

In the concluding chapter, I summarise my main findings, tracing a number of recurring notions throughout the analysis chapters, such as the discourse of female sexual respectability and the influence of family in young people’s sexual life. This is followed by a discussion of implications of these findings for sexuality education and sexual health practices, gender relations in China, and racialisation of Chinese sexuality. I then identify the limitations of this thesis and in the process, highlight possible directions for future research.
Chapter 2: The ‘Problem’ of Chinese Young People’s Sexuality

In this chapter, I examine literature pertinent to Chinese young people’s sexuality and argue Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality is informed by power relations imbedded in sexual knowledge, gender and race. I start by presenting a portrayal in existing research of young Chinese diaspora as sexually conservative and reckless, and problematise the exotifying tendency in such scholarship, which is underlined by a Eurocentric framework dominating sexuality research. In the ensuing critique of this profile as overly simplistic and stigmatising, I demonstrate how it is underlined by the way Chinese young people are gendered, racialised and desexualised in relation to their heritage culture, host society, schooling experience and general social interaction.

To counter the stereotypical and inaccurate understanding of Chinese sexuality as conservative, I first briefly trace the sexual history in China, with a focus on gender relations. By illustrating the changes and continuities in Chinese sexual culture, I identify the discussion of Chinese young people’s sexual subjectivity is inevitably a gendered one, and must involve the examination of the patriarchal gender order. Gender relations in Chinese societies have historically played a constraining role in young women’s sexual subjectivity and reinforced sexual conservatism. This understanding provides a backdrop for my investigation of gendered sexual subjectivities. Sexual subjectivity cannot be isolated from the wider societal norms. Particularly, I situate the ‘permissive’ trend observed among modern (Chinese) young women within neoliberalism, which further complicates a dominant understanding of Chinese sexual culture as essentially conservative.

Following this temporal account of Chinese sexuality, I continue to unpack Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality on the dimension of transnational movement, through outlining sexuality literature pertaining to migration. I specifically look at the way diasporic Chinese are racialised as sexual beings in host societies and demonstrate how these young people must negotiate intricate racial relations with both mainstream societies and co-ethnic networks. Their transnational experience gives rise to a variety of subjectivities that cannot be reduced to the monolithic profile of sexual conservatism and recklessness. Through this review of literature, I identify the need to analyse (inter/intra-)racial relations incurred by migration, the way racial/national boundaries are breached or sustained by sexuality, and how racial relations intertwine with the constitution of sexual subjectivity. Though existing literature has suggested
ethnic/racial in-betweenness is dynamic and contextual, I extend my investigation to both settler and sojourner Chinese, and to how their experience of inter- and intra-racial relations differs.

To further contextualise the ‘conservative’ and ‘reckless’ sexual profile of Chinese young diaspora, I then give a review of literature on sexuality education across China and NZ. I show that formal sexuality education (i.e., school-based) is severely lacking in China compared to NZ, and informal sexuality education (i.e., sexual communication with parents, peers and intimate partners) serve as important venues of reproducing and sustaining dominant sexual discourses (e.g., sexuality as taboo, sexual double standard). The way Chinese young people experience sexuality education at school and interpersonally produce them as ‘conservative’ sexual subjects and impacts on their practice of sexual safety. Integrating and extending existing literature, I argue sexuality education might be seen to produce problematic sexual subjectivities for diasporic youth, and is simultaneously constituted by problematic assumptions of Chinese youth sexuality itself.

**Young Chinese as sexually conservative and reckless**

Existing research on Chinese young people’s sexuality presents a contradictory profile: they are simultaneously at low sexual risk due to sexual conservatism and at high risk from ‘reckless’ sexual behaviours. Diasporic Asian youth are commonly represented in research as more sexually conservative than local ethnic majority youth (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1996; Okazaki, 2002), or other European diaspora in the host society (B. Lee et al., 2013). Subsequently, the group is perceived as at low risk of STIs and unwanted pregnancy and has been understudied in this domain (J. L. Kim, 2005). Diasporic Asian youth tend to have fewer sexual partners (McLaughlin, Chen, Greenberger, & Biermeier, 1997; A. Song, Richters, Crawford, & Kippax, 2005), experience sexual initiation at a later age, are less likely to participate in noncoital sexual behaviour and casual sex (Meston et al., 1996), and are less sexually knowledgeable or experienced (Brotto, Chik, Ryder, Gorzalka, & Seal, 2005; Brotto, Woo, & Ryder, 2007; Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1998) than their Caucasian peers. They report more conservative attitudes towards homosexuality and gender roles in sexual relationships (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Brotto et al., 2007; J. Yu, 2007), as well as more tolerance for rape myths and sexual harassment (Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002). Asian women report lower rates of desire, arousal and sexual pleasure, and higher rates of anxiety from
anticipated sexual activity than their European counterparts (Brotto et al., 2005; Cheng et al., 2014).

Studies in China similarly conclude Chinese youth are more conservative and less sexually active than their western counterparts (Higgins & Sun, 2007; J. Hong, Fan, Ng, & Lee, 1994; P. Zhang et al., 2015; W. Zheng, Zhou, Wang, & Hesketh, 2014), though some suggest they are on a par in some aspects such as pornographic consumption and masturbation (among men) (Parish, Laumann, & Mojola, 2007). Despite growing acceptance and practice of premarital sex in China, young people are still expected to marry the person they have had sex with (Higgins & Sun, 2007; Higgins, Zheng, Liu, & Sun, 2002). The window from first sex to marriage remains much shorter for Chinese youth (1 year or less) compared to the west (8-12 years), due to their relatively delayed sexual onset and the social emphasis on marriage (Parish et al., 2007).

In contradiction to this profile of Asian youth as a low-risk sexual group, another body of research portrays them as sexually at risk. Driven by a public health agenda, such research tends to focus on negative sexual outcomes such as unplanned pregnancy, abortion, STIs and HIV/AIDS (e.g., Abdullah et al., 2003; Y. Gao et al., 2001; B. Wang et al., 2005). In China, this type of research arose as a response to the increasing prevalence of sex related epidemics (e.g., STIs) in the youth population (Hoy, 2001; X. Li et al., 2004; K. Zhang, Li, Li, & Beck, 1999) in the last few decades (Parish et al., 2003; L. Zhang et al., 2002).

Similar concerns are observed overseas. In America, Asian men who have sex with men (MSM) are found to engage in unprotected sex at high rates (K. H. Choi, Han, Hudes, & Kegeles, 2002), and in some areas at higher rates compared to white MSM (McFarland, Chen, Weide, Kohn, & Klausner, 2004). In Australia and NZ, Chinese international students are believed to be more sexually active than in home countries, but display much less knowledge of sexual health and sexual health services than Chinese immigrant youth or European counterparts in the host society (Burchard et al., 2011; B. Lee et al., 2013). They are commonly portrayed as “lonely, isolated and impressionable”, “developing promiscuous habits and permissive lifestyles” given the new found sexual freedom in the host country (Simon-Kumar, 2009, p. 7). High abortion rates have been reported among Asian young women, particularly newcomer students (Trinh, 2012). However, other NZ research contradicts this pattern by showing a “healthy migrant effect” where recent Asians migrants are less likely than NZ raised migrants to engage in risky health behaviours (Rasanathan et al., 2006).
In summary, existing research findings portray a paradoxical image of Chinese young people as sexually conservative, and simultaneously reckless (see Simon-Kumar, 2009). This image echoes the sexual stereotyping of Oriental femaleness fantasised by white masculinity both historically during the colonial eras and today in the sex industry, as ‘submissive’, ‘feminine’, ‘available’ and sexually ‘wild’ (see Bernstein, 2009; Leung, 2008; Prasso, 2005). Just as such stereotyping illuminates western masculinity’s consumption of Asian femaleness in fantasy or in reality, the portrayal of Chinese youth in research is perhaps indicative of an exotifying tendency in scholarship.

Ethnic minority youth are frequently studied and measured against western paradigms, which are presumed universal (K. H. Chen, 2010). Questioned against these normative frameworks, their sexualities are rendered as problematic (Lewis, 2004; Tolman, 2000), as a Eurocentric framework used in mainstream scholarship tends to accentuate non-western groups’ differences as racial/ethnic/gendered Others (Simon-Kumar, 2009). This potentially reduces otherwise nuanced sexual differences to binaries of conservatism/liberality or healthy/risky, where ‘problematic’ sexual conduct tends to be over-represented (e.g., Lin, Simoni, & Zemon, 2005). For example, a construction of Chinese young people as sexually repressed, even ‘asexual’ places them outside ‘normal’ femininity or masculinity, operating as an “oppressive discourse” and denying them agency and humanity (Archer & Francis, 2005, p. 176). Additionally, the investigation of abortion among Chinese international students often overlooks China’s population control agenda and an anti-natalist discourses (Evans, 1997; Fraser, 1977), which a western sexual rights framework cannot successfully account for (e.g., Correa & Petchesky, 1994).

As Simon-Kumar (2009) articulates, “static frames that stigmatise the ‘other’ by reiterating constructions” of Asian youth “as careless, conservative or immature fail to capture dynamic and evolving conceptions of sexual identity and agency as part of active and ‘rational’ social negotiations” (p. 12). In this study, I challenge such racialised sexual stigma through unpacking Chinese young diaspora’s ‘permissive’ and responsible sexual subjectivities, and their resistance to ‘conservative’ or ‘reckless’ stereotypes (Chapters 5 – 7).

My review of literature below serves to set up the backdrop for the ensuing analysis in later chapters. Organised into three parts, this review complicates and contextualises the sexual profile of Chinese young diaspora by demonstrating the power relations in gender, race and sexual knowledge that shape young Chinese diaspora’s sexual subjectivity.
Chinese gendered sexual culture

While briefly tracing the gender sexual culture in contemporary China as follows, I demonstrate the importance of considering gender relations in a discussion of modern Chinese young people’s sexuality, as a patriarchal gender order is directly responsible for sexually constraining and conservative subject positions for women. By uttering the term ‘Chinese sexual culture’, I do not mean there is a self-contained culture that is distinctively and consistently ‘Chinese’ (Ang, 2005; Yeh, 2000). On the contrary, I show with the following literature dominant sexual norms and mores in Chinese societies fluctuated in openness or leniency throughout history, with continuities as well as changes (see also L. J. Martin, 2015).

Contrary to popular misconceptions informing research (e.g., Woo, Brotto, & Gorzalka, 2009), Chinese sexuality was historically more liberal than the Judeo-Christian west at the time (Y. Li, 2006; Ruan & Matsumura, 1991; van Gulik, 1961). A repressive sexual culture only emerged during the Song Dynasty (A.D.960-1279), when Confucianism was re-appropriated as the official state doctrine to solidify social stratification, including gender and sexual hierarchies (Ng & Lau, 1990). Female fidelity and sexual chastity were promoted as principal virtues, and sex was restrained to wedlock and procreation. This tightened control of sexuality continued during the succeeding dynasties, particularly for women (S. Pan, 1994).

A patriarchal gender structure has persisted throughout Chinese history (Evans, 1995; Humana & Wu, 1971). Chinese women were primarily defined by their domestic role, with their virtues measured by service to the paternal family (K. A. Johnson, 2009) and the ability to produce male offsprings to continue the husband’s agnatic line (Evans, 1995). The idealisation of submissive femininity still holds much currency in modern Chinese societies (Evans, 1997). After the founding of PRC, communist ideology enabled a brief period of officially endorsed gender egalitarianism, as women were encouraged to participate in education, production and class struggles equally as men (Tang & Parish, 2000). However, gender equality never gained primacy in the political agenda of the Communist Party, and hence was never sustained (Honig, 1985; K. A. Johnson, 2009). Gender equality progress in China has been staggering and feminism is negatively perceived by the public (Y. L. Huang, 2016). While there is consensus support for women’s paid employment, people still believe men should have privileged access to work opportunities, managerial or professional roles and higher level political positions (Shu & Zhu, 2012). Compared to American population, Chinese, especially Chinese women are more likely to accept restrictive gender roles that prescribe men as dominant, the provider, and
women as submissive and dependent (Z. Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Chia, Moore, Lam, Chuang, & Cheng, 1994; T. L. Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Even among Chinese diasporas, many women reported they emigrated simply to follow their husbands (Davidson & Dai, 2008).

Such gender relations have hindering implications on women’s sexuality. Despite a sexual revolution in China following the introduction of the government’s one-child policy and the Open-Door economic reform in the late 70’s (S. Pan & Huang, 2008), which brought issues of women’s sexual autonomy and sexual satisfaction to the fore (Evans, 1995; L. Li, King, & Winter, 2009; S. Pan, 1993, 2006), gendered sexual norms (e.g., sexual chastity) are sustained (E. Jeffreys, 2006). Ideal femininity prescribes female subordination (T. L. Lee et al., 2010; Xiao, Mehrotra, & Zimmerman, 2011) and Chinese women remain subject to more sexual restrictions than men (e.g., P. Zhang et al., 2015).

Changes among youth are occurring rapidly (Hoy, 2001), as their sexual views and practices are increasingly liberal in terms of premarital sex, unmarried cohabitation and casual sex (Farrer, 2002; Ma et al., 2006; J. Yu, 2012; K. Zhang et al., 1999). However, marriage continues to be idealised (Badger, Nelson, & Barry, 2006), especially for women. Young women’s practice of premarital sex is often constrained to the context of potential marriage (Parish et al., 2007; W. Zheng et al., 2011) to minimise reputational damage (Chang, Tsang, Lin, & Lui, 1997). Alternatively, premarital sex is often moralised as women giving away their first time as “a profound token” of love and devotion (Farrer, 2002, p. 233). The ostensibly ‘modern’ concept of romantic love colludes with traditional gender status quo, obscuring gender inequalities through romanticising normative ideals (de Beauvoir, 2014; Soucy, 2001).

Economic reform has had a profound impact on Chinese sexuality. Desire, be it sexual or material, is a major site where post-socialist sentiments operate. It embodies cosmopolitan yearnings and rejects a Maoist past, which is “viewed as one of constraints and deprivations” (Rofel, 2007, p. 5). The modern Chinese desiring subjects express their aspirations in terms of perceived life enhancing practices including consumption, sexual expression and money making (Rofel, 2007). Consistently, higher economic status is found to associate with earlier (P. Zhang et al., 2015) or more unrestricted sexual behaviours (W. Zheng et al., 2014), and parents’ professional and educational status appears associated with young people’s belief of wider prevalence of sexual behaviours among their peers (Higgins & Sun, 2007). These findings point to a trend that sex may be more accessible or attainable especially to Chinese youth with more social capital (see also Nguyen, 2007).
In terms of gender norms, economic reform rendered earlier communist feminism as part of the Maoist agenda against people’s expression of (gendered) desires, to turn people into “unnaturally gendered beings” (Rofel, 2007, p. 13). Cultivation and expression of ‘innate’ femininity or masculinity as their gendered nature (see also Evans, 1997) therefore became celebrated as emancipatory (Rofel, 2007). However, this shift also sustains gender inequality as Chinese women continue to hold a view of male superiority in finding partners in terms of education, age, income, and height (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016; Higgins & Sun, 2007; Higgins et al., 2002). This is mirrored by men’s preference for women who are “gentle”, “considerate” and “filial” (F. Wang & Rong, 2011) and from lower socioeconomic status (X. Zhou, Wang, Li, & Hesketh, 2011).

Economic reform also impacts on women’s sexuality through the production of a neoliberal feminine subject (Oksala, 2013). A post-socialist feminine subject of modernity took shape through cosmopolitan consumption or other entrepreneurial endeavours towards material gain (Nguyen, 2007; Rofel, 2007). Material aspiration becomes an important motivation in intimate relationships, especially for women due to gender disadvantage in social resources (Farrer, 2002; Zurndorfer, 2016). “In a money economy, everything, including the personal qualities of individuals, are judged according to their exchange value and even the most personal and intimate are somehow permeated by economic calculus” (Gammeltoft, 2002a, pp. 482–483). While pragmatic calculation in intimate relationships has always been common in Chinese culture (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016; Dion & Dion, 1996; Higgins et al., 2002), the current pattern has gendered implications. Young women’s material demands for men (e.g., a house, a car, and a high income) is underlined by self-commodification of their sexual purity in neoliberal calculation for upwards social movement (L. Z. Li, 2015). Male dominance and traditional gender division of labour are solidified (Zuo & Bian, 2001), but this is obscured by an illusion of female empowerment (L. Z. Li, 2015).

Within the neoliberal narrative of female empowerment, this seemingly freely choosing, self-serving feminine subject does not see a heteropatriarchal society or challenge the structural gender discrimination pervading in it (Gill, 2007, 2008a; Gill & Scharff, 2011; McRobbie, 2009). In other words, in modern China, post-feminism arrived and occupied dominant discourse before feminism could take much hold (see also Tan, 2014; Yates, 2015). Traditional morality around female virginity clashes with liberal sexual rhetoric around free choice and desire, creating tension in young women’s sexual subjectivities (see also Gammeltoft, 2002b; Nguyen, 2007; and Robinson & Utomo, 2003).
My analysis of young Chinese people’s sexual subjectivity engages with the review of gender relations presented above. I discuss what subject positions are enabled or disabled for young women by dominant gender discourses, and what space there is for transgressive gender expressions and relations (Chapter 5). Although female subordination seems consistent throughout history, I extend existing literature by identifying agency and resistance among the participants (e.g., young women challenging the sexual double standard). This discussion also considers Bay-Cheng’s (2015b, 2015a) theorisation of a neoliberal brand of sexual agency observed among western women. Engaging with her critique of a neoliberal feminine profile as autonomous, self-serving and unapologetic, I point out young Chinese women who appear ostensibly empowered in sex are not free from slut-shaming (Farvid, Braun, & Rowney, 2016), or liberated as the profile promises (Bay-Cheng, 2015a).

**Border-crossing and sexuality**

Apart from gender, race constitutes another important power relation in the production of Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity. Racial relations incurred by migration underscore the (re)production of the Othering sexual profile of young Chinese diaspora as conservative and reckless. Sexuality is an important dimension of the transaction between ‘home’ and destination, or heritage and local societies (Simon-Kumar, 2009). Noted as the “sexual turn”, increasing attention in mobility studies has been given to the way “migrants and other ‘people on the move’ are sexual beings expressing, wanting to express, or denied the means to express, their sexual identities” (Mai & King, 2009, p. 296). Through exploring pertinent literature on migrants’ sexuality, I show how Chinese young people’s sexuality is racialised and problematised though transnational border-crossing.

**Sexual freedom and discrimination in the host society**

Research often implies an understanding of movement to western countries as enabling more sexual/gender freedom (Davidson & Dai, 2008; Grewal & Kaplan, 2001). Researchers have claimed that as Chinese diaspora become more acculturated to the mainstream western culture, their sexual views and practice get more aligned with the ‘western’ norms, as in more sexually liberal or ‘permissive’ (Meston et al., 1998; Okazaki, 2002; Raffaelli, Kang, & Guarini, 2012). Detraditionalisation of gender and sexual norms (e.g., virginity imperative for girls, Ahmadi,
is observed especially among women (see Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006 for a review on gender and migration).

While immigrant women are assigned a symbolic role as guardians of cultural values and family honour, migration offers them opportunities to challenge and transgress such patriarchal demands (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005; Espin, 1999). Women’s sexuality is found more responsive to environmental and cultural influences than men’s (Baumeister, 2000). Consistently, Asian women are more likely to adopt liberal views towards gender and sexuality than men (Brotto et al., 2005; Mok, 1999; W. Zheng et al., 2014). In post-migration life, they report expectations for more equal gender contributions in familial responsibilities (Dion & Dion, 2004; C. Kim, LaRoche, & Tomiuk, 2004), more possibilities of gender expression (as opposed to “tender and soft”), and more opportunities to pursue one’s potential and desires (D. Qin & Lykes, 2006). In terms of sexuality, they report more autonomy over their sexual body (K. K. Hoang, 2014), more space and anonymity to transgress boundaries (Gonzales & Rolison, 2005), more active pursuit of sexual pleasure (Y. R. Zhou, 2012) and more resistance to traditional notions of sexual chastity (Okazaki, 2002). Scholars on Asian migration have claimed migration “has awakened the sexual self in migrant women” (L. A. Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 600).

Sexual freedom could also play a decisive role in motivating and enacting migration (Mai & King, 2009) for sexual minorities (Fortier, 2001). Queer Chinese report frequently facing heterosexist attitude and homophobia in home societies (Y. R. Zhou, 2006). Traditional cultural emphases on filial piety, family obligations and reproductive duty make it difficult for them to reconcile their Chineseness and sexual attraction (Quach, Todd, Hepp, & Doneker Mancini, 2013). They typically hide their sexuality from family (P. K. Y. Chow & Cheng, 2010; Nemoto et al., 2003), and enter heterosexual marriages to produce offspring (J. X. Liu & Choi, 2006; Y. Yu, Xiao, & Xiang, 2011). For some of them, migration therefore serves a pathway toward ‘coming out’, or fulfilling sexual desires (Espin, 1999, 2013).

Border-crossing can facilitate crossing ethnic borders in sexuality. While migrant women in general are more likely to outmarry (i.e., marry outside of their own ethnic group) than migrant men, Asian women tend to do so at a much higher rate than many other racial groups (Jacobs & Labov, 2002). In particular, Asian women show a preference to date Caucasian men (S. Chow, 2000). This has been understood in terms of Asian women seeking equal gender relations and resisting patriarchy in their heritage culture (Morgan, 2015; Pyke, 2010; Uskul, Lalonde, & Cheng, 2007). Asian men on the other hand, prefer dating Asian women (Fisman,
Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2008) and are less favourable towards interracial dating than Caucasian males (Uskul et al., 2007). This may be accounted for by the patrilineal gender structure in Asian culture, where sons are responsible for passing on the family name, and hence under more pressure to enter co-ethnic marriages (A. Y. Chung, 2016; King & Sondhi, 2016).

Despite the documented positive association between migration and sexuality, it is crucial not to reduce diaspora Chinese’s experience of migration to one towards sexual liberty, which is reiterative of Eurocentric construction of the west as sexually progressive (Corboz, 2009). Migration can also incur negative influence on sexual subjectivity, mediated by racial marginalisation or segregation (Lim & Pham, 2016). Research has identified Asian diaspora as caught between the pressure to assimilate into the host culture and racism that expels them from participation in the mainstream society (Espiritu, 1994). Racial discrimination in the form of name calling, social exclusion and unfair treatment is prominent in Asian young diaspora’s experience in the host countries such as NZ (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Asian international students, especially Chinese report low satisfaction in terms of social inclusion and emotional support from the host society (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Ward & Masgoret, 2004, 2008). Contingently, Chinese students report having more co-ethnic friends than other groups, and less willingness to initiate friendships with New Zealanders, consistent with an overall tendency of poor integration with local society (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). A division can also be observed among Chinese sojourners and settlers with the former having fewer NZ friends than the latter (Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

Gender performance appears crucial in Asian young people’s integration into mainstream society. A recognisably ‘proper’ gender display often involves rejection of a ‘typical’ Asian nerd image (Eglash, 2002; Kendall, 2011), and adoption of gender expressions typically associated with white youth culture (e.g., fashion, music, entertainment) (Moloney & Hunt, 2012). Nonetheless, Asian young people’s visible racial difference subjects them to Othering and essentialist racialisation (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Dwyer, 2000). Assumptions are made of their sexuality based on their visible racial markers (Huynh & Woo, 2014). Failing to perform gender in a normative way in a host society (e.g., hypermasculine) (L. Frost, 2003) could easily marginalise them as too ‘Asian’, which implies sexual conservatism (Hibbins, 2006).

The liberating potential of interracial intimate relationships is also accompanied with new oppressions produced by unequal racial relations (Constable, 2010; Y. R. Zhou, 2016). Despite
their perceived promise of gender egalitarianism, interracial heterosexual relationships could also signal Caucasian men’s fetishisation of ‘submissive’ and ‘subservient’ Asian women (Espiritu, 2008; Fujino, 1997; Lauser, 2008), as well as Asian women’s collusion in these stereotypes (Morgan, 2015). The belief reported by some Asian women that patriarchy is race-based is problematic (Morgan, 2015). Some settler Asian men have presented a non-hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) that renders them more open to sharing domestic responsibility and showing emotions than Caucasian men (Chua & Fujino, 1999). By glorifying Caucasian men as more egalitarian and less domineering than Asian men, Asian women may be reproducing negative stereotypes of Asian masculinity created by the dominant group (S. Chow, 2000) and furthering Asian men’s marginalisation (Morgan, 2015; Pyke, 2010).

This body of literature on migration and sexuality illustrates the importance of considering racial relations incurred by migration in the investigation of Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality. As migration enables some Chinese young people to seek and fulfil sexual subjectivities previously not available in their home societies, their accounts appear to indicate agency. This is unlike public health research introduced earlier which portrays such sexual activeness in terms of recklessness. I follow this argument and analyse the new found sexual freedom reported by some Chinese diaspora (Chapter 7), especially female sojourners, from the perspective of possible sexual empowerment instead of as a sexual health concern (I provide further contextualisation of their ‘recklessness’ in relation to sexual knowledge in the next section). On the other hand, the unequal racial relation in a host society often renders Chinese young diaspora as the conservative sexual Other, unless they adopt assimilative gender expressions recognised in a white dominant culture and as distinctly not ‘Asian’ (e.g., Dobson, 2014; Francis & Archer, 2005b; O’Donnell & Sharpe, 2002). I integrate these insights in my analysis of Chinese young diaspora’s racialised sexual subjectivities and discuss how participants internalise or subvert the racialised sexual stereotypes (e.g., nerds, submissive) (Chapters 6).

**Constraints and support from co-ethnic networks**

Just as it is hard to conclude simply whether border-crossing movement is emancipating or subjugating (Foner, 1998), the co-ethnic community (including family) of Asian diaspora could serve as both a constraint and a buffer in their cultural adjustment (Sakamoto, 2006). Research suggests traditional cultural norms around filial piety and interpersonal harmony persist among
Chinese youth even in the context of increasingly ‘westernised’ sexual mores (Chang, 2005). Family discipline characterises one of the key familial relationship norms underpinning Chinese migrants’ behaviours (Davidson & Dai, 2008). Confucian ideology that explicitly advocates for family duty, obedience and honour (D. Y. F. Ho, 1996; K. S. Yang, Yeh, & Hwang, 1989) is sustained among Chinese migrants. As young people in China report a tendency to comply with family and avoid transgression (D. Qin, 2004) when it comes to intimate relationships (Moore & Wei, 2012; Pimentel, 2000; S. Zhang & Kline, 2009), parental influence is also strong for Asian settlers in terms of sexual activities (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014) and mate-selection preference (J. L. Kim, 2005; Uskul et al., 2007), especially for those feeling close to their family/parents (Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006). Chinese youth are more likely to support parents than Caucasian youth in a scenario of interracial dating conflict, indicating familial influence may work through Chinese youth’s (willing) submission, rather than through imposition (Uskul et al., 2007).

Chinese diaspora also report expectations from co-ethnic peers to refrain from sexual discussions or expressions (C. S. Chan, 2008; Y. R. Zhou, 2012). Scrutiny from co-ethnic community is particularly strong on young women and typically centres around maintaining their sexual ‘purity’ (Dwyer, 2000; Nagel, 2000). This points to the observation that “gender ideals and gender roles are often reinforced, rather than challenged through the process of migration and resettlement” (Dwyer, 2000, p. 477). Contingently, diasporic Asian women report more constrained sexual subjectivities such as lower expectations of pleasure and self-efficacy in sex than their Caucasian and African counterparts in a host society (Cheng et al., 2014).

Simultaneously, racial or ethnic based hostility in a host society may motivate diaspora to preserve heritage cultural integrity (Nagel, 2000) and to seek support from co-ethnic communities (King & Sondhi, 2016). For sojourner youth, their ethnocommunal relationships are largely defined by a shared ethnicity linking them to their homeland (Safran, 1991) rather than to the host society. For settler youth, family serves as a key site of transmitting cultural heritage and maintaining Chinese identities (Davidson & Kuah-Pearce, 2008; L. S. Liu, 2014; Wan & Chew, 2013). Immigrant women have noted the importance of connecting to co-ethnic community, especially with other women in preserving their cultural or religious practice and making migration less stressful (D. Qin & Lykes, 2006; Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2013). Across genders, some diasporic Asians report preferring co-ethnic as intimate partners, and
reject dating Caucasians due to their racial dominance and cultural incompatibility (S. Chow, 2000; Kibria, 2003; Morgan, 2015).

These findings portray the role of co-ethnic community in Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity as prominent and complex. Chinese diaspora’s affiliation with co-ethnic community may contribute to the reproduction of ‘conservative’ Chinese sexuality. While some may experience such co-ethnic ties as sexual constraints, others may find them sexually validating, as the shared racial identity prescribes sameness in sexual views and practice. This insight gives rise to my analysis in Chapter 7 on how Chinese young diaspora are racialised as sexual beings by co-ethnics in the host society.

‘In-betweenness’ and sexuality

Literature presented so far illustrates sexuality serves as a major axis in reproducing racial, ethnic and nationalist agendas. ‘Correct’ enactment of masculinity and femininity according to heteronormative regimes “often lie at the core of ethnic cultures” (Nagel, 2000, p. 113). Young diaspora’s sexuality is therefore contingent to the dynamic complexity of their racial subjectivities.

As shown in the last two sub-sections, racial ‘in-betweenness’ (Bartley, 2010; Bartley & Spoonley, 2008) experienced by Chinese young diaspora sometimes produces conflicting expectations for them as sexual beings, such as pursuing sexual freedom enabled by migration and maintaining racialised sexual norms such as premarital chastity. This leads to some migrants (strategically) living a ‘double life’ between private sexual practice and public expression (C. S. Chan, 2008; A. Y. Chung, 2016; Y. R. Zhou, 2012), especially those strongly identifying with Asian values (Lau, Markham, Lin, Flores, & Chacko, 2009). Ambivalence in sexual subjectivity is also observed in some Asian young diaspora’s inconsistent, or transitional gender or sexual views (Morgan, 2015). Diasporas often deploy heritage or host cultural norms contextually, especially when the two conflict with each other (Uskul et al., 2007). Though migration may lead to the dissolution of some traditional views, the ‘change’ of sexual views, even practice might be just a revisionary response to adjust socially (Ahmadi, 2003). Heritage and host cultures also interact to produce sexual beings. For example, individuals’ investment in heritage culture mediates the ‘liberalising’ effect of mainstream culture on their sexuality (Brotto et al., 2005).
Engaging with the dynamic position of in-betweenness enables me to explore how participants navigate different, even conflicting subject positions pertaining to sexuality (e.g., as an autonomous sexual being, a filial, compliant child, or a good ‘Chinese’ man/woman) (Chapters 6 and 7). The notion of ‘in-betweenness’ also facilitates the discussion of gender relations. Due to their supposed symbolic role as guardians of heritage culture and family honour, Asian women are often more subject to this dilemma in terms of individual (sexual or gender) expression (A. Y. Chung, 2016; Dwyer, 2000). Diasporic Chinese young women report greater conflicts and less compliance with their parents around adherence to traditional gender norms than men (R. H. Chung, 2001; Uskul et al., 2007). I explore how the young women in my sample negotiate personal sexual expression against racialisation of their sexuality from NZ society and their co-ethnic networks throughout the thesis.

In discussing ‘in-betweenness’, the dichotomy of home-away is re-examined and complicated. Existing literature shows while transnational subjects with their multi-local subjectivities and identities are often seen as “neither here nor there”, they can also been seen as both “here and there” (S. Huang, Yeoh, & Lam, 2008, p. 7). Many young settlers report preferring a compound or hyphenated ethnic identity label (e.g., Asian New Zealander), which captures a sense of being in-between as well as a sense of instability brought on by the competing calls for cultural allegiance and attachment (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Kong, 1999). Hybrid identities also signal rejection of a dichotomised construction of national identity as either-or, and cut across national boundaries in creating a distinct cultural heritage (Dwyer, 2000). Most ethnic minorities were found to both adopt features of the mainstream/host culture and retain identification and participation with the heritage culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Costigan & Su, 2004). ‘In-betweenness’ becomes the celebration of multiple homes in diaspora discourse (Dwyer, 2000). I add to this body of theorisation through discussing participants’ orientation towards and negotiation of different racial subject positions in Chapters 6–8.

Queer scholarship in migration (Luibhéid, 2004, 2008) also offers meaningful discussion to ‘in-between’ sexuality. Like diasporic Asian women who occupy the intersection of gender and race, queer immigrants face double marginalisation as immigrants and queers (Kuntsman, 2009; Quach et al., 2013). Their sexuality is “erased at best, stereotyped and demonized at worst, both inside and outside their ethnic communities” (Nagel, 2000, p. 123), while their mobility is policed through state immigration regulations (Luibhéid, 2002). However, trying to venture “beyond the framework of normative heterosexuality” (Fortier, 2001, p. 408) or normative homosexualism (Mai & King, 2009), these “queer diaspora” (C. Patton & Sánchez-
Eppler, 2000) challenge the fixed notions of sexual citizenship and identities through both migration and sexuality (Manalansan, 2006). ‘Home’ is a site of attachment that can be reproduced through migration and evokes engagement with both their past and future (Fortier, 2001; Pain, 2002). Queer migrants and their identities thus create and occupy an ‘in-between’ space, a ‘third space’ that “entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 10). Queer participants in this study gave some accounts that illustrate this conceptualisation of ‘home’ (Chapters 7 and 8).

Literature presented above shows ‘in-betweenness’ is a crucial component in the investigation of Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity. Their sexuality cannot be reduced to a stagnant profile of sexual conservatism or recklessness, since “to be a sexual being has totally different signification in different cultures and epochs” (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 685). As diasporic youth are variedly understood as hybrid subjects who are able to selectively appropriate western sexual norms (Corboz, 2009; Grewal & Kaplan, 2001), and as victims of repressive ‘home’ culture and western hegemonies (Dwyer, 2000), I add to existing scholarship and examine how my sample of Chinese young people are situated and why. I discuss how participants conceptualise this ‘in-betweenness’ (e.g., asset or liability) as sexual beings, and in this process, illustrate the importance of contextualising diaspora’s sexuality within discourses of race, ethnicity and mobility. Through connecting the young people’s transnational subjectivity to gendered experience of sexual norms, I demonstrate race and sexuality are both discursively constituted through relations of power (Dwyer, 2000), and are constituted through each other (Nagel, 2000).

**Sexuality education – making problematic sexual subjects**

In critiquing the profile of Chinese young people as sexually conservative and reckless, I do not deny the sexual health issues present among them (e.g., Trinh, 2012). Particularly, youth in China frequently report insufficient knowledge of reproductive biology (He, Tsang, Zou, & Wu, 2010), misinformed understanding of sexual safety (B. Chen et al., 2008; X. Li et al., 2004; B. Wang et al., 2007; J. Yu, 2012), and rare or inconsistent condom use (Cottrell et al., 2005; Ma et al., 2006; Sun et al., 2013; L. Zhang et al., 2002). Even when they are aware of HIV/AIDS as a sexually transmissible disease, many young people believe it is preventable by avoiding ‘unrespectable’ sexual conduct (as the word in the study referenced), and therefore perceive low vulnerability to it (H. Zhang et al., 2004). In this section, I outline the structural and social foundations (i.e., inadequate sexuality education in school and social interaction) of these
issues and how they contribute to the making of Chinese young people as ‘problematic’ sexual beings. By sexuality education, I include both informal sexuality education that occurs through family, peers, and sexual relationships, and formal school-based sexuality education (Allen, 2005b).

**School-based sexuality education in China and NZ**

Sexuality education was officially introduced in schools in mainland China in the context of rising STI and HIV/AIDS epidemics in the 90s (Y. Gao et al., 2001; L. Li et al., 2009). However, the topic of safer sex was largely absent in the curriculum (Aresu, 2009; Y. Gao et al., 2001). The small number of officially sanctioned programmes are predominantly abstinence-based and preoccupied with youth sexual morality. Young people are instructed to “improve their personal hygiene, to desist from masturbation, to observe premarital sexual abstinence and to stay away from teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS” (Aresu, 2009, p. 532). Such institutional sanctions potentially disempower young people from engaging in safer sexual practice (Aresu, 2009; L. Li et al., 2009) and create hindrance in obtaining condoms (H. Zhang et al., 2004).

The abstinence-only approach is not unique to sexuality education in China (Lerner & Hawkins, 2016; S. Martin, Rector, & Pardue, 2004), but the “external packaging” given to it such as the rhetoric of national strength and social stability makes sex/sexuality education in China peculiar for a modern society (Aresu, 2009, p. 538). For example, sexuality education classes are often carried out under the name ‘population education' or even ‘morality education’ (L. Li et al., 2009; Y. F. Zhou, 2012), linking youth (non-)sexual body with population planning and nation building (Evans, 1995). Abstinence education in China is therefore not just about disease prevention, or the notion of chastity, but also about disseminating a socialist ideology that stresses state intervention and control of individual bodies (Aresu, 2009).

Promotion of sexual abstinence as the only officially sanctioned discourse of sexuality education leaves little room for provision of sexual safety and other knowledge (Fraser, 1977; L. Li et al., 2009). Programmes or curricula typically focus on knowledge on physiology and STIs, avoid ‘touchy’ issues such as sex and contraception (S. Pan, 2006; B. Wang et al., 2005), and explicitly advocate against masturbation (D. L. Liu, Ng, Zhou, & Haeberle, 1997; Ruan & Matsumura, 1991). Despite a positive relationship between sexuality education and condom use demonstrated in research (Sun et al., 2013; Tu, Lou, Gao, & Shah, 2008; B. Wang et al.,
Chinese youth continue to find sexual health services or school sexuality education unhelpful when it comes to contraception (B. Chen et al., 2008; Ma et al., 2006). The way school sexuality education is conceptualised renders it out of touch with a reality of continuing sexual revolution in China (S. Pan, 1994; Ruan & Matsumura, 1991). Caught in the clash of tradition and modernity, ideology (i.e., government regulation of sexuality) and reality (i.e., increasingly liberal sexual attitudes among youth), existing sexuality education programmes have seen limited effectiveness (L. Li et al., 2009). Despite official encouragement on a national policy level (W. Liu & Su, 2014), school sexuality education programmes remain in a state of chaos and shortage (A. A. Chen, 2014; Y. Li et al., 2004). Young people have expressed strong dissatisfaction with the sexuality education schooling they have received (Aresu, 2009; Y. Huang, Pan, Tao, & Gao, 2009). Adolescents express a desire to learn more about sexuality in schools, whereas in reality, their primary sources of information are friends (L. Li et al., 2009; Parish et al., 2007), pornography (D. L. Liu, Ng, & Chou, 1992; D. L. Liu et al., 1997), media and the internet (J. Yu, 2012; H. Zhang et al., 2004). Continued efforts in sexuality education have been made by scholars and NGOs in the last decade (Lou, Wang, Shen, & Gao, 2004). However, progress has always been accompanied by backlash from the public or anti-sex campaigners (A. Y. Li, 2015), who perceive sex/sexuality education as anti-communist foreign bodies’ attempt to corrupt young Chinese’s moral character (FlorCruz & Hong, 2011).

Compared to China, NZ has a reasonably well established sexuality education system. The Health and Physical Education Curriculum released in 1999 reflected a pedagogical intention to shift towards a more holistic approach to sexuality issues (see Allen & Elliott, 2008). However, the potential of comprehensive sexuality education intended by the Curriculum is not (fully) realised (Allen, 2005a). Many sexuality education programmes continue to constitute sexual knowledge in a de-eroticised (Allen, 2001, 2004a, 2009a) and heteronormative way (Allen, 2007d). There continues to be a focus on negative outcomes of sexual behaviours such as unplanned pregnancy and STIs (Allen, 2007b, 2007c). The approach has been critiqued extensively for its construction of youth sexuality as negative and risky, and its denial of young people’s sexual agency (e.g., Allen, 2007a, 2007b; Rasmussen, Rofes, & Talburt, 2004).

A knowledge/practice gap is evident in young people’s experience with formal sexuality education in NZ and worldwide (Allen, 2001; Rodden, Crawford, Kippax, & French, 1996; Wight, 1992), where the acquisition of safer sex knowledge does not translate into practice.
Allen (2001) identified young people afford a lower status to information learned from sexuality education schooling than knowledge gained from personal experience. She argues this is due to a ‘discourse of erotics’ typically missing in formal sexuality education, as the discourse sits in conflict with a desexualised official school culture (Allen, 2007a; Fine & McClelland, 2006). Allen and others (Allen, 2001, 2004a, 2008b, 2009a; Cameron-Lewis & Allen, 2013) argue for inclusion of this discourse in sexuality education as a means to close the knowledge/practice gap. The inclusion could render sexual knowledge more relevant to young people’s concerns and interests, therefore more effective in engendering “confident sexual subjects”, broadening (hetero)sexual subjectivities, and delivering safer sex information (Allen, 2005a, p. 395).

Formal sexuality education in NZ may bear more similarities with that in China than it seems. Firstly, like in China, NZ sexuality education schooling is underlined by public health concerns. The fact that NZ has the highest rates of some STIs in the world (STI Surveillance Team, 2011) drives an urgency of promoting disease prevention in education (S. Jackson, 2004; Terry et al., 2012). Secondly, a Cartesian dualism of mind/body that prioritises intellectual development over the corporeal body heavily informs education across societies (Nash, 2001; Paechter, 2004). Young people’s sexual expression and interest are considered a distraction to their academic pursuits, a disruption to the formal landscape of schooling, and thus discouraged (Allen, 2007a; Allen & Elliott, 2008). Sexuality education therefore tends to constitute young people as de-eroticised, asexual beings and overlooks sexual knowledge on pleasure and desire (Fine, 2003; Fine & McClelland, 2006; though for a review and critique of pleasure-based sexuality education in NZ, see Allen, Rasmussen, & Quinlivan, 2013). Thirdly, a heteronormative, monogamous framework (Bay-Cheng, 2003; McMillan, 2004; Pei, Ho, & Ng, 2007) and traditional gender ideologies (J. Y. Liang, O’Halloran, & Tan, 2016) continue to be promoted in sexuality education across both societies. Despite its potential to challenge disempowering sexual norms, sexuality education schooling tends to reinforce them (Willig, 1999).

Overall, formal sexuality education in China and NZ (or elsewhere, e.g., the United States) operates the same way, where sexual knowledge is produced, selected and organised as a set of ‘truths’, defining normative sexual practice (Allen, 2005b; Aresu, 2009; Bay-Cheng, 2003). Discursive constructions of sexuality “have implications for sexual practice by offering a range of subject positions which constrain and/or facilitate what can be thought, said and done sexually” (Willig, 1999, p. 114). Through enabling and disabling subject positions, school-
based sexuality education as a vehicle of regulative power works to construct normative sexuality and produce a particular type of sexual being (Aresu, 2009; D. Epstein, O’Flynn, & Telford, 2003). Through selection and constitution of sexual knowledge, youth sexuality is constructed as predominantly negative, diseased, dangerous and guilt-invoking, a problem to be managed (Allen et al., 2013; Rasmussen et al., 2004). This potentially disempowers youth in self-protection from sexual coercion and unsafe sex, not to mention marginalising individuals who are already sexually active (L. Li et al., 2009; Tolman, 2002).

In this thesis, I affirm the structural absence and poor delivery of formal sexuality education in China, and discuss its sexual health implications for Chinese young diaspora in NZ (Chapter 4). I demonstrate the very construction of youth sexuality as a ‘problem’ for schools to manage and erase, is responsible for the young people’s problematic sexual subjectivities (e.g., being ‘ignorant’ about sexual knowledge and ‘reckless’ with safe sex practice). I further discuss the regulative effect of sexual knowledge not only in terms of how it produces normative sexual subjects, but also how the ‘normative’ itself is defined through a western framework (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). Through identifying the way Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity does not fit western conceptualisation of sexuality (e.g., resistance of western sexual labels), I add to the critique of white hegemony in the production of sexual knowledge (Chapter 7).

**Informal sexuality education: Parents, peers and intimate partners**

The perceived importance of parents as a source of sexual knowledge for youth (van de Bongardt, Yu, Deković, & Meeus, 2015) varies ethnically (Coleman & Testa, 2007). Compared to western youth, young Chinese in China or overseas are less likely to receive sexuality education from their parents (M. Epstein & Ward, 2008; J. L. Kim & Ward, 2007; L. Li et al., 2009; W. Liu, Van Campen, Edwards, & Russell, 2011). The information they do receive is limited to less ‘taboo’ topics such as puberty (L. Zhang, Li, & Shah, 2007). This intersects with Chinese parents’ tendency to emphasise children’s academic pursuit (e.g., Francis & Archer, 2005a), since sexual interest is considered a disruption to academic progress (D. Epstein et al., 2003). Chinese parents tend to disprove of adolescent children’s display of sexuality (J. L. Kim, 2005; Lau et al., 2009; J. Yu, 2007), or the safe-sex approach in school-based sexuality education (Cui, Li, & Gao, 2001; J. Yu, 2008).
Irrespective of the length of their residency in a host country, diasporic Asian parents around the world often hold conservative views about children’s sexuality (Meston et al., 1996, 1998 for Canada; Okazaki, 2002 for USA; J. Yu, 2007 for Britain). They can also encounter additional barriers in sexual communication with children due to language and acculturation gaps (T. A. Kao, Loveland-Cherry, & Guthrie, 2010; T. A. Kao, Loveland-Cherry, Guthrie, & Caldwell, 2011; J. Yu, 2007, 2008). Their silence on sexuality is commonly attributed to cultural taboos or conservatism (J. Yu, 2007, 2008). Some diasporic youth believe their parents’ restrictions of their sexual activities stem from their reliance on exaggerated and inaccurate media scripts of adolescent sexuality in the host society without first-hand experience as teenagers (Durham, 2004; King & Sondhi, 2016).

Chinese parents are however, not homogeneous in their approaches to sexuality education. Parents in China report ambivalent attitudes towards their children’s premarital sex (Cui et al., 2001). Many support sexuality education and acknowledge their role as ideally the first source of this education, but lack needed knowledge (W. Liu et al., 2011) or perceive discomfort in the communication (W. Liu, Dennis, & Edwards, 2015). An association is found between Chinese parents’ income level and attitude towards sexuality education and sexuality (W. Liu et al., 2011), consistent with western research findings of higher social class as a predictor of more social liberalness (Armstrong et al., 2014; Gonzales & Rolison, 2005). Some diasporic parents become more relaxed with their children’s sexuality in post-migration life (Espiritu, 2012). More acculturated Asian parents overseas are described as more accepting of premarital sex than less acculturated parents, and those with less language discrepancy with their children gave more information about sex to their children (Ahmadi, 2003; J. L. Kim & Ward, 2007).

In turn, international literature documents parents’ open communication about sexuality is associated with children’s safer sexual practice and delayed sexual debut (Aspy et al., 2007; Hutchinson, Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2003).

Conservative attitudes from Chinese parents are sometimes considered a ‘protective’ factor for youth against negative sexual consequences (T. A. Kao et al., 2010, 2011; Okazaki, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2011). However, they also potentially feed into the restrictive construction of Chinese youth as ‘asexual’, repressed and passive pupils and “working automatons” in a school setting (Francis & Archer, 2005a, p. 175). In this study (Chapters 4 and 6), I explore what subject positions parents’ sexual communication has disabled or enabled for Chinese young people as sexual beings, and what they do in response to parents’ (academic, sexual and gender) expectations. As diasporic Chinese youth report higher family allocentrism than Europeans.
(Uskul et al., 2007), they also display resistance to conservative messages from parents (e.g., S. Zhang & Kline, 2009). I explore how their subjectivities vary in terms of complying with parental messages, and in so doing, unpack the assumption that Chinese-identified people share a Confucianist cultural emphasis on the family unit, which informs their sexual expression (C. S. Chan, 2008; Espin, 1999).

Young Chinese women receive more conservative sexual messages and more strict monitoring from parents than men (J. L. Kim, 2005), and perceive more intergenerational conflicts (Uskul et al., 2007). Parents’ sexual communication with daughters is preoccupied with preventing or obstructing their sexual behaviours, rather than providing information on sexual safety (J. L. Kim, 2005; H. Zhang et al., 2004). This poses gendered sexual risks, especially given women are more likely to contract certain STIs including HIV/AIDS due to physiological factors (Xiao et al., 2011). The detrimental impact of this gendered pattern in parental sexual communication on young people’s sexual safety is specifically examined in this study (Chapter 4). I further link gendered sexual communication to a wider discussion of female sexual respectability (Chapter 5). While some young women demonstrate a neoliberalism informed subjectivity of self-interest and self-maximisation in colluding with restrictive gender messages (e.g., premarital abstinence), I explore if such ‘choices’ can be seen to suggest agency.

Apart from parents, peers constitute another major influence in young people’s sexual life. Peer groups not only serve as a primary source of sexual information for young people across countries (Allen, 2001; L. Li et al., 2009; Somers & Surmann, 2004), it is also an important site where young people construct and perform their gender or sexual identity (Lyons, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011; van de Bongardt et al., 2015). In male peer groups for example, “the demonstration of competence and fear of ignorance become familiar tropes in the articulation of a masculinity that is sexually knowing and heterosexuality active” (Kehily, 2002, p. 134). Young men are more likely than women to be reluctant to seek sexual knowledge in peer groups (Allen, 2008a), or disclose anxieties derived from their personal sexual practice or concerns (Allen, 2003a). Young men are also less knowledgeable than women about sexuality (Allen, 2005b), as information shared in male peer groups may be exaggerated accounts of sexual ‘conquests’ and hence unreliable (Holland, Ramazanoglu, & Sharpe, 1993; Wight, 1994).

Race and diasporic status intersect with gender in the way peer groups serve as a source of sexual knowledge. While Chinese international students perceive more help with sexual health information from co-ethnics than local networks (Ward & Masgoret, 2004), co-ethnic peer
groups tend to be a source of conservative gender and sexual messages and norms (C. S. Chan, 2008; J. L. Kim, 2005; Y. R. Zhou, 2012). Immigrant youth with more diverse ethnic peer groups and more involved in the mainstream youth culture (e.g., party culture, casual sex) also report more liberal views (Cavanagh, 2007; G. Kao & Joyner, 2006). Meanwhile, young women in China are found less sexually knowledgeable than young men (J. Yu, 2012). While diasporic Asian young women in NZ report using friends as a source of sexual information more than men (Rasanathan et al., 2006), they also report less knowledge of contraceptive methods than other racial groups (Trinh, 2012). These findings give rise to my interest to investigate if there is a distinct pattern in the way the particular group of female Chinese international students are influenced by peer sexual communication in their sexual subjectivity (Chapters 4 and 5). That is, if they are more ‘insulated’ from wider transmission of sexual (contraceptive and erotic) knowledge due to their affiliation with co-ethnic peers as a source of sexual information.

Finally, young people’s personal sexual practice constitutes a major source of sexual knowledge that no other sources can substitute (Allen, 2001; McGeeney, 2015). Western young people report prioritising lived sexual experience as a more ‘valuable’ source of sexual knowledge over secondary sources such as textbooks or media (Allen, 2001, 2005a). These findings point to the importance of considering social and contextual determinants that shape sexual experience in discussing young people’s sexual safety (Terry et al., 2012), such as gender power relations in a relationship (Chapman De Bro, Miller Campbell, & Peplau, 1994; Holland et al., 1994).

In western literature, young women have displayed ‘new’ femininities (Gill & Scharff, 2011; Harris, 2012) in sexual relationships that resist patriarchal feminine norms such as the disclosure of sexual knowledge and experience (Allen, 2003a, 2004b, 2008a) and articulation of desire (Farvid, 2014). Louisa Allen (2003b) shows how young women mediate male power in negotiating sexual activity and contraceptive use in relationships, and argues for a more complex understanding of gender power relations than simply male domination. These findings indicate how young women could potentially move away from a hegemonic sexual script characterised by the coital imperative (Braun, Gavey, & McPhillips, 2003; S. Jackson & Scott, 2001) and a disembodied construction of female sexuality that is detrimental to their sexual well-being (Holland et al., 1994). There is also increasing circulation and normalisation of alternative, ‘softer’ masculinities that contest the dominant essentialist gender discourse (e.g.,
the male sexual drive, hypermasculinity) (Gavey, 2013; Potts, 2002) and open up more sexual possibilities for young men (Allen, 2005b; Wetherell & Edley, 1998).

Despite this trend, a gendered sexual double standard continues to prevail in sexual relations (Farvid et al., 2016; S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). Research on Chinese young people’s gender relations in intimate relationships is minimal, but what exists documents young women’s tendency to comply with normative gender constructions such as prioritising male partner’s needs (H. Zhang et al., 2004). Such tendency has been extensively critiqued as detrimental to young women’s sexual safety and autonomy (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1998; Tolman, 2000).

In this thesis, I examine the extent the notion of gender equality is reflected in participants’ sexual subjectivity, and the way their experience of gender relations in intimate relationships constitutes their embodied sexual knowledge about sexual safety (see Marston & King, 2006) and pleasure (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, & Zucker, 2009). In this process, I demonstrate Chinese young diaspora’s ‘reckless’ or ‘irresponsible’ sexual behaviours may be indicative of problematic gender relations.

**Conclusion**

In this literature review, I have presented how young Chinese diaspora are shaped as sexual subjects through gender relations, racial relations and sexual knowledge. Their subjectivities are congruent with the dynamics of power relations they are located in and display heterogeneity resulted from diasporic status, family and peer influence and ethnic/cultural identification. I continue this recognition of the group’s complexity and heterogeneity throughout the ensuing chapters.

I critiqued existing dominant understandings of Chinese young diaspora as sexually conservative and reckless, and identified the Eurocentric framework underlying this profile. To contextualise my critique, this chapter investigated Chinese young people’s sexual subjectivity against a temporal dimension (i.e., development of sexual culture and gender relations in China) and a geographical one (i.e., migration). Gender relations as documented in Chinese sexual history were integrated with latest theorisations of neoliberalism in relation to sexuality, providing a backdrop for my investigation of gendered sexual subjectivities in this thesis. I also explored migration as creating an in-between space for sexuality, in the context of globalisation (Corboz, 2009) and transnationalism (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001), which give rise to complex
power relations beyond binaries of global/local and modern/traditional. The review invokes Joane Nagel’s articulation: “Ethnic boundaries are also sexual boundaries – erotic intersections where people make intimate connections across ethnic, racial, or national borders” despite surveillance, regulation and restriction (2000, p. 113). My analysis is concerned with the role of mainstream society and co-ethnic networks in the process of how racial/sexual boundaries are breached or sustained. While existing literature suggests ethnic/racial in-betweenness is dynamic and contextual, I extend my investigation to both settler and sojourner Chinese, and examine how their inter/intra-racial experience differs in relation to sexuality. Finally, I argued sexuality education might be seen to produce problematic sexual subjectivities for Chinese young diaspora as it is constituted by problematic, racialising norms of Chinese youth itself.

In my ensuing analytic chapters, I demonstrate how sexual, gender and racial identities are discursive formations configured through each other and how the global identities embodied by transnational subjects offer both resistance and complicitities in terms of national, racial and sexual boundaries (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001). For example, sexual norms can be transgressed through the race or ethnicity of sexual partners, suggesting the sexualised foundations of ethnicity (Nagel, 2000); diasporic identities can be articulated through creating compound or hybrid ethnic identities (e.g., Kiwi-Asian) which offer alternative ways of being and presenting gender (Dwyer, 2000).
Chapter 3: Methodology

This research employs methodological approaches informed by feminist poststructuralism. In this chapter, I explicate the methodological and analytic implications of feminist poststructuralism in relation to how this study was conducted and how data were collected and analysed. A demographic profile of the sample, ethical considerations and a reflection of methodological limitations are also detailed.

Feminist poststructuralist methodology

From a feminist poststructuralist perspective, a positivist and essentialist understanding of the world is critiqued. A researcher cannot observe or report on a social reality “with objectivity, clarity and precision”, because there is no objective reality outside of the socially situated experience of the respondents and the interpretation of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 21). The traditional scientific notion of neutral or objective knowledge is not possible as researchers cannot be value-free (Caplan & Caplan, 2015). As this methodology recognises the situational limitations of knowledge and the knower, it also makes a “partial, local and historical” way of knowing possible and legitimate (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961). Subsequently, what is important about the findings in this research is not their generalisability but that they reveal the specificities in participants’ positioning as sexual subjects, what informs such positioning and how it produces different meaning making.

Language is crucial in this meaning-making process. In a poststructuralist framework, language is considered the centrepiece linking subjectivity, social organisation and power (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Rather than a neutral medium of people’s thoughts, language is understood as producing subjects and constructing subjectivities (Weedon, 1997). Accordingly, feminist poststructuralism rejects the humanist conceptualisation of a unitary, free and rational subject (McLaren, 2012). Serving as research data, participants’ talk in this study is hence not treated as descriptive or reflective of an objective reality the young people experience, but as a process of producing this ‘reality’ itself.

As feminism is both ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, feminist research is inherently political (Letherby, 2003), guided by an outlook of emancipation and empowerment (Jaggar, 2015). Feminist methodology involves an ongoing criticism of mainstream scholarship, with aims to produce knowledge that challenges relations of subjugation (Letherby, 2003), “to create social change”
and “to represent human diversity” (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 240). This fits my research agenda of endeavouring positive changes for young Chinese diaspora’s sexual well-being. Feminism has extended its interests over the last decades from a focus on doing research by women for women (Worell & Etaugh, 1994), to marginalisation and oppression based on dimensions other than exclusively gender (e.g., race, class, sexuality, able-bodiedness) (hooks, 1984; Olesen, 2005). In this research, I incorporate discussions of subjugation and empowerment from several dimensions of power relations including race, gender and heteronormativity. The discussions are thus also relevant to Chinese young men, whose sexual subjectivity is as profoundly shaped by heteronormativity and racial power relations as Chinese women’s.

Feminist research is concerned with power relations between the researcher and the researched (Brabeck, 2000) and strives to avoid the researcher’s domination and misrepresentation of participants (Harding, 1987). This involves acknowledging the subjective involvement of the researcher, and respecting the perspectives of the researched (Letherby, 2003). Constant self-reflexivity is required of the researcher (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) in terms of their own positioning in knowledge production and study design (e.g., Finlay, 2002; Rice, 2009; Williams & Adams, 2013). As I elaborate below in the section on ethical considerations, this methodology requires me to take my positionality as a Chinese young woman researcher into careful consideration during the processes of data production and analysis. Nonetheless, tension remains as interviewers often have more power than the interviewees in terms of control over the direction of discussion (Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman, 2001; Wilkinson, 1986). I address this power imbalance in data collection later in the section on methodological limitations.

While methodology concerns how theories are applied to research, method(s) are the specific techniques of data generation and collection (e.g., interviews) (Harding, 1987). In exploring previously unnamed, unexamined or misunderstood experiences, feminist research uses “a multiplicity of research methods” with a commitment to thoroughness and open-endedness (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 240). There is no method that is inherently feminist or non-feminist (Peplau & Conrad, 1989). Many methods can be utilised with a feminist orientation, which emphasises a gender perspective, discussions of power and a commitment to social change (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Worell & Etaugh, 1994).

For this research, I used a quantitative online survey and qualitative interviewing (individuals and focus groups) sequentially. The different types of data generated this way could potentially
present Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality in complementary ways, with the qualitative data contextualising and providing explanations for statistical trends found in the quantitative data (see also M. Y. K. Chow, Quine, & Li, 2010). Despite the adoption of both quantitative and qualitative methods, I did not perceive any challenge in terms of methodological pluralism (see Freshwater, 2006), because the quantitative survey was mostly utilised to suggest possible patterns that prompt further qualitative investigation and did not pose inconsistency with the epistemological and ontological framework of feminism poststructuralism (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

**Quantitative survey**

Due to its root in quantitative research, survey as a method in feminist research has met with ambivalent response (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). However, quantitative research can endorse a feminist perspective, generating data that counter pervasive sexist assumptions in mainstream research (Jayaratne, 1983; Peplau & Conrad, 1989). Quantitative surveys have proven valuable in identifying previously unnamed or overlooked problems experienced by marginalised groups, such as the role of sexual self-efficacy in women’s sexual pleasure (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) and sexual safety (Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006). By highlighting the prevalence of an issue, or highlighting group differences such as those based on gender or race (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992), quantitative surveys can provide evidence to facilitate feminist movement and legal redress (e.g., Friedan, 1963).

I employed a quantitative survey in the first phase of data collection to obtain information on participants’ contraceptive practice/views, what sources of sexual knowledge they find helpful and unhelpful, and if there are differences based on gender and diasporic status (i.e., settler, sojourner). The data served two purposes (1) some gender and intra-racial differences identified would facilitate further inquiry during the qualitative methods in the second phase of data collection by informing and shaping my interview questions; and (2) these results may be presented in the thesis when relevant, to support my analysis and elucidate the arguments (e.g., analysing gender difference in contraceptive use relation to gendered sexual norms).

Situated in a poststructuralist methodological framework, my use of the quantitative survey served more of a descriptive and illustrative role than an analytic role. Tension between quantitative methods and poststructuralism was therefore minimised. While the survey results told me what prominent patterns were present in a wider sample, I explored why these patterns...
might exist, and how the young people make sense of them by analysing the qualitative data through a poststructuralist lens. The quantitative data served as a great way to facilitate, or prompt further qualitative inquiry, and were used to complement qualitative analysis, to show the generalizable potential of particular arguments.

**Qualitative interviews and focus groups**

The second stage of data collection consisted of two qualitative methods, focus groups followed by interviews, with aid of visual tools (see details in following sub-sections). Participants were free to take part in either or both of the methods. I guided the discussions in both forums with a series of questions (see Appendix G). The question schedule was not strictly followed, but indicates the main areas of interest to be covered, including important sources of sexual knowledge, contraception and abortion, the role of parents and peers in sexuality, popular representation of Chinese sexuality and racialised sexual norms. These questions were informed by an attention to the intertwining of race, gender and sexuality. I also explored intra-ethnic difference between sojourners and settlers in sexuality when possible.

Focus group and interview supplement each other in a few ways. While focus groups enables collective exploration of commonalities and differences across individual stories, identifying and questioning of such commonalities could elicit critical analysis of the wider (sexual) cultural context (Elden & Levin, 1991). Such discussion is followed by interviews, which provide a venue where participants may be more comfortable to talk about sensitive or intimate material (e.g., sexual practice, body image) (see Gerdin, 2014; Peasley, 2013).

This study design also allowed interviews to counter or mitigate methodological concerns of focus groups. As I address later in the section on methodological limitations, power dynamics were observed in some focus groups that may have influenced participants’ self-presentation in terms of sexual experience. Some queer participants also displayed differences in the degree of (non-)disclosure of their sexuality between focus group and interview. Not only can the presence of other participants in a focus group have an inhibiting impact on what is said, it may also impact on how it is said (Braun, 2000). If participants choose to participate in both forums, the order of methods allows for their ‘public’ accounts from the focus group revisited in the interview, where potential discrepancies or contradictions in their expression can be identified and discussed (see Allen, 2003b).
Focus group with photo collage

Focus group has a democratising effect on the research process, “providing participants more ownership” and “promoting more dialogic interactions” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 904). It enables “the possibility for research participants to develop ideas collectively, bringing forward their own priorities and perspective” through group interactions (Alasuutari, Bickman, & Brannen, 2008, p. 359). Through this process, researchers not only gain access to the language and concepts used by participants in discussing a given topic (Alasuutari et al., 2008), but can also observe “how opinions are created and above all changed, asserted, or suppressed in social exchange” (Flick, 2009, p. 201). Moreover, focus groups can function like a peer group, where young people manage and make sexual selves through what is revealed and concealed about themselves (Allen, 2005b). Peers play an important role in the enactment of dominant gender and sexual discourses among young people. Therefore focus groups allowed me to observe how particular (gender, sexual or racial) identities are produced, performed and negotiated in participants’ talk (Butler, 1993).

Focus group participants could be friends or strangers to each other. Each group consisted of 3-6 people. With stranger groups, I ensured participants shared some similarity (e.g., diasporic status, gender, language ability) based on information I collected from conversations with potential participants during recruitment. Within-group homogeneity is helpful in prompting participants to build on each other’s views or narratives (Hughes & DuMont, 1993).

As a way to prompt discussion, participants were each handed a photo collage (Henwood, Shirani, & Finn, 2011) at the beginning of a group and asked to pick out most appealing and unappealing photos from it (see Appendix H). The collage is made up with images I pre-selected from internet searches. Search terms included “Asian interracial dating”, “same-sex relationship”, “Chinese gay couple”, “Chinese girl”, “Chinese masculinity”, “hyperfemininity”, “Asian nerd”, “China landscape”, “New Zealand landscape”, “religion landmark”, “Asian club”, “Asian family” and “Asian graduation”. The images were intended to depict a range of sexual beings (e.g., Asian male athletes, scantily dressed young women), intimate relationships, physical settings related to sexuality and race (e.g., nightlife space, graduation ceremony) and cultural symbols that could invoke racial identification (e.g., typical NZ scenery, Buddha statues commonly seen in Asia). Participants’ interpretation of such images would speak to their migrant temporalities in terms of time and place (Harper, 2005) rooted in their personal lives, which is important in informing their ways of being (sexual).
As participants were presented with a range of representations of others’ lived social realities and different cultural possibilities, certain images would “gain more importance through being part of more elaborate visual statements” that contextualise the participants’ personal experience (Henwood et al., 2011, p. 333). Certain images could then stand out for the participants (positively or negatively), and generate conditions for them to speak from. Through discussing the images participants selected as (un)appealing, a photo collage was helpful to draw out the participant’s articulation of related personal experience (Prosser & Burke, 2011) as diasporic sexual subjects. By making visible the similarities and differences in their selection and responses to the images (e.g., a picture depicting an interracial couple elicited widely varied responses), further dialogue among the participants was forged where their sexual subjectivities were compared.

*Interview with participants’ personal photos*

Interview is a common and ideal method in feminist research (Willig, 2013b) on sex/sexuality (e.g., Braun et al., 2003; McPhillips, Braun, & Gavey, 2001; Terry & Braun, 2009). Ethically, feminist interviewing emphasises non-hierarchical research relations, giving voices to participants, and paying critical attention to power relations playing out in intersections with age, gender, race, sexuality and so forth (Alasuutari et al., 2008; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Epistemologically, feminist interviewing acknowledges knowledge as co-constructed in the research process through collaborative meaning making of researcher and participants, rather than something ‘inherent’ or to be simply ‘gained’ (Alasuutari et al., 2008). The dynamic interaction where participants question, explain and negotiate around a given topic provides space for a poststructuralist analysis of ‘self’ that is non-unitary and constantly ‘becoming’ (Weedon, 1997).

I proceeded in adherence with these principles. For example, I left the choices of interview location and time completely to participants. This was not only for their convenience, but also to maximise their comfort with the interview setting and to minimise the power gap we entered an interview with. Throughout the interview, I was mindful of letting the participants steer the discussion as long as it stayed (potentially) relevant, rather than going through the interview question schedule in an orderly fashion. My familiarity with the questions, however, allowed me to perceive when a topic occurred in participants’ narrative and to insert the question into the discussion. This way may enable participants’ articulation of subjectivities to occur more ‘naturally’ and more contextually. In contrast, rigidly going through the question schedule
would highlight my power status as the researcher, and reduce the participants to merely ‘questionees’ rather than subjects in their stories.

Interview participants were asked to bring to the interview some personal photographs that they felt portrayed them as sexual beings. I left ‘sexual being’ to participants’ personal understanding and stressed there was no wrong way to understand the term and no ‘wrong’ photo to bring. Participants mostly brought photos featuring a person of sexual interest (including celebrities), friends and family, and social activities (e.g., drinking, sports, travelling). Like the photo collage in focus groups, this photo method was used to facilitate the discussion. Visual material is believed to afford access to memories and reflections that may not be readily available to individuals through verbal or written narratives (Reavey, 2011). These personal photos could potentially open up talk that disrupts pre-rehearsed personal or cultural narratives, complexities and ambiguities (Reavey & Johnson, 2008). As photos possess a high iconic quality (Flick, 2009), this approach allows for participants to interpret their own images, access memories captured in the images, and explore their changes as sexual beings (see Del Busso, 2011; Majumdar, 2011). Prioritising participants’ own perspectives is particularly beneficial for research on marginalised groups, such as young people (Allen, 2009b) and ethnic minorities (Majumdar, 2011). It is also consistent with feminist ethics of power sharing in research process and enables participants’ agency (Del Busso, 2011). Additionally, being able to use their own photos, participants had greater autonomy over data collection, a strategy to encourage participation in sexuality research (Allen, 2009b, 2013b). Though these photos themselves were pre-existing, rather than data generated from this study, they also served as illustrative data and presented in this thesis where needed.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment started after ethics approval was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). Eligible participants were those of 18-25 age, born in or with parent(s) born in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and living in NZ at the time of data collection (see Chapter 1 for more details on the definition of ‘Chinese’ and information on Chinese population in NZ). This criteria of ‘Chinese young diaspora’ were set this way because statistics in NZ suggest the largest groups of Chinese population are those with such ancestral backgrounds (E. Ho et al., 2003), and the fastest growing Chinese population are of tertiary education age group (Bedford & Ho, 2008). Potential participants were aware participation was entirely voluntary and that no incentive of monetary value would
be offered. However, I as the researcher provided non-alcoholic beverages and snacks for interviews and focus groups.

The final recruitment flyer is bi-lingual (Chinese and English) and has a QR code as well as URL of the survey, so people could easily access it on their smart phones as well as computers (see Appendix B). Posters were put up on notice boards in various departments, as well as students’ health centres, across the University of Auckland (UoA) and Auckland University of Technology (AUT). International students’ offices from both universities were contacted and UoA international students’ office advertised my project in their fortnightly newsletter. Research information was also posted on the webpages of student associations or clubs with large numbers of Chinese members from various tertiary institutions. These include LGBTQA+ organisations from UoA and AUT, Chinese/Hong Kong/Taiwanese/Asian student associations from UoA, AUT, Massey University, Waikato University and Unitec Institute of Technology, Kiwi Asian Club of UoA, Auckland University International Social Network, and Auckland University Chinese Alumni group.

I also contacted Chinese or Asian community organisations including Chinese New Settlers Services Trust, Asian Family Services, Asia Savvy, Asians in New Zealand Facebook group, New Zealand Chinese Youth Federation, who either circulated the research information for me or allowed me to post it on their webpages. Research information was also sent out through NZ local organisations/groups with interests in sexuality and gender, such as Family Planning, Rainbow Youth, and Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN). Friends and individual activists in NZ and in China helped me advertise the project through personal networks. As part of the recruitment effort, I also set up a Facebook page with all research information (https://www.facebook.com/chineseyouthnzstudy/) and posted material related to my research topic as a daily project throughout 2014. The only recruitment measure that required payment was advertising through skykiwi.com, a gateway website for Chinese community in NZ.

Data collection

Data collection commenced with a quantitative online survey that was distributed on SurveyMonkey.com (see Appendix E). At the end of the survey, participants were invited to the second phase of qualitative data collection (focus group/interview) and given my contact details should they be interested. 11 out of 42 focus group or interview participants got in touch through my contact details on the advertising posters or the survey. The rest of qualitative
methods participants (31 out of 42) were recruited through personal networks, referrals and snowballing (M. Q. Patton, 2002). 15 were my acquaintances, 14 through friends’ referrals, and 2 through snowballing through participants.

Focus groups/interviews were conducted at a location convenient for the participants and suitable in terms of privacy, environment noise and comfort. Most of them were conducted at group rooms in academic facilities (e.g., university library). On a few occasions when the option was preferred by the participants, three female participants chose to have interviews conducted in their homes, one all-female focus group took place in one of the participants’ apartment, and one mixed-gender focus group (friends’ group of two women and one man) took place in my living room. The interviews and focus groups varied in length from 81mins to 153mins.

All focus groups and interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim by me. As I speak English and mandarin Chinese, participants were encouraged to use the language they were more comfortable with or fluent in. Data were transcribed in the language originally used, with those presented in analysis chapters translated to English. Transcription records all verbal utterances verbatim. Laughter, exclamation and sighs are described and inserted in parentheses. False starts or incomplete words were denoted as “--.” Pauses were indicated as “(.)” for short pauses, “(pause)” or “(long pause)”. Emphasised words were shown as underlined. In the final presentation of data, some non-essential part of the transcription was omitted and indicated by “(...)”. I used “[ ]” to denote information that I added to substitute identificatory information (e.g., [a high school in west Auckland]), or to clarify the context (e.g. him [participant’s brother]). English words used by participants who did most the interview/focus group in Chinese were italicised, to indicate they were not part of my later translation.

By presenting participants’ narratives as accurately and contextually as possible, this level of details in transcribing adds to the veracity of data collection and rigour of research (Wengraf, 2001). The closeness I developed with the text in the process of detailed verbatim transcribing is also consistent with feminist research ethics (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Especially as some participants did not use English, it was beneficial for data analysis that I did all transcribing and translating, so that misunderstanding or misinterpretation of data by other transcribers and translators could be minimised (MacLean, Meyer, & Estable, 2004).
Demographic profile of participants

Survey recruitment lasted for 3 months from the end of 2013 to early 2014, and received 458 responses together, including 379 to the English version of the survey and 79 to the Chinese version. In total, 243 out of 458 were completed, with a completion rate of 53.1%. After cleaning data (i.e., taking out ineligible participants and completely blanks responses), the final dataset consists of 382 responses, with varied degrees of completion.

Qualitative data collection continued till August 2014. I had 42 participants in total. 33 participated in 10 focus groups respectively, with follow-up individual interviews with 10 of the participants. Additional 9 participants only took part in individual interviews (see Table 3 on pp. 77-80).

As follows, I present a breakdown of the sample demographics by gender, sexuality and migratory history. This way I can highlight features about the sample that bear significance for my analysis. I introduce the quantitative survey sample first, followed by demographic information about the interview/focus group sample.

Survey sample: Gender and sexuality

317 people filled out ‘gender identification’. The gender makeup is presented in Table 1. The 6 participants who identified as neither male or female specified their gender variedly as: “non-binary”, “genderqueer”, “I want to keep it fluid, instead of identifying with a fixed gender identity”, “queer”, “bit of both”, and “cat”.

Table 1
Sample gender identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Identification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ reported sexuality showed more diversity and complexity than gender. Among 317 people who filled out the item on sexuality, 239 identified as heterosexual, 20 as bisexual, 10 as gay, 9 as lesbian, 7 as asexual, 27 as “I’m not sure”, and finally, 5 as “something else”
(see Figure 1 for percentages). Among the 5 respondents who did not identify with any given options, 3 specified as “queer”, 1 as “for biological female and 'unbiological' female”, and 1 as “I’m kind of against identity politics. I won't identify with any fixed identity categories, not even ‘queer’. I only use queer theory epistemologically, not as an umbrella term for sexual minorities” (this response will be shortened to “against identity politics” when featured in the future).

![Figure 1. Sample sexual identification.](image)

Participants who self-identified as ‘I’m not sure’ (N=27) is the largest group among non-heterosexual identified participants. Among them, 18 disclosed having had sexual intercourse in the past, and 8 disclosed they did not (1 respondent chose not to disclose). While research indicates sexual fluidity has become increasingly accepted and common among the younger population (Driver, 2008; Munoz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002), this result may also suggest some Chinese young people’s unfamiliarity with, or lack of identification with these western originated sexual labels, especially if they come from a schooling background where sexuality education is lacking. I discuss this in Chapter 7.

331 participants filled out the item of ‘sexual experience’ (defined here as ‘any sexual contract with genitalia’). Table 2 below presents the results. Furthermore, among the participants with sexual experience, 179 were willing to specify if they have had with the opposite sex only: 141 have had sex with only the opposite sex (78.8%), while the rest 38 (21.2%) has had non-heterosexual sexual experience.
Table 2

*If participants have had sexual experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the sexual identification distribution among respondents with heterosexual sexual experience only (N = 141), non-heterosexual sexual experience (N = 38), and no sexual experience (N = 92). The group with non-heterosexual sexual experience shows the biggest diversity in sexual identification.

![Figure 2](image_url)

*Figure 2.* Distribution of sexual identification among participants with sexual experience with opposite sex only, no sexual experience and non-heterosexual sexual experience.

Among the 141 participants with experience with the opposite sex only (72 female, 69 male), 125 identified as heterosexual (61 male, 64 female); 9 identified their sexuality as ‘not sure’ (5 males and 4 females); 4 as asexual (2 male and 2 female); 2 as bisexual, both female; 1 male identified his sexuality as “something else”: “for biological female and 'unbiological' female”.

Among the 92 participants with no sexual experience, 75 identified as heterosexual, including 25 males and 50 females (with one who identifies as ‘normal’, which I took as meaning ‘heterosexual’). 7 identified sexuality as ‘not sure’, including 1 male, 5 females and 1 who
identified as neither male nor female (‘cat’). 1 female identified as lesbian, 2 males as gay, and 1 male as asexual. 6 identified as bisexual, including 2 males and 4 females. This group shows less percentage of heterosexual identification and more percentages of bisexual and ‘not sure’ than the opposite sex only group.

Among the 38 participants with non-heterosexual sexual experience (20 females, 14 males, 4 as “something else”), 6 men identified as gay, all with same-sex experience only. Apart from this sub-group, this group of respondents display the largest degree of mismatch between identified sexual label and reported sexual practice among the three. 9 respondents identified as heterosexual, including 1 female and 2 males with same-sex only. 8 identified as lesbian, including 1 male with sexual experience with men and women. 8 identified as bisexual, including 4 women and 2 men with experience with men and women, and 1 female and 1 male with same-sex experience. 1 female identified as asexual and had sexual experience with women only. 2 males were ‘not sure’ about their sexuality, with sexual experience with male only. Finally, 4 identified both gender and sexuality as “something else” (e.g., “queer” “non-binary” or “fluid”), with varied experience with same-sex only, both men and women, and people who are neither. Though small in size, this group shows a level of complexity and diversity that indicates good heterogeneity in this survey sample.

Survey sample: Migration

In terms of place of birth, among the 382 participants who answered this item, 267 were born in mainland China (69.9%), 25 in Hong Kong (6.5%), 25 in Taiwan (6.5%), 48 in NZ (12.6%) and 17 in other countries (4.5%): 7 in Singapore, 4 in Indonesia, 2 in Malaysia, 1 in Macau, 1 in Abu Dhabi, 1 in Manila, Philippines, and 1 in Australia.

Among the 367 participants who filled out the item, 224 first came to NZ before the age of 18 (61.0%), and 143 came after age 18 (39.0%). However, it is important to note age of arrival may not directly translate to the length of time spent in NZ, as the young people’s migration movement may be more complex than one-directional ‘Home to NZ’. For example, among those who received secondary schooling in mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, 13 were either born in NZ or first arrived in NZ before the age of 12.

Young diaspora’s migration trajectories are also be multi-national (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008), as reflected in participants’ schooling experience. Out of 317 participants who filled out this question, 55.5% attended secondary school in NZ (N = 176), 48.9% attended secondary school
in mainland China (N = 155), 3.8% in Hong Kong (N = 12), 2.2% in Taiwan (N = 7), and 3.5% elsewhere (i.e., 1 in USA, 3 in Singapore, 1 in Macau, 2 in Indonesia, 1 in France, 1 in Canada, 1 in Australia, and 1 not disclosed) (N = 11). As participants were allowed multiple choices, results showed 35 participants have schooling experience in both NZ and mainland China, 2 in both Hong Kong and NZ, 2 in both Taiwan and NZ, 1 in both Hong Kong and mainland China, 1 with experience in mainland China, NZ and Singapore, 1 in NZ and France, and 1 in NZ and Australia.

A growing transnational trend has been documented in NZ (Bartley, 2010; M. Ip, 2011) and international research (Portes, 2001) where Chinese young diaspora change places of settlement through life according to parents’ jobs, family structure change and education stages. This particularity of Chinese young diaspora seems well captured in my sample.

**Sojourner and Settler**

In the introductory chapter to this thesis I explained that I borrowed the conceptualisations of sojourner and settler to refer to a division within the sample, characterised by if they have received secondary schooling\(^1\) in NZ. This criterion coincides with the profile of Chinese international students in NZ. 72.3% of sojourner participants (i.e., those who did not receive secondary schooling in NZ) (N = 141) were self-identified international students, and 80.3% of international students (N = 154) were sojourners\(^2\).

The overlap between sojourners and international students is further illustrate in Figure 3. The two groups show close percentages in terms of arrival after adulthood, living in NZ without family supervision and places of birth (mainland China or Hong Kong/Taiwan).

\(^{1}\) This excludes foundation programmes offered to international students by tertiary institutions to substitute Year 13.

\(^{2}\) Participants with secondary school experience only in mainland China are referred to as mainland Chinese sojourners throughout the thesis. Due to their relatively homogeneous schooling background and dominant number compared to other sojourners, this group is often used specifically in comparison with the settler group in the analysis in this study.
The characteristics of settlers and sojourners can be summarised as below. Settler participants have attended secondary schools in NZ, mostly (93.2%) having arrived before the age of 18 and lived in NZ with some form of family supervision (80.1%). Sojourners have never received secondary schooling in NZ, and most arrived in NZ after adulthood (75.2%), living primarily alone without family (86.8%), with a majority as international students. Compared to settler participants, sojourners’ stay in NZ is characterised by more temporary features, such as shorter length of stay, being on a temporary visa specifying one’s purpose of stay, and not having family networks in NZ. Consistently, as I demonstrate throughout the thesis, settler participants are more likely to identify with NZ ethnically and culturally than sojourners and this difference produces different sexual subjectivities.

**Focus group and interview sample**

23 females and 19 males took part in the qualitative methods. 36 participants identified as heterosexual, 2 as gay, 1 as lesbian, 2 as bisexual and 1 as “not sure, asexual maybe”. In terms of place of birth, 30 were born in mainland China, 5 in Hong Kong, 1 in Taiwan and 6 in NZ. Some of participants’ individual information is presented in Table 3 (pp.60-62).

As shown in Figure 4, 16 participants received (some or all) secondary schooling in NZ and 26 never did, among whom 23 had secondary school experience only in mainland China, 1 only
in Hong Kong, 1 in both mainland China and the U.S. and 1 in both mainland China and Singapore. Except one from Hong Kong, all sojourner participants were from mainland China.

![Figure 4: Makeup of qualitative participants in terms of secondary schooling experience.](image)

13 participants have been living in NZ for less than a year, including 2 who are attending languages schools, 2 on working holiday and the rest studying for tertiary or postgraduate degrees. 13 have been in NZ for 1-4 years, all studying at tertiary or postgraduate levels except one person who works full time. 4 participants have been in NZ for 5-9 years, all studying. 12 have been in NZ for 10+ years. Among them, 3 have graduated with tertiary degrees and started working full time, the rest pursuing academic degrees on varied levels. Despite relative homogeneity in sexual identification, this sample displays a good degree of diversity in participants’ migratory trajectories, which may play a role in producing varied sexual subjectivities.

Table 3

Participants’ demographics ordered in data collection methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Diasporic status</th>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Interview participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 1 (3 participants)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Group Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yuiko*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>settler</td>
<td>FG 2 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid101*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>straight</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>settler</td>
<td>participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ*</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>FG 3 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>settler</td>
<td>participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>bisexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>FG 4 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>FG 5 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>settler</td>
<td>FG 6 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>straight</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td>participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>sojourner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Group Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 7 (5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 7 (5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L*</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 7 (5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 7 (5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 8 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 8 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viv</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 8 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ccao*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Not sure, asexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 9 (4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 9 (4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 9 (4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 9 (4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 10 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 10 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Settler</td>
<td>FG 10 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>Sojourner</td>
<td>FG 10 (3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poker*</td>
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1 Participants’ information is in order of data collection.
2 Pseudonyms chosen by participants are marked with *
3 Participants’ own specifications are used here verbatim.

**Ethical considerations**

Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to data collection. Survey respondents were made aware that by answering the survey, they were consenting to data collection. Interview/focus group participants were handed the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix C) prior to data collection, which outlines information about the study, including its aim and how the data would be collected, stored and used. Their written consent was obtained before focus group or interview commenced.

Participants were also made aware they have the right to withdraw from participation at any point during data collection and to withdraw their data retrospectively up to one month after taking part in the research. As the interviewer and researcher, I was available to answer any questions of concern before, during or after data collection. At the end of the discussion, I always closed with giving participants the chance to ask me questions about me or about my research. On several occasions, participants contacted me after the discussion to add more information; or I contacted them to clarify certain points of information.

In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, the online survey was completely anonymous. Interview transcripts were anonymised, with pseudonyms assigned to or chosen by participants. Verbal or visual data that could potentially identify a person were modified or obscured (e.g.,
faces in personal photos are warped, identifying details in a narrative are omitted). With focus groups, I stressed the importance of confidentiality at the start and close of each group, and reached agreement with all participants regarding non-disclosure of discussion content to anyone in a way that could identify other participants. All collected survey/audio/visual data and transcripts were entered into password-protected computer files.

Apart from these conventional considerations, there were ethical concerns specific to my research. The first one was around the delicacy of conducting research on minorities (see Greenfield, 1997; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). Linguistically, English is a second language for many participants, and certain terms commonly used in English sexuality scholarship may not be accessible in their native language system or knowledge framework (e.g., “sexuality”). On the other hand, some participants may find it easier to talk about sexuality related topics in their second language (Espin, 1995). I therefore asked participants to use whichever language (i.e. Mandarin or English), or a mixture of both as they found most comfortable in the discussion.

Chinese sexuality has been exotified in scholarship and media in varied ways (see Chapter 2). Although I shared the participants’ racial identification (i.e., Asian, Chinese), this did not render me ‘safe’ from making problematic assumptions or interpretations about their narratives. As a young person who has lived in NZ for more than a decade and been trained in a western academic environment, I am conscious of the profound influence of western ideologies including western feminism on my intellectual evolvement and personal convictions. It was therefore crucial for me to be critical and reflexive of my own standpoint in analysing and presenting data, in an effort to avoid further accentuating Chinese young people’s ‘Otherness’. In response, I maintained a work journal to record my reflections of the study design and implementation based on participants’ response during data collection (see a later section on methodological limitations).

Sex/sexuality related topics are considered sensitive and personal, and pose ethical challenges (Boynton, 2003). For example, the researcher must exercise care in facilitating discussion on topics such as abortion and sexual consent as participants may have related traumatic experience. Participants were given assurance beforehand that should they become upset as a result of taking part, I would terminate the discussion and respect their choice to withdraw from the research. At the end of each interview session, I also provided information of sexual health service providers, including Rainbow Youth, Youthline, and Family Planning services, and debriefed with participants on issues that may have affected their emotional well-being. For
individuals in particular need, I was prepared to refer them to relevant services (e.g., University health centre or professional counsellors) at their permission. Throughout my data collection, none of these scenarios occurred.

Focus group dynamics can sometimes pose problems in sexuality discussions (Allen, 2007e). My focus groups included those consisting of friends, and those where no one knew one another beforehand. Disclosing sensitive personal information in either type of group incurs different risks and concerns. Participants in friends’ groups may be concerned about their peer status, or getting harassed after participation (Armstrong et al., 2014; Frosh et al., 2001). Stranger group members may not feel comfortable enough to share intimate information. I attempted to counter these concerns by making participants aware of the two options of group formulation, and exercising care in putting together stranger groups based on the information I managed to gather about the participants. The goal was to minimise perceived ‘status’ difference among group members, which may lead to power imbalance in discussion (see Gerdin, 2014). For example, I avoided grouping together strangers with jarring differences in language proficiency (English or Mandarin), because I believed such differences in linguistic ability would pose as a structural impediment to the democracy of expression in a group setting. Where individual dominance in discussions did occur despite my facilitative efforts, I would examine such instances in terms of power relations (e.g., performing of masculinity). I present such examination in my analysis chapters where relevant.

My own position as a female researcher in conducting sexuality research also requires ethical reflection on. To some (heterosexual) male participants, my embodiment as an able-bodied, slim, young woman whose gender performance is commonly perceived as feminine (and therefore presumably heterosexual) may have rendered me as sexually desirable (see Farvid, 2011). Aside from safety considerations, this posed concerns in terms of the way a heterosexual male interviewee might narrate his account to perform desirable/desiring masculinity. As a counter measure, I consciously dressed in androgynous ways for data collection. I believe this image helped in terms of facilitating discussions with participants across genders as it conveyed my professionalism more than my sexuality. Observations of noteworthy interview dynamics were documented in my work journal and taken into consideration when data were analysed.

Due to the consideration that research perceived to focus on sex might filter out participants who consider themselves too private or not sexually confident enough to engage in the discussion (Boynton, 2003), I foregrounded ‘sexuality education’ as a main research topic during recruitment. By starting a discussion with ‘sexuality education’, a less sensitive topic
than sexuality, I was potentially able to ease the participants into more developed and comfortable discussions on sexual subjectivity (see also Farvid, 2011). I consider this approach as a matter of ambiguity (Farvid, 2010) rather than deception because sexuality education constitutes a significant part of my analysis (see Chapter 4) and it was not going to cause harm to the participants that could be avoided otherwise.

Finally, some participants perceiving me as an ‘expert’ to seek information from posed ethical challenges. I needed to consider: should I strictly position myself as a researcher whose role is to collect data, including ‘wrong’ conceptions or ideas of sexuality (e.g., normalising the lack of condom use), or should I also provide (corrective) information when I see the need, and by doing so, play an intervening role? Does playing the ‘expert’ violate feminist ethics of research? On the other hand, does not the role of a ‘neutral’ researcher itself create a hierarchy in research relations where participants’ views are exploited? Christine Webb (1984) discusses this dilemma and advocates for helping participants by providing information needed but grounding this in personal experience. This involves researchers engaging in self-disclosure, through which needed information is shared and discussed in “a true dialogue” (Bristow & Esper, 1988, p. 67), rather than disseminated or taught. I took on this approach as it was consistent with my research goal of exploring young people’s agency. This approach also facilitated my engagement with the participants in a two-way exchange of information and a more balanced power relation to establish rapport.

**Data analysis**

For quantitative survey data, I used SPSS to conduct statistical analyses. Since quantitative data were used as a grounding basis for further qualitative investigation, I was primarily interested to find out, or affirm some generalities of the research sample. For example, independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences on sexuality education experience or contraceptive views based on gender, or diasporic status. Such results were further elucidated in qualitative data analysis, where the differences were contextualised in discussions.

In the second phase of data collection, verbal data serve as the primary material for analysis and visual data (i.e., participant’s photos) serve an illustrative role. The verbal data were analysed using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) (e.g., Stuart & Donaghue, 2012), an analysis approach consistent with my poststructuralist framework. Though some verbal data
were used illustratively (i.e., when participants described an incident in making a point), they were primarily treated analytically. The participants’ narratives were not taken as conveying an objective external reality, cognitive inner states or autobiographical “private ‘experiences’”, but as “instances of social action” or performative acts (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005, p. 825; Willig, 2013a). This means in my analysis, I was not interested in what really happened as much as how it was relayed through language. The way participants articulated and made sense of their individual sexual experience and views was indicative of what discursive resources were available to them and what subject positions were taken up (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

My analysis aimed to engage with discourses participants drew on in constructing their subjectivities and to identify the subject positions made (un)available (Burman & Parker, 1993). For example, my analysis of participants’ talk of dating would focus on how their subjectivities were shaped by, or could subvert dominant discourses (e.g., sexual chastity). Informed by Foucault’s theorisation of discourse and power relations, FDA allowed me to explore the context and variability of individual subjectivities. Additionally, discourses simultaneously restrict and offer the potential to liberate young people’s sexual subjectivity (Weedon, 1997). Due to its analytic focus on power relations, FDA enables problematisation of dominant discourses, and therefore allowed me to explore data with particular attention to the possibilities of resistance (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Following the guidelines of FDA (Willig, 2013a), I first familiarised myself with the data while transcribing. Through repeated reading of the transcripts, codes were generated based on sexual topics (e.g., premarital sex, formal sexuality education), recurring patterns indicative of discourses (e.g., settlers are different from sojourners in sexual practice/views) and conceptual constructs possibly underlying the accounts (e.g., sexual double standard). This process involved ongoing moving back and forth between data and codes. I used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software to facilitate the coding and organising of codes. I looked for consistencies in the data as well as variations across and contradictions within accounts. While the former suggests compliance with dominant discourses (e.g., academic commitment trumps sexual desire), the latter indicates alternative subject positions (e.g., distancing from a ‘nerd’ image). Examining contradictions and variability in subject positions also enabled me to identify spaces for resistance. I then selected most representative extracts for closer analysis.

Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was also employed to generate sub-arguments. The technique is consistent with FDA in the sense it allowed me to look beyond the data surface
for underlying assumptions or ideologies “informing the semantic contact of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). I used TA as an accessible tool in the treatment of qualitative data, including their organising and coding, while the analysis process was more driven by FDA insights.

TA helped me to formulate the codes into four sub-arguments with themes that were distinct from each other (i.e., external heterogeneity), and cohered within each (i.e., internal homogeneity) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Elucidated in the following four analysis chapters, the four sub-arguments respectively focused on (1) the role of communication of sexual knowledge in the participants’ sexual health (2) female participants’ sexual practice in relation to the gendered discourse of sexual respectability (3) participants’ sexual subjectivity in relation to their academic selves, and (4) the role of border-crossing in shaping the participants as sexual subjects. These four sub-arguments capture different aspects of Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity and together form a rich story about the participants as sexual beings.

Visual material used in the study did not require analysis. The photo collage used in focus groups served as a stimulus to generate data and did not constitute data in itself. Personal photos used in interviews were primarily employed as a tool to bring out participants’ verbal narratives or to further discussions (Bach, 2007), and were not treated as part of the analytic text. They only feature in the thesis as illustrations where relevant or needed, for example, as embodiments of desires talked about by the participants (e.g., see Chapter 7).

**Methodological considerations**

This study sustained some methodological limitations, despite overall success in implementation of the research design. The use of focus groups may have had implications in the way male participants presented or performed their masculinity in data collection. Young men have been theorised to “employ discursive constructions which afford positionings that help them meet objectives within particular social contexts”, such as projecting an ‘ideal’ masculinity (Willig, 1999, p. 144). Research documents the dominance of hypermasculinity in young men’s peer group discussion about sexuality, especially when the research environment is not perceived ‘safe’ enough (i.e., adult led, competitive group dynamics) to express alternative masculine subject positions (McGeeney, 2015). The context of a ‘serious’ discussion of sexuality could be at odds with this expression of masculinity and could even heighten some male participant’s vulnerability (Allen, 2005b; though a more structured setting may counter
this, see Carmody, 2013). My position as a female researcher leading the focus groups/interviews may also be perceived as scrutinising by some male participants and impede them from projecting alternative sexual selves (i.e., sexually inexperienced or unconfident).

The issue of reproducing heteronormativity (Warner, 1991) was raised during the data collection process. I observed several instances in focus groups where a participant’s sexual difference was either made visible which resulted in the person being taunted (e.g., being a virgin in an all-male group), or was obscured to avoid potential judgement (e.g., being queer in a stranger group). Heteronormativity operated in both scenarios, and by producing difference in the former and sameness in the latter, oppressed diverse sexual subjects from emerging (see Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). My facilitation was implicated in reproducing these norms. In the former scenario, while I encouraged the participant(s) to speak in an attempt to dislodge normative masculinity, I may have accentuated their difference and added to their marginalisation. In the latter scenario, I did not actively challenge the heteronormative assumptions in the discussion, and by doing so silenced the queer participants’ articulation of same-sex romantic experience.

Particularly in sexuality research, heteronormativity operates in complex and pervasive ways and may not have any necessary relation to the researcher’s sexual identity (Allen, 2010). My self-identification as queer, which was not disclosed to all participants, did not necessarily produce anti-normative knowledge and may have even been co-opted by the normalcy of heterosexuality during research process. Researchers’ role in knowledge production therefore requires constant self-reflexivity, which entails examining their own location, their positionality around the ‘norm’ and understanding ‘difference’ as a process of relationality rather than a fixed category (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). This project left me with valuable methodological questions: “How do we avoid reproducing difference in ways that constantly re-centre the normative? How do we imagine an ethical methodology that interrogates the normative in ways that avoid the impulse to deny, smooth over or conflate the contradictions of difference?” (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014, p. 62).
Chapter 4: Sexual Knowledge and Chinese Young People’s Sexual Safety

Knowledge is never neutral (Hirtle, 1996) and its production intimately intertwines with power (Foucault, 1978). In this chapter, I examine school, family, peers and intimate relationships as four sources of sexual knowledge, and discuss how the knowledge communicated via these channels is constituted by discourses of gender and sexuality. I demonstrate how the way sexual information is disseminated or silenced informs and shapes young people’s sexual subjectivity. The chapter also argues that gendered patterns in sexual communication have important implications for Chinese sojourners’ safer sex practice.

I concentrated on these four sources of sexual information because they constitute a young person’s closest social relations. Other sources including media, pornography and internet also serve as repertoires of sexual knowledge (Albury, 2014; Y. Hong, Li, Mao, & Stanton, 2006; J. Yu, 2010a), but from my data, it appears information obtained from them tends to also be relayed through communication with peers, parents and intimate partners. Therefore, their examination does not add enough new insight to the discussion of sexuality education that warrants further attention in this thesis.

In my online survey, participants were asked to rate a range of sexual knowledge sources in order of helpfulness and unhelpfulness. 276 participants completed the item on ‘helpful sources’ (i.e., “Based on personal experience, among the following options, I find these source(s) have been most helpful with getting the information I need about sex/sexuality (including knowledge of sexual health, sexual practice, sexual identity etc)”), and 277 participants completed the item on unhelpful sources. As Figure 5 shows, the four most helpful sources were ranked: peers (45.7%), sex partner (30.8%), school-based sex education (26.1%), and parents (4.3%), and the four most unhelpful sources were: parents (59.9%), school-based sexuality education (32.9%), peers (15.9%), and sex partners (10.8%).
Figure 5. (Un)helpfulness of peers, sex partners, school sex/sexuality education and parents as sexual knowledge sources according to quantitative survey sample.

Consistently, sex partners and peers were considered the most helpful sources, while parents were perceived least helpful. School-based sexuality education was ranked in the middle. I demonstrate in this chapter participants’ polarised responses to school as a source of sexual knowledge highlight the institutional differences in formal sexuality education between China and NZ, and the structural absence of sexuality education in China is further complicated by sexual communication in familial, peer and intimate relations.

School-based sexuality education

Findings reveal the different responses to school-based sexuality education were related to whether participant received secondary schooling in China or in NZ. Significantly more settler participants (34.4%) than sojourners (15.6%) picked school-based sex education as a helpful source of sexual knowledge ($X^2 (1, N = 276) = 12.5, p < .001$), and significantly more sojourner participants (41.0%) than settlers (26.5%) picked school-based sex education as an unhelpful source ($X^2 (1, N = 277) = 6.5, p = .011$). In relation to these comparisons, I demonstrate below that young people in China typically experience school as a vacuum of both official (i.e., contraception) and erotic (i.e., logistics of how to have sex, pleasure) discourses of knowledge (see Allen, 2004a). While the absence of school sexuality education has regulative effects on young Chinese’s sexuality, so does formal sexuality education available in NZ.
School-based sexuality education in China

Qualitative data on participants’ talk about school-based sexuality education provided complementary evidence to the quantitative data above. Mainland Chinese sojourners (i.e., those who only attended secondary school in mainland China) commonly described it as largely absent or very poorly delivered.

Tania: in high school or secondary school (...) in biology classes there’s (...) a little bit—very little—we don’t have the western system--.

Wendy: (overlapping) there’s no teacher teaching us (about sexuality) specifically (Tania: no specific sex education), nothing (Tania: no), just the textbook [both sojourner female, age 25]

Alternatively, as KJ recounted below, attempts to teach sexuality (even as biology) are often unsuccessful and anxiety provoking in the normative practice of teaching (Y. Gao et al., 2001).

KJ: it was a (pause) biology teacher that taught us that class (...) you know she’s so young at that time, so while she was teaching this class, the whole class—her face was just blushing (chuckles) (int: blushing? Ok) yeah, and she was like, ‘ok’, and she had to like try to—‘cos we the kids were laughing down there, and she was trying to like make herself like be more professional, but you can tell that she’s holding herself there, she’s sort of scared or whatever [female, sojourner, age 23]

The teacher’s discomfort and the students’ disruptive laughing indicate both parties acknowledge this moment as unusual, or ‘wrong’ for classrooms. It is ‘wrong’ because both teacher (Haste, 2013) and student (Allen, 2009a) are evoked as sexual subjects, trespassing into a sexualised territory where they perceive they should not be. Such sexuality education moments are often attributed to teachers’ lack of competency (e.g., Y. F. Zhou, 2012), but also indicate deeper meanings of education as a normatively non-sexual realm for everyone involved (Allen & Elliott, 2008; Paechter, 2004). The ‘sanitisation’ of sexuality in classrooms is not only seen in sexuality education, but also in everyday teaching practice, which I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 6.

Because of the way education is desexualised, the only legitimate presence sexual information can make in education is through its construction as scientific knowledge. As mentioned above, sexuality is typically taught in health or biology classes. When there is no official curriculum specifically named sex/sexuality education (Aresu, 2009; L. Li et al., 2009), ‘sexuality’ is
pedagogically erased as a legitimate knowledge (see Evans, 1995; Fraser, 1977). Even when it is taught as scientific knowledge (i.e., reproduction), as Poker reported below, the information given appears carefully filtered in a way sexual acts (including masturbation) are omitted.

Poker: I felt so hormonal, yeah lots of hormone but (. ) I was just like why does it get all hard all of a sudden, why, am I ill? I really thought that, later I realised it’s fine, I just ignored it, ignoring it, I had no idea it was supposed to be plugged into something else, like (chuckles)—the way human body’s designed is fascinating

Int: were you taught about reproduction in biology class?

Poker: we were only taught how the sperm enters the egg, but (int chuckles) not on how, not on the humping activity that makes it happen (…) yeah, I didn’t even know how to wank [male sojourner, age 22]

It is evident in Poker’s account the disembodied way reproduction is taught translates into a disembodied sexual subjectivity, where a person appears disconnected from their bodily sensation (i.e., sexual urge) and bodily practice (i.e., masturbation). This ‘somatophobic’ culture (Spelman, 1988) is not specific to Chinese society. It is underlined by a Cartesian dualism which not only separates body from mind, but also assigns body a lower status than mind (Paechter, 2004). In the context of sexuality education, this is reflected in a missing discourse of desire (Allen, 2013b; Fine, 2003). The official discourse of sexual knowledge in school emphasises negative consequences of sexual activity (e.g., STIs, unplanned pregnancy) over sexual pleasure or desire (Allen, 2005b). While feminist and sexual liberation movements in western societies have facilitated a more sex-positive approach in sexuality education (see Cameron-Lewis & Allen, 2013; Russell, Campen, & Muraco, 2012), in China, the erotic discourse of sexual knowledge remains missing. Aside from a focus on sexual diseases, sexual information also typically limits to anatomical, developmental or hygienic knowledge of human body, with minimal reference to the sexual body (Y. Gao et al., 2001; L. Zhang et al., 2007). Through what’s taught and not taught, school sexuality education serves as a vehicle of regulative power, constructing normative youth sexuality and producing a particular type of sexual being (Allen, 2005b; Aresu, 2009; Bay-Cheng, 2003), or in the case of Chinese youth, asexual beings. Bodily constructs such as sexual desire and pleasure are rendered as needing regulation or “intervention” (B. Wang, Meier, Shah, & Li, 2006). Sojourner male Yan offered an example of the regulative effect of formal sexuality education:
Yan: (…) like very briefly, telling you not to—don’t masturbate and stuff, in a passing sentence (…) masturbation affects its function, and affects (.)—they said prostate—is that what it’s called? I actually don’t know where it is (chuckles) (…) but it does, (int: chuckles) ok) ‘cos how to put it, it’s (.) dirty or something

Int: so when you do it [masturbation] do you feel guilty?

Yan: yeah I would (chuckles), so I (.) don’t—generally don’t do it [age 23]

It appears the sexuality education Yan received had little educational value but had a strong prohibitive effect against masturbation. The feelings of anxiety and guilt produced by a construction of masturbation as “dirty” or harmful are detrimental to youth sexual autonomy and sexual health (Holland et al., 1994). Yan’s response, which shifted from uncertainty to the decision to follow the given information, indicates a lack of access to alternative discursive resources.

An account articulated by settler participant C who had experienced sexuality education in China before coming to NZ at age 15 adds nuance to the picture, where he expressed scepticism about the prohibitive message from school.

C: the earliest school sex ed was in intermediate (…) mostly about body mechanisms, and disease prevention, like what’s herpes what’s gonorrhoea, then super cancer, which is AIDS, it was called that then

Int: so how to prevent them?

C: (.) I remember what we were taught was (.)—they said the best way of course was to not do it, which is of course impossible right [age 25]

Research documents as much as sexuality is portrayed as prone to diseases in sexuality education in China, little information on protective methods is given, apart from sexual abstinence (Y. Gao et al., 2001). Chinese youth often refer to avoidance of sex and maintaining moral conduct, rather than barrier methods as disease prevention measures (H. Zhang et al., 2004). However, unlike Yan, C concluded the message of sexual abstinence was unrealistic. In invoking sexual desire as irrepressible and natural (Bay-Cheng, 2003), he articulated a subject position of a sexual being. At the time of the interview, C had had considerably more sexual experience than Yan. It is possible that C’s sexual experience enabled him more access to a discourse of erotics. Research shows sexually experienced youth perceive premarital sex more
favourably than others (B. Wang et al., 2006), and erotic sexual knowledge is more available in intimate practice than in schools (Allen, 2005b; L. Zhang et al., 2007).

It appears both official and erotic discourses of sexual knowledge are missing in school-based sexuality education in China for participants in this study. In comparison, youth in western societies such as NZ commonly report school as helpful in disseminating official sexual knowledge, but unsatisfactory in providing erotic sexual knowledge (Allen, 2005b). I look at Chinese young people’s experience with NZ formal sexuality education next.

**School-based sexuality education schooling in NZ**

Several settler participants who attended schools in both China and NZ reported benefits from school-based sexuality education in NZ after their arrival. For example:

Bill: (...) a Korean kid, our neighbour, came play with me and said here’s a present for you, it’s a condom (laughs), it’s funny, he said we were in class, in school—he’s in year 9 I think, and he’s like, I learned how to use condoms in year 9 (...) I didn’t have this class myself, ‘cos they thought, I was in year 11 [when I came to NZ], how old was I, 16-17, they thought I’d been taught that (...) but I learned some stuff anyway (...) he gave me a demonstration of whatever he learned in class (chuckles) [male settler, age 24]

Having arrived in NZ in year 11, Bill missed compulsory sexuality education in NZ, which is taught within the Health and Physical Education Curriculum until the end of Year 10 (see Allen, 2005a) and did not enrol in optional health classes offered for senior students. However, he was able to learn some official sexual knowledge (i.e., contraception) from his younger friend. His experience echoes research findings where school is ranked the second most useful source of sexual information among local NZ youth (Allen, 2005b), and the most common source for Asian youth in NZ (Rasanathan et al., 2006).

Quantitative data in this study also indicate young Chinese with schooling experience in NZ (i.e., settlers) had better levels of sexual knowledge and sexual safety awareness than sojourners (see also B. Lee et al., 2013). I measured participants’ views pertaining to safer sex practice, sexuality education, sexual pleasure and sexual conservatism on a number of Likert scales statements. The results all fall well within reasonable bounds (skewness less than two and kurtosis less than seven) (Meissel, 2014), making the distribution normal enough for T tests. Compared to sojourner participants, settlers were less likely to think schools should teach young people more about sex/sexuality (t(243) = -2.6, p = .011), and that pornography is a
good way for young people to learn about sex \( t(243) = -3.5, p = .001 \), indicating their need for sexuality education through school is better satisfied. Settlers were also less likely to rely on sex partners with contraceptive use during sex \( t(243) = -4.2, p = .000 \) and more likely to agree that using contraception is important \( t(174.493) = 2.4, p = .020 \). Although I am not arguing schooling experience alone defines these differences between sojourners and settlers, the results are consistent with the documented positive effect of sexuality education in raising awareness and knowledge of sexual safety and responsibility (Sun et al., 2013; B. Wang et al., 2005, 2006). When there is a lack of sexuality education schooling, pornography is more likely to be used as a learning substitute (Y. Hong et al., 2006; Lou, Zhao, Gao, & Shah, 2006).

However, the positive outcomes of sexuality education must be contextualised within an examination of knowledge and power. While the unavailability of formal sexuality education in China is underscored by, and reproduces a desexualised construction of youth, the availability of sexuality education in NZ also has regulatory discursive implications in terms of (racialised) sexual norms (see Rasmussen, 2012). I return to this point in Chapter 7.

**Family/parents**

Irrespective of Chinese young diaspora’s different schooling experience, cultural background appears to retain a unifying influence on their sexuality. Research shows Asian sojourners are more similar to Asian settlers in NZ in terms of sexual health knowledge and sexual experiences than non-Asian sojourner youth (B. Lee et al., 2013). Family serves as a primary agency for preserving and sustaining cultural norms and heritage (Davidson & Dai, 2008). In this section, I explore the extent of this influence.

Participants in this study revealed their parents rarely offer factual sexual information to children, but communication of sexual values is nonetheless achieved, through the way sexual knowledge is silenced or selectively conveyed. In other words, family is a site of power where children’s access to discursive resources (i.e., sexual knowledge) is supervised, restricted and regulated by parents (Howard, Hallam, & Brady, 2016). Family’s sexual communication is also gendered. Young Chinese women tend to receive more prohibitive messages about dating than young men, due to traditional emphasis on feminine virtues. Together, the absence of helpful sexual information from parents and the gendered sexual messages work to the detriment of Chinese women’s sexual safety.
Family as an unhelpful source of sexual knowledge

Family was consistently rated by the participants in this study as the least helpful source of sexual knowledge (see also L. Li et al., 2009) across settlers (3.9% rated helpful, 64.5% rated unhelpful) and sojourners (4.9% rated helpful, 54.1% rated unhelpful). The qualitative data affirm that most participants’ families avoid talking about sexuality with them. Among 42 interview/focus group participants, only two (Bai, female settler, lesbian; Bill, male settler, heterosexual) found their parents helpful in this regard.

In female settler Hik’s case, her mother’s avoidance of sexual communication extended to rudimentary physiological knowledge about menstruation.

Hik: when I got my period, I got my period for like two days, it was just like a little bit of bleeding and I thought it was just me, like I cut myself, then it got to the stage where I told my mom, and she called my sister, and my sister told me about it

Int: why didn’t she tell you?

Hik: just because my mom’s so (. ) old-fashioned, it’s embarrassing maybe, I don’t know, but even back then, I only got told it was called period, and I get it once a month, but I didn’t get taught in details, I had to learn it in intermediate [age 19]

Like Hik’s mother, many overseas Chinese parents as reported in literature tend to assume sexuality education to be school’s responsibility (while criticising a safe-sex approach in sexuality education, see J. Yu, 2008). Asian youth in a western society have reported a stronger need than their Caucasian counterpart for more information about STIs and contraception (Coleman & Testa, 2007), indicating the relative absent role of Asian parents in sexuality education. Other research documents Chinese parents as unhelpful in sexuality education due to discomfort (W. Liu et al., 2015, 2011), limited sexual knowledge, lack of communication skills, divergent sexual values, and language barriers (J. Yu, 2007, 2008, 2010a). Though research in China shows that parents are becoming more willing to be involved in children’s sexuality education (W. Liu et al., 2011; J. Yu, 2007), my data did not show the trend.

Even when parents attempt to give advice on sexual safety, it is often excessively vague and does not entail any concrete instructions or contain much of educational value.

Fiona: I started going out with my boyfriend in the third month of my mom’s visit, then she told me to be careful, what to do—don’t do what I shouldn’t do and stuff like that
Int: (…) so by “be careful”—what’s your understanding of the sentence? Is it “as long as you’re not pregnant”, or “use condoms or safety measures”?

Fiona: that I don’t know, like his dad just told us not to like—don’t end up with (..) babies—just don’t end up with babies [settler, female, age 18]

C: she [mom]’d say—like say be safe, don’t (..) knock her up or (int: she’d say “knock her up”?)—yeah she’d just say you be safe, or it’s really really bad for the girl [settler, male, age 25]

Int: that’s pretty vague but you understood her?

C: yeah yeah, we prefer it to be a bit vague, but we’d laugh and I’m like yeah I get it I get it [male, settler, age 25]

The parents’ advice as relayed by Fiona and C is full of euphemisms of avoiding pregnancy but lacks actual guidance on how to be safe (D. L. Liu et al., 1997; J. Yu, 2010a). This limited communication seems heavily based on an assumption that children had enough knowledge to know what was implied. For example:

Jaw: my mom’s talk was like, so you know and I don’t have to talk to you about it (others chuckles) yeah that was the talk [settler, female, age 22]

However, this assumption that “you know” does not always match reality. For example, despite Richard’s expressed ‘knowingness’, he did not practice safer sex. Even after he impregnated a gir, his parents’ messages about sexual safety remained obscure.

Richard: my parents found out and (..) told me to have it [the baby], then (..)—talked a lot during that period, like always telling me to be safe

Int: (…) have they talked to you about how to be safe?

Richard: no, they knew I knew [sojourner, male, age 20]

In Chinese culture, parent-child discussion about sexuality has never been customary or seen as necessary (Bullough & Ruan, 1990). Some parents feel their children will know about sex when they are old enough even without sexuality education (Y. Gao et al., 2001), or are reported as commenting “we Chinese are too conservative to talk about sex” (J. Yu, 2008). Due to a lack of alternative resources, Chinese parents struggle with conceptualising sexual knowledge as ‘normal’, either in communication with children or in public discussion (Okazaki,
Western research has documented youth tend to assign official sexual knowledge (e.g., contraception) obtained from secondary sources (e.g., school, books, parents) a lower status than erotic sexual knowledge obtained from first hand, embodied sexual experience (Allen, 2001). Given the way the two types of sexual knowledge are already in competition in terms of perceived importance, Chinese parents’ evasiveness in passing on sexual safety knowledge further reduces the effectiveness of such communication.

Participants also reported sensing parents’ discomfort or reluctance and accordingly participating in the silence. For example:

Cosy: sometimes it feels like they don’t really know how to talk about it with me either, so it’s kind of like an (all chuckle) awkward thing to do, yeah [settler female, age 23]

Cosy’s parents’ silence is meaningful in the way that it conveys sexuality as taboo, secret and not for open discussion. Compared to white youth who report preferring to learn about sexuality from parents over school, peers and media (Somers & Surmann, 2004), diasporic Asian youth are less likely to receive verbal sexual communication from parents (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014), and more likely to wish to keep sexuality education out of the family household (Coleman & Testa, 2007).

Additionally, the silence about sexuality is often combined with parents’ attempts to ‘shield’ the children from sexual material to avoid/delay their sexualisation.

Fiona: with TV it was when I was little, like—like if—you see a man and a woman together on TV, then my parents would cover my eyes, then--. [settler, female, age 18]

Richard: yeah my mom did that too, I was pretty curious [sojourner, male, age 20]

Current understanding of youth sexuality is dominated by psychological discourses which delineate the forming of a sexual self into developmental stages, each stage with norms to be observed (see Hook, 2002). As sexuality serves to regulate the distinction between children and adults (Foucault, 1978), a ‘normal’ child is to be free from sexuality, and responsible parents are expected to protect children from exposure to sexual material (Howard et al., 2016) to sustain the innocence of childhood (Egan & Hawkes, 2010). Parents’ failure to do so risks ‘unnaturally’ and prematurely sexualising the children, which could derail them from a normative cognitive and emotional path (Egan & Hawkes, 2009). Chinese parents’ silence or ‘shielding’ around sexuality is supported by this concern, as well as the assumption that exposure to sexual material or talk implicitly encourages children’s sexual exploration (Cui et al., 2001; J. L. Kim & Ward, 2007). However, international literature consistently shows
parents’ open communication with children about sex and about their expectations (e.g., no sex before university, or safe sex) leads to later sexual initiation (Aspy et al., 2007; Ethier, Harper, Hoo, & Dittus, 2016), and parents’ teaching about contraception has a positive effect on children’s safer sex practice (see J. Yu, 2010a). Despite such findings, Chinese parents appear to believe their job is to shield children from the evil ‘lure’ of sexuality without addressing the topic of sex.

Through the way parental sexual communication occurs, sexuality related norms are transmitted and sustained (Higgins & Sun, 2007; Okazaki, 2002). Sojourner male participant J discussed the impact of his parents’ sex-negative messages on his own sexual being.

J: the impression I get from them is like everything is, mm, a bit like puritanism, self-restraint and discipline, then sex is—sexual desire is a sinful thing, that’s what was instilled in me from when I was little, I still feel like that even now, and that’s one of the reasons it’s been bothering me, I just don’t (. ) particularly care for sex [age 24]

Other research has documented the role of family in Asian migrant youth’s sexuality as a restrictive (in some research termed as ‘protective’) one, and as a source of sexual morality (T. A. Kao et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 2011). I further explore family in relation to children’s sexual practice in Chapter 5. In terms of sexual safety practice, I show below the significant role of parental sexual communication.

**Family as a source of gendered sexual knowledge**

While Chinese parents are generally unhelpful in providing sexual information and prohibitive about children’s sexual activity, they are often a source of gendered messages in relation to sexuality, for instance, the idea of female sexual chastity (W. Liu et al., 2015).

Hik: it wasn’t till third year in high school, so I knew about sex already, when they found out [I was dating], they gave me that (. ) “It doesn’t mean anything for boys, for girls it’s special” (…) it was just like (. ) “Don’t lose your virginity, it’s (. ) bad for you”, yeah don’t have sex [settler, female, age 19]

As I elaborate in Chapter 5 in relation to female sexual respectability, the notion of female virginity still prevails in Chinese societies, despite the increasing trend of premarital sex (Higgins et al., 2002). The finding that such views were shared by settlers’ and sojourners’ parents suggests resilience of traditional values against the influence of acculturation and westernisation (Brotto et al., 2005).
More evidence is seen in female participants’ narratives about how their mothers warned them against using tampons. All such narratives came from settlers, as using pads, rather than tampons has always been the common practice for women in China (Y. Z. Yang, 2016). These accounts were often brought up in the context of premarital sex.

Jaw: she [mom] never said, don’t have sex until you’re married, she never actually said those words, but by saying don’t use a tampon until you’re married, sort of implied you shouldn’t have sex until you’re married [settler, female, age 22]

Other settler female participants recounted their mothers more explicitly voicing the concern for their virginity loss from tampon use.

Hik: (…) ‘cos mom says if you put a tampon in, that’s like (.) having sex (…) she said it stretches your vagina (Int chuckles), like it’s not true, it’s medically not true, but they like to say it (chuckles) [age 19]

Jasmine: (…) like even when I—I bought some tampons, and she was like you can’t use—I never thought my parents would be the whole like “you can’t do sex, or else when you have and you won’t bleed and you won’t be a virgin if you used tampons”, I was like what?! [age 18]

Disciplining of female sexuality is exercised through parents’ surveillance of their daughters’ genital practices. However, in the instances of these settler women, all of them continued to use tampons as their experience of school-based sexuality education in NZ may have enabled them to discern and counter inaccurate sexual information and ‘problematic’ sexual views (i.e., female virginity) from their parents. However, for sojourner young women who comparatively lack alternative resources, such parental messages may be more powerful in producing compliance and self-discipline (see Chapter 5).

Parents’ communication around sexual safety is distinctly different between sons and daughters. To young women, the communication mainly serves to monitor or intervene with their sexual behaviour (Russell et al., 2012), even social interactions with boys (D. B. Qin, 2009).

Erin: (…) not in much detail, my dad would say, “You be careful, don’t get too close with boys” (Nancy (chuckles): be careful), “Don’t [let him] mess you up” (…) “Getting pregnant overseas is big trouble!” (others laugh loudly) "You’d get deported!” [sojourner, female, age 24]
Helen: they wouldn’t say much directly but my mom said, don’t go out with random boys and stuff, but you know what she’s talking about [sojourner, female, age 19]

This parental teaching typically consists of cautionary messages against dating, or any ‘slip ups’ in young women’s sexual conduct. Sexuality is constructed as dangerous, and romantic expression is conflated with negative consequences such as pregnancy or sexual diseases (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014). Sexual intercourse itself is therefore conceived as an adverse outcome of development by Chinese youth in China (H. Zhang et al., 2004). With patriarchy as one of the core values in Chinese culture, Chinese young women, ‘home’ or overseas, continue to be subject to sexual double standards as reflected in parents’ sexual communication (E. Gao et al., 2012). As their stakes in preserving sexual purity seem much higher than men’s (D. W. Chan, 1990), so are their stakes in avoiding sexual risks. Parents’ safeguarding of young women’s sexual body tends to render girls as naïve prey easily victimised by boys or men. In contrast, sexual safety messages received by male participant Bill as below collude with the gendered constructions of female sexuality as vulnerable to negative consequences, and male desire as predatory and irresponsible. It appears both girls’ and boys’ parents participate in the reproduction of the sexual double standard.

Bill: both my father and mother told me this, better not to sleep with Caucasians, because once they get pregnant, they can’t get an abortion, this way it may become more messy [settler, age 24]

Additionally, none of the parents quoted told the children about contraception, despite unplanned pregnancy being a major concern. Abortion is implied as a taken-for-granted common solution of birth control, and it is indeed used, even advocated this way in China (S. Liang & Sugawara, 1992; C. Wang, 2012). Parents resort to indirect or implicit sexual communication, with vague or veiled terms (e.g., “be careful”, “don’t mess up”) without giving any concrete information or guidance on sexual safety (J. L. Kim, 2005; D. L. Liu et al., 1997). While direct sexual communication is avoided, parents find it paramount to emphasise traditional notions of female sexual chastity (Kuo & Lawrence, 2006; W. Liu et al., 2015).

E: she [mom] found out about my boyfriend, but she trusted me in this regard, so didn’t say much about it, she just said, girls gotta have self-respect, that’s what she said

Int: (…) what did you think she meant by self-respect? Do you agree with her?
E: my understanding was (.) don’t easily get into bed with someone, and learn to protect yourself, she didn’t specifically talk to me about these things in detail, she thought I knew everything, and I behaved like I knew everything too [sojourner, female, age 25]

As parents of boys tend to be less involved in children’s sexuality education (W. Liu et al., 2011), daughters tend to receive sexual messages centring on traditional gendered constructions of sexuality (J. L. Kim, 2005; W. Liu et al., 2015). Implying sex as dangerous and damaging to young women’s reputation and virtuousness, these messages create constraining sexual space for them.

Given the absence of school-based sexuality education in China and girls’ comparatively less exposure to sexually explicit material as alternative sources of information than boys (Allen, 2008a; P. S. Y. Ho & Tsang, 2002), these gendered accounts from parents might be seen to contribute to (sojourner) Chinese girls’ relative sexual ignorance and sexual repression. As I demonstrate in a later section on intimate partners, researchers have identified gendered power relations and gender role expectations as among the key impediments to the application of safe sex knowledge (Wight, 1992). Conventional constructions of femininity and masculinity that render boys as sexually predatory and girls as sexually passive are detrimental to young women’s autonomy in practicing safer sex (Tolman, 2002). Additionally, through their evasive and gendered sexual communication, parents can be seen to be complicit in the reproduction of the neoliberal notion of self-responsibility – young women are supposed to protect themselves while not being told exactly how to protect themselves, or necessarily having the power to do so. As I identify in the final section of this chapter, the negative impact of such sexual communication is reflected in participants’ safer sex practice.

**Peers/friends**

Peers/friends were ranked the most helpful and least unhelpful source of sexual knowledge in this study. In research, peer group is reported by diasporic Asian youth as a primary source for both official sexual knowledge (e.g., sexual safety) (Rasanathan et al., 2006) and erotic sexual knowledge (e.g., talk of sexual interest or activity) (J. L. Kim, 2005). I unpack this role of peers in Chinese young people’s sexuality and demonstrate the peer group is a site that shapes and reinforces normative gendered sexual subjectivities through the communication of sexual knowledge.
Gendered pattern in peer communication

Research has suggested a self-converging pattern in peer groups’ sexual communication. Most youth tend to form friendships with people from the same gender, cultural background, with similar sexual attitudes, and tend to assume friends hold similar sexual views (J. Yu, 2008). Therefore depending on the group norm, peer group can either enable transmission of sexual knowledge, or serve as a segregating or protective shield that ‘insulates’ group members from non-normative sexual subject positions. For example, while seeking sexual information from friends correlates with liberal sexual practice, conservative peer groups could also delay sexual debut or encourage abstinence (J. Yu, 2010a). The type of sexual knowledge circulated in different peer groups also reflects this pattern. While sexually inexperienced Chinese youth tend to identify teachers and parents as the main sources of sexual knowledge, sexually active youth perceive peers as more helpful (L. Zhang et al., 2007), as the exchange of erotic sexual knowledge is more normalised among peers than with parents or schools (J. Yu, 2008). Especially for sexually active young women, they are more likely to share experiences with other non-virgins, instead of sexually inexperienced peers to avoid judgement or reputational damage (J. L. Kim, 2005).

In this study, these self-converging features of peer sexual communication are evident and map onto a gendered pattern, where sexual knowledge appears more available in male peer groups than women’s, especially among sojourners. Interview data below illustrate this contrast in terms of contraceptive knowledge.

Int: how did you learn contraception later?

Ethan: contraception—contraception mainly was—because (.) I was certainly not the leader in a group in this aspect, so like there were some—certainly some other guys with more experience, then they—they maybe—like they maybe talked about it when they were chatting [sojourner, male, age 25]

Other men described contraception as featured in their communication in such a common way that “you’re very aware of that, though you never learned it consciously” (Martin).

Martin: classmates, those more mature in this aspect (chuckles) took some [condoms] to school, many guys had never seen one, so we played with it [sojourner, male, age 22]

In sojourner women’s peer communication, knowledge or talk about sexual safety appeared to feature much less regularly, and needed to be actively or knowingly sought out.
Int: how did you know about contraception?

Wendy: I only found out in the last few days [sojourner, female, age 25]

Tania: no way you didn’t! [sojourner, female, age 25]

Wendy: really.

Tania: no way! You didn’t know about *condom*[s]?

Wendy: I knew about *condom*[s], but—but I was asking—asked a friend of mine, I’m like are condoms 100% safe, or should you be on the pills too (chuckles)

Ethan: (...) have you seen one [condom]? [sojourner, male, age 25]

Wendy: (chuckles) no, I haven’t--.

Tania: (overlapping) neither have I

Settler female participants reported higher levels of contraceptive knowledge than sojourner women, but nonetheless perceived barriers in communicating, or displaying their sexual knowledge among peers. Settler female Jaw described a scenario of a sexuality education class in NZ where one group of girls were asked to put a condom on a banana in front of the rest of the class. Even though western young women’s peer groups are found a good venue for sex talk and may provide more accurate sexual information than male peer groups (Allen, 2005b), such communication is constrained by the boundary of peer group. Beyond the privacy and comfort of their social groups, western women’s, including young Chinese settler women’s display of sexual knowledge or experience still risks peer judgment (see also Allen, 2013a).

Jaw: I felt bad for the girls, one of them had to put a condom on and everyone was like “How do you know how to do that?” you know (others: ohh) so it became like if you didn’t know you’re you know, teased or if you did know you’re teased which is lose-lose, so I’m like I’m not in that group so yeah [settler, female, age 22]

Eden: (overlapping) that’s a good point (...) double standards [settler, male, age 21]

Int: yeah, does that still happen you think?

Viv: I think so yeah, I think it’s really engrained in society [settler, female, age 21]

The sexual double standard identified by the participants is further evident in sex talk concerning erotic sexual knowledge. Participants compared gender differences in sex talk:

Int: girls do talk about sex though
Jaw: oh not like a—not like they count, (…) whereas guys would, except some guys have slept with lots of girls and they’d be like, oh I can’t tell you, ‘cos it’s too many (…) [settler, female, age 22]

A sexual double standard implies the display of sexual experience as commendable for boys and damaging for girls (Lees, 1993). While sharing narratives of sexual encounters or conquests is a typical way of bonding or seeking peer status among young men (Grazian, 2007), women are likely to risk sexual respectability for talk of (especially casual) sex (Crawford & Popp, 2003; J. Yu, 2008). Settler female participant Viv reported being highly aware of such consequences:

Viv: (…) I’d still be cautious about talking about my sexual experience, or you know, you don’t wanna be called a slut or something [age 21]

Normative feminine ideals ascribe sexual innocence as virtuous, rendering young women’s interest in or possession of erotic knowledge as inadequate or shameful (Allen, 2004b; S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). This potentially adds to the obstacle of Chinese young women gaining related information from friends by silencing such communication. For example:

Nancy: my classmate from [university in] China, she’d go out with her boyfriend, stay over there for a few days then come back (to our dorm), and I never asked about any details (chuckles) (Erin laughs), too embarrassed to [sojourner, female, age 25]

Helen: you wouldn’t (talk about pornography), because if you did, people will look at you weird (chuckles)

Int: what do you mean by weird?

Helen: just like how can you be so—just (chuckles)—so mature, no not mature, just a bit—a bit—a bit like a pervert [laughs] [sojourner, female, age 19]

In this context, sojourner Chinese women tend to participate in normative silence about sex in peer groups. A gender gap in relation to erotic sexual knowledge is thus perpetuated. Settler female Hik’s account below shows sex talk is normalised among her peers but again, only within carefully navigated boundaries.

Hik: yeah we talk about it [sex] with friends yeah, we’re quite open about it

Int: does it get quite explicit, in details?
Hik: yeah in details yeah, everyone shares their sex stories with their friends (...) but with boys I’ve just met, no, not boys I’m trying to impress or something [age 19]

Functioning as a disciplinary site, peer groups function to set out norms in sexual communication, but these norms are contextual and contingent. As the only Asian in her New Zealander female peer group where everyone is sexually active, Hik was able to access meanings of female sexuality that position women sexually desiring and interested. However, Hik still complied with the gendered norms around women’s sex talk when her sexual attractiveness was at stake.

Sex talk among peers is therefore a significant space for the negotiation and reproduction of gender norms of sexuality for participants in this study. Male participant Z gave another gender comparison:

Z: guys care most about “Have you done it yet? You banged her?”, after I started going out with that girl, jeez those two [friends] are like, everyday they’re like “Get on with it”, you should do it like this like that, (...) then girls are different, they care more about emotional stuff, if they’re happy [about the relationship], fuck or not they don’t care (.). as much [sojourner, age 25]

The extract reiterates conventional understandings of gendered sexualities where men are preoccupied with sexual satisfaction in a relationship, whereas women are more interested in the emotional aspect (Allen, 2003a; McGeeney, 2015). Informing this gender difference is essentialist reproductive discourses (Potts, 2002) such as the ‘male sexual drive’ which prescribes young men as innately driven towards sexual fulfilment. Within this discourse, young men are limited to a masculine subject position that is sexually predatory and separated from emotional involvement, with young women as passive recipients, or victims to male desire (Holland et al., 1993; Willig, 1999). Concurrently, women are more likely than men to receive conservative sexual messages from friends that centre on love and commitment as a pretext for sexual activity (J. L. Kim, 2005). The dominance of such discourses makes alternative subject positions difficult to access, such as ones that allow young women to be legitimately and positively sexual.

Settler male participants’ accounts affirm the tendency for young men to present selves as experienced and ‘successful’ in articulating masculinity (Kehily, 2002).

Kid101: maybe the next day you’ll be like, oh bro you know, I just got with this girl, but--.
Matt: (overlapping) and then that’s when we share—that’s when we [male friends] share—we’ll be like oh bro you know um, you know that girl Jenny man, she was good in the bed you know, she has big tits (...) [both male settlers, age 22]

Given hegemonic masculinity requires young men to be virile and competitive (Holland et al., 1993; Mac an Ghaill, 1994), there is tremendous pressure in male peer groups for young men to play ‘up’ their sexual competence through ‘showing off’ (J. Yu, 2008) their sexual conquests. Peer communication typically involves boasting or comic story telling with misogynist rhetoric (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003; McGeeney, 2015), rather than factual information exchange. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity structures hierarchical relations among men (Connell, 2005). The concern with peer status could restrain young men from seeking out accurate sexual information from male peers, as it risks a sexually ignorant, or inexperienced perception (Forrest, Strange, Oakley, & RIPPLE Study Team, 2004). Male peer group is therefore not always a reliable source of accurate sexual information (Allen, 2005b). For example, in an all-male focus group in this study, settler Bill (age 24) who arrived in NZ at age 16 had a more dominant presence in the group interaction than the other two members who were new to NZ. After Bill exposed group member DA’s (age 20) sexual inexperience, for the remaining of the group session, DA was observed attempting to salvage his masculinity by trying to match Bill in terms of sexual knowledge. In one stance, when Bill stated his ‘dilemma’ of dating a Caucasian girl because of his parents’ disapproval, DA concurred with Bill’s inaccurate information about abortion.

Bill: once they get pregnant, they can’t get abortions, that way it’d be more messy, my mom told me this--. (DA: oh yes, it’s in the law, I remember) they think it’s a life, so now I’m (laughs)—I’m kind of stuck (laughs)

This exchange demonstrates how sexual information circulated in male sex talk could be misleading (Holland et al., 1993). It also points to a chasm between young men’s self-belief of knowledgeability and a lack of ‘rudimentary’ sexual knowledge (Allen, 2008a).

However, these dominant discourses of gendered sexuality do not determine young people’s sexual subjectivities. As the constitution of subject is ongoing, the power of discourse is never absolute (Davies, 2006). This means in performing gender, which according to Butler relies on repetitive acts and perpetually risks failure (Butler, 1990, 1993; Wetherell & Edley, 1998), one could find agency flowing between discursive formations (Hekman, 1995), and space of
subversion within the ‘slippages’ of performing. Kid101 below presented alternative positioning to hegemonic masculinity.

Kid101: I just sort of share my knowledge and like share my experience (Matt: yeah), I just give what I can offer, if he can share more you know then I’ll just ta—take what he’s said in and yeah, just sort of (Matt: acknowledge it happened) just acknowledge it, ‘cos (pause) yeah I mean yeah everyone’s different, but some guys—I know some guys will try—probably like try to get to his level and they’ll be like oh yeah I did that too [settler, male, age 22]

As Kid101 strayed from the hypermasculine display of sexual experience in peer sexual communication, he acknowledged the display being common among young men. However, he articulated this subject position of male sexual competition as a difference (i.e., “everyone’s different”) rather than a norm, which de-centres its dominance. Though he did not directly challenge the discourse of hegemonic masculinity, he showed other ways of being male and sexual are possible (i.e., not engaging in the sexual competition), and simply ‘different’ rather than less desirable. By opening up such new possibilities, his narrative served as an alternative discursive resource for other male peers to draw on (e.g., Matt here presented a subject position different from his earlier masculinist one by concurring with Kid101). Research documents masculinities that contest dominant discourses may be becoming more normalised amongst youth today (O’Donnell & Sharpe, 2002). A similar trend is being observed in western research with femininity, where young women are often more sexually knowledgeable than young men (Allen, 2001, 2008a), and report sexual subjectivities driven by erotic, rather than emotional pursuit (Allen, 2003a). Although my data do not show female participants being more sexually informed than their male counterpart, resistance to gendered sexual discourses is evident in their accounts in relation to the notion of female sexual respectability, which I focus on in the next chapter.

**Intimate relationships**

In this section, I show that although intimate relationships appear a helpful source of sexual knowledge, it poses risks in terms of practising sexual safety. Gender once again divides participants’ narratives, as the young women presented a more passive role in constituting sexual knowledge in intimate relationships.
Sexual relationship is perhaps valued as a source of sexual knowledge especially when school-based sexuality education is largely absent, or implements an abstinence-only approach as in the case in mainland China. The survey results in this study show sex partners were ranked as the next most helpful source of sexual information after peers (30.8%), and least unhelpful (10.8%). Mainland Chinese sojourner participants particularly showed an overwhelming preference for sex partners as a source of sexual information, which was at par with friends (both picked by 43.7% as helpful sources). Mirroring the low popularity of school as an information source among mainland Chinese sojourners, significantly more mainland Chinese sojourner participants (43.7%) than settlers (22.1%) picked sex partners as a good source ($\chi^2 (1, N = 257) = 13.5, p = .000$). Further qualitative data show intimate relationships are utilised as a source for both erotic and contraceptive knowledges.

**Intimate relationships as a source of erotic knowledge**

Affirming existing research (Allen, 2001; McGeeney, 2015), participants in this study identified embodied sexual experience provided sexual knowledge in ways no other sources can substitute.

Matt: you won’t actually know how it feels or what not to do or to do, like what’s good and what’s bad, until you try it for yourself, (Kid101: mm) yeah [both settler male, age 22]

In settler Hik’s case below, she and her partner transferred information from secondary sources (i.e., magazine, pornography) into embodied experience (i.e., experimenting), from which they learned about the logistics of sexual activity and bodily pleasure.

Int: how do you think you learned about having sex, ‘cos sex ed didn’t teach you that?

Hik: so like I was with my boyfriend for four years, so we experimented quite a lot, we read magazines and go ooh (...) he’d watch pornography, so he’d get new ideas from it [settler, female, age 19]

NZ youth have reported erotic knowledge, such as that of sexual positions and techniques as the type of sexual knowledge they knew least about, and subsequently, as valued more than official sexual knowledge (i.e., sexual safety) (Allen, 2005b). This is echoed among sojourner participants, but only those who were sexually active.
M: I feel sex partner is quite important (...) there’s not much you need to learn about sexual health right (chuckles), more important is sexual techniques I think [sojourner, female, age 24]

Alternatively, among less sexually experienced sojourners, there is a narrative as exemplified by Bill’s below, where erotic knowledge is not considered as something they must make a conscious effort to learn about.

Bill: I don’t have a lot of sexual knowledge, but I wouldn’t (. ) spend time on learning about it, if it happens, it happens, I like it to come naturally (...) by that time I’d have a girlfriend, and I’d communicate with her [sojourner, male, age 24]

Bill did not dispute the importance of sexual knowledge, but believed it would not require learning because it is acquired “naturally”. Erotic knowledge is conceptualised as derived from corporeal sexual practice. As sex in an intimate relationship is constituted as happening ‘naturally’ and instinctually, learning about it formally becomes unnecessary (Allen, 2005b).

Furthermore, there is no separation between erotic knowledge and erotic practice; practice is not only a means to knowledge, but a form of knowledge itself (Allen, 2005b). For example, female sojourner E who used to have difficulty focusing on her own pleasure in sex with a partner became more attuned with her body later in the relationship. The experience of pleasure in sexual exploration produced embodied sexual knowledge for her, rather than the other way around.

E: he (. ) helped me a lot this way, we’d (chuckles) watch porn together, he’s like let’s try different positions, or, how do you feel good, he’d definitely ask you [female, sojourner, age 25]

The pattern of intimate experience preceding erotic knowledge also means sexually inexperienced young people might not consider erotic knowledge important precisely because of their lack of access to it. This was illustrated by the following exchange between Tania who had not had sexual experience and Ethan who had.

Tania: you mean how to have sex? (int: yeah) do you need to learn that? It’s just common sense isn’t it? (Ethan laughs quietly), what do you mean? Or are we being too simple? [sojourner, female, age 25]

Ethan: you’re being too simple and naïve [sojourner male, age 25]
This exchange demonstrates a gendered pattern observed throughout the dataset. Ethan’s response portrays him as sexually knowing, compared to a less knowledgeable female group member Tania. Similarly, Hik and E quoted earlier in this section implied their male partners’ leading role in sexual exploration (e.g., Hik: “He’d get new ideas”; E: “He helped me a lot”). The quantitative data also consistently portray a gender divide in responses around erotic sexual knowledge and erotic sexual subjectivities. Male participants were more likely than female participants to feel they have sufficient knowledge about sex/sexuality ($t(239)=-2.3, p = .021$), to believe that pornography is a good way to learn about sex ($t(239)=-3.6, p = .000$), to state that they have sexual desires ($t(239)=-4.0, p = .000$), and to find it important to have sexual needs fulfilled ($t(239)=-2.2, p = .031$). These results echo the theorisation of young women as less informed than men in how to become a sexual person, what sexual desire feels like, and how to express sexual feelings because of constraining feminine norms (Tolman, 2011). I continue this discussion in the next chapter in relation to sexual double standard.

**Intimate relationships as a source of official sexual knowledge**

In terms of using sex partners as a source of sexual safety knowledge, my data show some problematic patterns. Despite the general trend of male participants being more sexually knowledgeable than females, as I show below, male participants showed considerable gaps in terms of official sexual knowledge as opposed to erotic knowledge. Among all participants, male participants were more likely than women to rely on sex partners for contraceptive use during sex ($t(239)=-3.1, p=.002$). In particular, mainland Chinese sojourners, both male ($t(87)=2.6, p =.012$) and female, ($t(133)=3.3, p =.001$) were both more likely to rely on sex partners for contraceptive use their settler counterparts.

Qualitative data further show male participants are not as knowledgeable about contraception as assumed by female participants.

Fiona: actually I think guys all know (about contraception), yeah guys know but some guys are just irresponsible [settler, female, age 18]

Int: so do guys know? (Fiona: I think they know)

Richard: I’m—I do, yeah—about how to use protection, but I don’t know like (.) how a woman gets pregnant, safe period and stuff like that, I don’t really know [sojourner, male, age 20]
On the other hand, Chinese young men may assume female partners to know how to protect themselves, which may not be the case either.

Z: there were a few times we didn’t use (a condom), but she did a good job protecting herself

Int: was she on the pills or something?

Z: no I think she—I don’t really get what they do—she just went to the toilet, I didn’t—I don’t have the habit to peep (chuckles)

Int: so you never talked about it, like are you on any sort of protection, or do you know if she’s not?

Z: no, no—she’s just like oh I got it out, I’m like, oh cool well done (int (laughs): got it out?), I’m like ok then, then we won the lottery [she got pregnant], she—‘cos it was pretty late that night and she was too lazy to get up, so that one time [sojourner, male, age 25]

These data present a disconcerting pattern. Just as many (sojourner) young women are unfamiliar with condoms (e.g., Wendy, Tania) and yet rely on male partners to use them, Chinese young men do not have enough knowledge about women’s contraceptive or protective methods but expect their female partners to know and practice them. Their gap of knowledge is aggravated by a misconception of contraceptive methods as gender specific. Studies show overseas Chinese young males feel girls should be more responsible for sex as they were more disadvantaged in terms of getting pregnant (J. Yu, 2008). Research in NZ also shows males are more likely than females to be knowledgeable about condom use, but less likely to understand conception, as the fact that conception happens in women’s bodies renders it a women’s issue (Allen, 2005b). Even when young men do speak from the subject position of a responsible sex partner, condom use is articulated in terms of responsibility for their female partners, rather than for themselves, again implying sexual risks as women’s issues. For example:

Martin: yes (contraception is important) [sojourner, male age 22]

Int: what if the person doesn’t want to use it

One: it means they don’t want to take responsibility for other person, I mean the guy doesn’t want to take responsibility for the girl [sojourner, male, age 25]
In comparison, sojourner female KJ’s account implies contraception as a self-preserving necessity, illustrating the higher stake involved for women, as well as their relative vulnerability in (casual) sexual practice.

KJ: I’m very cautious about it [using condoms], even if for fun I’d tell him, if you dare make me pregnant, I’d blah blah, a load of threats, and I’m—I don’t just rely on them, I’m on the pills myself, but they don’t know that, they’re—gotta have double protection (both chuckle), there’s no way I’d let that kind of thing happen to me [age 23]

While the combined quantitative and qualitative data above suggest young women, especially sojourner Chinese women should take contraception into their own hands instead of relying on male partners, it is crucial to not perceive or articulate this responsibility as women’s alone. The latter understanding risks tapping into a neoliberal ideology of self-responsibility, which gives rise to victim blaming (Bay-Cheng, Livingston, & Fava, 2011) and ignores the gender structure impeding women’s safety practices (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). As I show below, different subject positioning in intimate relationships produces very different knowledges regarding contraception. While the empowered and responsible female subject position in KJ’s account constitutes men as threats to her reproductive autonomy, and precludes narratives of trust and care between partners (e.g., Y. R. Zhou, 2016), other women spoke of emotional commitment in relation to condom use:

E: ‘cos he doesn’t like condoms, then, well, actually when I was with him, it’s probably more about (pause)—like I think it’s about pleasing him, or satisfying him [sojourner, age 25]

Young women’s inconsistent or unsuccessful condom use is connected to compliance with gendered sexual norms, such as putting partner’s needs before one’s own (H. Zhang et al., 2004). E’s narratives well illustrate the operation of a ‘male-in-the-head’ (Holland et al., 1998) and its gendered ramifications in intimate relationships. Her understanding of herself as a sexual being is not based on her own sexual desires but through a preoccupation with male partner’s sexual satisfaction. This disembodied subjectivity in relation to sexual pleasure and efficacy negatively impacts on women’s sexual health (Cheng et al., 2014). Also underlying this narrative is the essentialist construction of male desire as urgent, intrinsically unbridled and needing release (Potts, 2002; Shefer & Foster, 2001). Her male partner’s expressed sexual preferences (i.e., “doesn’t like condoms”), or simply his presence almost had a deterministic
effect on her contraceptive decision: “heterosexuality becomes ‘thinly disguised masculinity’ so that being a sexual person is confined by the privileging of masculine meanings and desires” (Allen, 2005b, p. 69). As E adheres to normative feminine virtues such as self-sacrifice and accommodating male desire, she is complicit in sustaining unequal gender relations and problematic sexual practice.

However, such ‘choices’ are often individualised as indicative of women’s poor judgement or lack of self-esteem, while the deeper gender power relations are overlooked. For example, sojourner female Shan talked about her female friend (Chinese international student) who had had several abortions to the same boyfriend over the last 5 years from not using proper contraception. While her friend naturalised her (lack of) contraceptive practice with notions of romantic love and commitment, Shan disparaged such expressions and her friend as irresponsible.

Shan: I said to her you gotta take responsibility, it’s your own body, your own future, you gotta have your own ideas, and not just listen to him

Int: how did she respond?

Shan: her? She said true love, it’s true love (both chuckle), I fell out with her a few times because of this, (...) she said we’re in love, can’t leave him, we’re used to living together [sojourner, age 22]

Like KJ, Shan employed a neoliberal script of agency (i.e., self-interest, self-responsibility and autonomy) (Bay-Cheng, 2015a). The difference between her subject position and her friend’s is jarring (i.e., agent versus victim). Similarly, sojourner female Bel [age 19] described a friend (Chinese international student) who had had three abortions to the same boyfriend (Chinese) as “sadistic”, and having “no self-respect”. Shan’s and Bel’s negative perception of their friends’ action is underscored by the presumption that the agency is accessible to everyone (Bay-Cheng, 2015a). Feminist research have revealed disempowering sexual experiences makes agency much more difficult to access or realise for women, as they often report lowered self-worth and feeling trapped in an abusive relationship and relationship pattern (Coggins & Bullock, 2003; Walker, 2009). However, as neoliberalism expects young women to make sexual decisions out of self-interest as empowered female subjects, their victimisation itself is now perceived as a failure indicative of personal inadequacies (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). I continue this discussion in the next chapter in relation to young women’s negotiation of sexual reputation.
Implications for sexual safety

In this chapter, I have argued school, family, peers and intimate relationships are not only sources of sexual knowledge, but also disciplinary sites where varied sexual norms, particularly gendered sexual norms are conveyed, monitored and reproduced. Through what is communicated or silenced, sexual knowledge is produced and subject positions are made un/available for Chinese young people as sexual beings.

The findings outlined so far have important implications for Chinese young people’s safer sex practice, especially for sojourners. Sojourner participants reported some ‘problematic’ contraceptive views and a relative lack of sexual safety knowledge (B. Lee et al., 2013), which generally imply lower contraceptive use (Sun et al., 2013). Mainland Chinese female sojourners were singled out as least sexually knowledgeable and at greatest sexual risk in terms of contraceptive practice. Compared to female settler participants, mainland Chinese sojourner females were less likely to report having sufficient knowledge about sex/sexuality (t(82.167)=-2.8, p = .006), more likely to believe school should teach more about sex/sexuality (t(133)=2.2, p = .033), to agree that pornography is a good way to learn about sex (t(133)=3.4, p = .001), and to rely on sex partners for contraceptive use (t(133)=3.3, p =.001). NZ research also portrays sojourner Chinese women’s sexual safety practice as highly problematic: Asian women have the highest abortion rates and ratio compared to other ethnic groups, and among which, Chinese women born in China, been in NZ for less than 5 years and studying at tertiary level make up a majority group (B. Lee et al., 2013; Trinh, 2012).

My discussion has located this ‘problem’ of the Chinese young people within the context of their experience of sexuality education and gender power relations. The results highlight the structural impediment underlying sojourner Chinese young people’s sexual ‘ignorance’ (Simon-Kumar, 2009), which is the unavailability of formal sexuality education (Y. Chen, 2014; L. Li et al., 2009). The limited sexual information provided by schools tends to be sexually prohibitive. The resulting feelings of guilt and anxiety are likely to be detrimental not only to young people’s sexual autonomy but also to their sexual health and safety (Tolman, 2002). When youth are denied the right to be informed about their sexuality, their ability to navigate future sexual situations is compromised, such as when and how to consent to or reject sex.

Family and friends serve as disciplinary sites where gendered sexual norms (e.g., female sexual passivity) are reproduced. The gendered patterns of sexual communication with family and
friends might be seen to contribute to (sojourner) Chinese girls’ relative sexual ignorance and repression of sexual desires. Family communication around sexual matters tends to be a bleak ground for sexual information and a source of prohibitive sexual messages. Young Chinese women are seen to receive more repressive sexual messages from parents than young men, due to the traditional emphasis on female sexual and gender virtues. While I have focused on parent’s role in relation to sexual knowledge in this chapter, in Chapter 5 I will look at parents’ surveillance and interference of young Chinese women’s sexual practice in everyday interaction.

Peer group was reported as a more useful source of sexual knowledge than parents. However, the findings suggest that peer groups are not universally a source of liberal or helpful sexual messages. Especially for sojourner Chinese young women, their peer group norms may discourage communication of sexual interest and sexual information. This relative silence contrasts with glorifying anecdotes about sexual encounters common in male peer groups, reproducing gendered sexual norms and sustaining gendered gap in sexual knowledge.

A general lack of sexual knowledge (e.g., how to use a condom) (B. Lee et al., 2013) and a patriarchal gender structure observed among Chinese sojourners render unsafe sexual practice a legitimate concern in their intimate relationships, particularly for young women. While sojourner women in this study appear commonly discouraged from obtaining sexual knowledge as ideal feminine norms require them to be sexually innocent, they also display a tendency to perceive condom use to be male partner’s responsibility or decision (Y. R. Zhou, 2016). Simultaneously, sojourner young men with equally disconcerting gaps in contraceptive knowledge expect their female partners to take responsibility for their sexual safety and to know how (more than they do). Some female participants did articulate the importance of self-autonomy in safer sex practice, but a neoliberal notion of self-responsibility was invoked, which implies if a girl is pregnant, she has no one to blame but herself. These results challenge the stereotype of Chinese sojourners as sexually ‘reckless’, irresponsible and uninterested in safer sex (Simon-Kumar, 2009), but also point out the double bind faced by many young women. As much as young women are expected to take responsibility for their own sexual safety, feminine norms also require them to be accommodating for their partners’ sexual needs. A neoliberal rhetoric of sexual empowerment over-emphasises women’s sexual practice as individual choices, and overlooks the gender relations in intimate moments and relationships. Young people assign sexual knowledge generated from embodied experience with a higher status than that obtained from secondary sources (Allen, 2005b). Therefore gendered sexual
messages in intimate relationships are particularly difficult to counter, even if they are informed by discourses both disempowering for women (i.e., putting male partner’s needs first) and constraining for men (i.e., being sexually knowing).

This issue of sexual safety therefore must be contextualised within structural absence of sexual information, patriarchal constructions of gender, and gender power relations. To individualise it as a matter of sexual ignorance or recklessness on the young women’s part would be missing the mark. As sojourner Chinese young people were observed in this chapter as largely complicit in dominant constructions of sexuality, I demonstrate in Chapter 5 the ways Chinese women may resist repressive sexual discourses, and in Chapter 7, that being diasporic in NZ offers them access to alternative subject positions.
Chapter 5: The Virgin/Slut Sexual Subject: Navigating Sexual Respectability

In the last chapter, I identified that the way Chinese young people in this study became sexual subjects was highly gendered. In alignment with the feminist focus of this research, I deepen the discussion in this chapter by focusing on discourses of female sexuality and the way they produce sexual subjects. Specifically, I examine the data in relation to the notion of sexual respectability, which is fundamental in the construction of ideal femininity (Hollway, 1984; Skeggs, 1997) across cultures including China (Dosekun, 2015; Parish et al., 2007; Ramberg, 2013). Through unpacking women’s sexual subjectivity, young men’s subjectivity is also considered and discussed in relation to the dominant sexual discourses invoked.

The subject positions taken up by the young women in this study around female sexual respectability are varied. From premarital sexual chastity, to negotiated sexual activity (i.e., justified by ‘love’), to unapologetic sexual permissiveness, the array of discourses the young women drew upon illustrate the co-existence of diverse sexual views and practices in modern Chinese societies (see S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016). On one hand, patriarchal notions such as the sexual double standard continue to dominate, and sexual respectability remains narrowly and stringently defined for many Chinese women. On the other hand, following the capitalist market reform in China (H. Wang & Karl, 2004), neoliberalism has given rise to a depoliticised illusion of gender equality and female empowerment (L. Z. Li, 2015).

In this chapter, I argue that as sexual beings, Chinese young women are now caught between repressive traditional norms and a neoliberal brand of sexual agency, which may have become a new (hetero)normativity for sexually liberal Chinese women in a post-feminist social context. While female sexual purity remains an idealised virtue, Chinese young women now also face the expectation to be sexually knowing, active, ‘up for it’ sexual agents (Gill, 2008b). To navigate this complex sexual landscape, young Chinese women’s talk displays subjectivities that both accommodate and resist restrictive sexual norms, to be both ‘Virgin’ and ‘Slut’, ‘respectable’ and ‘free’. The traditional Virgin/Whore Dichotomy where young women are either sexually respectable (i.e., abstinent) or contemptible has evolved to a Virgin-Whore continuum in the last few decades in western societies (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997). This chapter acknowledges this development and traces its manifestation among diasporic Chinese,
showing that for modern Chinese young women in this study, the Virgin/Whore is impossible to separate in their construction of sexual subjectivity.

“Virgin” and her variations

In this section I demonstrate how the Virgin is constructed among participants. The permeating notion of sexual chastity is strengthened by a normative ideation of marriage prevalent in Chinese societies (Yeung & Hu, 2013), that simultaneously collides with a growing (and gendered) permissive discourse of sex (S. Pan & Huang, 2008). Young women’s talk in this study presented nuanced positionings around the notion of sexual chastity, including adherence, negotiation and resistance.

“My virgin complex is even stronger than men’s”

As a socially constructed notion, sexual respectability does not evoke a fixed set of meanings (see Armstrong et al., 2014), but virginity appears a core component of the construct, especially in developing societies with patriarchal structures (e.g. DeShong, 2011; Marecek, 2000). Qualitative data from this study illustrate female virginity continues to be held in high regard by participants across genders. For example, sojourner female Erin expressed agreement with her father’s view against premarital sex.

Erin: my dad told me girls—it’s best not to have premarital sex from when I was little (Int: what do you think?), I agree too, honestly I agree, (…) though I might look like I don’t care, people may think I’m pretty liberal, but deep down when it comes to relationships, I still think it’s better to be conservative. I think for me, before I marry I still hope to remain pure—try to stay pure [age 24]

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, Chinese parents’ sexual communication with children is gendered, emphasising sexual chastity for daughters. Data here further show how young women may internalise such messages as a personal preference. However, as discussion in Erin’s focus group developed, the gender structure underlining her ‘choice’ was revealed:

Erin: [my dad] said most Chinese men still have the virgin complex though the society is developing and people’s views are changing eh, yeah, like (Nancy: yeah) it’s no big deal, but when you get married, on your wedding night, the husband finds out the girl’s not a virgin, he’d harbour this deep unease (…) Chinese young men—doesn’t matter
if he’s traditional, they all care about it, put it this way, if he knows you’re a virgin, he’ll maybe treasure you more, if he knows you’re not a virgin, (...) he may love (chuckles) you a bit less, not as much

As premarital chastity remains the norm for young women in China (Parish et al., 2007), the “virgin complex” refers to a common preference for virgins as romantic partners, especially wives. Despite a sexual revolution taking place in China (S. Pan, 1994) where premarital sex has become more acceptable (Yeung & Hu, 2013), many young people are still expected to marry the person they have had sex with (Parish et al., 2007). The preference is gendered as young women express concerns about their loss of standing from premarital sex (Marston & King, 2006; H. Zhang et al., 2004), and young men appear more liberal in attitude and practice towards uncommitted premarital sex (see J. Yu, 2012).

Erin also articulated the ‘prestige’ of female virginity as relative to its less ideal alternative. Though not completely unacceptable, a non-virgin woman is less than ideal as a marriage partner candidate, ascribed with less ‘value’ (Higgins et al., 2002). Rather than an autonomous choice, female virginity becomes a bargaining chip in the marital marketplace and connected to women’s economic and emotional welfare, because ‘purity’ positions a woman more sought after and more ‘treasured’. Expression in Erin’s first account (e.g., “it’s best not to …” “try to …”) indicates her and her father’s awareness of loosening sexual norms (W. Zheng et al., 2011). However, the fear for ‘tainted’ sexual purity becoming a future liability remains strong, its disciplinary effect evident in her ‘choice’ to “stay pure”.

Erin’s belief was ‘affirmed’ by some male participants’ reported preference for virginity in women.

Richard: guys are more likely to care, if I’m looking for a girlfriend, I probably have a bit of virgin complex too, more or less, for a guy (...) if it’s a girl I’m not really into maybe I won’t care, but if I really really like this girl, it’d be on my mind a bit, I won’t completely not care [sojourner, age 20]

Drawing on a discourse of romance, Richard normalised his virgin complex as a natural result of attraction. Ironically, it only bothers him that a girl is not a virgin when he is serious about her and is not after just “a quick screw” (Cowie & Lees, 1981, p. 20). Women’s sexual body can be seen as a token in the marital trade marketplace (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009) where male partners’ emotional (and other) investment correlates with a woman’s ‘purity’ condition (i.e., used, unused).
This patriarchal construction of women’s sexual body leaves little space for young women’s sexual expression.

Int: so you said you would only date with the prospect of marriage?

Erin: yes (Nancy: we’re the same), yeah, I think so (…) hit the bull’s eye, that’s for the best [both sojourners, female, age 24 and 25]

Getting a good man to marry (i.e., “hit the bull’s eye”) appears to dictate Erin’s intimate interest and decisions. Ussher’s analysis of fairy tale representations of western femininity from two decades ago remains relevant here (1997, p. 10): “courtship is presented as the most important and exciting event in the heroine’s life. It is here that she exercises her most important choice – identifying the ‘right man’ and saying ‘yes’ to his offer of marriage”. This echoes with Chinese proverbs such as “men should fear being in the wrong line of work, women should fear marrying the wrong husband” (Hird, 2012). The gender conceptualisation in these ancient proverbs continues to dominate modern gender relations, delineating restrictive gender roles. Men are expected to take on more financial responsibilities (e.g., providing the new family house, being the main earner), while women are taught to invest in finding a ‘successful’ marriage partner (Zurndorfer, 2016) and perform domestic roles (Zuo & Bian, 2001).

Furthermore, such traditional gender norms now finds new validity, as traditional patriarchy collaborates with neoliberal politics, individualising women’s ‘choices’ (i.e., to stay pure in order to marry well). Young women are disciplined to self-commodify their ‘purity’ and prudence, in a neoliberal act of calculation that works to consolidate a desire for traditional marriage and the gender division of labour within in (L. Z. Li, 2015). As the ‘choice’ to select and say “yes” to eligible male partner is hailed as female empowerment (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016; L. Z. Li, 2015), underlying gender inequality becomes harder to detect.

There are however, variations among women in terms of how they make sense of their ‘choice’ to “stay pure”. Virgin bodies appear produced through multiple pathways, one of which is through the construction of chastity as a feminine virtue distinguishing ‘good’ girls from ‘bad’ girls (Armstrong et al., 2014).

E: when I was (studying) in Singapore (by myself), one time we [I and mother] went on a holiday to Malaysia, that night we talked a lot, to assure her I said, I remember very clearly, “mom I’m still a virgin”, meaning I didn’t mess around, maybe at the time I felt that was a standard, a standard for a good girl [sojourner, female, age 25]

Subsequently, when E later engaged in sexual practices that did not eventuate in marriage, she
experienced a loss of self-value. She reported feeling like “spoilt goods”, and the feeling was self-embedded, rather than a result of external influence.

E: ‘cos I thought you should be with only one man your whole life, especially when I first got together with my second boyfriend, that feeling was very strong

Int: has any of the guys you dated made you feel they mind you’re not a virgin?

E: so far no, feels like my virgin complex is even stronger than men’s.

As E scrutinised herself through an imagined (rather than actual) male partner’s perspective, the account illustrates the regulative role of ‘male-in-the-head’ in young women’s sexuality (Holland et al., 1998). With ‘the-male-in-the-head’ operating as an integral feature of heterosexual relationships (Holland 1995), it is difficult for young women to challenge normative female passivity and muted female sexual desire (Potts, 2002). Even in western societies where a sexual revolution has ostensibly dismantled marriage as the only legitimate venue for female sexuality (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997), being a ‘good’ girl is still defined in opposition to being sexual (Tolman, 2011).

Two female participants Nancy and Erin articulated similar positions in relation to premarital sex. However, as the group exchange went on, their meaning-making of abstinence diverged. As Nancy, who identified as Christian, cited religious doctrines of chastity, Erin’s articulation of sexual chastity shifted from an individualised obsession for “cleanliness” (i.e., accounted for by her star sign) to a more pragmatic motivation.

Int: so to you being a virgin means purity?

Nancy: yeah purity and faithfulness

Erin: yeah, maybe—for me maybe it’s my star sign, I’m obsessive about cleanliness, I don’t really like having sexual relations with men if we’re not going to marry, I think, I can’t accept it myself

Nancy: like—if having sexual relations without the promise to marry, that’s like sexual debauchery

Erin: (.) I can’t accept that, no matter how much I like the guy (Nancy: yeah yeah), if by any chance he doesn’t want me anymore, I’ll be in deep trouble, gosh

As Erin implied, premarital sex is not so much ‘wrong’ as risky: it could jeopardise a girl’s sexual status, derailing her chances of an ideal marriage (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009) or
leaving a tarnished reputation once the relationship ends (see Bryant & Schofield, 2007). Chinese young women in other research have reported similar positions informed by not moral but pragmatic calculation: “I will not do it myself, but (…) you can do it, no problem. It’s very natural (…)” (H. Zhang et al., 2004, p. 109). This positioning also explains the high level of acceptance and low level of actual occurrence of premarital sex found among Chinese youth (J. Yu, 2012; H. Zhang et al., 2004).

Between this distribution of reward (i.e., good girl reputation) and punishment (i.e., loss of value as marriage candidate, consequently reduced chances of a good life), virginity delimits women’s sexual subject positions. A dualistic understanding of gendered sexuality is reinforced in the process. While women’s sexual bodies are perceived as easily exploited and victimised by a predatory and drive-based male sexuality, women are constructed as moral regulators of their sexuality (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Hollway, 1984). Warding off or consenting to men’s sexual overtures becomes their only recourse to agency (Gavey, 2013).

In a parallel, such views echo the moral discourse in post-WWII western societies that instructed women to refuse sex and demand a ring in the efforts to reinstate traditional marriage institution (Allyn, 2016). Though Erin framed her sexual abstinence as conscious, it is problematic to see it as agentic and deflect the gender power relation at play (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). The imperative of marriage (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016) combined with the virgin preference, exerts considerable influence, even control on young women’s sexual decisions.

Participants’ accounts presented so far resemble the traditional Virgin/Whore Dichotomy in western societies (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997). For young women lacking access to alternative discourses, conceiving themselves as legitimate sexual beings is difficult: “Engaging in sexual intercourse can ‘break’ rather than ‘make’ an appropriately feminine reputation as well as increase feelings of disempowerment caused by fears of ‘being used’” (Allen, 2005b, p. 76; J. Yu, 2008). However, just as traditional notions of sexuality falter or strengthen through different societal and historical contexts (see Farvid, 2012), their dominance among modern Chinese youth is not absolute.

“As long as it’s meaningful and you’re in love”

As premarital sex is increasingly less taboo in many societies including China and NZ (Farrer, 2002; L. J. Nelson & Chen, 2007), female virginity has become a less important (or realistic) marker of female sexual respectability (Yeung & Hu, 2013). A woman’s sexual respectability
can now be ‘salvaged’ if her sexual engagement is motivated by love (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009; J. Yu, 2008). When talking about women’s premarital sexual practice, participants across genders frequently referred to “being in love” to justify its occurrence. Sex in a committed relationship appears a lot more acceptable than casual sex (see also W. Zheng et al., 2011). Sojourner participant One offered a heterosexual male’s perspective where a woman’s premarital sex is ‘excused’ if and only if it was with her “true love”.

One: you haven’t met the girl back then, maybe she thought she met her true love, why can’t she give herself to the person, why would you ask someone with a past to be responsible for your present?

Int: so if it wasn’t true love, like she had sex with the guy because well we like each other, is that acceptable to you?

One: I think (pause) if it’s not true love (when she had sex), we’re not the same type of people, then I wouldn’t hang out with her [age 25]

One acknowledged and reiterated a Virgin-Slut continuum (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997). As a hegemonic norm “introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184), women’s presumed motivation for having sex is now crucial in determining their placing on this continuum. Following virginity, female sexualities are further ranked on a hierarchy of sexual respectabilities (Warner, 1999), where “the more emotionally involved or committed a sexual relationship, the higher its status” (Farvid & Braun, 2013, p. 370).

This ‘in love’ rhetoric was repetitively observed. Settler female participant Jasmine reported her relatively liberal parents held this view.

Jasmine: I don’t think they[my parents]’d be like (.) no premarital sex, I think they’ll just be like ”as long as it’s meaningful and you’re in love”, you know, but if I’m like, oh I’m having one night stands, they’d be like ahhh! (both chuckle) so meaningless sex I think they’d be very (.) anti [age 18]

What is implied in Jasmine’s talk is that emotional involvement makes sex meaningful whereas corporeal pleasure or psychological satisfaction alone obtained from casual sex does not (Farvid & Braun, 2017). In accounting for their premarital sexual experience, female participants themselves also often linked sex to romance and emotional commitment, rather than physical pleasure (see also Marston & King, 2006). Sojourner female E who earlier
reported she had upheld virginity as the standard of a ‘good’ girl, used ‘being in love’ to make sense of her decision to have sexual intercourse.

Int: when you had sex, did you think you were no longer a good girl?

E: (.) no, ‘cos I loved him, I felt it’s OK [age 25]

Hik, a settler participant highly assimilated into NZ society and holding liberal sexual views, reported a similar narrative.

Hik: I just turned 16 and I’d been with my boyfriend for like a year, so I had sex and I didn’t (.)—I told my friends, they’re quite understanding, “You have been with him for quite a while” [female, age 19]

Hik identified a norm amongst her friends (mostly NZ Europeans and Māori) that emotionally committed sex informs the distinction between ‘normal’ female sexuality and a ‘slutty’ one (S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). Despite seeming to enable more legitimate space for women’s sexual practice, the ‘in love’ rhetoric still draws on a ‘have/hold’ discourse (Hollway, 1984), which demands women to act as gate-keepers in preserving their sexual body for the ‘right’ person (i.e., someone she’s in love with). The ‘charmed circle’ of sexuality (Rubin, 1984) which prioritises long-term, monogamous relationships is also reinforced.

“When it comes to marriage, ... better if she’s a virgin”

Showcasing further complexities around the discourse of female sexual chastity, a separation of sex and marriage was evident in participants’ articulation of sexual subjectivity, but in a heavily gendered fashion. Some female participants observed Chinese young men’s preference for female virginity only applies to a marital context.

Erin: I asked about three people [male friends], they all gave me the same answer, like “I don’t want to date a virgin, but when it comes to marriage, I wish she’s a virgin, it’s better if she is”, better if she’s a virgin [sojourner, age 24]

Erin’s recounting of her male friends’ views affirms female virginity is an ‘asset’ for women as marriage candidates, but also identified the flipside: female virginity can also be a burden when the young man is not yet ready for the commitment of marriage. M expressed this more explicitly:

M: many young guys don’t want virgins nowadays (chuckles) (…) feels like too much responsibility [sojourner, female, age 24]
With the increasing age of first marriage, the window before young people ‘settling down’ is becoming extended worldwide (L. J. Martin, 2015). In China, contingent to increasing premarital sex, the expectation for young men to ‘reciprocate’ female sexual purity by settling down seems also increasingly experienced as burdensome. Nonetheless, the gap between first sexual intercourse and first marriage for both Chinese men and women remains small (a year or less, according to Parish et al., 2007), indicating the expectation of marrying one’s first sex partner is still normative, at least among women. For example:

Int: if you love a guy a lot, but he doesn’t want a virgin, what would you do?
Erin: why not? He’s not a good guy then! (others laugh) The way I see it, I’m a virgin, why would you not want me? [sojourner, female, age 24]

However, virgin women’s expectation for men to keep their end of the bargain (i.e., promise to marry) does not seem to match men’s desire. The sense of male entitlement to women’s sexual body was expressed bluntly by a male participant as below.

Int: do you expect your partner to be a virgin?
Poker: um(.) actually if it’s my wife of course I hope she’s a virgin right? But on second thought, if she wasn’t a virgin she must be quite experienced, that’s nice too right? [sojourner, age 22]

Through invoking the Virgin/Whore Dichotomy (i.e., “if she wasn’t a virgin, she must be quite experienced”), Poker’s account illustrates the precarious place for female sexuality in the structure of male desire. Subject to constant evaluation and regulation by male–defined norms, female sexuality is forever problematic, lacking in either the ability to maintain ‘purity’ or the skillfulness to sexually please. Chinese young women are now expected to be sexually knowing as girlfriends, and sexually pure as wives. This echoes western research where young women must navigate a tightrope of subject positions (Cowie & Lees, 1981) between being sexually responsive girlfriends and sexually responsible gatekeepers (Ringrose, 2013; Tolman, 2002). As modern young women are now (self-)positioned as empowered subjects, there is a demand for them to be sexually ‘up for it’ (Gill, 2008b) rather than ‘prudish’ (Farvid et al., 2016). At the same time, they are still subject to the stigma of sexual irrespectability brought on by the display of sexual interest, or even body appearances considered too sexual (S. Jackson, Vares, & Gill, 2012; Ringrose, 2008). Data here suggest a similar trend where conflicting feminine norms have come into view in the wake of a sexual revolution in China heralded by urban Chinese men (S. Pan, 2006).
Across male-dominant societies, imposing contradictory and unachievable feminine ideals on women is a regular feature, where the female sexual body is constructed as subordinate to male desire (Bordo, 1993; Gavey, 1992). The emerging separation of sex from marriage appears more evident among Chinese men than women (S. Pan, 2006). Having shaped the love/sex conflation to regulate women’s sexuality, male desire now asks the association to be severed, not for women, but for men to have more access to women’s bodies, and to be able to evade the old meaning of sex (i.e., marriage). The traditional status of female virginity and its association with marriage are left unchallenged.

“He’s not a virgin himself, why does he expect that from her”

Data presented so far largely portray participants’ adherence to female chastity in nuanced and evolving manifestations, but the norm is not entirely unchallenged. Some discussions featured participants voicing ambivalence or questioning about the norm, indicating space for resistance. All female or mixed focus groups proved a good venue for generating such accounts (Liimakka, 2008). Some female group members supported each other in critiquing the virgin complex.

Bai: so those three friends of yours who have the virgin complex, are they—are they virgins? [settler, female, age 25]

One: some yes some no [sojourner, male, age 25]

Bai: right, he expects the girl to be even if he’s not (Ccao chuckles)

Int: what do you guys think about this?

Ccao: well if it’s about being the first time, there are so many first times in life, this is just one of those that happens to your body, if you don’t make it a big deal [female, sojourner, age 25]

Int: so why is it a big deal for some men?

Ccao: probably tradition

Bai: I think it’s a kind of possessiveness, they think this is my stuff, I just bought it, he wants it in original packaging (Ccao: with the tag still on), yeah with the tag on, untouched, only I get to touch it

Other female participants challenged female group members to reflect on their positions. Erin and Nancy who expressed conservative views about female chastity earlier showed
ambivalence as their group member Holly led a discursive shift in critiquing the sexual double standard.

Erin: dating is more casual, but when it comes to marriage of course he’d want a girl who completely belongs to him, I think that’s why [female, sojourner, age 24]

Nancy: (overlapping) someone that belongs to him, his other half, like him owning her, just like (Erin: yes)--. [female, sojourner, age 25]

Int: is it OK, him owning her?

Holly: of course not OK, he’s not a virgin himself, why does he expect that from her? (Erin laughs) [female, sojourner, age 25]

Erin: we’re talking about traditional feudalist Chinese stuff (Nancy laughs), it’s—the virgin complex in essence is a deep rooted Chinese feudalist idea, it’s (.) very deep rooted

A sexual double standard positions men positively (e.g., ‘stud’) and women negatively (e.g., ‘slut’) for being sexual (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Lees, 1993). As Holly observes, this norm underpins virginity as a gendered issue. Quantitative data also show female participants are more likely than male to have sex only with someone they are going to marry/married to ($t(221.884)=3.7, p = .000$), or feel masturbation is shameful ($t(228.554)=2.7, p = .007$). These data suggest sexual respectability defined by chastity, rather than sexual desire, is considered the “anchor of young women's sexuality” (Tolman, 2011, p. 155). The very dominance of sexual respectability is based at the expense of women’s experience and articulation of sexual desire (Tolman, 2002). As seen in the narratives above, some young women show internalisation of the sexual double standard. Though voices against gendered sexual injustice like Holly’s did exist in this study (see also Beres & Farvid, 2010; Farvid et al., 2016), they were fragmentary and individual, rather than consistent or collective (see also S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003).

Some female sojourners, particularly those raised in China, normalised the sexual double standard with a hardwired male sex drive (Hollway, 1989).

Bel: guys definitely have more sex partners than women, in general [age 19]

Helen: yeah because (.)—from a biological perspective [age 19]

Bel: because—yeah that’s right
Nancy: I think, it has to do with men’s inherent – like his – what is it called—like his male attribute (…) his essence is male hormonal essence, his nature [age 25]

On the other hand, though some male participants seem to be letting go of the virgin complex, the sexual double standard still informs their evaluation of women.

Bill: it [a girl’s experience] has to correlate with my sexual experience, I mean, if I’m a virgin I wish her to be a virgin too, when I – say if I’ve had a dozen of sexual partners, it’s probably unfair to expect her to be a virgin, then I wouldn’t really care, it depends on my sexual experience (…) but of course, the less experience the better (all laugh), I hope the girl has less sexual experience than me, you can put it that way [settler, age 25]

Bill’s preference for a less experienced partner illustrates a normative construction of masculinity whereby young men are positioned as sexually experienced and knowing (Allen, 2003a, 2008a). His account showcases the clash of traditional notions around female chastity and a liberal understanding of gender equality (i.e., “it’s not fair to expect her to be a virgin”), but nonetheless shows a masculinist position.

Sojourner male participant Yan similarly recounted having questioned the female virginity norm, but only partially. Neither Bill or Yan identified the sexual double standard, or saw it as a culturally informed discursive product (Brotto et al., 2007 suggest the double standard may be particularly salient in Asian cultures). Instead, they individualised their preference for less sexually experienced girls.

Yan: maybe if you don’t know enough you’d think it [being with a virgin girl] means stability, faithfulness, that you’re her first man, but if you think about it rationally, like—analyse the people around you, and the reality, you’d realise (.) it’s quite normal for women to have more than one boyfriend

Int: then would you mind if a girl has more sexual experience than you?

Yan: that (.)—that I would mind, ‘cos I’m Scorpion [star sign], Scorpions are very, like very controlling in this way, I would mind [age 23]

Mirroring a narrowing gender gap in premarital sex in China (Yeung & Hu, 2013), female virginity was questioned by participants across genders. However, the sexual double standard was ineffectively challenged, and often naturalised or depoliticised by participants (see also Bay-Cheng, 2012).
This sexual double standard remains powerful in youth’s sexual subjectivities across cultures despite the feminist legacy of western sexual revolution and liberal movements (Farvid et al., 2016). In a Chinese context, where there has not been a history of successful feminist movements, feminism constantly encounters dismissal or even antagonism from the society as presumably a foreign import and an elitist ideology (Y. L. Huang, 2016). People in China commonly accept or deny existing gender inequality in various aspects of life, including sexuality, domestic duties, education attainment, employment development and political representation (Hird, 2012; Shu & Zhu, 2012). The economically motivated neoliberalism in China further inspires post-feminism (Gill & Scharff, 2011), and women’s engagement with (feminised) consumerism is taken as a sign of female empowerment (L. Z. Li, 2015). People’s common conception of gender remains binaristic and essentialist (i.e., Yin-Yang), reifying traditional and restrictive feminine constructions (e.g., women being more fragile or emotional) (A. Lee, 2016). However, there is evidence that women in China show growing dissidence against patriarchy, as they exhibit more rapid changes in sexual attitude and practice than Chinese men (S. Pan, 2006).

The emerging critique of female chastity documented in this study so far signals space for alternative subject positions that disrupt dominant discourses. I explore this further in the next section, where I demonstrate the coexistence of moralist and permissive sexual discourses and a multiplicity of subject positions they created among Chinese young people.

“Slut”: Is anyone not one?

In this section I discuss Chinese women’s sexual subjectivity in relation to (supposed or actual) transgression of sexual respectability. As I demonstrate, slut-shaming is a disciplinary tool to regulate women’s sexuality, and is powerful precisely because of the ‘slipperiness’ of the meaning of ‘slut’. It can be directed at any woman to refer to various (rumoured) sexual ‘indecencies’, and used by any woman wishing to assert their own sexual standing through distancing from not sexually respectable women. Even though some female participants embrace sexual permissiveness, they are not free from reputational concerns or the constant work involved in negotiating/managing sexual respectability. However, I argue Chinese young women’s resistance to oppressive sexual norms can be found in the way they mobilise multiple (contradictory) sexual subject positions to assert sexual desire without directly challenging the status quo. As the sexual respectability discourse “compels young women to cover their sexualities, whether strategically and/or shamefully, and to find creative, subversive, defiant,
and resilient ways to forge sexualities” (Tolman’s collected scholarship, cited in Bay-Cheng, 2015a, p. 334), I examine their agency in this navigation.

“We would call someone a slut if…”

Despite evidence of some positive shifts in women’s sexuality, slut shaming remains an effective regulative tool in shaping female sexual subjects in ways that do not apply to men (Farvid et al., 2016). Many participants in this study, across genders and diasporic status, reported others and themselves engaging in slut-shaming. In an account, settler male Bill vocally described active female sexuality as unrespectable, cheap and easy (Armstrong et al., 2014; Marston & King, 2006), using terms like “prostitute” to mark her sexual excess.

Bill: (...) some people maybe have 100, or 200 [sex partners through their life], women, women like that are not much different from prostitutes, in my eyes, but of course maybe they don’t charge you money, they like the lifestyle (...) I’m very fussy about women, so I wouldn’t become close with people like that anyway [age 24]

Similarly, sojourner male Richard used a woman’s sexual (in)experience as a measure of her desirability.

Richard: if she’s only had one or two [ex-partners], I wouldn’t really—but if she’s had a lot I probably would really mind (...) I prefer if the girl was simpler (sexually) [age 20]

In these accounts, women’s sexual respectability appears solely defined by her ability to say “no” to sex, which severely delimits their subject positions as desiring and active sexual beings. While such male-defined standards constitute feminine norms, young women are compelled into self-surveillance to evade being shamed. For example:

KJ: (...) they’re like family friends, brothers I grew up with (...) they talk like I saw this girl, I’m gonna hit on her, like oh this chick is easy or like—like even when they take the girl out with their mates, it doesn’t mean she’s—like he’s gonna have a relationship with her. No way, not like this, I don't want to become one of those girls one day [female, sojourner, age 23]

The corrective function of disciplinary punishment (Foucault, 1977) is evident: dominant discourse (i.e., female sexual chastity) marks the ideal as well as the gaps below the ideal, implying possibilities of how to reduce the gaps, and how to normalise female sexualities deemed unattractive. Though KJ’s observance of these male defined sexual norms appears to
win her sexual privilege, and is therefore not unwitting (Armstrong et al., 2014), her agency is compromised. As she later added, concern over her sexual reputation as perceived by men led to her ‘retirement’ from an active night life.

Slut-shaming is often not based on actual sexual practice, but women’s display of apparent and desiring sexuality through gender expression (Almazan & Bain, 2015; Ringrose, 2011). Figure 6 below is an image in the photo collage I used to elicit focus group discussion around desirable femininity. Participants’ overwhelmingly negative response to it illustrates how women’s body appearance results in sexual labelling. As “an inhabited and presented visual space”, a woman’s body is always inscribed with meanings, and the judgements enabled by these meanings tend to pertain to one’s whole identity (‘slut’) rather than stop at superficial presentation (L. Frost, 2005, p. 65).

![Figure 6. Sexy Cora](Unknown, 2013).

For example, male participant Eden described the image as embodying a reckless, hypersexual, and ‘slutty’ female sexuality (see also Griffin, Szmigin, Bengry-Howell, Hackley, & Mistral, 2013).

Eden: she’s got the (.) like tattoo on her chest, that’s pretty trashy, her hair just looks fa—her face just looks fake, um, her boobs are probably fake, (…) you watch TV and (…) see these girls causing trouble everywhere (…) just being sluts, and they’re—they get knocked up at 15 or whatever and then they bitch to their mom who’s looking after the kid (…) [settler, age 21]

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3 Sexy Cora (born Carolin Ebert; 2 May 1987 – 20 January 2011) was a German pornographic actress, model and reality show participant. I came across this image online while looking for material for the photo collage (see Chapter 3) and only became aware of who she was and that she had deceased after data collection was completed. Neither did any participants know her identity. All related discussions in the study were based on the photo image alone, rather than any knowledge of who she was.
The woman’s ‘explicit’ way of presenting her body is taken to indicate an undesirable female sexuality characterised by a lack of restraint. Similarly, Ethan linked her perceived immodest appearance with sexual immodesty. Particularly, the tattoo on the woman’s chest becomes “an immediate constitutive force” of an excessive, hypersexual feminine subject (Ringrose & Rawlings, 2015, p. 99).

Ethan: I really can’t with western girls (Tania: can’t bear them) (.), can’t bear them (chuckles), and look here, she’s got a tattoo right? (…) too much (…) like (.) a wild horse off the leash (Wendy laughs)

Int: so wild horses off the leash are no good? Not—sexually not attractive?

Ethan: no, I think not [all sojourner and age 25, Ethan is the only male]

While Eden alluded to class (i.e., underclass teen moms), Ethan’s account shows sexual labelling is also racially demarcated. This racial dimension of slut-shaming is underlined by racialised gender norms (Nagel, 2000). As sexual ‘looseness’ (see Attwood, 2007) was essentialised by some participants as a western women’s trait (e.g., settler male Evo: “Kiwi girls are kind of unrestrained, loose”), Asian femininity was celebrated for male-defined feminine virtues (e.g., submissiveness, domestic service, see K. A. Johnson, 2009; van Gulik, 1961), including the absence of sexual expression.

Holly: I feel their women [western women], aren’t as good as Chinese—Asian women (Int: in what ways?), for example, loyalty, commitment to family, or that self-sacrificing spirit, they don’t have it, they’re all about ‘enjoy myself’ then—then sex and stuff, getting drunk and stuff like that, ‘cos in NZ there’s so much of that, like being crazy and stuff (…) [sojourner, female, age 25]

A ‘drunken slut’ (Griffin et al., 2013) is an epitome of ‘looseness’ because it suggests not only sexual availability, but also a loss of self-control (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). In her distancing practice, Holly disparaged not just the ‘drunken slut’ figure, but also the whole group of western women, and highlighted Asian women’s presumably racially based virtuousness through this comparison. This self-orientalisation (Ang, 2005) Holly employed in asserting her racial ‘advantage’ colludes with patriarchal as well as neo-colonialist narratives (A. Lee, 2016). As Asian women’s (sexual) virtuousness is essentialised, their exotified stereotype as good wives and partners is reproduced and reified (Leung, 2008; Prasso, 2005).

Female peer groups are a primary site for slut-shaming to occur, where normative femininities are reinforced through the deriding of ‘abject’ ones.
Hik: back in high school, it was kind of (.) not ok to have sex with not your boyfriend, we'd get judged (…) we would call someone a slut if they had casual sex with someone, but it was never bullying though (…) [settler, female, age 19]

Illustrated here is the working of normalising judgment as a disciplinary technique (Foucault, 1977). Normalisation is achieved through punishing transgression and rewarding compliance; compliance is ascribed with a higher status, which allows more privilege in terms of membership affiliation (Foucault, 1977). Through imposing the label ‘slut’ on others, Hik and her friends participated in the punishment of “non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it” (Foucault, 1977, p. 178). While such shaming operates to create power hierarchies among girls, it’s not seen as ‘bullying’, as girls failing to abide by sexual/gender norms are ‘punishable’ (Ringrose & Renold, 2010).

This shaming is both oppressive and defensive as its other function is securing one’s own respectability (Armstrong et al., 2014). To evade the negative label, young women must not only organise their own behaviour accordingly, but also push others down the hierarchy of sexual respectability (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). Through producing those who have casual sex as ‘sluts’, women who have had sex in long-term relationships are (momentarily) salvaged from the label (see also Ringrose & Renold, 2012). Constant boundary work is required to mark such distinctions because there is no unstable division between ‘slutty’ and ‘normal’ female sexualities.

As a vehicle of normalising judgement, gossip plays an important role in constituting and maintaining sexual relations (Farrer, 2002). As female participants (Helen, Hik, Fiona, Jaw) reported circulation of gossip as extremely common in peer groups in both NZ and China, Tania and Wendy’s conversation during the focus group itself can be seen as an exchange of gossip, with a clear tone of judgement.

Tania: in my university, the girls in our foreign languages faculty, wow, they’re all—all—all quite that, especially girls from foreign languages faculty

Wendy: wasn’t everyone pretty innocent in uni--?

Tania: it’s just you—universities are different maybe, our university was pretty crazy anyway I think, especially foreign languages girls, they all have a reputation like that (laughs), foreign languages girls are really that way, though I’m from foreign languages but my group was all about scholarships, at least me and others, so I wouldn’t know too much, but still--.
Wendy: (overlapping) I still don’t think it’s common, still a minority [who were having sex]

Tania: (pause) but there were a lot, some—didn’t you know? We just—you just didn’t know
[both sojourner female, age 25]

The frequent use of a euphemism by Tania (i.e., “that”) is indicative of the way female sexuality is “driven out, denied and reduced to silence”, and “would be made to disappear upon its least manifestation – whether in acts or in words” (Foucault, 1978, p. 4). Additionally, it illustrates normalising judgement through gossip is often vague in meaning. Like the use of ‘slut’, the judgement in such gossip exchange is directed at any kind of divergence from normative femininity (Armstrong et al., 2014; Lees, 1993). Notably, by the way Tania described herself and her group of friends (i.e., studious, don't have fun, don’t go out), they could also be made the target of disparaging gossip in the ‘popular’ girls’ talk about ‘reputation’ (i.e., lower in ‘class’, see Stewart, 1999).

Female participants who have been targets of gossip affirm this does not need to refer to a woman’s sexuality at all to effect reputational damage (Cowie & Lees, 1981; Stewart, 1999). Sojourner Yuiko and settler Jasmine reported they earned a reputation simply from being seen hanging out with different men, and in sojourner KJ’s case, for having frequented night clubs. Female sexual reputation appears extremely vulnerable and fragile, and a woman becomes a ‘bad’ sexual subject simply through being called one.

Like the use of ‘fag’ among boys (Pascoe, 2005), ‘slut’ is not a static identity with a clear and fixed meaning. This ‘slipperiness’ makes it a powerful disciplinary mechanism. Any woman could be labelled a ‘slut’ “since the status is always disputable, the gossip always unreliable, the criteria always obscure” (Cowie & Lees, 1981, p. 21). Furthermore, despite its supposed corrective function, the ‘slut’ discourse never specifically addresses how to effectively undo the label. In fear of being slut-shamed, young women must engage in vigilant and constant self-policing, against various contradictory or unrealistic gender norms (Tolman, 2011).

Despite being often based on elusive gossip, slut-shaming is capable of inflicting real damage. Social ostracism and exclusion (Attwood, 2007; Kitzinger, 1995) are typical occurrences in participants’ accounts about slut-shaming. Such policing practices constitute peer group aggression (Ringrose, 2008), but like KJ regretfully recounted below, youth may not always be aware of this nature of their action and its abusive effect.

KJ: this girl has to quit the school, go somewhere else ‘cos she cannot stay there anymore because we were saying she did abortion [sic] and (Int: oh) everyone looks [sic] her
like she’s so dirty and stuff (…) at that time we didn’t know the words can be so harmful [sojourner, female, age 23]

Slut-shaming also perpetuates sexual injustice on a discursive level. As the discourse of female sexual respectability promotes a neoliberal notion of self-control and self-responsibility (Bay-Cheng, 2015b), women’s negative reputation, as well negative outcomes of sexuality such as pregnancy, abortion, even sexual violence are often considered as the result of their own doing (Bay-Cheng et al., 2011). Sojourner male Poker expressed this belief bluntly.

Poker: a girl in my class got gang raped, and moved school afterwards, ‘cos like, like—’cos this girl pretty much (.) had no self-respect, yeah no self-respect, she liked hanging out with those gangster boys, but she didn’t think about if they’d harm her (…) I thought she was quite—quite stupid, very stupid, how can she hang out with gangsters like that, her personality is (pause)—um, ‘cos that girl was close to a mate of mine in primary school, (…) they’d slap each other’s butt and stuff, like flirting, since primary school, then (.)—I knew that, she’s that kind of person, as a result (this happened) (…) [age 22]

Though victim blaming remains prevalent in western societies (see Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008), the social atmosphere in modern China may be particularly nurturing for such rhetoric. Anti-feminist sentiments are pervasive, indicating dire conditions of gender justice as a social issue (Y. L. Huang, 2016). Neoliberalism is growing strong in China, which promotes the belief of self-responsibility (for both personal success and failure). Gender and sexual subjectivities are depoliticised as individual ‘choices’ (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). Within this context, “problem identification and solution seeking revolve around individuals and ignore unjust system conditions” (Bay-Cheng, 2015a, p. 3). Young women are now called sluts not only for perceived sexual impropriety, but also for their victimisation, which is seen as indicative of an ineptitude in self-control and agency (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). With the notion of self-control as imperative, this neoliberal brand of agency restricts Chinese young women’s ways of being sexual, rather than empowering them sexually. I examine this illusory agency more closely next and explore what empowering agency might look like for Chinese young women.

“A grown woman has a grown woman’s needs” but...

Like any discourse, sexual respectability prescribes normal and natural ways of being, but by doing so also exposes itself, making resistance possible (Foucault, 1982). In this final sub-
section, I examine Chinese young women’s self-assertion as legitimate sexual beings, which is fraught with constraints of “relentlessly rigid and un/changing gendered heterosexuality” (Farvid et al., 2016, p. 14). However, agency can be found in the way young women navigate between seemingly conflicting subject positions in relation to sexual respectability. Their reconciliation of constraining sexual norms with their liberal sexual practice suggests resistance in a subtle form.

Though limited, participants’ talk did feature accounts of female sexual subjectivities centring on female desire. Sojourner female M reported she actively pursued first time sexual intercourse because she was intrigued by sex.

M: maybe because the friends I hanged out with, their sexual experience sounds so cool (chuckles) (…) so I’m like wow sounds exciting, I wanna try it too (…) like trying sleeping with my friend for example, wanted to lose my virginity but he chickened out, he had a girlfriend, later he introduced a friend of his to me, then (.) he was too chicken to do it too (laughs) [age 24]

Without any attempt to romanticise the experience, M appeared unfazed by the concern of sexual respectability, and used rhetoric (e.g., “exciting”) common among western youth when they describe casual sex (Farvid & Braun, 2017). Though she did not specifically describe desire in a bodily sense, she described a desire to experience sexual excitement and exercised autonomy to act on it. Interestingly, M’s attempts failed because her male partners did not meet the challenge. The account subverts the normative gendered patterns in casual sex, that men are more interested in sex that involves no emotional connections (Beres & Farvid, 2010), or inherently more “casual sex-ready” than women (Farvid & Braun, 2014, p. 130). Other research offers similar counter-narratives, where women articulate a desire for sex purely for the sake of sexual pleasure rather than romantic interest (Allen, 2003a; Farvid, 2014; Farvid et al., 2016).

Responding to her grandmother’s concerns about her active night life, sojourner female Shan deployed and re-appropriated the notion of sex drive which is typically used for male desire (see also S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003).

Shan: (…) I said a grown woman have a grown woman’s needs, this is no big deal granny, I’m all grown up, granny said OK (both laugh) [age 22]

Portraying sexual satisfaction as the primary motivation for casual sex (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009), the narrative draws on a sexualised construction of femininity. From this subject
position women’s active sexual pursuit is not only “no big deal”, but also to a certain degree, encouraged (Attwood, 2009).

Sojourner female Yuiko described having met stronger social disapproval for her sexual practice, but she defied its regulatory effect.

Yuiko: Chinese [peers] definitely think I’m promiscuous, my—my friend from primary school, we’re still in touch, he said you—you’re dating so many people I can’t tell them apart, they’re all Caucasians and you’re going over them so fast

Int: how do you respond to comments like this?

Yuiko I just think (pause) I’m single, I’m not married, I don’t think it matters, this is my life [age 25]

Yuiko drew on the permissive sexual discourse (Hollway, 1989) to shift the parameters of normalising judgement from her friend. Since she’s single, she’s at liberty of engaging in many sexual relations without moral violations. Constructing sex as a matter of individual choice and personal right (Farvid, 2012), the permissive discourse presents sex for pleasure as legitimate, and as long as no one gets hurt, anything goes (Hollway, 1989). This permissive discourse emerged from the initial post-WWII period when sex became associated with personal fulfilment (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997), as well as the sexual revolution of the 1960s. It has profoundly influenced heterosexual practice in western societies (Gavey, 2013). Data here affirm this discourse also appeals to young Chinese women for the sexual freedom it appears to offer (Farvid & Braun, 2017). Jeffreys and Yu have documented growing permissiveness in China where sex is “a channel of self-expression and self-exploration, a window on to the revelation of human nature, a shortcut towards financial security or simply a form of play” (2015, p. 48). However, sexual empowerment for Chinese women in a post-feminist context seems fraught with conflicts and anxieties around feminine sexual norms, both old (i.e., sexual respectability) and new (i.e., sexual permissiveness).

Firstly, liberal sexual practice does not necessarily signal sexual agency. Shan spoke of her first sexual intercourse in the context of feeling embarrassed for her virginity.

Shan: (…) can’t stand it anymore, being a virgin, so embarrassing (both laugh), so annoying (int: so him it is), yeah him it is! It’s time anyway, like I’m not gonna let people laugh at me! (both laugh) [sojourner, female, age 22]
Shan’s recounted experience took place in NZ with a local Caucasian man. The account implies she perceived being sexually experienced as a norm in her (multiracial) peer group (see Chapter 7 for more on the effect of being diasporic on sexuality). While I am not claiming Shan was pressured to losing her virginity, her conception of her own virginity as a liability was certainly not agentic (Lamb, 2010). Ostensibly liberating, for many women the sexual revolution in the west produced new anxieties where saying ‘No’ to sex could render a woman ‘unliberated’ (S. Jackson & Scott, 1996). Post-feminist western society has arguably created a feminine subject that must not only deny sexual oppression, but also be sexually available and ‘up for it’ (Farvid & Braun, 2013; Gill, 2008b). She may be free to engage in premarital or casual sex, but is not free from the pressure to engage in these practices (Fahs, 2014), especially if casual sex has become normative in their social context (e.g., Wade & Heldman, 2012). This pressure to be sexually available does not yet prevail in China. However, it is worth noting that just like the permissive turn in the west (Farvid, 2012), the sexual revolution in China finds most resonance among urban men (S. Pan, 2006). It is then crucial to keep an eye on if and when liberal sexual practice becomes normative, and ask whether such ostensibly liberal development in sexual culture is truly representing women’s interest, or indicating “a refashioned patriarchy” (Parish et al., 2007, p. 751).

Secondly, the young women’s liberal sexual practice does not mean they are liberated from the regulative effect of slut-shaming. Sojourner M gave an account that illustrates her negotiation of negative sexual labels. The most common Chinese term for ‘casual sex’ used by interview participants was 滥交 (lan jiao, literal translation: indiscriminate/excessive relationship). The term obviously has a more negative connotation than ‘casual sex’ and typically refers to a woman’s sexual promiscuity.

Int: you mentioned some girls would lan jiao, do you worry people label you as one of them?
M: (. ) I’d do it myself—labelling myself (laughs)

Int: you think you lan jiao?
M: not really lan jiao, I’m not indiscriminate with whom I sleep with (…) lan jiao is for people who are purposeless (.) and only after sex right? (…) But I’m not that casual, I have (.) standards even for fuck buddies, at least one thing about this guy needs to attract me, either he has six-packs, or he’s successful, or he’s really handsome (chuckles), plus we’d have dinner and talk so I know this is someone I—at least I don’t dislike [female, age 24]
As settler Hik in an earlier account distinguished ‘good’ relationship sex from ‘slutty’ casual sex, M tried to claim standing for her casual sex practice in a similar way, by distinguishing herself from those who ‘have no standard’. In a neoliberal sense of agency (Bay-Cheng, 2015b), a bad reputation has less to do with a woman’s sexual conduct than her being seen as easy, unchoosing (Farvid et al., 2016), and ‘saying yes to everything’ (S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). It appears “whatever freedom or control girls are perceived to enjoy as they position themselves as agents comes at the expense of those against whom they push off” (Bay-Cheng, 2015b, p. 9) down the sexual hierarchy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sex (Farvid & Braun, 2013). M’s sexual subversion remains delimited by the fear of stigma, her assertion of self-determination and freedom entangled with the narrative of stigmatising others (e.g., the conversational shift from self-labelling to labelling others) (see also Kitzinger, 1995). Sexual reputation remains influential, if not defining, in sexually liberal women’s sexual subjectivity (Farvid et al., 2016), even for self-claimed ‘sluts’.

Finally, for Chinese young women engaged in liberal sexual practice, the subject position enabled by the permissive sexual discourse is always in negotiation with those produced by traditional sexual discourses. M’s oscillation between being unconcerned about the label “lan jiao girl” and trying to distance from it suggests a woman’s claim of ‘slut’ is always conditional and recuperative. Though agency can be found in the process of embracing an injurious term like ‘slut’ (Ringrose, 2011, 2013), the self-labelling “can slip back easily into injury” (Ringrose & Renold, 2012, p. 337) depending on the circumstances (i.e., if a woman is single, what type of sexual activity she engages in, if her peer group is conservative). Subsequently, some young women reported contextually different subject positions around sexual reputation. For example:

M: depends on the group, some groups, if you talk about that people will think you’re a slut, but in some circles, everyone’s a player so there’s a lot of bluffing (chuckles) [sojourner, female, age 24]

For M, depending on the social circle, she alternates between the subject positions of a sexually respectable woman (i.e., avoiding talk about sex) and a “player” (i.e., boasting about sexual conquests). Both subject positions are normative in respective settings. Another participant KJ described the “constant strategizing, divisive status jockeying, and relentless self-surveillance” entailed in enacting an agentic yet reputable female sexual subject (Bay-Cheng, 2015b, p. 288).

Int: then do you worry about what they [casual partners] may think about you? Like thinking you’re promiscuous or something?
KJ: don’t really care, because I won’t develop a serious relationship with him, after that—it’s like two lines crossing at one point, going separate ways after

Int: so like making sure you don’t have common friends, from the same circle that kind of thing?

KJ: that definitely won’t do (laughs), yeah, so most friends, especially close friends, they wouldn’t know about this guy, I won’t tell them either (…) reputation concern is perhaps more about (…)—for my future (chuckles)—for my future like when I want to find someone (. ) serious, I don’t want him to think I’m that kind—don’t take me—if one day I really fall in love with someone, I don’t want him to not take me seriously

[sojourner, female, age 23]

KJ simultaneously orients towards different subject positions. On one hand, KJ’s articulation of an ‘agentic’ and empowered female subject who engages in casual sex fits a neoliberal profile: individual in control, self-serving, strategic (Bay-Cheng, 2015a). The detachment she describes her casual relations with also echoes a new kind of ‘respectability’ embraced by modern young western women, characterised by avoidance of emotional commitment and prioritisation of personal success (Finn, 2015). On the other hand, KJ’s discretion in terms of public censure of her sexuality (Armstrong et al., 2014) is underscored by and colludes with (hetero)normative femininity. This positioning clashes with her individualised permissive ideals about sex. Though she is able to unapologetically break away from traditional feminine codes of respectability with non-romantic partners (Farvid & Braun, 2017), she acknowledges the moralistic construction of casual sex (i.e., promiscuous) (Farvid & Braun, 2013) and dreads its impact on her outlook of intimate relationships. Though her casual sex practice defies the understanding of women’s sexuality as “inevitably and naturally relational” (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009, p. 605), she positions a normative relationship (monogamous, committed) as more prestigious, and destined (Farvid & Braun, 2017). Again, both subject positions of being an empowered sexual agent and a respectable woman are normative in respective contexts. The two positions map onto the two archetypal representations of the Virgin and the Whore. Between them is “the dilemma between pure passivity and active independent sexuality, a double bind in which no woman wins” (Ussher, 1997, p. 11).

This seemingly conflicted and carefully negotiated subjectivity has important implications on understanding Chinese young people’s agency, and could potentially take us beyond the Virgin/Whore, or victim/agent binary (Bay-Cheng, 2015b; L. Frost, 2005). A few tightropes of
sexual subject positions for young women have been illustrated in the analysis so far, between a ‘good girl’ and a ‘experienced sexual agent’ (Ringrose, 2013), and between sexually attractive and simultaneously “without the taint of sexuality” (Cowie & Lees, 1981, p. 14) (see the discussion of Figure 6 in the last sub-section). The binary of sexual purity and excess serves as the foundation for these sets of contradictory expectations. KJ’s account suggests transcendence of this binary. Recognising the incompatibility of these positions, she mobilised between them to ensure her ability to practice sexual liberty without suffering social consequences. She reported consciously performing normative femininities in conforming to the regulative power of sexual respectability. Simultaneously, this conforming is used to carve out room for her non-normative sexual practice. Through incorporating and performing both subjectivities of a sexual being and a respectable woman, it becomes possible for women like KJ to transcend the “compliant forms of femininity” without punishment (Halberstam, 1998, p. 6). Their resistance may not lie in openly defying these norms, but in being aware of the ‘schizoid’ contradictions in modern femininities (Griffin et al., 2013), and rendering them artificial through their conscious performing of both. This subjectivity reported in KJ’s talk can also be seen as an agentic double life, where she tries to reconcile the disciplinary power accorded by dominant discourses and her own sexual pursuit.

Other female participants also reported this double life, most commonly in the context of parental communication (C. S. Chan, 2008; J. L. Kim, 2005). While Asian parenting is commonly experienced as more controlling than white parents (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014), parental supervision is particularly strict with Asian young women compared to men (D. B. Qin, 2009). Sexually active female participants in this study (M, E, Yuiko, Hik) typically hide their sexual activeness from their parents to avoid conflicts (e.g., M: “I’m still pretending I’m a virgin in front of them”). However, this double life may have debilitating consequences. Asian young women’s tendency to under-report sexual activities is accompanied with reluctance to utilise sexual health services (Cha, Kim, & Patrick, 2008). Not discussing sexuality openly with family for fear of exposure places the women at risk in terms of seeking treatment or disease prevention (Okazaki, 2002). M gave an example:

Int: so do you know where to go if you had gynaecological problems?

M: I don’t eh, my aunt is actually a gynaecologist but I still don’t go see her, what if she finds out I’m not a virgin anymore? (chuckles) [sojourner, female ,age 24]
Furthermore, the flexible position of mobilising conflicting subject positions may be only accessible to young women with privileged status (e.g., heterosexual, good looking, affluent) and requires savviness in romantic or social networking (Armstrong et al., 2014; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009). Even so, they cannot completely evade the stigma and may be subject to penalising consequences (e.g., potential disrespect from future partners). Even as women have entered the ‘game’ of permissive sex, “[they] are playing by a different set of rules” from men (Kalish & Kimmel, 2011, p. 141), because the risk of pregnancy, coercion and violence is real (Farrer, 2002; Gavey, 2013). Simultaneously, the neoliberalism discourse over-emphasises women’s self-responsibility, accounting for their susceptibility to sexual risks in terms of personal inadequacies (i.e, skills, knowledge, values) (Bay-Cheng et al., 2011). M’s account below demonstrates the gendered sexual risk women are subject to, and subsequently the constant vigilance about safety required from them in this ‘game’.

M: I’m super cautious, ever since I had that abortion (…) I’d insist [on using condoms]

Int: do you carry condoms yourself?

M: if there’s the possibility of having sex then yes

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have shown how repressive norms around Chinese women’s sexuality, such as sexual chastity remain dominant, but there is an expanding space for self-assertion of female sexual desire. Chinese young women occupy varied subject positions within this expanding space. As the female participants in this study negotiate contradictions and dilemmas in the fraught sexual space they inhabit, their manoeuvres around female sexual norms are both defensive (i.e., managing one’s sexual reputation) and offensive (i.e., seeking sexual experience, being a ‘player’) (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). Compared to western young women, Chinese participants’ resistance may take a subtler, more covert form. Rather than directly challenging repressive sexual or gender norms, female participants reported strategic mobilisation of both moralist and permissive sexual discourses in reconciling their sexual self-determination and sexual reputation. However, Chinese young women’s engagement in ‘permissive’ sexual practice cannot be taken uncritically as liberating while being sexually knowing/experienced may be emerging as a new sexual norm for modern young women. A neoliberal brand of sexual agency also appears to subjugate other forms of agency and prescribe self-perseverance and/or self-advancement over sexual freedom (Bay-Cheng, 2015a). As the
young women’s sexual ‘choices’ are depoliticised and individualised, they remain constrained by the discourse of female sexual respectability.
Chapter 6: Sexual Subjects in Education and beyond

The overriding concern of most parents in bringing up their children is with ‘normality’, the normality necessary for future success in the two privileged sites of adult life, the family and work. (Weedon, 1997, p. 73)

Contained within Weedon’s statement is a notion of young adulthood as a sequence of transitions progressing towards stability in career and family (Elder, 1985; Elder & Rockwell, 1979). As part of this sequence, education is a major project in the development of ‘normality’. It sets up young people for future employment, and financial stability subsequently marks one’s eligibility to enter a (heterosexual) marriage (Feng, 1995; L. J. Nelson & Chen, 2007). In this chapter, I examine Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality within this normative life trajectory, and discuss how it is informed by this “overriding concern” of normality in relation to education and marriage. I argue education, as a neoliberal life project, profoundly intersects with sexuality (Carpenter & DeLamater, 2012) and delineates certain ways of being (non-)sexual for Chinese young people.

I start this chapter by demonstrating how Chinese parents and schools in China construct young people’s education and sexuality as irreconcilable. This is followed by how participants’ talk positions them in relation to this expected prioritisation of academic commitment over sexual expression in China and NZ. Particularly, participants’ talk around the Asian nerd stereotype is discussed in relation to their sexuality. I then examine how Chinese young people negotiate their academic and sexual selves beyond the schooling context in relation to marriage, to which education is normatively conceptualised to be a precursor. In between education and marriage, Chinese young people, especially young women are left with a small window of opportunity to explore their sexuality. Family serves as a heteronormalising agency (Warner, 1991) in participants’ constitution of sexual subjectivity through their role in young people’s academic and dating lives.

“You’re ruining your future”

In this first section, I illustrate via participants’ accounts how and why Chinese parents and schools perceive their sexuality as incompatible with academic pursuits. Chinese young
diaspora are subsequently constructed as asexual beings. A narrative that parents discourage participants from dating out of concerns for their academic performance (Y. Gao et al., 2001; J. Yu, 2008) was common in this study. Though some research on Asian diasporic youth suggests dating is tolerated by parents as long as children can maintain their grades (Lau et al., 2009), findings in this project consistently present explicit and strong prohibition against young people’s sexual interest by the parents. For example, settler female Jasmine described her parents perceiving her dating as disastrous for her academic success, hence her future:

Jasmine: (…) ‘cos last year I was dating this person (laughs) and my parents just gave me hell, it was like “No! Study! (…) You need to be studying and going to uni! You’re ruining your future!” [age 18]

The desexualisation of youth due to the belief that intimate relationships disrupt study is informed by a Cartesian body/mind dualism (Paechter, 2004). Education is hereby theorised as a task for the mind, not the body. Since “there is not only an intellectual separation of mind and body, but also a hierarchical positioning of mind over the body” (Bay-Cheng, 2003, p. 66), young people’s sexual self is constituted as inferior and primitive in relation to the academic self. Presence of sexuality in a young person is taken to signal the tension between “the weak and corruptible body versus the innocent and pure mind” (Howard et al., 2016, p. 257). Sexual expression hence needs monitoring and discipline rather than cultivation so it does not get in the way of study and consequently “ruin one’s future” (Bay-Cheng, 2003).

Chinese culture in particular, may stress this study/dating division more rigidly (X. Chen & Chang, 2007; L. J. Nelson & Chen, 2007). Asian American parents are reported as more likely than white parents to expect children to stay abstinent while studying (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014). Therefore, while parents in general tend not to perceive adolescents as sexual beings, Chinese parents may expect a more extended non-sexual period from children (i.e., till early adulthood). For example, in Lisa’s case below, it is not until she completes tertiary education and starts working.

Lisa: they did say not to rush and yeah—like you start working that’s usually when it starts [settler, age 24, female]

The emphasis on education underlying such sexual expectations constitutes a powerful discourse in Chinese societies. Chinese are known for a cultural mentality of ‘wishing for dragon children’ that captures parents’ expectation for children to strive academically and through which, to advance ahead of others and achieve social upward mobility (Pang,
Macdonald, & Hay, 2015; J. Wu & Singh, 2004). Chinese parents with higher education levels may ascribe particularly strongly to this Confucianism informed mentality at the expense of communicating with or educating children about sexuality (W. Liu et al., 2015). Additionally, premarital sexual abstinence was once mandatory as part of China’s socialist nation-making project in the 1950s (Aresu, 2009). Schools instructed youth that premarital sex would corrupt their morals and disrupt their study, work and even future marriage (Evans, 1997). This puritanical socialism may have left a strong legacy for modern Chinese.

The emphasis on academic excellence intersects with a culturally endowed parenting style characterised by a high degree of behavioural monitoring and control, especially in the academic domain (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014; Shek & Lee, 2007). Asian parents, irrespective of their place of settlement, typically perceive a strong obligation towards children’s success and are willing to make considerable investments to facilitate children’s academic pursuits (see Da & Welch, 2016; Liang & Sugawara, 1992). Better education for children is frequently cited a major motivation for Asian family emigration (Davidson & Dai, 2008). In post-settlement, Asian parents also continue to engage in children’s education intensively through choosing good school as well as supplementary or extra-curricular education (Frewen, Chew, Carter, Chunn, & Jotanovic, 2015; M. Zhou & Kim, 2006). In return to this parental care, young people are expected to reciprocate through obedience, a central element in the concept of filial piety (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; D. Y. F. Ho, 1996). In Jasmine’s continued narrative of parental rejection of her relationship, this cultural expectation appears to encroach her (sexual) autonomy.

Jasmine: they kept like guilt tripping me, they were like oh we looked after you for so many years (both laugh) and now you’re gonna give it all up for this one person, you don’t love us anymore and

Int: which means if you love them, you’d get into medical school?

Jasmine: no no I’d break up with my boyfriend [settler, female, age 18]

Exacerbated by this educational emphasis, sexuality and education are constructed as exclusive to each other. To the parents, the presence of a sexual self alarmingly signals the absence of the academic self (see also J. L. Kim, 2005). For Chinese young people, ‘body’ becomes absolutely precluded from ‘mind’, and ‘dating’ from ‘study’. Participants further reported the body/mind dualism does not only apply to one’s sexual body, but extends to bodily practices in general.
Jaw: all those (Chinese) families spend every afternoon tutoring, whereas white kids would go to sports [settler, female, age 22]

Typical in Chinese and Korean immigrant communities, supplementary education has been theorised as an ethnic system that provides structural support for sustaining and reproducing ethnic culture, including the focus on academic excellence (M. Zhou & Kim, 2006). While in home societies such as China, limited access to quality education and fierce competition breed academic devotion, Chinese immigrants in a (western) host society continue to perceive education as the most reliable means of social mobility due to their disadvantaged racial minority status (Sue & Okazaki, 1990).

While intellectual endeavours are given primacy in the daily life of Chinese youth, bodily practices including social activity, sports and dating are positioned as secondary, if allowed at all (D. B. Qin, 2009). Chinese diasporic youth in other studies have reported being discouraged by their family against developing interest in sports, as it was not adding to the family’s capital in any valued way: “the hyper-investments in (...) academic study and music, (...) came at the expense of other possibilities that their broader social contexts had to offer such as school sport” (Pang et al., 2015, p. 1054). Academic work is prioritised to the point that it forecloses almost all non-academic, bodily endeavours, which are considered frivolous and distracting.

Schools collaborate with parents in constructing education and sexuality as precluding each other. Though western research has theorised a separation between the official desexualisation of youth and the unofficial sexual culture among students (Allen, 2005b; Kehily, 2002), surveillance and discipline of school authorities appear to permeate both official and private spheres (Allen, 2013a). Several sojourner participants in their accounts of schooling experience in China similarly described teachers exerting interference or control over students’ private sexual expression.

KJ: (...) and there was a girl, she was really into one guy, (Matt: mm) somehow the teacher found out and they cannot be together, and she actually ends up running away from home and then—like—took us quite a while to find her, though she got back, she’s still like being a very very depression sign[sic] (Matt: yeah) and she actually tried to suicide [sic] (Matt: oh wow), and she cut off the vein, more than ten stitches (Matt hisses) (...) both the parents and teacher sides think it’s the girl’s fault (Matt: mm), till now people may still think they are—they have got nothing wrong because the girl is not in the age
to have a relationship, so they never cared about if the girl is—it’s just like normal love
[sojourner, female, age 23]

As an exemplary site of the Cartesian mind/body split, schools focus on the education of the mind, and treat the body as a threat that must be controlled, even effaced (Allen, 2007a). This is evident in the way embodied and physical school subjects (e.g., Physical Education, drama, sex/sexuality education) are marginalised in the curriculum (Paechter, 2004). Sexuality has been theorised as both “everywhere and nowhere” in schools (D. Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p. 168). This means though the official curriculum continues with a missing discourse of desire (Fine, 2003), sexuality is “driven underground” (Paechter, 2006, p. 128) and remains common and visible among youth in their social and private conduct. Simultaneously, schools seem to condone, even authorise teachers to police students’ personal sexual/romantic affairs, justified by the belief that sexual interest or expression “derails students from ‘the real’ purpose of education” (Allen, 2009a, p. 248). Given the Confucian conceptualisation of respect and obedience to authority, teachers in China may be endowed with more influence over students’ private life than in the west (J. Li, 2003). As KJ’s account illustrates, a young person’s sexual autonomy could be completely denied under this influence, especially when school collaborates with parents.

Alternatively, teachers may not directly engage in a reprimanding position, but may instead ‘contain’ or silence students’ sexuality in maintaining a desexualised school environment. For example, prior to sharing the extract below, gay sojourner participant L described an incident in secondary school (in China) where he posted defaming content online about a classmate who rejected his courtship. Instead of properly addressing the incident, his teacher chose to sweep it under the carpet, promising not informing his mother in exchange for his compliance in class.

L: here’s what the teacher told me, pointed a finger at me and said, “If you keep causing trouble, I’ll call your mom and show her what you wrote online, and what happened, if you don’t want that, go back to class”, that’s it, in the end they didn’t call my parents

Int: so the point is as long as you be good in class

L: yeah, don’t make a scene [sojourner, male, age 21]

As a desexualised space (Allen, 2007a), classrooms are “officially coded for academic learning…where sexuality must be muted and controlled” (Allen, 2013a, p. 13). Explicitly addressing L’s sexual desire implies its acknowledgement. Through not naming what had happened, the teacher effectively erased L as a (homo)sexual being. Instead what was
highlighted was the student’s docile body, a body that may be tamed, transformed and improved (Foucault, 1977). This body was asked to stop “making a scene”, in other words, to stop disrupting the learning environment for others with their sexuality.

In cases where the student’s sexuality cannot be tamed or controlled successfully, their sexual body may be ‘zoned’ or contained in a way it does not contaminate the academic community of a classroom (D. Epstein et al., 2003). L recounted another incident, when his teacher ‘expelled’ his sexualised body from the academic space in a classroom (Paechter, 2004) through renouncing their teacher-student relationship.

L: I was getting OK grades at the time, but that student (I had a crush on) wasn’t, so he sat in the last row, so I wanted to go sit with him, so my teacher said “Fine then, I’ll just leave you alone from now on, either you do well or badly I won’t care anymore”, I’m like fine, then I went and sat with him

Containment of sexualised bodies is made possible by the regulative effect of seating (see Paechter, 2004). Though L’s school did not officially practice place-holding through seating, students seated at the back of the classroom were commonly designated ‘bad’ students, either for their academic performance, or for their disruptive manner. However, L’s voluntary moving to the back made him a bad student not for these reasons, but because of his conspicuous self-representation as a sexual being (through his insistence to sit with the other boy at the back). To the teacher, L could not be legitimately sexual and academic simultaneously. Given the normative understanding of good youth as sexually innocent (Allen, 2005b), young people’s display of sexual interest is often taken to signal resistance to education, or a failing academic outlook (Nash, 2001). In particular, as the classroom is often imagined as a monosexual community (C. D. Nelson, 2006), marginalised sexual bodies (i.e., gay) are seen as even more divergent from a rational mind, and unable to embody successful learners (D. Epstein et al., 2003).

In schools, students’ bodies “that are not controlled are seen as problems, and problems with bodies are subordinate to the overt academic purposes of the school” (Paechter, 2006, p. 128). Therefore, as L’s sexual body was persistently present, and perceived to be subversively sexualising the learning space (see also Allen, 2013a), the teacher insulated his sexual body in securing the academic climate for the wider class. A closet was built around him, keeping him from engaging with the class and teacher academically, and thus from challenging the institution as a sexual being (D. Epstein et al., 2003).
“Study comes first”

Having discussed parents’ and schools’ construction of youth sexuality, I now look at how the young people experience their academic selves in relation to sexuality. A neoliberal notion of education as a life project preconditioning one’s future success (McLeod & Yates, 2006) is strongly implicated in the production of (a)sexual subjects at school and home. To explore the racialisation of academic commitment, I specifically examine the stereotype of (Chinese) ‘nerd’ and its sexual and racial meanings.

“Everything else is secondary”

Many participants’ articulation of sexual subjectivity in relation to education affirms the two as precluding each other. Their academic commitment is often discussed in conjunction with a reduced or erased sexual self. Sojourner participant J below talked about prioritising study in high school to the point he and his classmate willingly suppressed their sexual interest for each other.

J: at the time we were both very academic very studious, so we kept up the facade, but we had this tacit agreement that we’d try to get in the same high school, but I failed (…) it’s a pretty big regret of my life (…) but she and I were like—I think what education in China does is, it tells you, study comes first, everything else is secondary, even now I still think like that [male, age 24]

Female sojourner Ccao recounted making a similar choice at university, which she later felt regretful about.

Ccao: near the end of undergrad a girl was after me, said she’s into me, that was the 2nd semester of 4th year, we had this exam at the time called TEM-8 [Test for English Major-band 8], you only get to sit it twice in your life (laughs), I was so anxious about it, I was like, let’s not worry about this for now, focus on the exam, that was pretty much a rejection [age 25]

Consistently articulated in these accounts is a neoliberal construction of self that gives primacy to self-development and self-regulation in the context of schooling (McLeod & Yates, 2006). Both J and Ccao suppressed their sexual interest for academic goals perceived to have life-long implications (i.e., getting into a good high school, passing TEM-8). The sense of urgency and anxiety around thriving academically appears to foreclose ways of being sexual for them.
(Western) research also shows higher achieving youth are less likely to have experienced sexual initiation (Fletcher, 2007). Through self-policing and self-disciplining, the participants enact a self-determining subject who focuses on enterprising individual future success through academic achievement.

Narratives of academic diligence were also articulated by settler participants, especially female settlers. For example, Jasmine who earlier talked about her parents’ interference with her previous intimate relationship due to concerns about her academic achievement, reported she was now actively evading their monitoring and control with her current budding relationship. Nonetheless, she reinforced the academic focus her parents expected of her, and chose to prioritise study over the sexual relationship in a self-determining manner.

Int: how would you justify going over to his place and stuff (to your parents)?

Jasmine: oh I’m planning on focusing on studying this year anyway, but we’ll just be there for each other, so it won’t be like I’ll see you every week (…) I don’t want it to be too frequent, or time consuming (…) but yeah he’s completely open to (.) sacrificing how much he likes me for my benefit [age 18]

This account echoes the relationship logics or strategies reported by some young women in western countries (E. E. Blair, 2016; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009) in reducing the threat of sexual desire to their self-development. An ideal relationship (or ‘hookup’) must “either stay out of the way of, or support” the young women’s academic commitment (E. E. Blair, 2016, p. 16). To manage the risk of emotional distraction potentially presented by a relationship, Jasmine not only practiced self-discipline but also evaluated her male partner in terms of his support for her educational pursuits. Portraying a rational and autonomous subject, this narrative rejects gendered representations of women as emotionally needy, and flips the traditional romantic scripts where women make willing sacrifices in supporting male partners (see also E. E. Blair, 2016; S. Jackson, 2001). Moreover, the demonstrated self-discipline and self-management also negate dominant construction of young people’s sexuality as controlled by hormonal urges and out of control (Allen, 2005b).

However, it is important to examine this autonomous subject critically. An unquestioning understanding of academic achievement as agency overlooks the structural impediments underpinning Chinese youth’s academic commitment. Sojourners’ and settlers’ accounts present different structural issues. For sojourners, neoliberal ideology which has taken a strong hold in China (Rofel, 2007) is intimately interwoven with the traditional emphasis on education,
which translates to an increasing emphasis on individual merit and achievement (McLeod & Yates, 2006). The notion of education as a realm of self-maximisation is further naturalised by the highly competitive education system in China, where exam results not only ensure academic advancement but serve as a gatekeeper to limited high quality educational resources (Davey, Lian, & Higgins, 2007). With much at stake, students from middle to lower socio-economic background in particular, “relentlessly policed themselves and each other in order to produce themselves as academic winners” (Quinlivan, Rasmussen, Aspin, Allen, & Sanjakdar, 2014, p. 401). This intersection of education and class or family wealth was captured in sojourner KJ’s description of some classmates in her secondary school:

KJ: they’re all—their families are not really rich and—and for the rich ones, they never study hard, and for the study-hard ones, they don’t even go to—they only go—leave their seats when they have to go to the toilet, all the rest of the time, they’re just doing the exercise for the studies [sic] [female, age 23]

While the richest youth in China may be exempt from academic pressure, most are implicated in the neoliberal ideation of using education as an investment to ensure future career progression and life-improvement (Anagnost, 2013). This construction of education informs some sojourners’ conception of study as the essential pathway to a larger life-improvement project that is immigration.

Erin: most international students that come to NZ, to be honest, aren’t of very high quality at all (Nancy: yeah), they’re here, with no goals, don’t even know if they can stay after study, still having fun, fooling around [sojourner, female, age 24]

In Erin’s account, education is linked to success in immigration, and subsequently a better future. As a rational, enterprising neoliberal subject, Erin positions study as opposite to social activities (i.e., having fun), which would not add to her assets for achieving immigration. The neoliberalist construction of education leaves young people limited subject positions, aside from ‘choosing’ to be academically focused at the expense of sexual or social pleasure.

For settler Chinese, academic commitment is often contingent to their disadvantaged racial status, which is glossed over and sustained by a model minority stereotype (M. Song, 2003). Seemingly a positive image, this stereotype paints Asians as inherently hardworking and high achieving (Kibria, 2003). Heralded as exemplars of the notion that individual meritocracy trumps structural racism, Asian immigrants’ ‘success’ is therefore often used as hegemonic devices to protect dominant groups’ interest (S. J. Lee, 2015). Asian youth are subject to
tremendous academic pressure and racialised expectations as a result (Y. Choi & Lim, 2014; Noh, 2013). Additionally, immigrant parents’ sacrifice as well as hardship is often witnessed by the children and in turn may motivate them to strive academically (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; J. L. Kim, 2005). For example:

Sage: and I personally think that, with the whole immigration thing, and like the sacrifice and the hardship they’ve been through that it’s almost unconsciously already imbedded in you, that you have to sort of repay them back with (Lisa: yeah) (Cosy: mhm) like (.) pride

Cosy: yeah I think that’s the case with my family--

Sage: (overlapping) like completely unconscious, like you do it yourself

Cosy: yeah, at least with my parents, they don’t consciously tell me to (.) be academic (Sage: yeah), they don’t make me do tutoring or anything, um but (.) because we did immigrate, and that’s costly and things were expensive, and they found it hard to have a job here, so I guess we—at least I felt a lot of pressure to succeed (…) I don’t think it’s [being high achieving] necessarily a Chinese trait, as much as maybe like an immigrant (others: mm yeah) thing

Lisa: especially those who migrated here for education [all settlers, females]

These three young women had not known each other before this focus group, and are a few years apart in age (Sage 19, Cosy 23, Sage 24). However, they shared each other’s experience to the extent that their narratives converged into one singular story, which was further concurred by other settler participants (Hik, Evo). This story shows Chinese settlers in this study having high academic expectations of themselves irrespective of parental pressure. This insight challenges and expands that the understanding of Chinese young people’s academic achievement in terms of inherent cultural traits such as filial piety, obedience and strict parenting (D. B. Qin, 2009; Yau, Tasopoulos-Chan, & Smetana, 2009).

“(There are) the nerdy ones and there are the ones that (...) are Kiwi”

In this sub-section, I expand on the racialisation of Chinese young diaspora’s academic commitment, and demonstrate how participants adhere to and resist ‘Asian nerd’ as a racialised sexual stereotype. The pejorative stereotype of ‘nerd’ describes someone with academic commitment, and (by association) social ineptitude and physical ‘inadequacy’ (Kendall, 2011).
The notion of a ‘nerd’ epitomises how education and sexuality are seen to preclude each other. Within a (western) youth culture that stresses embodied attractiveness (e.g., physical appearance, social skills) as the most important social asset (Harter, 2000), there is a considerable social cost to being perceived as a ‘nerd’. Studious youth are often subject to social expulsion, with young women seen as ‘frigid’ (Lees, 1993), and young men being targets of emasculating sexual slurs such as ‘gay’ (D. Epstein et al., 2003). When this stereotype meets ‘Asian’, it becomes “compulsory nerdiness” (Eglash, 2002, p. 58) because of the way ‘Asian’ and ‘nerd’ are heavily conflated in essentialist discourses (Huynh & Woo, 2014). Chinese youth’s racial body becomes the basis for “judgment and differentiation” (L. Frost, 2003, p. 60) and could automatically make them outcasts (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). As a result, an essentialist understanding of Asian youth as academically oriented may subject them to higher vulnerability to social ostracism compared to their racial counterparts (D. B. Qin, 2009), even bullying (Barber, 2015; Rasanathan et al., 2006), and less recognition as legitimate sexual beings (Huynh & Woo, 2014).

Kid101: I know for a fact that a lot of people in New Zealand, they’ll just look down at him, they look at him and they’ll be like “oh typical Asian” you know, geeky looking, nerdy dressing whatnot [settler, male, age 22]

In this extract, Kid101 was referring to Figure 7 below, an image in the photo collage used in focus groups, which portrays an academically accomplished student and alludes to the Asian nerd stereotype. I used this image to elicit discussions on the relation between sexual attractiveness and nerdiness. Like Kid101, many participants recognised the image as not only “typical” of Asian, but also as unpopular and attracting harassment (see also Bishop et al., 2004; Kinney, 1993). Subsequently, many expressed dislike for the image.
Many participants, especially settlers reported actively avoiding the label by distancing themselves from the ‘nerdy’ students (see also D. B. Qin, 2009). This distancing is also achieved through participants enacting the (racialised) masculinity or femininity embodied by the dominant groups in their social life. For example, there were accounts of settler males engaging in bodybuilding, a mainstream ‘fitness’ activity in western societies (Stokvis, 2006), to combat the ‘Asian nerd’ image and its associated negative social/sexual implications (see Chapter 7 for more discussion). In particular, in settler male Kid101’s reflection on emulating Polynesian (the dominant racial group in his school) masculinity, a perceived incompatibility of academic commitment and peer status was highlighted.

Kid101: I grew up in an area [in Auckland] where education wasn’t cool so I followed—you know I tend to follow that trend (...) I’ve got like a few Asian friends who are still like (.)—like a few Asian friends who are—who are smart enough but like still quite stupid ‘cos they still adapt to the Polynesian ways, such as there is this guy I know um he’s same age as me but he can’t spell, his English is like really bad [age 22]

Kid101’s account shows how some youth strive to under-achieve academically because ‘trying too hard’ at school is sanctioned in their peer culture (Bishop et al., 2004). This peer culture is also racialised, as the narrative resonates with the unacademic stereotype of young black men
(O’Donnell & Sharpe, 2002). The racial emulation described allows the Asian young men to transcend their racial body and gain access to ‘cool’ male peer groups, which is crucial for young men’s playground survival as well as self-esteem (L. Frost, 2003). Similarly, some female participants (Hik, Sage) talked about participation in night clubbing/partying, an essential part of western youth’s sexual culture (see Livingston, Bay-Cheng, Hequembourg, Testa, & Downs, 2013). The activity functions to distinguish them from the ‘nerdy’ Chinese girls who do not go out (see D. B. Qin, 2009). Hik’s following account makes explicit the connections between ‘doing’ femininity, nerdiness and race.

Hik: so with Asian girls there are like two types, there’s actually the nerdy ones and there are the ones that quite (…)—like quite a lot of make up like you know quite (.)--I don’t know, kind of covertly Kiwi, you’re either really Kiwi or not Kiwi, there’s like nothing in between really

Int: where would you position yourself?

Hik: um I think I’m just really Kiwi [settler, age 19]

The pressure for youth to have/present the ‘right’ bodies does not appear to discriminate across genders (L. Frost, 2003), but is racially configured. As Asian bodies continue to be measured or understood by western perspectives (K. H. Chen, 2010), especially for Asians living in a western society, the ‘right’ body means a white one, in terms of how it moves, talks and dresses (Moloney & Hunt, 2012). This performing of ‘Kiwness’ is crucial for ‘proper’ gender and sexual expression. The resistance of Chinese young people to the ‘nerd’ label is hence simultaneously a racial, gender and sexual project, where their sense of sexual self intricately relies on how successfully they normalise their gendered body, in other words, how successfully they stop being stereotypically Asian.

Sojourner participants’ observation of intra-ethnic differences also reiterates Hik’s division of ‘nerdy ones’ and ‘Kiwi ones’.

Ccao: Chinese students [postgrad] do spend most of time in the library [female, age 25]

Int: Martin, what is like for undergrad?

Martin: those who grew up here, been here since little, I feel they spend a lot of time going to night club[s], pretty much every week, or three days a week, like they spend more time on socialising (than us) [male, age 22]
The participants’ articulation of racialised social activities (study versus socialising) echoes the documented invisibility of Chinese young diaspora in local mainstream youth culture (Yeh, 2013) and reinforces Asian nerdiness. Such racialised stereotypes not only perpetuate the invisibility of Asian young people (Chou & Feagin, 2008; Wing, 2007), but also limit the way they imagine themselves as embodied (social or sexual) subjects (Yeh, 2013). Settler participants’ earlier accounts of performing Kiwiness (i.e., bodybuilding, nightclubbing) can thus be seen as contesting and subverting such racialised profiles (Huynh & Woo, 2014; Yeh, 2013).

The negotiation of ‘Kiwiness’ and ‘Chineseness’ articulated through these settlers’ practices also illustrate race-making’ through “the ‘play’ of difference” (Hall, 2000, p. 17). Both being Chinese and being Kiwi are unstable discursive subject positions that serve to render each other intelligible through differences. A racial subject is constituted by performatively enacting these differences (Chadderton, 2013). Butler (2010) extends her rejection of gender identity categories (Butler, 2004) to race, and posits race is not, contrary to common beliefs, a ‘real’, essential fixed feature to bodies, but is perceived so because of the way it is (re)produced. A racial subject is therefore always in the making through performative repetition (Butler, 1993), like the participants’ reiterative performing of ‘Kiw’ femininity, or Polynesian or white masculinity.

This theorisation of race as performative also implies race making as unstable, dynamic, and in need of ongoing negotiation. The data show participants presenting contradictions in their racial identification. For example, female settler Hik, who earlier identified as Kiwi and perceived being Asian as incompatible with being western (Huynh & Woo, 2014) (i.e., “there’s nothing in between”), aligned with Asian identity in another extract:

Int: what do you think about the stereotype, like when you do well, people make jokes “you’re so Asian”?

Hik: I don’t really mind, ‘cos we’re smart (both chuckle), it’s nothing to be ashamed about, but people forget that we work hard to (.)—to get good marks [age 19]

In this account, Hik embraces the conflation of Asianness and academic success. This is also the only time in the discussion she used ‘we’ in referring to a co-ethnic Asian group as opposed to ‘they’. Male settlers (e.g., Matt) who expressed pride in their ability to integrate into NZ society and derided co-ethnic peers who fail to do so, similarly used ‘we’ only in the context of describing certain ‘Chinese’ traits as more ideal or superior (e.g., being family oriented).
This fragmentary presentation contrasts with the portrayal of Chinese youth as consistently siding with ‘Chinese’ values or ‘western’ ones in making self-identity, and echoes research where Asian youth reject essentialist racial labels (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008). While this complexity presented stands to challenge presumed racial homogeneity which underpins racist discourse (Chadderton, 2013), the participants nonetheless drew on fixed racial differences (e.g., “we’re smart”). Though Hik added “we work hard” in accounting for Asian academic achievement, the narrative implied a racial hierarchy, and does not sever the link between Asian and “undersexual nerdiness” (Huynh & Woo, 2014, p. 365).

The resistance imbedded in such shifting of racial identification is limited. As identity is “always an act of exclusion” (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 465), being called into Chineseness forecloses possibilities of (sexual or social) expression afforded by being Kiwi and vice versa. In this binary structure, minority youth need to assert constant efforts to counter racialised stereotypes through their embodied practices, including sexual practice (Huynh & Woo, 2014). Accordingly, this ‘resistance’ often takes the form of reiterating hegemonic norms perceived opposite to what being Chinese entails. However, “mere reversal is never sufficient as an oppositional strategy” (Eglash, 2002, p. 60). While such efforts can be read as subversive (see Francis & Archer, 2005b), their transgression is limited as they do not challenge the pejorative sexual meaning of ‘nerd’, or the negative sexual association of Chineseness. Instead, embodiment appears influenced by racial meanings of being Chinese in different contexts: a Chinese racial position is only taken up when a dominant discourse enables positive meanings of Chineseness. The participants’ alignment with or refusal of Chineseness is thus a reproduction of the model minority and the Asian nerd stereotype, respectively.

It appears settler participants may perceive more social scrutiny in relation to ‘nerdiness’ than sojourners participants, who have resided in NZ for less time and feel less compelled to identify with the mainstream sexual culture. There might also be less stigma attached to a ‘nerd’ or its linguistic equivalents in Asian societies (Kinsella, 2000). Settler Chinese youth are frequently faced with a double bind created by the model minority and Asian nerd stereotypes, and feel compelled to negotiate a balance between academic achievement and popularity (D. B. Qin, 2009).

Nonetheless, agency against dominant constructions could also be found in participants’ reconfiguration of Chineseness in relation to presumed sexual (in)attractiveness. Though norms may make and shape us, we also “occupy, reverse, resignify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely” (Butler, 1993, p. 127). A few participants, across sojourners
(e.g., J, Ccao) and settlers (Cosy, Lisa) reported academic commitment as sexually appealing, whilst being fully aware of the Asian nerd stereotype. For example:

Cosy: I’d say I’m probably more attracted towards the (.) nerdy Asian, the nerdy kind of type (...) [settler, female, age 23]

Lisa: yeah especially if they’re smart, yeah [settler, female, age 24]

In summary, the production of Chinese young diaspora as sexual subjects is closely intertwined with racial constructions. Racial discourses limit Chinese young people’s academic as well as racial subject positions. School and university in particular, are “sites of cultural struggle” (D. Epstein et al., 2003, p. 7), where being marginalised (i.e., Asian or nerdy, or often both) poses as a ‘problem’ that needs to be dealt with on a daily basis (Bishop et al., 2004). Such experience gives rise to new identities, social relations and even bodies. However, mere negation does not undermine the stereotype itself and reinforces its underlying power relations, as well as a Eurocentric view of youth sexuality and bodies.

“It works up and up as a ladder”

In this final section, I place sexuality within a bigger picture of the normative life course consisting of education, employment and family (Elder, 1985; Elder & Rockwell, 1979). I argue education is a precursor to a heteronormative and linear life structure. More specifically, I look at the way education is positioned around what is normatively considered the next priority in Chinese young people’s life: marriage. In between these two imperative projects, Chinese young people are left with a rather small space and a very short window to explore their sexual selfhoods.

In the data, participants commonly articulated a linear structure of ‘good life’, where educational attainment leads to good jobs, good income and eventually fulfilling (family) life (Pang et al., 2015). This successful progression from education to family is seen as defining ‘normal’ adulthood (Badger et al., 2006), and is most evident in participants’ responses to Figure 8 and Figure 9 below, two photo collage images used in focus groups. Though the two images were placed randomly in the photo collage rather than in any consecutive order, participants tended to pick and talk about them together, as among the most appealing pictures.
Figure 8. Selected image from internet search results for “Asian student graduation” (Anderson, 2011).

Figure 9. Selected image from internet search results for “Chinese family” (Unknown, 2010).

Howard: (…) it [Figure 8] means academic success, then you can—like you can—then you can find a good job then take care of (.) your family [sojourner, male, age 22]

Matt: (…) after studying and after getting a good job, at the end of the day we wanna have a stable family, so that’s why you know um we picked this one [Figure 9], (…) and then after that, you know you—you have babies and stuff and the you be the (.) grand—grandparents and stuff so it works up and up as a ladder [settler, male, age 22]

Although this normative order of life is not racially or culturally specific (Carpenter & DeLamater, 2012), Chinese young people may be more likely than their European counterpart to use education, career and ultimately marriage to mark the transition into adulthood (Badger
et al., 2006; Yeung & Hu, 2013). Due to the cultural emphasis on duty, respect and obligations to family (Fuligni et al., 1999), Asian youth demonstrate greater adherence to family expectations in terms of social (D. B. Qin, 2009), academic (Da & Welch, 2016) and sexual ‘decisions’ (S. Zhang & Kline, 2009). In China, marriage is inevitably linked to housing (Fincher, 2014) and producing children (Pimentel, 2000). Therefore the sequence of education, career and marriage is cascading in terms of ensuring family welfare. Especially for Chinese men, education level and ensued career security and financial prospect are among the most important assets in the partner selection process, as many Chinese women still hold the belief that husbands should be superior in these aspects (Higgins et al., 2002) in exacting marriage partner standards (L. Z. Li, 2015).

Chinese family often play a significant role reinforcing this normative life trajectory, where marriage follows education as the next imperative (Pimentel, 2000). Like reported below, this role could involve gentle ‘nudging’ to signal to the youth their ‘tasks’, or more direct instructions on the young person’s dating.

Lisa: when you go back to Hong Kong, the first thing they ask is “Have you graduated” the second thing is “Do you have a boyfriend?” (chuckles) [settler, female, age 24]

Eden: mom’s more serious now, she’s like you should start dating girls that are nice, you’re getting older you’re gonna start looking at long-term and marriage, have a three year relationship and you’re already like 24, 25, so that kind of thing, when I was like 17 or 20, it didn’t matter too much (…) [settler, male, age 21]

Underlying parents’ concern around children’s dating life is the presumption that this dating should lead to marriage, and in a timely manner (L. J. Martin, 2015). This discourse of marriage as an inevitable destination and universal is particularly powerful in China (Pimentel, 2000). For Chinese adults, this means as they reach a date-able age as deemed by the parents (e.g., after most or all education) (see L. J. Nelson & Chen, 2007), they suddenly need to be marriage-ready, or at least to start progressing towards marriage.

This abrupt transition brings a sudden shift in sexual expectations, as captured by the participants’ accounts. While dating during schooling years is frowned upon, even prohibited, not dating at a time when parents deem it appropriate is also considered problematic and worrying.
Cosy: I think they [parents] did teach me (chuckles) to focus on studying in school, and then I guess I didn’t really say anything about it, and then when I was in uni, I kind of just carried on with the similar kind of attitude where study comes first (chuckles), um I think (pause) maybe there were a few times in the last three four years where my parents are a little bit wondering why I’m not dating anyone (all chuckle) [settler, female, age23] The paradox Cosy presented highlights the awkward relation between education and dating according to the normative life course encouraged by Chinese parents. Young people are expected to complete the transition from sexually innocent and abstinent children to sexually knowing and active young adults on their own course, with no parental guidance. This transition however, is often not a smooth one for young people. Intimate relationship is often constructed as naturally occurring, evolving in a “preordained fashion”, relying on no specialised knowledge other than ‘animal instinct’ (Allen, 2005b, p. 58). However, research shows people with no precursory experience to sexual interactions (e.g., kissing, dating) during adolescence may have increasing difficulty later to associate with others sexually (Donnelly, Burgess, Anderson, Davis, & Dillard, 2001). Additionally, this shift does not necessarily allow the young people more room to be sexual; it may even delineate a narrower space as it comes with a pressing timeline to marriage. Particularly, young Chinese women are allowed a very short time window to explore their sexuality, as parents always worry they are either too young to date, or too told to find a husband (J. L. Kim, 2005). As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the marriage imperative also places considerable restraints on young Chinese women’s premarital sexual practice in relation to the notion of sexual respectability. The incompatibility and contradiction of these expectations of study and dating is pronounced in Yuiko’s articulation of a double bind below.

Yuiko: my family’s weird, when I don’t talk about relationship stuff, maybe I’ve been just talking about study recently, they’ll be like well your age is actually—it’s time you found someone, but once I talk about relationship issues my mom’s like—like when I’m a bit upset, my mom’s like, you have to know what are you’re supposed to be doing overseas, (Int chuckles) you should focus on study, don’t let those trivial things distract you, they’re like that you know, so sometimes I really don’t know whether I should talk about it or not [sojourner, female, age 25]

“Finding someone” and “focusing on study”, when the two precluding priorities coexist in a Chinese young person’s life, there seems no way to get it right. Yuiko’s parents’ anxiety results
from their understanding of both education and marriage as life-advancing neoliberal projects closely linked to market economy (Farrer, 2002; L. Z. Li, 2015). Especially for women in China, the pressure to marry at an acceptable age is immense (i.e., 30 is deemed "unmarriageable age") (Fincher, 2014), and parents/family are often the primary enforcer of this norm (J. L. Kim, 2005). For some young women, the marriage imperative could preclude them from academic pursuits.

Ccao: in China people are like “PhD? Jeez why would you do that?” (chuckles) (...) lots of questioning and criticising, “You want to avoid working right? Or avoid social contact? Why study so much? What’s the use? Is it gonna get you a job? You do a PhD and you’re gonna have trouble marrying yourself off” (both laugh) [sojourner, female, age 25]

These data suggest the normative life course of education—career—marriage is also one-directional. Education supposedly paves the way to, and gives way to the next two life projects. Academic accomplishment is welcomed by the parents but too much of it, especially for young women (see Shu & Zhu, 2012), discounts their sexual value and warrants intervention. However, reversely, Ccao demonstrated education can also be deployed strategically to legitimate or excuse her lack of interest to enter (heterosexual) relationships (D. Epstein et al., 2003; Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016), which might otherwise be taken to signal ‘problematic’ sexualities:

Ccao: basically (.) I just say I’ve always been studying, haven’t thought about that kind of thing (both laugh), even now this line can still work, like if you tell people you’re not really that (.) enthusiastic about relationships or getting a companion, they’d think there’s something wrong with you (chuckles), or you’re homosexual or something

On her demographic information sheet, Ccao identified her sexuality as “not sure, asexual maybe”, but later in the individual interview, she gave the following account:

Ccao: maybe I am actually a les [lesbian] (both laugh), I just don’t want to develop anything (…) I have to think about my parents, so being into girls (.) is bit hard

Due to the heteronormative construction of dating in Chinese societies (i.e., leading to marriage and children), queer intimate relationships are sanctioned. As heterosexual youth are seen as legitimate sexual beings after a certain age, queer youth are either pressured into “a rehearsal of normative heterosexual adulthood” where they present themselves as heterosexual (D. Epstein et al., 2003, p. 7), or like Ccao, avoid intimate relationships all together. Even without
direct interference, Ccao’s parents still play a prohibitive role in her sexual (in)experience. By encouraging a (hetero)normative life course and expecting Ccao to eventually marry, they serve as heteronormalising agents.

Ccao’s continued academic pursuit can also be interpreted as an act to reject the transition into normative womanhood and to prolong the embodiment of ‘girlhood’, an “anti-heteronormative and non-reproductive queer time” free from feminine obligations (Yue, 2016, p. 29). Young women in other studies have reported using education to defer intimate relationships where they are subject to unequal gender relations and expectations (E. E. Blair, 2016; D. Epstein et al., 2003). Rather than passive automatons desexualised by academic demands, young people can also be seen as actively choosing to focus on academic advancement and to reject intimate relationships. This trend is emerging among American millennial generation of youth (born in 1980’s and 90’s) who are found much less sexually active than previous generations of Generation X and Baby Boomers, especially young women (Twenge, Sherman, & Wells, 2016). In a post-feminist neoliberal society, young women must now strive for not only normatively defined feminine ideals but also individual success. This expectation does not close the chasm between academic and sexual selfhoods, but assumes young women can simply juggle and succeed at both (e.g., Jasmine’s account earlier on negotiating dating and medical school). The sexual inactivity found among the young women appears informed and agentic, as they report preoccupation with work or study (Bahrampour, 2016). In this sense, this sexual inactivity may signal young women’s protest against the post-feminist pressure for them to “have it all” (Gill & Scharff, 2011).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I identified a relationship between education and sexuality for Chinese young people in my study. Findings reveal an overall pattern of prioritising education over sexuality among both the young people themselves and their parents. Through analysing this pattern, I demonstrated how education is conceptualised and experienced as a neoliberal life project of self-advancement. Educational accomplishment is vital in ensuring smooth transition to, and success in, ensuing life-stages, including employment and marriage. Young people’s expression of their sexuality is significantly constrained in this process, first by an academic focus which is believed to preclude sexual interest or expression, and later by a pressing notion of marriage. Chinese family serves as a heteronormalising agent. While young people are studying, they monitor, discourage and prohibit children’s sexuality to ensure their academic
focus, and once children enter a marriageable age, they expect the children to start dating in a timely fashion towards marriage. Participants largely demonstrated agreement and collusion with the importance of education, but showed variation and resistance in how they perform their sexual selves. In particular, as academic commitment is conflated with ‘Asianness’ and ‘nerdiness’ in a western context, settler participants engage in an intricate negotiation of their race, gender and sexual selves in resisting the stereotype. Some participants reported using education to evade the heteronormative gender or sexual expectations. As I elaborate next in Chapter 7, the young people also respond to parental or social influence in their sexuality through other means, including living a double life (e.g., Lau et al., 2009), and going overseas to study, in order to set off new life trajectories and disrupt the linear progression of normative life events (D. Qin & Lykes, 2006).
Chapter 7: Being Chinese and Sexual in NZ

In this chapter, I explore how living in NZ shapes the way Chinese young people become sexual subjects. Their geographical border-crossing, either through immigration settlement or sojourning education, is also a movement across cultural and racial borders, with ramifications for the constitution of subject’s sexual subjectivity. I show that while the border-crossing from China to NZ offers Chinese young people room for resisting oppressive sexual/gender norms, this movement is by no means simply one “from repression to freedom” as narratives of global mobility often problematically depict (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001, p. 670).

As a racial minority whose heritage culture is deemed ‘foreign’ or Other by the dominant society of NZ, young Chinese diaspora’s production of sexual subjectivity involves complex navigation within racial power relations. In the next four sections, I demonstrate how (1) this border-crossing enables some Chinese young people to escape oppressive networks in China, (2) living in NZ affords some young people more sexual freedom as autonomous sexual beings (3) the transformative effect of border-crossing is complicated by racialised constructions of Chinese sexuality in co-ethnic Chinese networks in NZ, and (4) mainstream NZ society prescribes new norms for Chinese young people, producing further entanglements of race, gender and sexuality.

This chapter continues and extends several threads of inquiry from earlier chapters, including the role of family and peers in Chinese young people’s sexual life (discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6), the double life (from Chapter 5), and the racialisation of Chinese sexuality (from Chapter 6). Supplementing the previous chapter where Chinese young people’s sexuality was examined in relation to life events (i.e., education and marriage), this chapter offers a migratory perspective with a focus on racial relations incurred by border-crossing, including interracial (i.e., white, Asian) and intra-racial (i.e., sojourner, settler) dynamics.

NZ as escape

Some sojourner participants explicitly articulated ‘escape’ was a motivation for, or a welcomed outcome of, geographical border-crossing in relation to sexuality. As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, many participants reported parents as the primary enforcers of gender/sexual norms. As sojourner participants are mostly in NZ without family supervision, some talked of being able to evade family “meddling” in their sexual lives.
KJ: I came here when I was 18, and as I came here, my mom—my parents—it’s like I’m already out, I’m too far away for them to control, and they have no idea what’s going on with me here (…) my mom finds different ways to like peek in what I’m doing, or sometimes ask my cousin to check my blogs or some stuff, ‘cos I don’t add her (…) she’d ask different people, even some of her friends, maybe a little bit older than me, and they can talk to me, she always ask them to come to ask if I have a boyfriend but of course I know (chuckles) [sojourner, female, age 23]

As traditional cultural norms around filial piety and interpersonal harmony persist among Chinese young people despite increasing ‘westernisation’ (Chang, 2005), young Chinese tend to avoid social transgression (D. Qin, 2004) and comply with close social networks in mate-selection (H. Zhang et al., 2004; S. Zhang & Kline, 2009) and dating (Moore & Wei, 2012; Pimentel, 2000). However, leaving for a foreign country to study conveniently took young people like KJ out of the range of family monitoring. New sexual possibilities (e.g., whom to date) and expressions are enabled by reduced familial control (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016). Other participants (e.g., E, sojourner female) managed to continue their romantic relationships despite their parents’ disapproval: “I’d save up and fly back to China for a week to see him [behind mom’s back]”. Similarly, sojourner Holly has kept her relationship with an older man in NZ a secret from her family out of concern of disapproval.

While these participants’ ‘escape’ is rewarded with increased sexual autonomy, in other cases, the ‘escape’ is driven by a perceived need to avoid punishment for non-normative sexualities. Yuiko who decided to leave for NZ after her divorce in China, described dealing with family relatives as potentially tortuous if she stayed.

Yuiko: I think now I’ve escaped, so (both chuckle)—so I don’t feel it [pressure] that strongly, but for my parents, every time they see my relatives, especially around New Year, they probably find it a torture [sojourner, female, age 25]

In general, interpersonal relationships in China are a powerful web that scrutinises, controls and constitutes ways of being (D. Qin & Lykes, 2006). The family structure in particular, disseminates and strengthens traditional values through the discourse of honour and shame, especially for young women (Durham, 2004; J. L. Kim & Ward, 2007). As suggested in Chapters 5 and 6, for Chinese women, the lack of marriage status diminishes their claim to sexual respectability and social standing (Ramberg, 2013). Some female participants therefore experienced the separation from China as a relief (see also King & Sondhi, 2016) as they could
now evade the pressure of entering the marriage market as experienced by their same-age peers in China.

Holly: (if I stayed in China) mom’s nagging at you every day so it’s impossible (to stay unmarried) plus there’s the outside influence and you feel pressured yourself too, you see your peers around you, everyone’s married or having children and you’re the only one who’s not (...) [sojourner, female, age 25]

Shan: (my) friend from high school, she’s 22, she tells me she’s been set up for matchmaking for a couple of years now (...) she’s like yeah, my mom’s been rushing me, saying it’s gonna be difficult to get married once I’m 25, I’m like what? She said, yeah actually I’m worried too, worried I’ll get rejected [sojourner, age 22]

As suggested in Chapter 6, a very short window is imposed on Chinese young women between the time they are seen as eligible to date or marry (e.g., 18+) to when they are considered too old. Women past age 27 (and better educated) are considered to have less of a chance to find a suitable husband as they grow older (Zurndorfer, 2016). These norms operate by creating anxiety and fear in young women and gain power through their very reiteration (Foucault, 1977). Leaving the country allows the young people to escape the network which sustains such fear and makes transgression of the norm unimaginable.

Apart from family and social networks, the highly heteronormative society itself was also described as a reason for escape. When bisexual identified participant Bel came out to her father during a holiday back home, the father disclosed he had known about her sexuality for some time:

Bel: he said, that’s probably one reason I sent you overseas too, (...) he said he’s pretty upset too, because it’s hard to accept this, not for him, but for the society he lives in, to accept this [my sexuality] [sojourner, female, age 19]

Bel’s account points outs that for some parents, the concern that their children will be rejected by the wider society for their sexuality may be a more potent reason underlying their negative reaction than their own intolerance. Sending children overseas to a perceivably more liberal society is hence an alternative solution.

However, not all Chinese queer youth are as ‘lucky’ as Bel, as research shows Chinese parents tend to play a constraining, rather than enabling role in queer youth’s sexual subjectivity
Gay identified male participant Lake reported he decided to leave China partly because he was aware of his parents’ expectation for him to marry. Similar to Lake, Ccao had not come out to her family, but mentioned being away from parents (and the wider social network) as stress relieving (see also Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016).

**Int:** does your decision to study overseas have anything to do with your *sexuality*?

**Ccao:** sure it does. Coming here, leaving parents and friends, no one knows me overseas, overseas environment is more relaxing too, but when I graduate and go back, at least what I’ve experienced and seen overseas allows me to be more ready and brave to face my sexuality, and less at a loss of what to do when I go back [sojourner, female, age 25]

As Ccao explained, since her trajectory was to return to China after study, the period of time in NZ could only be experienced as a short, recuperative reprieve (Quach et al., 2013). Such ‘escape’ for most sojourners is hence temporary. For this reason, some queer participants were motivated to make the ‘escape’ more permanent. Gay identified participant Lake reported his decision to study overseas as part of a bigger project of emigration (King & Sondhi, 2016).

**Lake:** this is also why I haven’t applied for the Chinese government scholarship, ‘cos I don’t want to be (.) tied down (…) after study I’d probably (.) emigrate, move myself out of the country [China] [sojourner, male, age 25]

Lake’s relocation is profoundly informed by his sexuality, suggesting “sexuality and sexual identities, practices, and desires may be pivotal factors for migration” (Manalansan, 2006, p. 225). Like Mai and King articulate, in “people’s understanding of who/where they are and who/where they want to be”, one’s sexual and emotional self closely interacts with and is often inseparable from the desire to experience new worlds, to resist oppression and to improve one’s economic status (2009, p. 297). Such movements can be understood as an ethical practice of freedom, where individuals strategically gain access to and take up subject positions that are less governed and allow more possibilities of being (Foucault, 1997). This theorisation is elaborated on in the next section.

**NZ as liberating**

Relative to the ‘escaping’ sexual subject, the ‘liberated’ subject constituted here is more defined by the participants’ lived relations in NZ rather than the ones they distance from in
China. According to Foucault’s theorisation, freedom is a practice (Foucault, 1997), and its ultimate goal is the expansion of possibilities of action (McWhorter, 1999). I show below that being in NZ enables Chinese young people access to alternative ways of being (sexual), hence more freedom. Participants reported an expanded repertoire of possibilities in NZ in terms of sexual expression, gender norms and sexual safety.

Firstly, sojourner participants’ exposure to more diverse peer groups and cultures in NZ fosters new possibilities of sexual expression. Sojourner participant M who is accustomed to associating with multiracial peer groups made an observation of fellow Chinese sojourners:

M: I think those Chinese young people have a (. ) pretty wild heart too, just that they didn’t have anyone to do these things with, if I say I’m gonna smoke some weed, those who’ve never done it would do it with me, so it’s strange, they have the desire, just no one to do it with (…) they probably do feel liberated after they come here (chuckles), they—like a girl as hot as my friend Tall Girl [nickname], short (Chinese) guys don’t usually dare go after her, but here they do [female, age 24]

Being in a ‘foreign’ location is closely associated with increased confidence and adventurousness in practicing sexuality (Walsh, 2007). Additionally, as Auckland gradually becomes a globalised dwelling place, transient sexual encounters which focus on sexual desire rather than romance or committed relationship occur more commonly, especially among transnational individuals, such as sojourners (Walsh, 2007, 2009).

A perceived liberal sexual culture in NZ could also increase sexual ‘permissiveness’, as some previously prohibited choices become possible. “Knowledge of more than one discourse and the recognition that meaning is plural allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual”, or at least room for resistance (Weedon, 1997, p. 102). Bisexual identified participant J spoke of this shift. He can now imagine new sexual possibilities for himself, as sexual practices take on new meanings (e.g., nudism is a legitimate sexual practice).

J: I feel (sexual) awakening, definitely yes, ‘cos certain things weren’t—like it didn’t bother me, but it’s a different matter whether you’d do it, it’s OK other people do it but I wouldn’t, but now I feel, maybe I can do it too (…) it’s more open over here, you get reminded all the time, earlier our university had a poster of a nudist club (…) [sojourner, male, age 24]

Additionally, because of NZ’s legal recognition of same-sex relationships (i.e., the Civil Union Act 2004, the Marriage Amendment Act 2013), some queer participants such as J associate NZ
with new possibilities for intimate relationships, as shown in his narrative and personal drawing (Figure 10) below.

J: (we’ll be) in civil union, then buy a house, a dog, two dogs, he and I both like dogs, then we work hard for our own careers

![Figure 10. J’s photo of his drawing of imagined life in NZ with his then boyfriend.](image)

The symbolic significance of marriage also allows queer young people to reimagine themselves as members of traditional nuclear families (i.e., husband/wife), as they are now no longer “unmarriageable” (A. Y. Chung, 2016). This is illustrated in gay participant L’s account and personal photo (Figure 11).

L: I just want to get registered here, so I can call myself married, even if I have to get a divorce later, I just wanna get married, experience it [sojourner, male, age 21]
Being in NZ also affords new possibilities for gender relations, particularly for young Chinese women. Several sojourner women (Shan, Holly) critiqued traditional gender/sexual norms in China after having experienced intimate relationships with more egalitarian (or less misogynistic) gender relations in NZ. Notably, these more equal relationships were often interracial relationships with Caucasian men.

Holly: I was cleaning up in the kitchen, and he [ex-boyfriend in China, Chinese] said, he said the way you clean up, if my mom sees it she’ll definitely tell you off, like that (chuckles) you hear that you’re like, what? (laughs) you know, it’s upsetting, what the hell (…) ‘cos I’ve been with a white man since I got here, if I meet another Chinese boyfriend who’s like this, I’d definitely feel (more sensitive) (…) that boyfriend, he’s always like, like talking about your breasts, size and stuff, like “Your breasts are too small” (…) I think it’s the Asian culture, men always judge women, why, you—you—you’re not so well built yourself compared to foreigners but we’d never think to belittle you because of it [sojourner, female, age 25]

*Figure 11. L’s photo taken at his first arrival in NZ.*
Such narratives are echoed by Asian young women in other research who believe interracial relationships (with Caucasian men) are more equal than co-racial ones (Morgan, 2015). The gender inequality they experience in co-racial relationships involves not just their male partners, but also the wider patriarchal gender order in Chinese societies which produces ‘Mommy’s boys’ as well as scrutinising in-laws (e.g., Holly’s ex-boyfriend’s mother) (A. Y. Chung, 2016). Research also shows Chinese ethnicity predicts traditional gender views for Chinese diasporic men, and acculturation has no effect on their views of gender egalitarianism as it does with Chinese women (C. Kim et al., 2004). Holly’s accounts showcases for her at least, the practice of freedom (i.e., pursuing egalitarian gender relations) is contingent on dating non-Asians. Nonetheless, homogenising claims could reinforce existing negative stereotypes about Asian masculinity as domineering and unappealing (Chua & Fujino, 1999; Pyke, 2010). I challenge this idealisation of white masculinity in the final section in relation to white supremacy.

Other female participants (Yuiko, Jaw) articulated an opposite relation between gender expression and interracial relationship. Rather than enable non-normative, ‘non-Asian’ ways of performing femininity as seen in Holly’s narrative, interracial relationships for them are contingent on their non-normative gender performance. Settler female Jaw, who has never dated Asians gave the following account:

Jaw: Asian guys don’t really like me anyway ‘cos I’m like (. ) I don’t give a crap I don’t have much of a filter and I’m not really like a really nice girl they wanna take home to their parents (all chuckle) you know (chuckles), I don’t know I’ve never really encountered an Asian guy I happen to like but it’s also like (. ) the stuff I do is quite—I just don’t know any Asian dude who’d be in into it, whereas white guys I just get on with you know, surfing, hockey, have my nose broken and go travelling by myself when I’m 18, I just do these stuff Asian parents don’t let their kids do [age 22]

This account suggests interracial relationships do not merely occur as a result of “propinquity” (Herman & Campbell, 2012, p. 344). Instead, they may be conscious, if not intentional, and informed by the participants’ self-constitution as gendered subjects. Being diasporic expands one’s access to alternative ways of being feminine (or masculine), as well as the possibilities of expressing them through intimate relationships (Dwyer, 2000).

Finally, the availability of sexual health services in NZ expands possibilities of action in terms of sexual safety, especially for Chinese women. Sojourner female Holly reported she only
started to consciously seek out sexual health information through family planning services after arrival in NZ.

Holly: I’ve been (to family planning in NZ) for information, because I have a sex life, I have to know (the information) (…) I think that’s the difference after I’ve come here, because people used to—the culture in China is people don’t want to talk about it, so you never really go and find out and even if—like there’s family planning in China, I don’t know what it’s called (in Chinese), you go in and you feel really uncomfortable, because the environment in China makes you feel this is something bad, especially if you’re not married (…) when I was in China, what I knew about contraception was just the pills, and only the emergency pills as I knew at the time, they’re actually quite harmful, but there are actually many kinds, that is the worst kind, so over here if you really go and find out, you can choose a method that suits you best [age 25]

As identified in Chapter 4, the circulation and communication of sexual information in China is commonly constrained by traditional sexual norms. Access to sexual health services in China is also limited (B. Wang et al., 2005) and formal family planning is officially only available for married couples (Tu, Cui, Lou, & Gao, 2004). This infrastructure reflects and strengthens the cultural taboo around premarital sex, posing considerable barriers to young people’s knowledge and utilisation of sexual health services in China (C. Wang, 2012), which may lead to their continued low usage of such services overseas (Burchard et al., 2011; B. Lee et al., 2013). For some participants in this study, the mere knowledge of such services being available and easily accessible in NZ appears to encourage their utilisation. Holly further described she first discovered a family planning facility while having a walk on the beach. The normality of such services in NZ made her choice to engage in these services easy (B. Lee et al., 2013).

In another focus group, sojourner female Bel reported having attended a helpful sexual health programme in NZ, which allowed her to find out what she was not even aware that she needed to know:

Int: so what do you think, do you have enough awareness (of sexual health)?

Bel: (pause) I don’t think so (Helen: yeah), not if you’re really having sex, like—like you know you don’t know something only after you’ve learned about it, like before, there was a course with Rainbow Youth, they taught us how to use a condom (…) we all know (how to use one) but I think if you weren’t taught you don’t know what you don’t know, first I wouldn’t know to check their expiry date, secondly I didn’t know which way (it goes on),
and then thirdly I didn’t know (chuckles) like—like—I think actually—‘cos we had to try to put it on, still took me three to four goes, so I think there are things you still need to be taught [bisexual, age 19]

This account illustrates empowerment through sexual knowledge. Through the sexual health programmes, Bel obtained knowledge that enabled transformation in her personal views of sexual safety (i.e., “you need to be taught” about condoms). Her options for safer sexual practice were expanded (e.g., checking for expiry date). The availability of such sexual health services therefore enabled her more freedom through opening up possibilities for (sexual) action (Oksala, 2005) that are otherwise restricted by the lack of sexual knowledge.

**NZ as in-between space**

I now complicate the picture of Chinese young people in NZ as ‘liberated’ and/or ‘escaping’ sexual subjects and show they remain subject to traditional Chinese sexual norms represented by co-ethnic ties, including family and peers. Living in NZ as Chinese places young people in an in-between space, where they may experience sexual messages from Chinese community and the mainstream culture as conflicting.

**Parents and family**

As demonstrated in Chapters 5-7, Asian families tend to exercise greater control over young people’s private sexual matters than European counterparts (Espiritu, 2001; S. Zhang & Kline, 2009). Such cultural expectations hold across national borders, as illustrated in settler participants’ accounts about the mandate of parental authority they experience (see also D. Qin & Lykes, 2006; Uskul et al., 2007). For example:

Hik: my aunty was gossiping that he [my sister’s boyfriend] liked to race cars, he liked to (.)—had dyed hair (…) it got to my dad and my dad’s someone that doesn’t like to lose face, he’s really—you know, so he was like, people were talking, he didn’t like it, end your relationship, he didn’t consider maybe they loved each other, it didn’t matter, it was him, it was affecting him, so no you’re not to be together (…) [the boyfriend] got a haircut, (both chuckle) he (. ) sold his cars, and he came over one night with his dad, and he talked to my dad, and my dad told him that he had to get married, and they were only 19, 20, so people would stop talking (…) and they got married [settler, female, age 19]
As familial interdependence and harmony are prioritised over (sexual) autonomy (Triandis, 1995), Chinese young people’s partner selection and dating practice are often not matters of personal choice, but concern the whole family as their extended self (G. Gao, 1996; D. Qin, 2004). Individual sexual practice has bearings on family honour and shame, notions that are crucial in a patriarchal family order (Evans, 1997; Hasan, 2002). Compared to European youth, Chinese youth are found more likely to comply with parents’ expectations and wishes in dating, including the parents’ preferences for personal attributes (Hynie et al., 2006; S. Zhang & Kline, 2009) or race in partner selection (A. Y. Chung, 2016). In preserving family reputation, Hik’s father’s action created a relation of domination where power relations were asymmetrical and restrictive of action possibilities for the young people (Foucault, 1997).

Another settler woman Jaw’s account further highlights the strong influence of co-ethnic community (e.g., “people were talking”) on parental relationship. While Jaw’s mother approved of her dating and welcomed her boyfriend to stay over at their house, co-ethnic community’s scrutiny was still a concern. However, her mother dealt with the concern differently from Hik’s father:

Jaw: she’s like don’t (.)—don’t tell other people that your mom lets your boyfriend stay around or that you can stay around at a boy’s house, with me knowing, without lying to me you know, like I condoned it, it’s sort of like if you do it, that’s obviously normal, like you’re in New Zealand, it’s not Taiwan so whatever but with me knowing and being OK with it, it’s not OK (…) these Taiwanese community, Chinese communities whatever, she meant people (. ) like them [age 22]

Research suggests while some Asian parents overseas may be more likely than those in the countries of origin to idealise conservative sexual notions (e.g., female chastity) as a way to preserve cultural heritage, others may also relax their expectations in the host society (Espiritu, 2012). In Jaw’s case, being in NZ enables the possibility where her sexual practice is accepted by her mother (i.e., “it’s not Taiwan so whatever”). Even if knowledge of her dating can be compromising to her mother’s parenting reputation, room of negotiation was created to counter the constraining effect of co-ethnics’ judgement (i.e., “just don’t tell people”).

In dealing with Chinese community’s scrutiny, while Jaw’s mother strategically feigned Jaw’s ‘double life’ through pretending to be oblivious to Jaw’s sexual practice, Hik’s family’s approach led to real double lives. Hik kept a relationship secretly going for four years due to
her parents’ disapproval of her dating a Caucasian man. She disclosed her cousins who were dating Caucasians were also “too scared to tell” the parents.

Like sojourner female M introduced in Chapter 5, who pretend to be a virgin to her parents, settlers also commonly resort to silence (J. Yu, 2007), lies (J. L. Kim, 2005) or a double life (Lau et al., 2009) in defying parental authority without invoking (further) conflicts. However, settler parents’ paternalistic role may take on more racial significance than sojourners’, because children’s connection to heritage cultural norms is believed to be forged through parents (Davidson & Kuah-Pearce, 2008). For settler young people, family represents not just sexual norms, but also Chinese sexual norms. Subsequently young people’s conflicts with parents are often perceived as ethnically informed, their double life racially demarcated (between ‘Chinese’ and ‘white’) (J. L. Kim, 2005). For example, Hik explicitly articulated the alignment of family with ‘Chineseness’ and her personal sexual/social life with ‘Kiwness’ (see Chapter 6 for more on this division in relation to gender bodies).

Hik: they [my parents] understand that we’re all gonna like go out later, and be Kiwis and do white people things just ‘cos we’ve grown up in a Kiwi way, in a Kiwi environment, it’s not actually possible for us to (.) carry so much Chinese culture [settler, female, age 19]

A gender dimension in this family-personal divide is notable, as narratives of having to reconcile parents’ sexual intervention primarily came from female participants. Given the persistent sexual double standard in Chinese societies, young Chinese women in NZ may be more likely than men to perceive parental influence in sexuality as oppressive (see also Chapters 4 and 5). Research affirms Asian female immigrant youth are more likely than males to experience conflicting views with their parents (R. H. Chung, 2001), and also, to resist sexual rules enforced by parents (J. L. Kim, 2005).

The family-personal tension was also articulated by queer participants. Gay participant Lake described though he was now able to pursue and experience same-sex relationships, his parents’ potential disapproval remained a concern, especially if his double life enabled by their physical separation was disrupted. One of the personal photos Lake brought to the interview (see Figure 12) shows a framed photograph in his room of him and his boyfriend. When talking about his parental relationship in relation to his sexuality, Lake reported:
Lake: they [my parents] may come to NZ to travel and visit me next year (…) like that photo, (Int: yeah), maybe, maybe yeah maybe need to hide it [sojourner, male, age 25]

To maintain the double life, Lake later added he would have to introduce his then live-in boyfriend as his flatmate to the parents if they would come to visit.

Figure 12. Photo in Lake’s flat in Auckland of him with his boyfriend.

The accounts echo literature on queer Asian’s non-disclosure to family (Espiritu, 2001; Nemoto et al., 2003). Even if Lake had established a family of choice in NZ based on queer kinship (Weston, 2013), it could not be legitimately introduced to his family of origin. Instead, he needed to sustain a double life whenever his parents were involved, in responding to their regulative role.

**Co-ethnic peers and community**

Apart from family, co-ethnic peer groups in a host society also monitor sexual conduct of their group members according to racialised sexual norms (Nagel, 2000). Non-normative sexualities such as (perceived) permissive sexual practice, interracial dating, and same-sex desire can be typical targets of peer judgement.
Participants’ talk of sexual ‘permissiveness’ was characterised by a ‘them versus us’ divide. Many sojourner participants criticised fellow international students’ presumed sexual lifestyle as morally deviant and messy (expressed by participants in Chinese as 乱 (luan)). Night life in NZ was often referenced to prove their claim.

Erin: we came here as international students, there are those who study hard, and there are those who mess about, look at Primo [Asian nightclub], full of Chinese (...) messy (int: what do you mean by “messy”?), mindless, reckless, lots of international students like that in NZ (others: yeah) [sojourner, female, age 24]

Other participants more directly linked the ‘messiness’ of clubbing to a ‘problematic’, permissive sexuality, including sojourner Z and settler C, who came to NZ at age 16.

Z: places like Primo, you go there to talk? I don’t think so, you go there to (...) mess about (...) like picking up a girl, right? One night stand, the next day (...) you go separate ways [male, age 25]

C: if you always go to nightclubs, always come back drunk, I’d find it hard to consider you a good girl even if I want to, but, same thing I think, if a man goes to nightclubs a lot, always picking up drunk girls for one night stands, that’s not a good person either [male, age 25]

These accounts are not used here to support or dispute the extent of casual sex occurring among Chinese sojourners, which is not of interest in my discussion. Instead, I want to demonstrate how perceived non-normative sexual conduct (e.g., casual sex) is subject to surveillance in Chinese peer groups. As a physical site reflecting “the socially constituted desires of erotic participants in an aggregated form”, nightclub is simultaneously a space of sexual freedom and one of deviance, and youth’s identification of the space as either type of space “can provide a basis for people to make sense of their own action, with emotion and desire accordingly shaped by the sexual scripts and social norms existing in different times and spaces” (Hubbard, 2000, p. 290). From the perspective of the participants quoted above, being in NZ produces “messy”, promiscuous and reckless, rather than liberated sexual subjects. This difference in meaning making of the same sexual practice (e.g., casual sex) is seen in other studies where less sexually experienced individuals tend to find sexual hook-ups as inapprehensible, rather than empowering (Armstrong et al., 2014).
The ‘them versus us’ divide was also articulated along the racial line, as sexual permissiveness is perceived as part of western youth culture (J. Yu, 2008). For example:

Martin: white people here are pretty messy (One: yeah), like in University Hall, pretty messy [sojourner, male, age 22]

One: like getting on with this one for a few days, then with another one after a few days, pretty normal [sojourner, male, age 25]

Int: (...) you don’t desire that lifestyle?

Martin: no, I feel it’s not our culture (chuckles), watching American Pie I was like these westerners—they’re just meant to be like that, so be it

As sexual permissiveness/’messiness’ is Other-ed as ‘white’ (see also J. L. Kim, 2005; Wade & Heldman, 2012), it is simultaneously determined as not ‘Chinese’. As sexual differences are essentialised and solidified by racial lines, being Chinese closes down sexual possibilities considered racially non-normative. Chinese young people’s engagement in nightclubbing (and its presumed association with sexual permissiveness) therefore warrants co-ethnic peers’ judgement in a way that does not apply to Caucasians. Sojourner female KJ was fully aware of such racially informed bounds of sexuality, and took advantage of them to navigate between the two worlds of being sexual and being Chinese.

KJ: people see you (at nightclubs) and it looks bad (...) so I mostly went to local white clubs, ‘cos I’d consider my *reputation*, and don’t want too many Chinese to know about me (...) Kiwis don’t *care* about this as much, as long as you’re not always *cheating on other people*, or like you *sleep around*, it’s all good [age 23]

I have discussed women managing a double life to pursue sexual desire without forsaking sexual respectability in Chapter 5. KJ’s account further points to how the double life could be racially divided due to the role of co-ethnic networks. Other participants also observed the need to present different sexual selves across different ethnic groups.

Yuiko: I feel with foreigners [Caucasians] I don’t need to worry (about my reputation), but with Chinese friends, if I talk about it with them (...) like this girlfriend of mine, I’d tell her stuff, but I can feel it, like every time I wanna say a bit more, she makes me feel—and I know it, ok I should stop [sojourner, female, age 25]

The accounts are consistent with findings that Asian American youth and immigrants perceive pressure from their co-ethnic peers to refrain from sexual expressions or discussions (C. S.
Chan, 2008; Y. R. Zhou, 2012). They also extend my discussion in Chapter 4 on peer sexual communication. It appears co-ethnic peer groups tend to play a constraining role in diasporic young Chinese’s sexual practice or sexual communication through self-racialisation, which closes down possibilities of sexual selfhood.

Self-racialisation of co-ethnic networks is also evident in narratives of interracial dating. The racial divide of ‘them versus us’ manifests in ethnosexual gender stereotypes that portray ‘our woman’ as pure and ‘our men’ as virile, against ‘their women’ as sluts and ‘their men’ as degenerate (Nagel, 2000). Women who date outside their race (i.e., outdate) are perceived as violating such regimes. Female participants dating Caucasian men reported perceiving such judgement from with co-ethnics.

Shan: like he and I go to Momo Tea [a Chinese milk tea bar in NZ] and people would stare at me, I have no make-up on (…) guys probably think, (tsk) that woman, (tsk) (chuckles), then girls would think, she’s not even pretty (tsk), looking like that (both chuckle), you know, and I’m like jeez what the fuck, I live my own life, I’m the way I am, very casual, sometimes I find it very—very annoying, people somehow still think it’s special, if I stand together with him, people can still tell the difference in race at first sight, then have some stereotype or judgement, straight away, and if I do go in there all dressed up, (they’d think) “What a coquettish woman!” (laughs) [sojourner, age 22]

Visibility as an interracial couple could invoke harassment, even violence (Steinbugler, 2005), which is usually directed towards the woman in the relationship. Mirroring Shan’s account, a rather crude account from a Chinese male perspective was articulated by a sojourner participant.

Poker: I know one (Asian woman dating a Caucasian man), it pisses me off, I think (.) a Chinese woman getting fucked by foreigners [Caucasians], it pisses me off

Int: but it’s OK the other way around?

Poker: it’s OK the other way around, if it’s a white girl it’s OK, it’s glory for the country (chuckles), that we beat foreigners [Caucasians] [age 22]

‘Our women’ was a salient theme informing Poker’s hostility (see also Chua & Fujino, 1999), his misogyny exacerbated by perceived racial castration. Evident here is the colonial legacy imbedded in Asian-Caucasian race relations, that Chinese women’s body ‘occupied’ by Caucasian men conjures up the nationalist discourse of invasion and victimhood (L. H. Liu, 1994). In turn, Poker’s articulation as a national subject was through possession of Chinese or ‘foreign’ women. This symbolic meaning of the female body suggests the construction of
national identity as a male prerogative (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005), and nationalism as “a profoundly patriarchal ideology” (L. H. Liu, 1994, p. 58). Subsequently, Chinese women whose subjectivity has historically been displaced by this totalising, yet gendered discourse, “do not automatically share the male-centered sense of territory”, or as strong a need for national identity (L. H. Liu, 1994, p. 58). This theorisation sheds light on the generally higher tendency of Asian women to outdate or outmarry than Asian men (Fujino, 1997; Morgan, 2015).

Diasporic Asian women tend to show stronger identification with the mainstream culture than men, which predicts their openness to interracial dating (Mok, 1999; Uskul et al., 2007). Chinese men are less open to interracial dating than Caucasians (men and women) and Chinese women (Uskul et al., 2007), and more susceptible to network influence than Chinese women in partner selection (S. Zhang & Kline, 2009). Male participants in this study also normalised monoracial relationships with shared cultural background (see also A. Y. Chung, 2016).

Matt: I’ve been with a white person, you know, I know—I know um what’s good and bad about them so I wanna just go back to — go back to the Asian chicks (…) they’re like more down to earth, so they—they understand your background because they’re from the same background

Kid101: (…) I agree with him, I’m more into my Asians now because like from—my opinion right now, um, (pause) I think by the long run (…) what I notice with white people is um they got like no sort of emotion attached (…) they just wanna party for fun [both settlers, age 22]

The two NZ-born participants echoed sojourners introduced in Chapter 5 who essentialised observed differences between Asian women (e.g., family oriented) and Caucasian women (e.g., ‘wild’) as racially determined. These accounts also contrast with the resistance these two participants expressed elsewhere against a homogenising racial label (see Chapter 6). Like identified in Chapter 6, race is performative rather than a stable individual attribute. However, the assumption of race as underlining better compatibility remains largely taken for granted in partner selection across cultures (see Herman & Campbell, 2012).

Given the assumption of monoracial relationships as more ‘natural’, female participants’’ interracial relationships are often considered ingenuine or impure, tainted by racial exotification or external motives. As settler female Jaw described, she was exotified not by her Caucasian partner, but by her co-ethnic male peer.
Jaw: when I moved out of my flat last year, the guy that moved in, happened to (. .) know Nat [boyfriend] from my intermediate and high school and he’s Taiwanese as well, ( . . .) he said to him oh my god Nat, I didn’t know you had yellow fever, Nat didn’t respond so he said it again [age 22]

Alternatively, as Shan implied in her earlier account, Asian women’s motive in interracial dating is always subject to speculation in co-ethnic communities (i.e., using their sexuality in exchange for other gain) (see Nguyen, 2007). Participants in my study echoed such perceptions:

Bill: I think, the girl (in interracial relationships) doesn’t necessarily like the guy, she wants get Permanent Residency through him [settlement, male, age 24]

Overall, interracially dating female participants tend to be perceived negatively by co-ethnic peers, as either passive victims of ‘yellow fever’, or pragmatic, calculating gold-diggers. The portrayal is in stark contrast with some women’s own accounts of interracial dating in the last section as empowering, and reifies the racial boundaries of sexuality.

Finally, queer participants, especially males, spoke of applying particular discretion with co-ethnics around their sexuality.

Lake: I’d be more discreet with them [fellow Chinese students], more careful, but with other peers I would (tell them I’m gay) [sojourner, male, age 25]

The quantitative data also suggest Chinese sojourner participants are more likely than settlers to believe homosexuality is unnatural (t(162.919)= 2.2, p = .028), justifying Lake’s concern. With Chinese community in general, bisexual participant J described co-ethnics as a barrier rather than a source of support in relation to his sexuality:

J: with the identity as Chinese, actually there are conflicts sometimes, if you want to get some support in the Chinese community (here), it’s actually pretty much like in China ( . . .) from the organisation I worked for (in NZ), I got to know quite a few (queer people), I found it pretty comfortable during that time, ‘cos like—like you said I didn’t need to consider my straight side, like my other side was magnified, then—and um, I was free from the influence of Chinese traditional ideas [sojourner, male, age 24]

Both participants articulated an irreconcilable divide between their ‘Chineseness’ represented by the co-ethnic ties and their queerness (Bao, 2013), with the former constraining the latter (though racial stigma from queer communities are also prevalent, see Han, 2009). However,
this process is dynamic. A queer subject position becomes accessible, as the participants learn to navigate between co-ethnic communities and the local society.

Data presented in this chapter so far have consistently matched ‘traditional/liberal’ onto ‘Chineseness/Kiwiness’. However, a simplified understanding of Chinese societies as conservative and NZ society as liberal is problematic. Modern China has an increasingly liberal sexual culture and a market economy (Farrer, 2002), the combination of such conditions offering youth a growing variety of avenues “to live out various desires and needs” (Nguyen, 2007, p. 291). The host country can also impose oppressive domination on women, men, and queer migrants (Luibhéid, 2004; Manalansan, 2006). In the final section below, I destabilise the associations of China with sexual conservatism and NZ with sexual freedom, and demonstrate the way NZ mainstream society constrains Chinese young diaspora’s sexuality through uneven racial relations.

**NZ as marginalising and/or assimilating**

In this section, I show that living in NZ prescribes normative ways of being (sexual). As a visible racial minority, Chinese young people’s sexual subjectivity is fraught with racial assumptions which mark them as inherently Other. Especially, settlers are often pushed to defend/prove their ‘Kiwiness’ by erasing racial Otherness, or to accept a marginalised position. The constitution of sexual subjectivity closely intersects with race-making in this process. These racial power relations also produce intra-ethnic tension between settlers and sojourners.

**Sexual marginalisation and assimilation produced by white dominance**

The dominance of Caucasian racial status in NZ society is evident in participants’ experience of sexual relations. Sojourner female M talked of the perceived racial superiority in some Kiwi men (she was referring to NZ Europeans), resulting in relative difficulty in developing intimate relationships with them.

M: I feel *Kiwis* here have this “I’m better than you” kind of pride in them

Int: (…) do you find it harder to form casual sex relations with *Kiwis* in comparison (to people from elsewhere)?

M: yeah, I think like those who talk snobbishly, like real *Kiwis* here would [age 24]
The racial superiority of NZ Europeans M observed was echoed in settlers’ accounts of sexualised racial bigotry.

Jaw: so we were walking up the road, these two (Caucasian) guys are walking down the street, (...) they were like really loud, just so we could hear them saying, who’s gonna take the brunette, who’s gonna take the blonde, and I was like this is (.)—anyway, the minute they got close they were like “Nah she’s Asian I’m gonna go have her [the other girl]”, and I was just like, ok ‘cos you know I was totally just—I was like what’s the fuck wrong with you? It’s bad enough they were talking about like—completely sexualising us, as if they owned us (...) it’s like they rank you as well (Viv: yeah), a sexual rank—first it’s sexual then it becomes racial and then they just get really angry, you know [female, age 22]

Viv: yeah I think you can’t separate the two [female, age 21]

Int: (...) how different do you think it is for guys Eden?

Eden: yeah um [male, age 21]

Viv: is it like they try to fight you and

Eden: yeeeh um, they don’t try to fight me, they (. ) provoke, things like that (Jaw: they try to get you to fight them) yeah (...) sometimes if I’m feeling a bit worked up I’d go “seriously fuck off”, and they go “wait”, they’re like oh, they’re kind of shocked that I can speak English or shocked that I can say something back at them, and not be timid, or fearful, because they think we’re sort of inferior to them, or whatever (Jaw: yeah)

Segregated and stratified by gender and race (and class, see Griffin et al., 2013), urban night space produces unequal access to different “sexual fields” in the city (Hubbard, Gorman-Murray, & Nash, 2015, p. 290). While racial insults about women are typically sexually based, racially charged clashes of masculinity could entail physical aggression. These account show Chinese diaspora are deemed as perpetually different by NZ mainstream society in sexualised night spaces. Their sexuality is frequently marginalised when coming in contact with the dominant racial group.

Moreover, like Viv aptly summarised, gender and race are inseparable in Chinese diaspora’s constitution of sexual subjectivity. Their entanglement is prominently featured in interracial
intimate relationship. Settler female Jaw observed the racialised sexual hierarchies in interracial dating.

Jaw: if you’re a hot white guy, you’re just with a hot chick, maybe a hot Asian chick or a hot white chick or whatever, but if you’re an average or even unattractive white guy, you’ll never get really hot white chicks, but you may get a hot Indian chick or hot Asian chick or something, but if you’re an ugly white guy, you can still get with a hot Asian chick, but if you’re an Asian guy, well you’re fucked—if you’re a hot Asian guy, you might get with a hot white chick, has to be a really hot Asian guy but essentially their behaviour is totally white [age 22]

White male’s sexual privilege is pronounced in Jaw’s articulation, to which male participants showed varied responses. Apart from an antagonistic position documented in the last section (i.e., sojourner male Poker), there are also male sojourners who consider it “normal”. Sojourner male participant One (age 25) believe Caucasian men “have so many strengths” over Asian men, including “a sense of humour” and “many hobbies” that Asian men may have been restricted from developing due to their academic focus.

NZ-born male settlers also showed a different positioning to white masculinity via their talk. Many reported actively engaging in bodybuilding, which corresponds to what Jaw described as ‘white’ male behaviour. For example:

Eden: (…) not until I started getting bigger, I really liked that, I was like, this is cool, I did notice as I grew up over the years, I got less and less (.) shit from people

Int: (…) how about girls? Do you notice yourself getting more attention from women? (chuckle from one of the girls)

Eden: I don’t wanna sound cocky or anything, but yeah um, maybe a bit [age 21]

In a white dominant society, Asian men’s smaller physique often makes them targets of alienation and bullying on the basis of a non-normative masculinity (Barber, 2015). Bodybuilding not only offers a strategy to compensate for (real or perceived) physical inadequacy, but also normalises Asian masculinity through body modification (Connell, 2005). Given a growing male body norm as fit and muscular (Bordo, 1997a), bodybuilding has become a mainstream ‘fitness’ activity among (western) urban young men (Stokvis, 2006). For Asian men, workout not only signals participation in mainstream culture, but also allows them to transcend their racial body (i.e., small, nerdy), and in doing so, be recognised as a legitimate masculine subject.
Similarly, some settler female participants appeared acutely aware of their physical differences from Caucasian women. Presented as Figure 13, settler Jaw’s personal photo illustrates her hanging out with Caucasian female friends at a local music festival. As she recounted, eradicating racial differences as much as possible as she was growing up in a white neighbourhood in NZ was integral to her self-understanding as a gender and sexual being.

Jaw: I always felt different and I always—I guess like going out with boys and felt the other girls were like taller or prettier or whatever, and now I’m like actually not short, but I still feel really short, like if I wear high heels, my friends [mostly white] are like Jaw you’re really high why are you wearing such high heels? I’m like I’m not that tall, they’re like you’re really tall, I think it just really impacted me [age 22]

![Image of participant Jaw (middle) and her friends (both Caucasian).](image)

*Figure 13. Photo of participant Jaw (middle) and her friends (both Caucasian).*

Even as Jaw identified as being highly assimilated, being Asian is still a point of difference she is constantly made aware of, and works against her intelligibility as a sexual subject.

Jaw: boys would always be like, oh I’ve never liked an Asian but you’re like really awesome, I’m like oh great (both chuckle) that’s so flattering (laughs), you know there was always this point of difference and it’s always pointed out

This point of difference also subjects Asian women to exotification. Differently from Asian masculinity, Asian femininity is exotified in a way traditional feminine virtues (e.g., caring, gentle, submissive) (Itoh, 2014) are emphasised, even ‘celebrated’. Chinese women in interracial relationships may however find themselves constrained by such racialised feminine
stereotypes. Sojourner female Shan described the reason for her breakup with a Caucasian Kiwi boyfriend as below:

Shan: when we fought I’d be very—sometimes when I’m angry I’m like “You mess around, fuck it I’m gonna beat you” (chuckles), then they’re like how come an Asian girl is like this (…) so crazy (laughs) [age 22]

The fetishisation of Chinese femininity closely intertwines with white male supremacy. This relation is more apparent in Shan’s brief relationship with another Kiwi Caucasian male who claimed he really liked Chinese culture and often asked Shan to sing to him in Chinese.

Shan: I think actually he says he likes dating Chinese, but there’s his own Caucasian pride in it, like I go to his place and see his fences and ask what is this (…) I actually want to ask him what tree the fence is built from, and cut like that, and he’s like this is fences, this is like our white culture, to protect our privacy [sojourner, female, age 22]

As one of the female participants who reported dating Caucasians as emancipatory, Shan’s narratives here complicate this positioning. In the narrative she as a sexual being is defined almost exclusively by the Caucasian male partner’s exotification of her race, where he asserts his racial superiority (i.e., “our white culture”). Though she engaged in interracial relationships as a practice of freedom to expand her possibilities of being (sexual and feminine), she continued to be expected to perform traditional Chinese femininity in these instances. Other female participants, mostly settlers (e.g., Viv), also reported having encountered white men who “only go for Asian girls” and “see you for your race”. A belief of women’s interracial dating as sexually liberating and modernising is underlined by colonialist, racist, and culturalist assumptions that favour the western world (Luibhéid, 2004).

Becoming a sexual subject is therefore foremost a project of performing gender within racially demarcated parameters, and these parameters are defined through racial dominance. As “diasporic identifications are always configured through gender”, being diasporic could strengthen, rather than disrupt, patriarchal gender relations (Dwyer, 2000, p. 477). Gender power imbalance may be on some dimensions altered though race, but not abolished (Tienda & Booth, 1991). The presumed affirmative role of migration in raising women’s status is hence challenged.
Intra-ethnic tension produced by white dominance

As Chinese settlers may feel compelled to assimilate in order to be recognised as legitimate sexual beings, white dominance also facilitates intra-ethnic tension between Chinese settlers and sojourners. The following account subtly illustrates this intra-ethnic distance.

Eden: I’ll tell you a kind of interesting story, um I went clubbing with my Caucasian mates, a couple of Asian girls, one Asian guy, but we were Kiwi Asian, we went downtown, it’s fun it’s a good night. A different time ago, with a group of FOB Asians, and I was walking behind the group, they were all leading the way it’s for someone’s birthday, and I noticed about four five racist comments to our group, (…) (from) white people, downtown [settler, male, age 21]

Eden’s storytelling invokes a physical and emotional distancing from their less acculturated counterpart (e.g., the use of “we”, “they” and “I”) (see Moloney & Hunt, 2012; Shin, 2012). Research shows international students are frequently subject to racial segregation and micro-aggression (Park, Lee, Choi, & Zepernick, 2016; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), from both dominant racial groups (Ward & Masgoret, 2004) and co-ethnic settlers (Pyke & Dang, 2003). In a more explicitly derisive comment about sojourners, settler participant Matt ridiculed sojourners’ accent: “if they have this accent, oh god, yeah I was like yeah don’t talk to me eh” (see also Córdova & Cervantes, 2010). Eden’s account shows how racist bigotry works to instigate assimilation from racial minorities, by attacking those perceived as too ‘different’.

Growing up in NZ, many Asian settlers have experienced racial discrimination (Rasanathan et al., 2006), and feel compelled be more ‘white’ (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008). As “perpetual foreigners” (Coloma, 2013), their ‘Kiwiness’ must keep being proven, which often involves ridding their ‘Asianness’ (M. Ip & Pang, 2005) and disassociating with people perceived as ‘too Asian’ (see Huynh & Woo, 2014; Shin, 2012). To assert a hybridised Kiwi-Asian identity, which signals integration with local society, one must not be misrecognised as (just) an Asian ‘FOB’ student. However, just like sojourners, settlers’ intelligibility as sexual beings rests upon racial power relations that render them as inherently Other. In night spaces particularly, racial minorities are vulnerable to racism in a sexualised form (Hubbard et al., 2015). This may heighten settlers’ perceived need to avoid being mistaken for sojourners, through avoiding hanging out with “FOB Asians”. 
Furthermore, the intra-ethnic divide brings on the question about how the understanding of ‘Chinese sexuality’ may be shaped by a Eurocentric framework. Quantitative data in this study suggest settler participants are more likely than sojourners to believe Chinese are sexually conservative (t(243)=2.3, p=.025). However, participants’ reported sexual views suggest otherwise. Both mainland Chinese female and male sojourners place more importance on sex as an aspect of romantic relationships (female: t(133)=2.1, p = .040; male: (t(87)=2.3, p = .025)), and on fulfilling sexual needs (female: t(133)=2.2, p = .033; male: t(87)=2.5, p = .013) than their settler counterparts. Mainland Chinese sojourners (81.3%) are also significantly more likely than settlers (59.6%) to have had sexual experience ($X^2 (1, N = 273) = 14.1$, $p=.000$), including females ($X^2 (1, N = 149) = 6.1$, $p =.014$)) and males ($X^2 (1, N = 119) = 8.0$, $p =.005$).

While these comparisons point to mainland Chinese sojourners’ relative sexual liberalness, they are also more likely than settlers to consider themselves quite ‘Chinese’ when it comes to sexuality (t(226)=2.5, p = .013). Together, these findings suggest settler and mainland Chinese sojourner participants have very different understandings of what it means to be Chinese sexually, with settlers perceiving Chinese as more sexually conservative than they may actually be. This belief mirrors common understandings of Asian sexuality in western societies as conservative (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Okazaki, 2002), which do not capture the complexities of sexualities of Chinese (see also S. Pan & Huang, 2008; W. Zheng et al., 2014). Such monolithic and simplified western knowledge of Chinese sexuality may have colonised young Chinese settlers’ understanding of their heritage culture, giving rise to their lack of identification, even distancing with it.

This white colonisation may also occur through NZ schools. My finding on sexual labels offers an example. Among 317 survey participants who filled out the item on sexual identification, significantly more sojourner participants (who did not receive schooling in NZ) identified as “I’m not sure” (12.8%) than settlers (5.1%) ($X^2 (1, N = 317) = 5.9$, $p =.015$). From a normative developmental framework, youth not being able to identify their sexuality may negatively signal uncertainty or confusion (see Eliason, 1996). However, rejecting sexual labels also denotes freedom from the restriction of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1997) and the conceptualisation of sexuality as categories (Sedgwick, 1990). During qualitative data collection, mainland Chinese sojourner female participant Ccao wrote “not sure, asexual maybe” as her identified sexuality on the demographic information sheet. The writing of the answer itself indicates a process of her uncomfortably settling for ‘asexual’ as a recognisable sexual label whereas for her, it may be only “one of the given possibilities of organization of a self-
consciousness” (Foucault, 1988, p. 253). NZ youth statistics also show Asian young people’s rejection of sexual labels. Asians (8.9% in 2007, 7.6% in 2012), along with Pacific youth (7.0% in 2007, 8.3% in 2012), consistently make up the highest percentages in the group of youth self-identified as “not sure” in terms of sexual attraction, as compared to Europeans and Māoris (Lucassen, Clark, Moselen, Robinson, & the Adolescent Health Research Group, 2014; Rossen, Lucassen, Denny, & Robinson, 2009).

The use of white-centric sexual labels on non-western people has been critiqued as heteronormalising as well as racially assimilating (Arondekar, 2005; Corboz, 2009; Garnets, 2002). Non-white queer people are subject to these normative cultural frameworks through compulsory assimilation in order to be admitted to democratic modernity, or face exclusion (Sabsay, 2012). If conceptualised differently, such (racial or sexual) differences could make the normative framework visible and call the concept of normality into question (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). The results in this study, however, point to the role of (western) school as a heteronormalising space (Allen, 2007d) where the heterosexual matrix is reinforced through the practice of (sexuality) education (see also Rifkin, 2006).

While the sexual identity politics conceptualise (racial) differences as add-on categories, the west remains the norm and racial minority sexuality is subjugated (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). Most participants introduced in this thesis so far articulated a Chinese-Kiwi (or Asian-Caucasian) binary, which sustains Chineseness as irreconcilably Other to Kiwiness. I would like to end this chapter on an open note that shows participants’ (attempted) integration of Chineseness and Kiwiness. As my discussion on ‘Chinese sexuality’ has perhaps prompted more questions than answers, settler participants also showed ambivalence in their contemplation and lived experience as Chinese sexual beings living in the NZ society. Though less than a counter-narrative to Asian men’s assimilation by ‘western’ masculinity, male settler Evo’s account shows resistance to normative (i.e., white) masculinity, and his attempts to access alternative, “eastern” gender subject positions.

Evo: my brother actually is very assimilated I’d say (…) very guy like (chuckles)

Int: but you can’t relate to that?

Evo: yeah not like a gender role relationship, it’s confusing to me (…) I feel like (.) there’s a way to do it [masculinity], in a Chinese culture as different from western culture, so I can’t just take after my brother (…) I think there’s more (.) respect in eastern culture,
between (. ) males I guess, whereas in western cultures, like you are (. )—just being macho or something (chuckles) [age 21]

Contesting the hegemonic status of a Caucasian “macho” masculinity, Evo attempted to legitimate its (racial) alternatives and rejected the Kiwi way as comparatively more ‘progressive’. Settler female Viv similarly articulated a displaced position between being ‘white’ and being ‘Chinese’:

Viv: when my friend would say oh you’re kind of white, I used to think that’s a good thing, (…) they’re trying to say we don’t see you as different, but um, I think now, I’m kind of OK with being (pause) you know western born and eastern (…) then my mother also said, that’s white, but she meant it in a bad way, so (chuckles) [age 21]

The apparent contradiction illustrates competing expectations from different social terrains of peers and family (T. A. Kao & Martyn, 2014), and the intricate politics in manoeuvering the in/visibility of race across contexts (Dwyer, 2000). However, like Viv expressed, it is possible for an ethnic/cultural/sexual in-betweener to achieve a hybrid identity without being assimilated or marginalised (see Tokunaga, 2016; Yeh, 2013). Sexuality in particular, could be “a site of hybridization”(Durham, 2004, p. 144). The hybrid identity is not a static goal, but an ethical practice of freedom that requires ongoing negotiation, reflection and reconciliation in terms of being Chinese, being in NZ and being sexual.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined the various ways geographical border-crossing to NZ affects Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivity. For many sojourner participants, the movement offers the opportunity to escape from a repressive sexual environment and enables more room to pursue sexual desire. However, seeing the movement as a one from repression to freedom is deeply problematic as it is embedded in colonial ideologies that construct the west as ‘the ideal’. Just as an understanding of Chinese as sexually conservative is inaccurate, portraying NZ as sexually progressive also negates the complex racial, gender and sexual power relations in operation. Being in NZ could also constrain subject positions available as Chinese young people’s sexuality is racialised by co-ethnic networks as well as mainstream society. For example, young women who date interracially may be subject to both scrutiny and judgement from Chinese community and exotification of Caucasian men. Simultaneously subject to assumptions of sexual sameness by co-ethnics and sexual difference by NZ society, Chinese
young people must constantly negotiate these two sets of racial relations as diasporic sexual beings.
Chapter 8: Concluding Thoughts

This thesis has explored how Chinese young diaspora become sexual subjects in NZ. This research question sits at the junction of race, gender, sexuality and migration, and investigates scholarship in the areas of sexuality education, Chinese sexual culture, gender and sexuality, racial relations and migration studies. In Chapters 4-7, I unpacked this research question by exploring four distinct but interrelated arguments that emerged from the narrative and quantitative data provided by research participants. In their entirety, the arguments draw out a ‘story’ about Chinese young diaspora’s sexual subjectivities, elucidating their complexities, contradictions and connections. These four arguments are summarised as below.

Summary of findings

This ‘story’ of young Chinese diaspora’s sexual subjectivities begins in Chapter 4 where I first examined Chinese young people’s relation to sexual knowledge. The way sexual information is disseminated or silenced through school, family, peers and intimate relationships draws on dominant discourses which (re)produce normative sexual knowledge. These discourses, such as a desexualised construction of youth, delineate and delimit the subject positions available for participants in their constitution and communication of sexual knowledge (e.g., lack of knowledge about sexual pleasure). The way sexual knowledge is communicated in turn, informs some ‘problematic’ sexual safety practice among the participants. While discussing these sexual health concerns (e.g., lack of condom use), I stressed the importance of contextualising them within the structural absence of sexuality education in schools and gender power relations in sexual communication, to avoid further stigmatising Chinese young diaspora as sexually ignorant and reckless.

The structural absence of sexual information in schools, as typically experienced by young people in China leads to a relative lack of sexual knowledge among sojourner participants compared to settlers. Patriarchal gender messages evident in participants’ sexual communication with family, peers and intimate partners also link to a gendered pattern in sexual health, where young women are less sexually knowledgeable and simultaneously more vulnerable to negative consequences such as unintended pregnancy. Not only do female participants tend to have less access to sexual information from these sources than male participants, but the messages they do receive also tend to be gendered to discourage them from
being sexually knowledgeable, as proscribed by normative femininity. Additionally, knowledge of sexual safety may not be applied in sexual practice as sojourner female participants reported a tendency to rely on (male) partners in contraceptive use, or to prioritise male partner’s sexual pleasure (i.e., “he doesn’t like using condoms”). Family, peers and intimate relationships are therefore not only sources of sexual knowledge, but also as disciplinary sites where varied sexual norms, particularly gendered sexual norms (e.g., passive and chaste female sexuality) are conveyed, monitored and reproduced.

Motivated by a goal to contribute to gender equality, gender relations have been a major point of interest in this research. In Chapter 4 I identified gendered patterns in sexual communication and furthered this discussion in Chapter 5 by examining the notion of female sexual respectability. In this chapter, Chinese young women’s sexuality is seen to be scrutinised and regulated according to narrowly defined (i.e., premarital sexual chastity) and sometimes contradictory (i.e., chaste but sexually attractive) feminine norms. Consistent with a growing trend of premarital sex among young people in China (Parish et al., 2007), some variations of female sexual virginity (i.e., premarital sex is okay if she’s in love) emerged amongst participants. However, the notion of female sexual chastity remains valued across genders in this research, and sexual ‘permissiveness’ remains largely disparaged. Female participants who reported engaging in casual sex gave conflicting accounts of unapologetic sexual permissiveness and careful management of sexual reputation. Due to their location in multiple distinct sexual discourses, the (sojourner) young women’s understanding of sexual self is often fraught with contradictions and dilemmas. This research affirms the prevailing sexual double standard in Chinese societies (among other societies), which restricts female participants’ access to a liberal sexual position. At the same time, a neoliberal discourse of sexual choice was featured in some young women’s talk, producing a seemingly free and autonomous sexual subject. However, the depoliticised rhetoric largely left these gender power relations un(der)-challenged. Compared to female participants’ articulated resistance, young men’s transgression of normative sexual subject positions was even less evident. Though there was slight indication of varied positioning among male participants (e.g., don’t care about female virginity), their narratives largely colluded with dominant gendered sexual discourses.

In Chapter 6, I examined sexuality in and beyond the context of educational settings, within a framework of presumed linearly progressive life events, including education and marriage. Participants’ narratives portray education as a neoliberal life project, as educational accomplishment is a vital precursor to their success in ensuing life events, such as marriage.
Participant’s families tend to monitor, discourage and prohibit their sexuality while they are studying, but once they are required to proceed to later life stages, families often serve to perpetuate a heteronormative ideation of intimate relationships (i.e., marriage). In between education and marriage, the participants, especially women are left with a small window to explore their sexual selfhood. Their sexual subjectivity appears significantly constrained, first by an emphasis on the importance of education which is believed to preclude sexual interest or expression, and later by a pressing notion of marriage. For female participants, the pressure to marry is also linked to notions of sexual respectability, and could restrict pursuit of further academic goals. Participants in general explicitly agreed or colluded with the prioritisation of academic success over sexual pursuit. However, albeit limited, agency was observed in the way their academic and sexual selves were constituted and performed. For example, some participants (especially settlers) actively resisted the racialised conflation of ‘Asianness’ with ‘nerdiness’ in a western context, and articulated sexual selves that distanced them from, or challenged the overly academic stereotypes that render them sexually unappealing.

Moving from the temporal perspective of Chapter 6 (i.e. in terms of life events) to a focus on geographical movement in Chapter 7, I examined how border-crossing to NZ shaped the way participants became sexual subjects. I showed while the migration from China to NZ enabled increased sexual freedom and encouraged resistance against oppressive sexual/gender norms for some participants, understanding this movement as one from repression to freedom is deeply problematic. Embedded in colonial ideologies of the ‘west’ as the ideal, the assumption of western societies such as NZ as more sexually progressive than those like China is not only inaccurate, but also ignores the complex power relations within NZ’s sexual landscape. Being in NZ could limit subject positions as Chinese young people’s sexuality is racialised by co-ethnic networks as well as mainstream society. As a racial minority deemed ‘foreign’ or Other, young Chinese diaspora appear constantly subject to dominant sexual norms prescribed by NZ mainstream society, and pushed to either marginalisation or assimilation in terms of sexual/gender presentation. For example, settler participants who articulated resistance to a ‘nerdy’ sexual stereotype in Chapter 6 spoke of countering racial discrimination in this chapter through bodybuilding, which helps to present a ‘white’ sexual body.

Several threads of discussion interweave these four analysis chapters. The role of parents and peers was a recurring point of investigation in each chapter. They contribute to gendered communication of sexual knowledge (Chapter 4), the surveillance of female sexual respectability (Chapter 5), the (sometimes conflicting) expectations of participants as sexual
and academic beings (Chapter 6), and co-ethnic scrutiny and self-racialisation of young Chinese’s sexuality (Chapter 7). Another recurring theme, ‘double life’ was examined in Chapter 5, where female participants talked of hiding their pursuit of sexual desire from their Chinese social networks to evade social or familial disapproval. It was articulated in Chapter 7 as a racial divide (i.e., behaving differently with co-ethnic peers and local peers as sexual subjects). Finally, racialisation of sexuality was interrogated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. As some participants essentialised ‘Chinese’ femininity as demure as opposed to ‘trashy’ (Chapter 5) and masculinity as nerdy (Chapter 6), the way gender is performed is seen as inherently racial features. Other participants contested how these racialised sexual stereotypes were used in disparaging ways, and sought for alternative ways of being. For example, some female participants engaged in interracial relationships to resist patriarchal notions of femininity, and some male settlers used bodybuilding to subvert negative racial stereotypes of Asian masculinity (Chapter 7).

Implications of the study

Having reviewed the ‘story’ of this research, I now consider the findings in terms of their implications. Consistent with my political stance for this research, I elucidate how my findings may bear importance for the provision of sexuality education and sexual health services in China and NZ, feminist movement in China and the understanding of racial relations in diasporic Chinese communities.

Sexuality education and sexual health

Findings affirm previous studies of Chinese international students as lacking sexual knowledge (including erotic knowledge and sexual safety knowledge) (B. Lee et al., 2013). How this research extends these findings is by providing a detailed discussion of the pathways through which this lack of sexual knowledge is sustained (e.g., school, family, peers, intimate relationship). Apart from the structural lack of existing school-based sexuality education in China, family, peers and intimate relationships do not appear helpful sources of sexual knowledge either, especially for young sojourner women. This discussion generated some insights that might be seen to contribute to existing scholarship.

Firstly, my study suggests new insights regarding the role of the peer group. Based on my analysis of sojourner participants’ (majority are international students) accounts of peer
communication, peer groups can either enable or disable transmission of sexual knowledge. This argument adds onto previous research findings that peer group is not always a sex-positive influence for youth, and conservative peer groups could also delay sexual debut or encourage abstinence (J. L. Kim, 2005; J. Yu, 2010a). Furthermore, research shows Chinese sojourners in NZ tend to associate mainly with co-ethnic peers (Ward & Masgoret, 2004), and migrant Asian youth who have more co-ethnic peers receive more conservative sexual messages (J. L. Kim, 2005). Taking all these patterns into consideration, my analysis points to a possibility that Chinese sojourners may be more likely than their co-ethnic settler or Caucasian counterparts to be ‘insulated’ from sexual knowledge due to conservative peer group norms (Chapters 4 and 7).

This ‘insulating’ effect was identified as gendered with sojourner female participants’ accounts where their (female) peer groups tend to discourage communication of sexual information, or prohibit expressions of sexual interest (Chapters 4 and 5). Overlooking such gendered discrepancy may result in misinformed complacency in research on Chinese young women’s constitution of sexual knowledge. I therefore caution against assuming the helpfulness of peer group for Chinese young women as a source of sexual knowledge and suggest future research to further investigate this issue.

These findings have implications for sexuality education and sexual health services for Chinese sojourner diaspora. Sexuality education programmes typically adopt a didactic teaching mode where information is disseminated from the educator/trainer to recipients (Allen, 2008b; Marecek & Appuhamilage, 2011). Instead of this approach, sexual health practitioners or educators might consider engaging with Chinese young sojourners in group discussions. If group members present similar levels of sexual (in)experience and similar conservative views (e.g., Tania and Wendy in one focus group), the educator could facilitate discussions by identifying the gaps in sexual knowledge, challenging the silence in their sexual communication and exploring the basis and implications of their sexual views. In a group with more diverse sexual experiences and views (i.e., all focus groups in this study present some degree of such diversity), this diversity itself could stimulate discussions and enable communication of sexual knowledge. Focus groups in my study proved helpful in identifying gaps in participants’ official and erotic sexual knowledges, especially among sojourner young women (see Chapter 4). Some female participants also articulated resistance to repressive gender norms in focus groups otherwise not expressed in individual interviews (Chapter 5). This suggests the potential of using groups as a venue for raising gender awareness in relation
to sexual rights and responsibilities (S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). Open discussions where unsafe sexual practices and the underlying gender relations are made visible, should serve as a first step in sexual health promotion.

Secondly, my study has extended the discussion of young people’s double life (e.g., Lau et al., 2009) between family and personal networks. Observed across settler and sojourner participants, parents were often situated in opposition to the participants’ social and intimate relations, playing a (gendered) prohibitive role against their sexual expression. My discussion echoes Espiritu’s (2012) critique that intergenerational conflicts among immigrants about sexuality are naturalised and domesticated in research. She argues that the patriarchal culture represented by parents who impose control on young immigrant women’s sexuality is “a constantly negotiated strategy deployed to claim through gender the power denied them by racism” (Espiritu, 2012, p. 175). In other words, young women’s sexuality becomes a site for parents’ attempt to preserve family honour and cultural integrity. In this sense, migration could even strengthen, rather than dismantle patriarchal gender relations among diasporic young people (Dwyer, 2000). I extended this discussion by showing for participants in this study, the family-personal divide was also racially demarcated, with the family representing ‘Chinese’ sexual mores and positioned opposed to the dominant, ‘Kiwi’ way of being sexual (Chapter 7). For example, settler young women talked of their conflict with parents in dating as a matter of cultural clash.

The double life could also occur between family and school, especially for ethnic minority young people (Chapter 7). I discussed the potentially assimilative effect of sexuality education in NZ, where youth are shaped into particular types of sexual beings through western ‘liberal’ sexual ideologies (Zain Al-Dien, 2010). School’s “mobilisation of ‘permissive’ and ‘individualised’ discourses of sexuality” renders ethnic minority parents (e.g., Chinese, Muslim) as conservative and backwards, and may be responsible for the opposition and conflict between home and school (Allen, 2016, p. 3). The dichotomised way many participants experience their sexuality is therefore not simply a result of parents’ conflict with their sexual interest or desire as often perceived, but implicates deeper racial relations. In a Caucasian dominant society, being Chinese poses someone as inherently Other, and efforts at integration often involve reducing ethnic/racial differences at the expense of Chinese heritage (Chapters 6 and 7). Parents and the sexual norms they communicate may be experienced by migrant youth as irreconcilable with the ‘Kiwi’ way of being. Young people may therefore resort to a double life
as a strategy to balance different expectations from familial and social (including school) life (Chapters 5 and 7).

However, a double life is not ideal for young people’s sexual well-being (Chapter 5), as it may hinder their access to sexual health services and family support. Lack of such support and care could “amplify the consequences of even a single misstep” in a young person’s sexual development or experimentation (e.g., unplanned pregnancy) (Bay-Cheng, 2012, p. 716). Sexual health practitioners and educators need to engage with Chinese families and communities as part of health promotion efforts with migrant youth (Peiris-John, Wong, Sobrun-Maharaj, & Ameratunga, 2016; J. Yu, 2010a). Researchers have identified parental involvement in sexuality education benefits young people’s sexual safety (W. Liu & Su, 2014), and suggested parents paying particular attention to countering existing gendered messages (W. Liu et al., 2015).

Additionally, as identified in Chapter 6, Chinese societies’ emphasis on young people’s academic achievement informs many parent’s practice of sexual control on participants. Acknowledging this link may reduce cultural barriers in sexual health practitioners’ work and facilitate better understandings of the parents’ concerns.

Another consideration is that sexual health practitioners and educators must be conscious of the Eurocentric framework of sexual knowledge used in a western context, and its alienating effect in multi-racial setting (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). If delivered as the ‘right’ way, rather than one of the ways of being legitimately sexual, (western) sexual knowledge could result in resistance and rejection from racial minority communities, therefore exacerbating the young people’s double life. Challenging such hegemonic sexual knowledge goes beyond cultural diversity training for practitioners, but involves critically examining racialised sexual assumptions of ethnic groups (e.g., conservative) and recognising them as produced by western dominance (Chapter 7). More fundamentally, this involves reflection on the identity politics that inform western sexuality education, where (sexual or racial) alterity is dealt with through additive categories of differences. This add-on approach does not effectively challenge the centrality and normativity of a heterosexual and white subject in a sexuality education classroom (Haggis & Mulholland, 2014). Sexuality education should then perhaps focus on producing differences, rather than ‘containing’ and managing them, so “Chineseness” is no longer a point of conflict between family and school in sexuality education.
Thirdly, this study adds to the slim body of literature on international students’ usage of sexual health services in NZ (B. Lee et al., 2013). Asian international students in NZ are more likely than Asian settlers or European born international students to not know how to access local sexual health services, and be reluctant to use them (B. Lee et al., 2013). They are also a group often excluded in surveys due to language barriers or ‘international student’ status (Rasanathan et al., 2006) so their needs are under-reported. Some qualitative data in this study suggest sojourners’ increased awareness of the availability sexual health services in NZ could lead to better engagement with these services. This suggests the importance of increasing visibility of sexual health information and services among Chinese communities (M. Frost, Cares, Gelman, & Beam, 2016). Also given the jarring structural differences in sexual health services between NZ and China (see Chapters 4 and 7), professionals in NZ must not assume Chinese international students are aware of their services, how to access them, or that they need to access them (seen in the low participation in breast and cervical cancer screening) (B. Lee et al., 2013). Migrants’ sexual health issues should be explored in the context of their views and practices in the homeland, rather than their experience in the host society alone (Y. R. Zhou, 2016). Promotion should also stress the use of sexual health services as preventative, rather than just for treatment, or reproductive needs, as the existing pattern among Asian migrants shows (Cha et al., 2008).

Finally, the findings point to the crucial role of intimate partners in female participants’ safer sex practices, especially for sojourners. The young women appeared vulnerable to sexual risks due to a higher tendency to rely on partners for contraceptive use (Chapter 4). Statistics on abortion rates in NZ between 2002-2008 show the majority of Asian women’s abortions occurred in a stable relationship, with their partners helping them decide to get an abortion (Trinh, 2012). These findings echo the pervasive gender power imbalance in Chinese societies (Chapter 5). A sexual double standard not only restricts women’s sexual expression, but also hinders safer sexual practice, as women refrain from bringing up or insisting on condom use for fear of being perceived negatively by male partners (see Marston & King, 2006).

To pay more attention to the issue of gender egalitarianism in intimate relationships, sexual health programmes targeting Chinese sojourners could encourage young people to attend as couples. Without supportive partners, young Chinese women’s attempts at gender equality in relationships could meet tremendous difficulty, which intensifies their relative vulnerability (e.g., to pregnancy). Additionally, though my study lacks supporting data, other research shows in intimate relationships, young men may be less likely to take up the subject position informed
by hegemonic masculinity than in more ‘public’ venues (Allen, 2005b). The ‘couple’ format could then enable young men’s engagement in gender awareness discussions, and helps fostering a more ethical relationship. More importantly, such discussions deconstruct a patriarchal gender structure and enable young men more access to other masculine subject positions (besides being strategically predatory or compulsorily ‘performing’, see Farvid & Braun, 2014; Marston & King, 2006).

**Gender relations in Chinese societies**

This study has highlighted gender inequality as a prominent issue amongst participants, which closely intersects with the issue of female sexual subjugation. Across chapters, I unpacked gendered discourses including female sexual chastity (Chapter 4), sexual permissiveness (Chapter 5), as well as the traditional marriage imperative in China (Chapter 6), and the way they connect, intersect and clash in shaping Chinese sexual subjects. Consistently, the discussions point to the continued dominance of patriarchy in the social and sexual relations participants are located in. Although some data indicate acceptance, even celebration of female sexual ‘permissiveness’ (e.g., premarital sex, casual sex), the notion of sexual respectability remains central in participants’ meaning making of female sexual practice, restricting young women’s sexual expression. These findings especially pertain to sojourner women from mainland China.

Gender justice is an important dimension of the transformative agenda of this study. In this section, I locate my findings on young women’s sexual subjectivity within a bigger picture of gender relations in China. Making this connection allows me to extend on my critique of the individualising, depoliticised rhetoric of female sexual freedom emerging in a neoliberal Chinese society (Chapter 5). By positioning the findings within the wider political climate of gender relations in China, I also highlight how this study contributes to current Chinese feminist debates and dilemmas.

**Post-feminism and neoliberalism in China**

Based on my analysis of young sojourner women’s sexual practice, I believe progress in gender relations in China is stagnant and fraught with conflicting ideologies (Chapter 5). To contextualise this assertion, I link the findings to current gender ideologies in China, and show while Confucianism informed patriarchy has never really lost its grip in this transforming
nation, feminist movement in China is now confronted with new challenges posed by neoliberalism and post-feminism.

Feminism in China have had an inconsistent and irresolute history. Though gender equality was upheld officially as part of the Marxism informed zeitgeist in early days of People’s Republic of China (PRC), gender issues quickly became side-lined by other more ‘pressing’ issues of nation-building (Honig, 1985). Gender inequality often goes unrecognised in modern China (J. Zheng, 2016). People widely believe women should work and contribute financially to the household, but men should have privileged access to jobs and leadership positions (Shu & Zhu, 2012), and domestic duties in marriage remain women’s responsibility (Pimentel, 2000). Consumerism ushered in by the economic reform further strengthens traditional gender narratives by essentialising gender differences (Wallis, 2006) in promoting “feminine” consumption (e.g., cosmetics, fashion). Chinese young women are reluctant to identify with feminism, perceiving it no longer relevant and unnecessary, and ‘choose’ to embrace their ‘feminine essence’ (A. Lee, 2016). Feminism in China is commonly misconceived as “morally deviant, foreign-rooted, and associated with the upper class” (Y. L. Huang, 2016, p. 479). China appears to have directly arrived in a post-feminist era, with feminist discourses undermined by illusions of gender equality (L. Z. Li, 2015) and consumption based female empowerment (Thornham & Pengpeng, 2010).

The false impression of gender equality obscures continued sexual represssion of women. Even with an ongoing sexual revolution taking place in China, where Chinese young women show more rapid changes in attitude and practice than young men (S. Pan, 2006), a sexual double standard prevails and has not been effectively challenged. Chapter 5 revealed how the double standard is naturalised by some young women (i.e., male sexual drive discourse), or reinforced through women’s surveillance and judgement of each other’s sexuality (i.e., gossip, ostracism). Men’s casual sexual behaviours are not scrutinised nearly as much as women’s (Farvid et al., 2016; Parish et al., 2007). It appears the sexual revolution in China echoes that in the 1960’s west, where the ‘permissive turn’ did not shake traditional sexual and gender norms as much as assumed (Herzog, 2006).

Neoliberalism closely intertwines with individualising ethics of post-feminism (Gill, 2008a). Encouraged by the capitalist market following the reform (H. Wang & Karl, 2004), neoliberalism in China also finds resonance in the traditional conceptualisation of education in Chinese societies as a realm of self-maximisation. Evident in findings from Chapter 6, participants and their parents tend to place great emphasis on academic commitment at the
expense of sexual interest, out of a belief that self-advancement can be achieved through individual merit and commitment. Especially for young women, there appears to be a growing trend where their drive for individual success determines/delimits their intimate relationship choices (E. E. Blair, 2016). Some female participants in this study also voiced prioritising study over dating (Chapter 6).

Aside from education, the imperative of marriage in China renders marriage another neoliberal project. Given women’s disadvantage in career development, a good marriage is a crucial means of social advancement (Farrer, 2002; L. Z. Li, 2015). Many young women are exacting in their marriage partner standards (e.g., property, income level) because they envisage economic reliance on men (S. L. Blair & Madigan, 2016). Their ostensible ‘aggressiveness’ in setting such standards is taken as an indication of women overpowering men (L. Z. Li, 2015). In reality, women remain subjugated, and their agency in challenging patriarchal sexual norms and feminine ideals is compromised by the gender structure. For example, female sojourners in this study talked of preserving their virginity as a trade-off for better chances in marriage (Chapter 4). Given the focus on enterprising individual future success, there is increasing pressure for young women to believe they can, and should, ‘have it all’ (Gill & Scharff, 2011). They must now strive to achieve both normatively defined feminine ideals (through consumerism) and individual success (education, career, marriage) (J. Zheng, 2016). Among the few female participants in my study who articulated liberal sexual subject positions, their accounts of sexual autonomy often accompanied narratives of striving for individual success, as well as managing personal reputation to ensure successful marriage (Chapter 5). In between meeting these expectations, they are left with little room to explore their sexual selfhood (Chapters 5 and 6).

(Fraught) resistance

Despite this bleak outlook of gender relations in China, resistance to patriarchal gender norms was evident in this study. Looking for such resistance is crucial because understanding young Chinese’s sexuality as “non-agentic, conditioned and structurally determined” would do a disservice to the young people as well as the ethical commitment as a critical researcher (Coffey & Farrugia, 2014, p. 468). I argued Chinese women’s resistance is subtle and covert. Rather than directly challenging repressive sexual norms or confronting heteropatriarchal agents (i.e., family, peers), female participants mobilise both moralist and permissive sexual discourses in reconciling their sexual self-determination and sexual respectability (Chapter 5).
For example, some women reported navigating a ‘double life’ between being a good Chinese daughter/girlfriend and being a liberal sexual being who engages in casual sex (e.g., through keeping different social circles separate). Their accounts illustrate Ussher’s assertion: “A woman may play the part to perfection. But that doesn’t make it real or authentic. Even the perfect performance of femininity may mask resistance or transgression” (Ussher, 1997, p. 6).

Nonetheless, the resistance to sexual norms rests on precarious conditions. Firstly, across cultures, women have always used the public-private divide for sexual pursuits that are not morally permissible, especially in the context of restrictive sexual/gender mores (Farvid, 2012). However, it must be recognised the position to both accommodate and transgress sexual norms is a privileged one, and may be only available to young women with certain social, cultural and economic capital. In rural China for example, with traditional prohibition against premarital sex still prevailing (Higgins et al., 2002; W. Zheng et al., 2011), women face much more scrutiny and dire consequences than their urban professional counterpart. I talk about this more as one of the research limitations in the next section.

Secondly, as part of the navigation of double life, young women must balance a tightrope of gendered sexual expression. Participants across genders reported feminine displays that signal overt sexuality make a woman less desirable (Chapter 5). Part of maintaining a sexually conservative, un tarnished and submissive image is to display a feminine body that is not explicit about sexual intentions and desires (Gleeson & Frith, 2004). This balanced look (Kitzinger, 1995) requires young women to “negotiate their way through contradictory identities as women who are attractive without actively seeking admiring glances, who are sexual but not too sexual” (Gleeson & Frith, 2004, p. 112). This determines a very narrow and specific feminine (sexual) ideal: sexually attractive and simultaneously “without the taint of sexuality” (Cowie & Lees, 1981, p. 14). This contradiction echoes another double-bind for women – to be desirable, but not desiring (Tolman, 2002), illustrating the restrictive conditions the young women must first fulfil in order to pursue sexual autonomy (covertly).

Thirdly, resistance observed among participants was limited in the sense that articulation of female sexual desire was largely elusive, or “whispered” (see also Fine, 2003; Fine & McClelland, 2006). When it was present, it was often framed in reference to male desire, and an inverted male sex drive discourse (S. M. Jackson & Cram, 2003). Other research also presents some alternative forms of femininities with ‘masculine’ qualities (e.g., ‘predatory’, see Bryant & Schofield, 2007; ‘ladette’, see C. Jackson, 2006; ‘b-girls’ see I. K. Johnson, 2014; but for a theorisation of such femininities as displacing normative femininity rather than
mimicry of masculinity, see Renold & Ringrose, 2012). “Given the longstanding association of active female sexuality with pollution, it is not surprising that attempts to envisage women as sexual actors quite self-consciously use male sexuality as a model” (Attwood, 2007, p. 238). It is possible that Chinese young women still lack access to language to positively frame desiring sexual subjectivity (Hollway, 1995).

Finally, young women’s resistance through taking up the sexual permissive discourse needs critical examination because of its affinity with neoliberalism. Participants’ accounts suggest the development of sexual discourses and debates in western societies in the last few decades may be now emerging among modern young people in China. Growing individualising ethics resulting from neoliberalism could be a precursor to increasing acceptance of casual sex (Farvid, 2012), which is justified as an individual choice (Irvine, 2005). However, once ‘pleasure’ becomes a new norm, against which identity is measured (Allen & Carmody, 2012), it loses its transformative power and becomes regulatory (Sullivan, 1999). A “sassy”, fun-seeking, actively desiring subject position (Farvid & Braun, 2014) could thus become compulsory, rather than one of many viable possibilities accessible to young women in the endeavour of sexual expression. For example, some female participants who practice casual sex talked of this liberal subject position as defining for a progressive and modern female sexual subject, and by doing so, implied other women (e.g., virgins) who do not fit the position as conservative and not as ‘cool’. Agency perhaps involves constantly refusing what we are, rather than discovering what we are (Foucault, 1982), so new subjectivities can be produced and promoted to counter shifting and evolving normativities.

As casual sex may be on its way to occupying a legitimate position on the sexual spectrum in China like it has in the west (Farvid, 2012), researchers need to be cautious of the accompanying discourse of ‘choice’ that may end up dominating young women’s sexual subjectivity (it may have already, for some female participants). This ‘choice’ is a false one, because once sexual ‘permissiveness’ becomes a new norm (in certain contexts) (e.g., Wade & Heldman, 2012), despite young women’s freedom to participate in casual sex, their freedom from participation would be limited (Fahs, 2014). Women would then have to continue to “ward off accusations of promiscuity”, but also “do so while also compelled to play the parts of sexual libertines” (Bay-Cheng, 2015b, p. 286).

A neoliberal brand of ‘choice’ or ‘agency’ also depoliticises gender issues to the point self-responsibility trumps all (systemic) gender disadvantages and injustice (Bay-Cheng, 2015a). Adversities experienced by young women, such as unplanned pregnancy, sexual coercion and
social ostracism due to a supposed reputation, are construed as deserved consequences of the women’s own misjudgement, indecency or ineptitude as a responsible gatekeeper (Bay-Cheng, 2015b). These narratives were repetitively expressed by participants across genders in this study against other women known to have experienced abortion or sexual abuse (Chapters 4 and 5). It appears “whatever freedom or control girls are perceived to enjoy as they position themselves as agents comes at the expense of those against whom they push off” (Bay-Cheng, 2015b, p. 9), who do it wrong (Farvid & Braun, 2013). Neoliberalism is “not an affirmative celebration of agency” (Bay-Cheng, 2015b, p. 283), because “it is about acting strategically, with intention, out of self-interest, and while maintaining control” (Bay-Cheng, 2015a, p. 335).

For example, many participants articulated ‘choices’ (e.g., sexual abstinence) not in terms of non-conformity, but so to evade social sanction (Chapter 4).

My discussion highlights the importance of (re-)engaging feminism as both an analytic tool and an ethic to politicise the discussion of gender relations in China. However, it needs to be noted that the discussion of (post-)feminism in China (including in my thesis) remains heavily centred on a western feminist framework, given the brief and underdeveloped history of Chinese feminism as outlined above (see also J. Zheng, 2016). Latest theorisation has highlighted both the possibility and value of reconceptualising post-feminism in terms of transnational, rather than western culture (Dosekun, 2015). Efforts are called for in further developing Chinese feminist thoughts on a theoretical level that are not only specific to Chinese societies, but also contribute to the conceptualisation of transnational feminism (e.g., L. H. Liu, Karl, & Ko, 2013).

**Racialisation of ‘Chinese’ sexuality**

Throughout the thesis, I have approached the racialisation of Chinese young people’s sexuality from the following two perspectives: how Chinese young people’s sexuality is Othered as a racial group, and how the Othering produces intra-racial tension in sexual subjectivity.

**The sexual/racial Other**

I started the unpacking of racialisation of Chinese sexuality in NZ with a discussion of the subject of ‘Asian nerd’ (Chapter 6). The racial stereotype perpetuates the profiling of Asian young people as academically devoted and simultaneously socially inept and sexually unappealing. Across genders, focus group and interview participants who showed strong
resistance to the image tended to associate being typically Asian with a lack of sexual appeal (i.e., “compulsory nerdiness”) (Eglash, 2002, p. 58). Conversely, they perceived the only way to be legitimately sexual is a ‘white’ way, manifested in their gender body presentation, engagement of night life, and racial makeup of peer groups. As the image is particularly emasculating for Chinese men, male settler participants talked of being deliberately unacademic, or using bodybuilding to ‘better’ their physique. However, despite the association between academic commitment and ‘nerdiness’, in other contexts, some participants took pride in their ‘smartness’ as an inherent racial advantage.

This self-racialisation echoes the model minority stereotype, which subjects Asian youth to high academic expectations (Y. Choi & Lim, 2014; Kibria, 2003). The settlers appear to opt in or out of identifying with ‘Chineseness’ depending on the perceived associated connotations, rendering race as performative and discursively produced, rather than a ‘real’ and fixed feature (Butler, 2010; Chadderton, 2013). Attempts of a hybrid Chinese-Kiwi identity were made by some participants, especially settlers, but more often their identity-making seemed oriented to one or the other, each made intelligible by the other through essentialised (sexual) differences.

This essentialist (self-)racialisation is particularly pronounced in accounts of interracial dating between Asian women and Caucasian men. This interracial dating pattern was acknowledged by participants as common, but male participants’ responses to it varied. Some expressed hostility towards interracially dating Chinese women due to a wounded masculinity, whereas some others naturalised white men’s sexual privilege, describing them as more attractive (see Chapter 7). Most male participants expressed a preference for Asian women for their perceived feminine virtuousness (e.g., demure, chaste, restrained, emotionally committed), apart from shared cultural background. Overall, Asian women were portrayed as a particular type of being, characterised by certain racially inherent (gender) qualities as well as a presumed natural preference for Asian men. The wider co-ethnic Chinese community tend to perceive outdating Chinese women (but not Chinese men) negatively, drawing on not only patriarchal gender notions but also the normative construction of the female body as symbols of cultural boundaries (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005; A. Y. Chung, 2016).

Female participants’ accounts of Asian-Caucasian dating also suggest racialisation from the dominant white society. Asian women are racialised as more sexually appealing than Asian men, and white men appear more willing to engage in (heterosexual) relationships with Asians than white women (Herman & Campbell, 2012). Some female participants reported having been frequently subject to ‘yellow fever’. However, there were also accounts of white male
partners perceived as more egalitarian than Chinese men (Chapter 7). Asian women in other research have reported strategically engaging in a discourse that glorifies white men as ‘egalitarian knights’ as a way to resist ‘ethnic patriarchy’ in Asian communities (Pyke, 2010). This subject position corresponds with the way migrant co-ethnic networks exercise patriarchal gender relations over young women to assert power denied by their racial disadvantage (e.g., Dwyer, 2000).

However, this form of resistance to male domination by Asian young women could be complicit with racial oppression, reifying Caucasian men’s racial superiority (see Y. R. Zhou, 2016) and reinforcing racialised stereotypes of Asian masculinity as domineering, conservative and sexually unappealing (Morgan, 2015). Some female participants who perceived white partners as ‘better’ also engaged in self-racialisation where they reproduced Orientalist fantasies of Chinese women (A. Lee, 2016). For example, a sojourner female believed Asian women are better wives than western women. Additionally, some settler young women also implied pro-assimilationist sentiments in their very specific preference for Caucasian Kiwi men and self-identification as Kiwi (Pyke, 2010).

In summary, I showed while Chinese young people across genders must face and negotiate racialisation of their sexuality from the dominant society, they may also self-racialise and reinforce existing stereotypes. Such reproduction of essentialist discourses of racial and sexual differences reinforces the binary oppositions of white-Chinese, which contributes to intra-racial Othering among migrant young people.

Intra-racial Othering

Racialisation also produces intra-racial tension among Chinese young people, namely between settlers and sojourners. I documented the marginalisation of international students by settler participants (Chapters 6 & 7), which highlights the importance of engaging with these groups with different sensitivities in research and sexual health practice. Across migrant societies, there tends to be little interaction between the two groups, as settler Asian youth often associate with other settlers, or local New Zealanders, or even make an effort to distance themselves from Asian international students (Pyke & Dang, 2003). I showed this distancing is part of their (sexual) identity construction. Settler participants’ self-construction as a legitimate sexual being entails accentuating difference from sojourners and sameness with ‘Kiwis’ (Chapters 6 & 7). Their constitution of sexual subjectivity is part of a larger project of ethno-nationalism,
where racial minorities identify with the white-dominant society in their claim against racism (Coloma, 2013). Like how some settler participants in my study distanced from, even rejected co-ethnic sojourners (i.e., “FOB”) in their alignment with ‘Kiwi’ ways of being sexual, ethno-nationalism enables the inclusion of a marginalised group at the expense of the exclusion of another. This ethno-nationalist claim for inclusion itself implies (white) Kiwness as privileged and Chineseness as secondary, subsumed, therefore reifying the existing unjust racial order (Coloma, 2013). As Braidotti (2002) points out, in any self/Other dichotomy, Other is defined by being different from the self; the very assertion of difference affirms an original ‘One’ way of being, and the Other always confirms the superiority of the original One. Dualistic opposition of Kiwi\Chinese is produced by, and reinforces white dominance in NZ, and contradicts the logic of multiculturalism which NZ officially strives for.

This intra-racial Othering hinders ethnic solidarity and racial minority coalitions that could provide support otherwise missing in mainstream societies. For example, Asian settlers in the U.S. consistently report ‘cultural stress’, comparatively high incidence of depression, suicide and alcoholism (see Chou & Choi, 2013). NZ research also identifies cultural identity related difficulties and stress have an overarching influence on young Asians’ health (Peiris-John et al., 2016). The intra-racial tension further adds to Chinese international students’ social predicament. International students are often treated as ‘cash cows’ (see Robertson, 2011) whereas there is insufficient support outside of academic programmes for their social, sexual and emotional wellbeing in NZ (Y. Yang, Li, & Sligo, 2008). Chinese students in NZ and Australia report difficulty in forming friendships with locals (Generosa, Molano, Stokes, & Schulze, 2013; Ward & Masgoret, 2004), lower life satisfaction (Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Y. Yang et al., 2008) and higher levels of anxiety and depression than their local counterparts (Redfern, 2015).

Through including both settlers and sojourners in my research and studying them as sub-groups, I was able to demonstrate the distinct power relations characterising their sexual subjectivities. This approach also allowed me to identify their shared challenges, dilemmas and desires. Acknowledgement of this intra-racial tension is the first step in the efforts to address and neutralise it. For example, cultural values including academic commitment, obedience to parental authority and the notion of family honour do pertain to both groups and intersect with their sexual subjectivities. Future research could explore the potential of utilising these similarities to foster better intra-racial understanding, dismantle racialised sexual stereotypes imposed by mainstream societies and challenge white sexual privilege in solidarity. Such work
could also generate meaningful insights into how to explore new sexual subjectivities without reifying simplistic binaries such as eastern/western, modern/tradition and sameness/difference (Corboz, 2009).

**Limitations**

In order to consider implications of the findings for the sexual health sector, my discussion of school-based sexuality education focused on its role in fostering safer sex. However, research shows young people’s own conceptualisation of effective sexuality education diverges from the presumed focus on reducing sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy. Their suggestions of including more erotic sexual knowledge in sexuality education indicate they want to be recognised as positively and legitimately sexual (Allen, 2005a). My study did not engage with this perspective on sexuality education schooling, in China or in NZ, which calls for more research attention in the future. With the (albeit slow) increase of sexuality education programmes available in China, young people’s agency in these adult-designed programmes should be constantly examined, especially given that a positive, empowered position as a sexual being is more likely to engender responsible sexual behaviour than negative messages of sexual risks (Allen, 2005b).

My sample consists of relatively privileged Chinese young people who are mostly from a middle-class family background in NZ or China. Sojourners especially, would have come from urban families that are financially capable to afford the expensive tuition fees overseas. This sampling limits the relevance of the findings for wider Chinese youth population in China. Particularly, some liberal views observed among sojourner participants cannot represent lower-class youth in China with limited access to education, media and consumerist culture where liberal sexual discourses are promulgated (see Parish et al., 2007). This ‘elitist’ focus in current sexuality research in Asian societies (Manderson & Liamputtong, 2002) is problematic not only in terms of (in)visibility of lower-class young people (Wallis, 2006), but also because this inattention could jeopardise the explanatory power of existing sexual theorisation. “Private acts are never wholly private; intimate choices are always profoundly social” (Fine & McClelland, 2006, p. 304). Young people’s disprivileged social and material conditions could not only complicate their decision to leave an intimate partner they may be financially dependent on (S. M. Pan & Yang, 2014), but also influence their experience of sexual pleasure and practice of sexual safety in a relationship (Cheng et al., 2014). This sexual vulnerability contingent on
power imbalance could be particularly pronounced for diaspora dating local, white partners with racial and social privileges (Nguyen, 2007; Y. R. Zhou, 2016).

Finally, I demonstrated how queer sojourner Chinese use overseas education as a means to reject heteronormativity (i.e., marriage), and to explore their sexual selfhood (Chapters 6 & 7). However, my discussion of queer diaspora was limited to the extent migration brought change to the constitution of queer sexual subjectivities. Although I discussed the hegemony of western conceptualisation of queer sexualities (i.e., sexual labels, see Chapter 7), I did not offer an in-depth critique of a globalised, unified gay/lesbian identity, or explore the exclusion faced by queer Asians based on race, ethnicity, class or gender in a host society (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001). A sampling limitation contributed to this gap, as most queer participants participating in interviews/focus groups were relatively new to NZ (i.e., 1 month for two, 4-9 months for two and 1 year for one), resulting in insufficient data on their local experience as queer subjects.

Research has demonstrated the potential of transnational ‘queerness’ in challenging homonormativity and disrupting the imported/indigenous, progress/repression dichotomies. For example, Asian queers could resist assimilation to a normalised western gay culture by enacting alternative queer identities (Manalansan, 2006) drawing from vibrant Asian queer youth cultures (Yue, 2016).

The power of queerness lies in its non-normative position. Once recruited within a ‘solidifying’ agenda (e.g., homonationalism, western liberalness) (Mai & King, 2009), queerness becomes complicit in hegemonic political or social orders and no longer transformative. Increasing global movement is making more visible not only queer diaspora, but also neo-colonialist understandings of the ‘west’ as the ‘best’ (Corboz, 2009). Future research on Chinese queer people could explore the connections and diversities in the way race, sexuality, migrant status intertwine and inform their sexual experience (as I have explored in this thesis with a predominantly heterosexuals sample). Space for such exploration appears prominent. Finally, inspired by Luibheid’s (2004) paraphrasing of the famous quote by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (1982), I paraphrase it as follows to capture the challenges faced by Chinese queer diaspora (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016; Quach et al., 2013) as well as the hopes future research holds:

All Chinese are heterosexual,
All queers are white,
But some of us are brave.
Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

19-Aug-2013

MEMORANDUM TO:
Assoc Prof Louisa Allen
Critical Studies in Education

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 9872)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 19-Aug-2016.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 9872.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Critical Studies in Education
Prof Manying Ip
Miss Yang Li

Additional information:
1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

2. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the UAHPEC Administrators by email (humanethics@auckland.ac.nz) giving full details of the proposed changes including revised
documentation.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its completion.

4. Should you require an extension, write to UAHPEC by email before the expiry date, giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.

5. If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Manager - Funding Processes, UoA Research Office. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

6. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.
Appendix B: Recruitment Advertisement

(NB: earlier versions of advertisements were in English or Chinese separately, but had the same content, and are not included here.)

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**Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand**  
紐西蘭年輕華人與“性”

**IF YOU:** 如果你:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are of age 18-25, AND</th>
<th>年齡在 18-25 歲之間, 且</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were born in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, OR have parent(s) born in these areas, AND</td>
<td>出生在中國大陸、香港、臺灣，或父母出生在這些地區，且</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in New Zealand</td>
<td>生活在紐西蘭</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**I would love you to participate in my research project!**  
我希望你可以參與我的研究項目！

My name’s Alex Li and this project is being conducted for my doctoral thesis at the University of Auckland. I want to understand ethnic Chinese youth’s experience related to ethnicity, sex education and sexuality (including views, practice, preference and identity) in New Zealand and how they possibly interplay.

Do you consider yourself ‘kiwi’ or ‘Chinese’ (or neither) when it comes to sexual views and practice? What does it mean to be ‘Chinese’? How do racial stereotypes relate to sexual expression? What do family relations and media have to do with sexuality education? What kind of sexual knowledge do you think is important for young people to know? – These are some of the questions I hope to explore through this project. There’s currently very little research being done in this area, so your views are vital!

I call Alex Li, a researcher at my PhD thesis project. I hope to understand the ethnic Chinese youth’s experience related to ethnicity, sex education and sexuality (including views, practice, preference and identity) in New Zealand and how they possibly interplay.

Are you aged 18-25 and were born in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan? If so, I would love to hear your thoughts on the following questions:

1. How do you identify yourself? ‘Kiwi’ or ‘Chinese’ (or neither)?
2. How do racial stereotypes relate to your sexual experiences?
3. How do family relations and media influence your understanding of sexual education?
4. What kind of sexual knowledge do you think is important for young people to know?

Please spare 5-10 minutes to fill out my online survey. Click link as below. OR scan the QR code.

https://www.surveymonkey.net/s/chineseyouthnz

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions! Also interested to take part in individual interviews or focus groups?

Please email: alex.li@auckland.ac.nz

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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
ON19/08/2013 for 3 years, Reference Number 9872
Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet (English and Chinese)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

For Participants

Research Title: Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand
Researcher: Alex Li

Researcher Introduction
Hello! My name is Alex Li. I’m a doctoral student based in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Auckland. I’m a Chinese woman and have a history of doing research in sexuality and gender studies. I speak English and Mandarin.

Project description and Invitation
This study aims to understand what it means to be young and Chinese in New Zealand in relation to experience of sexuality education and sexuality issues. Findings will be used to improve sexual health services and sexuality education programmes for New Zealand based Chinese youth.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. To be eligible, you need to be of age 18-25, live in New Zealand, and identify as Chinese (including Hong Kong Chinese, NZ Chinese, Taiwanese Chinese, etc.), either with parents born in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan or born in these areas yourself.

Project procedures
The project involves taking part in an online survey, a focus group or/and an individual interview. You may choose to participate in any or all of these methods, using either English or Chinese (Mandarin). Participation is entirely voluntary. Participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship with the organisation that made you aware of the study.

For online survey participants:
The questionnaire (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/chineseyouths) is to be filled out anonymously. It takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and includes a series of questions on sexuality, sexuality education and cultural identity.

For focus group and/or interview participants:
The discussions will be around your experience of sexuality and sexuality education in New Zealand. With your consent, they will be audio-recorded. Request to turn off recording during data collection can be met for interviews, but not for focus groups. You may refuse to answer any question without giving a reason. Focus groups involve discussions among 3-6 friends and will last about 1.5-2 hours; individual interviews are about 1.5 hours. You may participate in either or both forums (focus group followed by interview). To help the discussion, I will show group participants a photo collage with images on some related subjects, and interview participants are asked to bring a selection of personal photos (digital or print) that represent significant sexual memories or phases in your life. All participants must sign a Consent Form prior to each session.

Right to Withdraw from Participation
You can withdraw from participation at any point during data collection without having to give a reason. Only individual interview participants may withdraw retrospectively, within one month after data collection (before April 30th 2014), in which case, I will not retain your data.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
Within the bounds of the law, I will ensure confidentiality of participants' identity and the overall dataset to the best of my ability: the online surveys are filled out anonymously; pseudonyms (i.e., fake names) are used for interview/focus group data. With focus groups, confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. In response I will stress the importance of confidentiality at the start and close of each group, and all participants must agree not to disclose anything said in the group in a way that could identify other participants. Consent forms will be stored separately from the data, securely with my main supervisor. Except my supervisors and me, no other party can access collected data.

Use of data

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Data may be used in my doctoral thesis, as well as publications and presentations arising from this project. Participants will not be identified in any reporting. Participants will be able to request a summary of results by indicating so on the CF or contacting me to express their interest. For focus group or interview data, I will transcribe the audio recording, and translate data provided in Chinese to English. Extracts of verbal data may be quoted in my reporting. Personal photographs may be used as illustrations in the analysis. Faces in personal photos will be warped, though some identifying features (e.g., clothing/jewelry) may still allow others to guess an individual’s identity even after face warping, though the chances are very low.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use

Data (survey, audio, visual) and transcripts/translations will be entered into password-protected computer files. Audio recordings and hard copies of data and transcripts/translations are stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland when not in use. After being retained for 6 years, the computer files will be deleted, recordings and hard copies will be destroyed using a secure disposal service.

Benefits & Risks

Participation should be an interesting and thought-provoking process, and I do not expect any risk in taking part, as participation is voluntary, and does not involve deception. However, should any distressing issues arise unexpectedly, you can choose to stop the interview, withdraw from the research, or to continue the process. Contact details of supportive services are listed below, and referral can be made.

Youthline http://www.youthline.co.nz/ 0800-376-689
(For the University of Auckland students) Student Health Centre: 09-373-7599 ext 87681

I hope you will be interested in taking part! Please feel free to email me for any questions.
Thank you!

Contact Details:
Alex Li: alex.li@auckland.ac.nz
Main supervisor: Associate Professor Louise Allen, School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland.
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn 8514
E-mail: je.allen@auckland.ac.nz

Co-supervisor: Professor Maryying Ip, School of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, The University of Auckland.
Phone: +64 9 373 7599 extn 87531
Email: m.ip@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of School: Dr Airini, School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland.
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn 48826
E-mail: airini@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Phone: 09 373-7599 extn 85711. E-mail: humane@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/08/2013 FOR 3 years, Reference Number 9872.
研究题目：推動年青華人與“性”

研究者：Alex Li（李陽）

研究者簡介
你好！我叫 Alex Li（李陽）。我是一名奧克蘭大學教育學院的博士生。我是一名華人女性，也是一名性別研究的研究者。我會講普通話和英語。

項目介紹和邀請
通過這項研究，我希望能了解紐西蘭的年輕華人在性教育和“性”方面的體驗。研究成果將用來改善紐西蘭的性健康教育和性教育專案。

我目前在尋找研究參與者。如果您是 18-25 歲，與年青華人或性教育有關的工作者或研究者，歡迎加入。我歡迎任何形式的參與，包括訪談、資料分享等。

專案過程
您的參與包括與研究者進行訪談和資料分享。請確保您的資料隱私。

線上訪談

線上訪談（https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/chineseyouth）是匿名的。預計需要 5 到 10 分鐘完成。問題包括一系列關於“性”、性教育與文化身份認同的問題。

如果您有興趣參與，請點擊下方連結。

詳細參與的權利

你可以隨時退出研究，不必給出任何原因。若出現研究需要的資料收集完成後，研究者將會在一個月內通知參與者。

研究員和保密

研究員將會在研究過程中保護所有資料的隱私性。資料將不會被公開，並且只有參與研究的研究員才能看到。參與者的資料將被保密。

如果您同意參與研究，請點擊下方連結。

同意書

同意書將由我們的主導師保存。除了主導師外，沒有其他人可以接觸到您的個人資料。

感謝您的參與！

Alex Li

參與諮詢

受訪者用
資料使用
收集的資料可能用於我的博士論文，以及與這個項目衍生的出版物和報告中。任何形式的發表都不會透露受訪者的身份。受訪者可以在同意書上選擇是否願意收到一份郵寄成果報告，或者直接聯繫我索取。
對於課題小組/個人訪談資料，我將抄寫訪談錄音，並把使用中文收集的資料翻譯為英文。訪談內容片段可能在文後中被引用。個人資料可能作為論文的分析細節。個人資料中數據將被匿名處理。但是需要注意的是，即使在最佳機制處理後，參與者的敏感或隱私特點仍然可能遺漏身份，雖然這樣的可能性非常低。

資料存檔/儲存/儲存/未來使用
所有收集到的資料（問卷，錄音，圖像）及抄本/翻譯將保存在密碼保護的電腦資料夾中。錄音，資料及抄本/翻譯的複印件被保存的檔案夾是克蘭大學的檔案。這些資料保留6年之後被銷毀，電腦將按預設清除。

受訪者收益及風險
對受訪者來說，參與過程可能是有益且令人深刻的。參與是完全自愿的，且不涉及對參與者的欺凌，所以我預計對參與者不會有風險。但是，如果訪談過程中任何話題讓你感到不安，你可以選擇暫停訪談，提出研究項目，或者繼續訪談。
以下是在這種情況下可以提供幫助的服務機構。如果有需要，我可以替你聯繫他們。
Youthline：http://www.youthline.co.nz/ 0800-376-633
中文生命線（Chinese Lifeline）http://www.chineselifeline.org.nz/ 0800-888-880
為奧克蘭學生提供優質的服務中心：09-373-7599 電話 87681
我希望你能與那些參與這個研究項目。如有任何問題，請聯繫我。謝謝！

聯繫方式
Alex Li（李博）：alex.li@university.auckland.ac.nz

王雅君
副教授
安娜麗絲大學教育學院

副教授
文學院

聯繫人
Lei.allen@u.ac.nz

學術負責人：
Ariini博士
安娜麗絲大學教育學院

聯繫人
HumanEthics@u.ac.nz

如有任何關於這個項目的倫理疑問，請聯繫安娜麗絲大學倫理委員會主席：
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee,
The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor,
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
電話 09 373-7599 電話 37711
E-mail: humanethics@u.ac.nz
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

For Organizations

Research Title: Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand
Researcher: Alex Li

Researcher introduction
Hello! My name is Alex Li. I am a doctoral student based in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Auckland. I am a Chinese woman and have a history of doing research in sexuality and gender studies. I speak English and Mandarin.

Project description and invitation
This study aims to understand what it means to be young Chinese in New Zealand in relation to experience of sexuality education and sexuality issues. Findings will be used to improve sexual health services and sexuality education programmes for New Zealand based Chinese youth. I ask for your help to distribute this information to your members or clients who are eligible to participate (i.e., age 18-25, live in New Zealand; identify as Chinese, including Hong Kong Chinese, New Zealand Chinese and Taiwanese Chinese; were born in mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, or have parent(s) born in these areas). You can support this project by putting my advertisement (attached with this letter) on your notice boards or webpages, forwarding it in your mailing lists, announcing this opportunity in your meetings, and giving out the Participants Information Sheet (PIS) for participants to potential participants.

Project procedures
The project involves taking part in an online survey, a focus group and/or an individual interview. Participants may choose to participate in any or all of these methods, using either English or Chinese (Mandarin). Participation is entirely voluntary. Participation or non-participation will not affect participants’ relationship with the organisation that made them aware of the study.

For online survey participants:
The questionnaire (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/chineseyouthnz) is to be filled out anonymously. It takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and includes a series of questions on sexuality, sexuality education and cultural identity.

For focus group and/or interview participants:
The discussions will be around participants’ experience of sexuality and sexuality education in New Zealand. With their consent, they will be audio-recorded. Interview participants may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time, but this request cannot be met in focus groups. They may refuse to answer any question without giving a reason. Focus groups involve discussions among 3-6 friends and will last about 1.5-2 hours; individual interviews are about 1.5 hours. Participants may participate in either or both forums (focus group followed by interview). To help this discussion, I will show focus group participants a photo collage with images on some related subjects (e.g., romantic relationships), and interview participants are asked to bring a selection of personal photos (digital or print) that represent significant sexual moments or phases in their life. All participants must sign a Consent Form prior to each session.

Right to Withdraw from Participation
Participants can withdraw from participation at any point during data collection without having to give a reason. Only individual interview participants may withdraw retrospectively, within one month after data collection (before April 30th 2014). In which case, I will not retain their data.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
Within the bounds of the law, I will ensure confidentiality of participant’s identity and the overall dataset to the best of my ability; the online surveys are filled out anonymously; pseudonyms (i.e., fake names) are used for interview/focus group data. With focus groups, confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. In response, I will stress the importance of confidentiality at the start and close of each group, and all participants must sign a
confidentiality statement on the CF, agreeing not to disclose anything said in the group in a way that could identify other participants.

Consent forms will be stored separately from the data, securely with my main supervisor. Except my supervisors and me, no other party can access collected data, including your organization.

Use of data
Data may be used in my doctoral thesis, as well as publications and presentations arising from this project. Participants will not be identified in any reporting. Participants will be able to request a summary of results by indicating so on the CF or contacting me to express their interest. For focus group or interview data, I will transcribe the audio recording, and translate data provided in Chinese to English. Extracts of verbal data may be quoted in my reporting. Personal photographs may be used as illustrations in the analysis. Faces in personal photos will be warped, though some identifying features (e.g. clothing/jewelry) may still allow others to guess an individual’s identity even after face warping, though the chances are very low.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use
Data (survey, audio, visual) and transcripts/translations will be entered into password-protected computer files. Audio recordings and hard copies of data and transcripts/translations are stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland when not in use. After being retained for 6 years, the computer files will be deleted, recordings and hard copies will be destroyed using a secure disposal service.

Benefits & Risks
Participation should be an interesting and thought-provoking process, and I do not expect any risk in taking part, as participation is voluntary, and does not involve deception. However, should any distressing issues arise unexpectedly, participants can choose to stop the interview, withdraw from the research, or to continue the process. Contact details of supportive services are listed below, and referral can be made.

Youthline http://www.youthline.co.nz/ 0800-376-633
(For the University of Auckland students) Student Health Centre: 09-373-7599 ext 87681

I hope you will be interested in supporting this project! Please feel free to email me for any questions.

Thank you!

Contact Details:
Alex Li: alex.li@auckland.ac.nz
Main supervisor: Associate Professor Louise Allen
School of Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn 8514
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Co-supervisor: Professor Menying Ip
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Email: my.ip@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of School: Dr Airini
School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland
Phone: +64 9 623 8899 extn 48526
Email: airini@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Phone: 09 373-7599 extn 85711. E-mail: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/08/2013 for 3 years, Reference Number 9872

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CONSENT FORM
For Participants

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Research Title: Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand
Researcher: Alex Li

I (participant) have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for Participants, have understood the purpose and the method of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- I must be over 16 years to give consent and to take part in this research.
- My participation in this research is completely voluntary. I can refuse to participate without giving any reason. Participation or non-participation will not affect my relationship with the organisation that made me aware of the study.
- I have the rights to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw my participation at any time during data collection. I can retrospectively withdraw my data, within one month after data collection (before April 30th 2014) only if I’m participating in an interview.
- Request to turn off recording during data collection can be met for interviews, but not for focus groups.
- In a focus group, I will be shown a collage of images on a range of research-related topics in focus groups; if participating in an interview, I will present a selection of my personal photos to aid discussion.
- As data, the personal photos I bring to an interview may be used as illustrations in the analysis; extracts of my discussions may be quoted.
- If I take part in a group discussion, I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the group to others in a way that can be potentially linked to a participant.
- My identity will be protected to the best of the researcher’s ability, and within the bounds of the law: the online survey does not require names; focus group/interview data are associated with pseudonyms; and faces in personal photos will be warped (chances of being identified by other personal features such as clothing or jewellery are very low but do exist).
- Should any distressing issues arise unexpectedly during discussion, I can choose to stop the process, withdraw from the research completely, or to continue the process. Contact details of supportive services are listed on PIS, and referral can be made.
- Alex Li, the researcher will transcribe all collected data and translate data collected in Mandarin Chinese.
- Data may be used in Alex Li’s doctoral thesis and publications/presentations arising from this project.
- Data and transcripts/translations will be entered into password-protected computer files. Audio recordings and hard copies are stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland when not in use. After being retained for 6 years, the computer files will be deleted, recordings and hard copies will be destroyed using a secure disposal service.
- I agree to be audio recorded: YES / NO
- I wish to be contacted after the thesis is complete to receive the summary of findings: YES / NO
- If yes, my contact details are (i.e., phone number/email address/postal address):

If possible, I would like the pseudonym used in reporting any of my quotes to be____________________

By signing below, I agree to take part in this research under the terms indicated in the information supplied.

Name ________________________________ Date ______________

Signature ___________________________ Date ______________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/08/2013 for 3 years, Reference Number 5872
同意書

受訪者用

（僅作 6 年）

研究題目：紐西蘭年輕華人與“性”

研究者：Alex Li（李雅）

我（受訪者）已經閱讀了 Participant Information Sheet for Participant（受訪者使用協議書），理解整個專案的進行和方法，對專案沒有任何疑問。

我理解：

1. 作答時，我必須 16 歲以上。
2. 我的參與是完全自主的。我可以隨時參與而不提供解釋，是否參與本專案不會影響我和介紹我參與專案的機構/團體/人員之間的關係。
3. 我有權在資料收集的過程中拒絕回答任何問題，或在任何時候退出專案。如果受訪者不同意，我也可以在收集資料後一個月內（即 2014 年 4 月 30 日前），退出專案並送出提供的資料。
4. 個人資料受訪者可在受訪過程中任何時候要求刪除資料，但在焦點小組中這個要求無法被滿足。
5. 如果參與焦點小組，我將被提示—組合與研究主題相關的照片或文檔；如果參加個人訪談，我需要提供—個個人照片以協助討論。
6. 作為資料，我提供的個人資料可能用作項目報告的分析和論文訪談內容片段可能在被引用。
7. 如果參與焦點小組，我同意不會將我提供的資料中任何其他受訪者身份透露給他人。
8. 以上所述的資料將在法律原則內最大限度地保護，線上檔案是匿名的，訪談內容將使用假名，個人照片中該部分的受訪者姓名亦被過濾，雖然這種可能性非常的小。
9. 如果訪談過程中任何問題讓我感到不適，我可以選擇隨時被打斷，跳出研究項目，或者拒不同意。如上所述在這種情況下可以提供幫助的服務機構和資訊。如果我有需要，研究者可以替我聯繫他們。
10. 研究者（Alex Li）將調查訪問資料，並把使用中文撰寫的資料翻譯為英文。
11. 收集的資料可能被用於 Alex Li 的博士論文，以及由這個項目衍生的出版物或著作中。
12. 所有收集到的資料（問卷，錄音，圖像）及抄本/翻譯將被保存在加密保護的電子資料夾中。資料，資料及抄本/翻譯的副本將被安全地儲存在奧克蘭大學的檔案中。這些資料保留 6 年之後被銷毀，檔案將被銷毀。

我同意參與是：是/否

我希望在訪談完成後收到一份結果報告書：是/否。

（如果是）我的聯繫方式是：

如果可的話，我希望研究者引用我在訪談使用的姓名是：

我表示同意項目招募並參與這項研究項目。（請在以下簽名）

姓名：

簽名：

日期：

本研究由奧克蘭大學人類倫理委員會於 2013 年 8 月 19 日批准（有效 3 年）。項目編號 0072。
CONSENT FORM
For Organizations

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Research Title: Chinese youth and sexuality in New Zealand

Researcher: Alex Li

I (Head of organisation) have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for Organization, have understood the purpose and the method of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:
- My organization’s participation in this research is completely voluntary. We can refuse to participate without providing any reason for refusal.
- My role is to make the initial approach to potential participants within my organization, through putting up the advertisement on notice boards or our websites, forwarding it to mailing lists, announcing this opportunity in meetings, or giving out the Participants Information Sheet (PIS) for Participants.
- Individuals participating in this research:
  - participate voluntarily. Participation or non-participation will not affect their relationship with the organisation that made them aware of the study, such as my organization.
  - have the right to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw their participation at any time during the process; they can retrospectively withdraw their data within one month after data collection (before April 30th 2014) only if they are participating in interviews.
  - will be audio recorded at their consent during a focus group/interview; interview participants can request the recording be turned off any time, but this request cannot be met for focus groups.
  - will be shown a collage of images on a range of research related topics in focus groups; if participating in interviews, they will be asked to bring a selection of personal photos for discussion.
  - are made aware that as data, their personal photos may be used as illustrations in the analysis; extracts of discussions may be quoted.
  - will have their identity protected to the best of the researcher’s ability and within the bounds of the law: the online survey does not require names; focus group/interview data are associated with pseudonyms; and faces in personal photos will be warped (chances of being identified by other personal features such as clothing or jewellery are very low but do exist).
  - focus group/interview participants can indicate if they would like to receive a summary of findings on their OF or by contacting the researcher; Alex Li.
  - should any distressing issues arise unexpectedly during discussion, participants can choose to stop the process, withdraw from the research completely, or to continue the process. Contact details of supportive services are listed on PIS, and referral can be made.
- Alex Li will transcribe all collected data and translate data collected in Mandarin Chinese.
- Data may be used in Alex Li’s doctoral thesis and publications/presentations arising from this project.
- Data and transcripts/translations will be entered into password-protected computer files. Audio recordings and hard copies are stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland when not in use. After being retained for 6 years, the computer files will be deleted, recordings and hard copies will be destroyed using a secure disposal service.

By signing below and sending this form to alex.li@auckland.ac.nz, I and the organisation I represent agree to take part in this research under the terms indicated in the information supplied.

Organization Name

Signature _______________________ Date ____________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/08/2013 for 3 years. Reference Number 3972
Appendix E: Online Survey Questionnaire

(NB: At the beginning of the survey, participants are informed a Chinese version is available and given its URL should they prefer to answer in Chinese. The Chinese version has the same content and is thus not presented here.)

1. I have read and understood the information describing the aims and content of the following questionnaire. I am aged 16 years or older. I understand that, by submitting this questionnaire electronically I agree to take part in this research under the terms indicated in the information supplied in the Participant Information Sheet-for Participants. YES______ (please tick Yes in order to proceed with the survey)

Demographic information:

2. My age is (please enter a whole number):________________(please ensure you are of age 18-25 in order to be eligible to participate)

3. My place of birth is:
   ❙ Mainland China (continue to the next question)
   ❙ Hong Kong (continue to the next question)
   ❙ Taiwan (continue to the next question)
   ❙ New Zealand (continue to question 5)
   ❙ None of the above (please specify): _____________(continue to the next question)

4. I was ________ years old when I came to live in New Zealand (put in whole numbers).

5. Which of the following best describes you?
   ❙ I’m living in NZ as an international student
   ❙ I’m living in NZ on a work permit
   ❙ I’m in New Zealand on a working holiday visa
   ❙ I’m an immigrant in New Zealand
   ❙ I’m a native New Zealander
   ❙ I was raised in New Zealand but I don’t feel comfortable identifying myself as either ‘immigrant’ or ‘native’ (continue to question 6)
   ❙ None of the above describes me (if so, please specify):

6. If so, how would you describe yourself? (please enter text)

7. In terms of ethnicity, I primarily identify myself as:
   ❙ New Zealand Chinese
   ❙ New Zealander
   ❙ Chinese
   ❙ Taiwanese Chinese
   ❙ Hong Kong Chinese,
   ❙ Other (please specify):__________________________

8. In terms of gender, I identify as:
   ❙ Female
   ❙ Male
   ❙ Neither; I identify my gender as something else (please specify): __________

9. In terms of religious beliefs, I identify as:
   ❙ Christian,
   ❙ Catholic,
   ❙ Buddhist,
Taoist,
Islamic,
Atheist,
Agnostic,
Other (please specify):

10. I attended secondary school in (select as many as apply):
   ♠ Mainland China
   ♠ Hong Kong
   ♠ Taiwan
   ♠ New Zealand
   ♠ Other places (please specify):

11. For most of the time I’ve been in New Zealand, I have lived here:
   ♠ Only with my parent(s)
   ♠ Only with caretakers who are extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles)
   ♠ Only with my siblings or cousins
   ♠ With a combination of the above
   ♠ Without any parents/family

12. I use the following language(s) more often when talking to my parents:
   ♠ My mother tongue (including Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, etc.)
   ♠ English
   ♠ Equally mother tongue and English

13. I use the following language(s) more often when talking to my friends in New Zealand:
   ♠ Mother tongue (including Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, etc.)
   ♠ English
   ♠ Equally my mother tongue and English

14. I more often consume media (including websites, TV shows, magazines, newspapers, movies, music, etc.) in the following language(s):
   ♠ Mother tongue (including Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, etc.)
   ♠ English
   ♠ Equally mother tongue and English

15. I primarily identify my sexuality as:
   ♠ Gay
   ♠ Lesbian
   ♠ Heterosexual
   ♠ Bisexual
   ♠ Asexual
   ♠ I’m not sure
   ♠ I identify my sexuality in some other ways (e.g., queer, please specify):

16. Currently, in terms of relationships I am best described as:
   ♠ Single,
   ♠ In a relationship,
   ♠ In a civil union,
   ♠ Married,
   ♠ Divorced

Thank you.
Now just a few questions about your experience of sexuality and sexuality education:

17. I have had sexual experience with other people (i.e., sexual activities including but not limited to sexual intercourse) in the past:
   - Yes [to next question]
   - No [skip the next two questions]
   - I prefer not to answer [skip the next two questions]

18. I had my first sexual experience (i.e., sexual activities including but not limited to sexual intercourse) with other people when I was ______ years old (please put in whole numbers; if you prefer not to answer this question, please put "0" in the text box.)

19. I have had sexual experiences (i.e., sexual activities including but not limited to sexual intercourse) with:
   - Men only,
   - Women only,
   - Both men and women,
   - Prefer not to answer
   - None of the above (please specify): ______________________

20. I masturbate:
   - Regularly
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never
   - I prefer not to answer

21. Based on personal experience, among the following options, I find these source(s) have been most helpful with getting the information I need about sex/sexuality (including knowledge of sexual health, sexual practice, sexual identity etc): (choose up to 3 options) [randomised]
   - School-based education,
   - (general, non-pornographic) media (e.g., magazines, TV),
   - Internet,
   - Pornographic material,
   - Friends/peers,
   - Sexual partner(s),
   - Parents,
   - Siblings or other family members,
   - Experts/doctors/counsellors,
   - Others sources not included above (please specify): ______________________

22. on the other hand, I have obtained least information about sex/sexuality from these sources:
   (choose up to 3 options) [randomized]
   - School-based education,
   - (general, non-pornographic) media (e.g., magazines, TV),
   - Internet,
   - Pornographic material,
   - Friends/peers,
   - Sexual partner(s),
   - Parents,
   - Siblings or other family members
   - Experts/doctors/counsellors,
   - Others sources not included above (please specify): ______________________
Great! We’re almost there!

Finally, based on your personal experience or perception, please indicate your views about the following statements by circling from 1-5 representing ‘strongly disagree’ ‘slightly disagree’ ‘not sure’ ‘slightly agree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

23. When I need to find out something about sex/sexuality, I know exactly where to look.
24. I have sufficient knowledge about sex/sexuality.
25. Schools should teach young people more about sex/sexuality.
26. Pornography is a good way for young people to learn about sex.
27. Sex is an important aspect of romantic relationships.
28. Sex is taboo and shouldn’t be talked about.
29. Masturbation is shameful.
30. I have sexual desires.
31. It’s important that my sexual needs are fulfilled or satisfied.
32. I would only have sex with someone who is my boyfriend or girlfriend.
33. I would only have sex with someone I’m going to marry or am married to.
34. Girls should save their first-time for the person they marry.
35. Boys should save their first-time for the person they marry.
36. I’m happy with my self-identified sexual identity (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, etc).
37. Homosexuality is unnatural.
38. It’s important that contraception (condoms, contraceptive pills) is used in (non-reproductive) sex
39. I rely on my sexual partner to decide contraceptive use during (non-reproductive) sex.
40. Chinese are sexually conservative (including sexual practice and views).
41. I consider myself sexually conservative (including sexual practice and views).
42. I feel people often make stereotypical assumptions about my sexuality (e.g., sexual practice and views) because I’m Chinese.
43. I consider myself quite “Chinese” when it comes to my sexuality (e.g., sexual practice and views).
44. I consider myself quite “Kiwi” when it comes to my sexuality (e.g., sexual practice and views).
45. I’m quite different from Kiwi Europeans when it comes to sexuality (e.g. sexual practice and views).
46. When it comes to sexuality, I feel divided between my family’s expectations of me and my ideal sexual life.

Thank you for your participation!
Please feel free to let others know about this survey. Your help's much appreciated.

Again, if you're interested to know more about my focus groups or/and interviews that are also part of this research project, please do get in touch me with me: alex.li@auckland.ac.nz

Have a great day/night!
Appendix F: Participants’ Demographic Information Sheet (English and Chinese)

For Focus Group and Interview Participants:

Some information about you

Please can you tell me a bit about yourself, so I have a sense of who has taken part in the study?

My age is: ______________________________________________________________

I identify my ethnicity as: ________________________________________________

I identify my gender as (e.g., male/female/something else): ______________________

My place of birth is: _______________________________________________________

My parents’ place of birth is: ______________________________________________

I have lived in New Zealand for ___________________________________ years/months

I identify my sexuality as (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, something else—please specify): ________________________________

I am currently working/studying/both. My job/study is: ________________________

Currently, in terms of a relationship I am: ________________________________ (e.g., single, in a relationship, living with partner, civil unioned, married, divorced, etc.)

I currently live in: ___________________________ (e.g., suburb, city)

I have attended secondary school (please select from the following):

☐ both in New Zealand and in mainland China/Hong Kong/Taiwan
☐ in New Zealand but not in mainland China/Hong Kong/Taiwan
☐ in mainland China/Hong Kong/Taiwan but not in New Zealand
☐ elsewhere other than New Zealand and mainland China/Hong Kong/Taiwan: _____________

THANK YOU!

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/08/2013 for 3 years, Reference Number 9872
焦點小組和個人訪談受訪者用：

基本資訊

為了我對受訪者有一個大概瞭解，是否可以告訴我以下資訊？

我的年齡: __________________________________________________________

我的種族身份（如中國人，Chinese, Taiwanese Chinese, New Zealand Chinese 等）: 
________________________________________________________________________

我的性別認同(如:男\女\其他):___________________________________________

我的出生地: _______________________________________________________

我父母的出生地: ___________________________________________________

我在紐西蘭已經生活了______________________________________月/年

我對自己性身份認同是：比如，異性戀，同性戀，同志，拉拉/蕾絲邊，酷兒，雙性戀，其他 (請具體說明)：____________________________________________________________

我目前在工作/學習/兩者都有。我的工作/學業是:_________________________

目前我的感情/婚姻狀況是（比如單身，有伴侶，同居，民事結合，已婚，等）:  
________________________________________________________________________

我所居住的地區（比如區，城市）：________________________________________

我____________________________上過中學 (以下請選一)：

☐ 在新西蘭和在中國大陸/香港/臺灣都有
☐ 僅在新西蘭上過，在中國大陸/香港/臺灣沒有
☐ 僅在中國大陸/香港/臺灣上過，在新西蘭沒有
☐ 在新西蘭和中國大陸/香港/臺灣之外其他地區：__________________________

謝謝！

本研究由奧克蘭大學人類倫理委員會於 2013年8月19日批准（有效3年）。項目號碼 9872。
Appendix G: Interview/Focus Group Question Schedule

*What interested you to participate in this study? 為什麼你有興趣參加這個項目？
* [distributing collage to participants, who are to spend 1-2 minutes to examine them and select the ones that stand out to them]

**Discussing the images**

1. Which images appeal to you most and why? [displaying all the images selected and starting with the most popular (i.e., most selected) ones] [展示最多被選中的] 這些選中的照片, 什麼讓你有好感?
2. [displaying the images less or not selected] do you dislike any of these ones and why? [展示沒有或很少被選中的] 這些中有沒有你討厭的? 為什麼?
3. Of all these images, what do you think they are saying about Chinese youth’s sexuality? Prompts: Any stereotypes? Is this a true reflection of the sexuality of Chinese youth you know? Why? Why not? Then is it a reflection of how Chinese young people’s sexuality is perceived and represented in New Zealand?

關於華人青年的“性”，這些圖片表達了什麼資訊呢？比如，有沒有刻板印象？是華人青年的“性”的真實寫照嗎？為什麼是/否？那麼這些圖像是否能夠表現紐西蘭主流社會是如何看待華人青年的“性”的？
4. What do you personally feel about these stereotypes? E.g., do you sense people make stereotypical assumptions of your sexuality because you’re Chinese? How do you respond to that? 你個人如果看待這些刻板印象？比如，比覺得人們因為你是華人會對你的性生活取向等套一些刻板印象嗎？你如何回應？
5. Do you think there are any images that are missing that might also reflect Chinese youth’s sexuality? 这裡沒有嗎？

**Sexuality education and sexuality**

6. What topics do you feel it’s important for young people to learn about in school through sexuality education? [prompts (avoid leading discussions): dealing with emotions in sexual relationships, sexual pleasure, masturbation, contraception, sexual and gender diversity, sexuality or sex based discrimination such as homophobia, transphobia, misogyny]. 你覺得年輕人從學校的性教育中應該學習到哪些內容？比如如何處理感情，性快感，自慰，避孕，性與性別多樣化，歧視，等。
7. Among these topics you have brought up, which ones do you feel you didn’t learn enough about from the sexuality education you’ve received at school (in New Zealand and in the home country, depending on the participants’ experience)? How would you improve the existing sexuality education in schools? 就你個人的經驗（在故鄉或紐西蘭），剛才提到的這些話題，哪些是你覺得學校性教育中教的不夠的或沒教的？你會如何改進目前的學校性教育？
8. How about what school-based sexuality education did teach you? Can you think of some examples of a time when you found sexual knowledge learned in school quite useful in practice? 那麼學校性教育的確教了你那些東西？你有沒有過在實踐中覺得學校教的性知識很有用，有例子嗎？
9. Why do you think it’s these kinds of knowledge that get promoted and not others? What kinds of messages about sex or sexuality did you receive from school-based sexuality education you just described? Do you agree/disagree with these messages? 你覺得為什麼學校性教育選擇推廣教授這些內容而不是其他內容？比如剛才提到的不教的那些？你認為這傳達了（關於“性”的）什麼樣的訊息？你是否同意這樣的諮詢？

10. (If you have had experience of schooling in both countries) how do you find each country’s school-based sexuality education in comparison? If you have attended both schools, how do you compare the two? 你有在兩地都上過中學，你怎麼比較兩處學校性教育的？

11. Apart from school, what other sources do you get information about sexuality from? This includes information on sexual and reproductive health, sexual relationships, sexual practice, etc. 除了課堂，你還通過什麼管道瞭解“性”？這包括任何相關資訊，比如生殖健康，性關係，性行為，等

12. How do you find talking about sexuality related issues with your parents or other family members? Are you comfortable seeking advice from them? Do you think being Chinese has anything to do with the way you communicate about sexuality with your family? 你覺得可以和你的父母或其他家庭成員聊“性”相關的話題嗎？覺得可以向他們徵求建議嗎？為什麼可以/不可以？你認為你和家人溝通性話題的方式和作為華人有關係嗎？

13. What do you think some traditional Chinese sexual values are? Do you agree or disagree with them? Do they impact on your sexual expression or practice? 你覺得中國傳統性價值觀是什麼樣的？你同意嗎？你覺得作為華人是否與你的性實踐或性價值觀有關係，是什麼樣的關係？

14. Do you talk about sexuality related topics with your peers or friends? What ethnic groups are they from? Any difference in your communication depending on what ethnic group(s) your friend/s come(s) from? 你和朋友/同伴會聊性相關的話題嗎？他們的種族身份是？和不同種族背景的朋友/同伴聊的時候，溝通方式會有所不同嗎？

15. Do you have preferences for your sexual partner’s ethnicity? 你對性伴侶的種族有要求嗎？比如比較受哪個人種的人吸引，還是沒有區別？

16. If you have had sexual partners, would you talk with your sexual partner(s) about sexuality issues? What do you/would you talk about? What’s their ethnicity? Who appears to know more about sex and sexuality in your relationships? Do you feel any pressure of sexual expectations? How do you respond? 如果你目前有性伴侶，你和你的性伴侶聊性相關的話題嗎？聊些什麼？對方在你的關係中，哪一方似乎對於性瞭解更多？你是否感受到任何性期待的壓力？你如何回應？

17. What kinds of messages do you receive about sexuality from mainstream media (e.g., magazines, TV, newspapers)? Any message about Chinese’s sexuality specifically? How do you feel about these messages? Positive examples and negative examples. Any difference between media in Chinese language and those in English, if you consume both? 你從主流媒體（比如雜誌，電視，報紙）看到關於性的什麼樣的資訊？有沒有特別關於華人“性”方面的資訊？對於這些資訊你怎麼看？正面/負面例子。中文傳媒和英文傳媒是否有任何區別？你兩種都使用嗎？

18. How is abortion among Asian women being portrayed in NZ media (e.g., news)? What
do you personally think about abortion? Are you aware what your family think about it? You have seen the reports about Asian women's abortions? These reports are about how women's reproductive rights are treated? What is your opinion on abortion? What do your family think about it?

19. What's your standpoint on contraception? Prompt: how did you learn about it, if you did? In reality do you always use it? Why/not? 隱約於避孕的立場是？如果你學習瞭解過避孕的知識，你是如果瞭解的？現實中你會避孕手段嗎？為什麼/不？

20. As far as you know, do young people use internet to seek sexual information? Do you? What kinds of information are sought after? How do you compare internet with other sources of information? Do you use social media (e.g., facebook, twitter, tumblr) as a way to obtain information related to sexuality (your own sexuality or sexuality in general)? 就你所知，年輕人使用互聯網來搜尋性資訊嗎？具體什麼樣的性資訊？你個人這樣做嗎？把互聯網和其他管道相比，你怎麼看？你是否使用社交媒體（比如臉書，微博）作為一種取得相關性資訊的方式？

21. What do you think of pornography as a source of sexual knowledge and information? How do you feel about it (fun to watch, disgusting, uncomfortable, etc)? What messages do you receive from it? And has that had any impact on your sexual practice (e.g., believing sex is to be done in certain ways)? 你怎麼看色情產品作為一種取得性資訊的管道？你怎麼看色情產品？色情產品傳達的資訊是什麼樣的？色情產品是否對你的性行為/實踐有過影響（比如相信進行性行為有某些特定方式）？

22. (if not covered enough earlier) How has the information, knowledge or messages you’ve received from these various sources impacted on your own views about sex and sexual practice? What kind of information or communication have you found most helpful in helping you understand yourself as a sexual being (e.g., exploring and practicing what you want to be like sexually)? (如果之前展開不夠充分)你從各種管道取得的資訊和知識是如何影響你自己的“性”（包括性價值觀，性行為，性身份認同）的？在幫助你自己理解自己的“性”方面（比如瞭解自己想進行什麼樣的性實踐），什麼樣的資訊或者溝通方式你覺得最有幫助？

23. What kind of information do you struggle most to seek/is least available? Why do you think that is? What do you wish to know more about? 什麼樣的資訊是你覺得很難得到的？你覺得為什麼這麼難？關於性，你還想知道些什麼（是目前無法瞭解的）？

24. Do you feel being Chinese impacts on how you obtain and select sexual information in any way? Do you believe it’s different for your non-Chinese peers? 你覺得作為華人對你取得和選擇性資訊有任何影響嗎？你覺得你的非華人同伴/朋友的體驗和你一樣嗎？

25. During your time in New Zealand, have you ever had moments or periods when you thought a lot about your own sexuality (who you are, what you like, what you dislike, what you think is right or wrong, sexually)? Prompt: became more aware of it, questioned it or deliberately tried something out? When and in what context did that happen? Anything to do with you being Chinese? 你在紐西蘭的這些年中，有沒有對自己的性（包括性身份認同，性欲望，喜歡什麼不喜歡什麼，什麼是對什麼是錯）有過強烈的體驗或反思的時期，比如有懷疑，醒悟或者實踐？這是在什麼時候，什麼環境下發生的呢？和你的種族身份是否有關？
26. When was the last time you had sexual feelings and decided to act on them? If you ever did, was that a deliberate decision or what you usually do? How did you feel afterwards? If you never did, why not (no sexual feelings? Or deciding against acting on them)?

27. Do you feel you are free to express yourself in ways you like? Prompts: any restraints? How do you deal with them?

28. How do you define being sexually active? What counts as sex? Prompt: masturbation, mutual masturbation?

29. Do you think there are gender differences when it comes to sex or sexuality (e.g., sexual expression, views)? How so?

30. What do you think about same-sex attraction? What other non-heterosexual sexualities are you aware of or have you come across?

*Summing up: REITERATE CONFIDENTIALITY.*
Appendix H: Photo Collage used in Focus Groups

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the images used in the collage. All images were found on the internet, with no known restriction around their usage.
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