

Fairbank Center Panel Discussion – Transnational Aging in the Chinese Diaspora, September 30, 2021

– Great. Great. Well, welcome. I wanna thank everybody for coming to our panel discussion today, focused on transnational aging in the Chinese diaspora. Today we're gonna be focusing primarily on two recent works that have been published in this area. One is my book, called "Chinese senior migrants and the globalization of retirement". And the other is Ken Sun's book, called "Time and migration". Today we have our panel presentation set up in a way that we've divided us, will be divided into two hours, in the first hour, we'll focus on my book. I'll give a very short presentation followed by commentary by professor Russell King, which joins us from the University, he's a professor of geography at the University of Sussex. After that, commentary by professor Andrea Louie, who is joining us from Michigan State University, and then Ken Sun. The second hour will be focused on Ken's work, he'll start with a brief presentation of his own work, followed by commentary from Sarah Friedman, who joins us from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Sarah Lamb, who joins us from Brandeis, and then I'll finish up with a few comments. Please feel free to ask questions. You can put them in the Q&A button at the bottom of the screen at any point during the conversation, but we're also gonna leave time at the end to have more conversation among ourselves. We'll also have a very brief break, probably three minutes or so, at five o'clock, between the hours, or at least between the panel presentations as the timing works out. So with that, we can get started. So, as I said, my name's Nicole Newendorp and I'm an anthropologist, I work on Chinese migration and family life. In my book, which is called "Chinese senior migrants and the globalization of retirement", I focus on the contemporary migration. I'm sorry. I'm a little bit nervous. I apologize. Let me try again. So I focus on a contemporary experiences of Chinese born seniors. So that is individuals who've migrated from Southeast China to the US for the first time, at the age of 60 or older. And my focus primarily is on people who migrated between the years of 1990 and 2010. My ethnography is primarily about Cantonese speaking senior migrants, and that was a conscious methodological choice that I made. I do get rest year each year, but Cantonese has been my primary field language for the last 20 years. You may also know that Guangdong province, where Cantonese is spoken, is the area of origin for Chinese immigrants, who first began coming in large numbers to the US, beginning in the mid 1800s. So that long history of engagement with the US has ended up coming into important play for understanding why it is that since 1990, 30% of all Chinese migrants to the US have come at the age of 60 or older. So the Chinese are, on average, older than all other American foreign born immigrants. My focus allowed me to create a detailed ethnographic picture of the lives of this group of senior migrants as a way to help document the diversity of Chinese American lives in the United States, where discourse about the model minority has largely hidden from view the reality that Asian Americans, to quote historian Erica Lee, "are

overrepresented at both ends of the education "and social economic spectrum of privilege and poverty." So in the book I highlight the uniqueness of this group, but I also seek to put their experiences in conversation with those of senior migrants from other areas of China, and also with senior citizens engaging in retirement migration trajectories across other world areas. Like many ethnographic projects, my research began a little bit by accident. So in 2007, as I finished out a longer research project in Hong Kong, I was looking for a new project and started teaching English as a second language, or what I'll refer to as ESL, as a volunteer to low income Chinese American seniors in Boston's Chinatown. I had assumed that my ESL students would be long-term residents in the United States. So as I first got to know them, and I realized that none of them had been in the US longer than a decade. And some of them for just a handful of years. I was surprised. It ended up turning out that they were all recent migrants, mostly they had come directly from Guangdong province, which they had left in their sixties or in their seventies to relocate to the Greater Boston metropolitan area. They worked in restaurants, they worked as caregivers for children or infirm adults. They worked as janitors, as hotel cleaners, and in a handful of cases as administrative help in Chinatown area of professional offices. Some of them had been sponsored to come to the US by adult children, but others have been sponsored by siblings or by parents, and they all had multi-generational family living in the United States, in North America, and in other world areas. Through our casual conversations, I learned bits and pieces about their lives. They told me about the family members that they had left behind in China. This included aging parents, adult children, even grandchildren that they had cared for before migrating. They noted both advantages and disadvantages to living in Boston. This included things like food, service, safety, and of course, racial concerns. Many of them voiced in anguish how difficult it was to get by and to adjust to living in the US as an older person. At the same time, they repeatedly talked about being comfortable and being happy here. So at some point I decided that I needed to more formally investigate this intersection for this particular group of aging and migration. That is what it was like for them to migrate to an entirely new location to live for the first time as an older adult. So in 2009, after three full years of talking each week with my ESL students and meeting many more senior migrants in the process, I ended my volunteer teaching and I began collecting both interview and participant observation data. My research unfolded following several years, each year, I built on the previous one. First, I focused on what were the multifaceted motivations for their decisions to move to the US for the first time as seniors. After that, I was interested in how these senior migrants interacted with Boston's Chinatown, and with other networks and forms of community support. Last, I followed them to Quincy, a suburban area south of Boston, that's become a kind of satellite Chinatown area. What I learned over these many years of interactions with a wide variety of Chinese seniors throughout the area highlighted their agency and their

engagement with global flows of movement and geographic mobility processes. So, as a result, I focus on how seniors age, what we might think of as their temporal positioning as older migrants, creates new possibilities for exploring forms of interaction, collaboration, and affinity to the people, places and ideas that might otherwise be unexpected. Is from these unexpected interfaces that I was able to document how my interviewee strive to achieve a sense of well-being, despite the potential obstacles to that well-being that they faced almost every day as aging individuals, marginalized from mainstream American society. So that's a very short overview of how I got started in my project, and some of the things I focused on, and now I'm gonna turn it over to professor Russell King.

- Okay. Thank you, Nicole. And good afternoon, everybody, although where I am it's very late in the evening. The first thing I want to say is that I've really, really enjoyed reading your book, Nicole. I think it's a wonderful book. I love the balance that you strike between the bigger picture of the Chinese diaspora and the individual stories that you weave through the successive chapters. And I love the balance that you create between theory on the one hand and empirical data on the other. So that's just my opening gambit, to just give you, honestly, my truly honest reaction to the book. I'm going to divide my comments into two sections. I mean, following the indications that I was given by the panel organizers. Firstly, I'm going to share with you what I think the contributions of the book are to the fields in which I personally work, which involve partly aging and migration and diaspora formation and so on. And then secondly, and maybe I'll spend a little bit more time on this, because it will lead more to questions and discussion. Secondly, I was asked to focus on what are the unanswered questions raised by the book and what future directions does it point to. So let me go back to the first part then, what are the contributions of the book to the fields that I work in. I mean, for sure, this book makes crucial and new insights into what I have myself called, the aging migration nexus, in a paper that I published in the Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies, 2017, a joint author paper. We proposed this term to look both at the phenomenon of aging as a migrant, and also migrating as an older person. There's a distinction between those two framings. And the first surprise that I had when reading the book was that this was not a book about longstanding labor migrants, who age in place, a little bit as Ken Sun's book is, which is more about long stay migrants who are then faced with the prospect of staying on in the United States or going back to Taiwan. But in Nicole's case, this was a book about relatively new arrivals. And as she's just told us, that her participants were all aged 60 plus, and sometimes substantially beyond 60 plus at the time they migrated from China to the US. So that was the first kind of intriguing finding that I took away, which kind of surprised me, but also pleased me. And I think that also leads to my second point, which is about the motivations and characteristics of this migration. It's rare that migrants migrate for one single reason. Usually there's a

mix of reasons, and this is what comes out from Nicole's ethnography. It is, I guess, predominantly a family driven migration connected to intra family caregiving, I mean, specifically of grandparents towards their grandchildren, but also more complicated than that, they're also providing services to their children. Some of them are also caring for their own parents. So we're actually sometimes involved in a four generation kind of scenario here, in which the actual protagonist of the migration are a kind of sandwich generation, but there's also the anticipation that they themselves will, at some stage in the future, if not actually now, receive care from their family members in the US. So to use Nicole's term, I mean in her introductory chapter, this is about assistance migration, but it's also about another category of migration, which she highlights, which is called amenity migration, or if you like, lifestyle migration. So her protagonists are also moving to United States to access a different lifestyle, and to experience, if you will, the American way of life. The third highlight for me was to learn more, since I knew virtually nothing, about the history and complexity of the Chinese diaspora. How it has been historically layered through time across generations, indeed, almost centuries, how it's geographically varied from different parts of China, urban versus rural, different regions of China. Also, of course, if we think of the wider diaspora, also Taiwan, Vietnamese Chinese, and Hong Kong Chinese and so on. And also how it's fractured by class, by language and these various other kind of biographical dimensions. So that was the third point. And then the fourth point that I found kind of connected to, well, not so much connecting to my own work, but something which I found truly fascinating was in the penultimate chapter where you look at what you call the Chinese heart, and focus on ballroom dancing. And this also for me was a surprise. Well, actually it wasn't a surprise, because the clue is on the cover, so I should've kind of realized, but I mean, this was, I guess, kind of a surprise to me because in my naivety, I thought that Western ballroom dancing would be seen in communist China as a kind of symbol of Western decadence and cultural colonialism. But then I read in Nicole's book, that actually during communist China, ballroom dancing was a widespread practice, and even Mao Zedong was an expert at it. So this was really interesting, but what is further interesting is the way in which this leads into particular models of successful and active aging. And we have here a kind of an experience of aging, which I suppose, somehow combines, and here I'm sort of lapsing into stereotypes to some extent. Somehow combines, you know, the Western model of individualized, energetic, active aging, where people are responsible in a sense for their own wellbeing. And the more traditional model of aging, which comes from other parts of the world in various parts of the global south, where it's much more family based. I'm thinking here of that wonderful book by Katie Gardner, called "Age, narrative, and migration", where she describes the aging process of Bengali elders in London. So what we find from the Chinese experience is that everybody is, well, not everybody, but many people are dancing, they're playing ping pong, they're taking exercise, they're singing, and so they're creating this

kind of bonding, I mean, on the one hand bonding social capital, but on the other hand also, a particular way of exercising and keeping the body relatively active. So now I turn to the second part of my little presentation, which is to talk about unanswered questions raised by the book and maybe some future directions. Here there are several, which I think is the sign of a good book, that there are many questions that it raises. So what I want to do in the next sort of five minutes is just to be selective in how I use the book to think with some of the wider questions that interests me. As a geographer who was initially trained in economic geography, one of the things that I missed a little bit in the book was more detail about the economic foundations of this migration. Nicole, in your final chapter, you kind of throw in very, very brief mentions of segmented labor markets and the new economics of labor migration, but it comes very late, and it's very brief, and I guess if I want to be a little bit more critical, it would've been nice to have seen that kind of economic underlay to your analysis signaled earlier on. I felt I wanted to know more about the pension situation. I looked for the word pensions in the index, it wasn't there, but, of course, it does pop up in a few places in the book, as I mentioned, of \$800 per month from one informant. But the actual material basis of these person's lives was a level of detail that, I guess, I would've liked to know more about. The second area, which I think I was a bit surprised that there wasn't more attention to, was the issue of gender. And again, that's not mentioned in the index, which was a little bit of a surprise. And it may be that your participants, the gender aspects of their migration processes and their family relations is not as marked as many of us know it is in other migrations. I've done a little bit of work on Albanian senior migration, the so what I call or has been called, the so-called Zero Generation, the older migrants who follow their first generation children and their second generation grandparents, and the whole dynamics of that migration is very, very sharply gendered. I don't have time to describe in what ways it's gendered, but gender seemed to be a little bit of a missing dimension to your analysis. My third point for consideration and future work is that this was a book which was resolutely focused on the 50 or so participants whom you interviewed, and, of course, the ethnographic observations that you made of their lives. What was missing a little bit was the voices of the significant others. It would've been nice to have heard what the children and the grandchildren felt about the presence of their grandparents in their households, their reaction to the language barrier, their reaction to different models of child rearing and so on. And in a similar vein, I felt I wanted to know more about the place of Chinatown, and also Quincy as well. What, and who preceded it, and what about the other inhabitants of those places, both the other inhabitants that are there nowadays, because again, you gave us a hint that most of these Chinatown places are actually not 100% occupied by Chinese, they're maybe 40 or 50% or something like that. So the other inhabitants were a little bit missing and also the historical evolution of Chinatown. I mean, we know from loads and

loads of historical studies of urban ethnic America, that there've been these enclaves, which, following the kind of Chicago School narrative, have succeeded each other over the decades. So, you know, there's little Italy, there's Greek town, there's Swede town and so on. And what was Chinatown built on in terms of its historical origins? Was it Chinese right from the beginning? Or was there a model of invasion and succession, which we see, to some extent, in studies of Sydney's Chinatown. I forget, I think the name of the author is Amanda Wise, who's done a really interesting study of Sydney's Chinatown, or China towns, I should say in the plural, because there are two, there's been a displacement to a newer Chinatown, which is more suburban. And there the previous occupants of Chinatown who are mainly, if I remember right, the Italian and Lebanese, were quite troubled by the Chinese-ness, what has become the prominent group. And Amanda Wise uses a kind of haptic lens to talk about the sights, the sounds, the smells, and the experiences of being a previous occupant of a little Italy, which is now a Chinatown. And I wonder whether there was those kind of tensions evident. I mean, you gave one or two clues, you mentioned Linda, who was a bit of a sourpuss in terms of her critique of what was going on. And you mentioned, I think, the single white woman who was an observer at the dances, but these are very fleeting experiences. And then finally, just a couple of curiosities. Your field work was done about a decade ago, so I'm curious to know what the end game is for these people. I mean, the redoubtable Mr. Lee, who we meet almost in the very beginning of the book, who migrated at the age of 75, and now is pushing 90. I mean, you know, do you know what's happened to him and many of the other of your interlocutors? Have you followed them through, what is the end game in that fourth age of eventual decline leading to death? That's my first curiosity. And the second curiosity is more a terminological one. Towards the end of the book, in particular, you use the phrase Asian Americans to almost as an interchangeable phrase for Chinese Americans. And I'm just curious, I mean, from a European and British perspective, to find out what you, guys, refer to as Asian Americans. I mean, is it Chinese plus, I don't know, Vietnamese, Japanese, Koreans, and so on? Or does it represent a broader, I mean, geographically, Asia stretches down to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and as far west as Turkey. From the British perspective, when we use the term British Asian, we think automatically of people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Whereas I sense that your kind of terminological vision of Asian Americans is something different. So that's just a curiosity that maybe somebody can clear up. But I mean, summing up, my knowledge of aging and migration has been seriously profoundly affected and enhanced by reading and digesting this fantastic book. Thanks.

- Okay. Thank you so much, Russell. I really appreciate your comments. I would love to respond to them, but I actually don't wanna hold up time too much, because we have so many other panelists to get through. Just, I mean, very, very briefly, in terms of one or two of your

questions, the end game, so, very sadly, Mr. Lee passed away even before the book was finished. So that was, I mean, even before I finished collecting my field work, actually. At the ripe old age of 88 or so, maybe 90. So some of the others, I did follow, I haven't followed everybody through, but there are various reasons for that. And then, yeah, sorry. Okay. I don't wanna take up more time going into a whole bunch of other details, but I think why don't I turn it over to Andrea, and then we'll keep going from there. Thank you.

- Okay. Just gonna time myself, cause I have no idea how long these comments I jotted down will take. I just wrote them down, because I did worry that I'm gonna forget something. Let's see. Yeah. So Nicole's book does an excellent job of showing how the diasporic imagination of Cantonese seniors is both informed by a rich history of immigration from that region and continued family connections, but also by their experiences in socialist and post socialist China, which is I think what makes this book so powerful for me, looking at these multiple elements. Her study maps out a dynamic and multilayered transnational social field comprised of people who imagine themselves as related to kinship and history, but her analysis also reveals tensions and discontinuities within this appearance of continuity or this kind of assumption of being part of the same transnational community or social field. So what on the surface may appear to be an act of family reunification when these senior migrants finally come to the US, is also revealed to be fraught with unfulfilled expectations, which are a product of the way that these Chinese seniors, even though they've now fulfilled their dreams of coming to the US, had expectations based on their imaginations or longstanding ties to family abroad and what they thought would come of that, but also through their experiences in pre socialist China through Mao's revolution, and then in a rapidly changing post socialist China. So I get this sense of this very dynamic transnational social field with multiple parts, as opposed to something that's kind of more cohesive in historic, just only historically rooted, which I think is very powerful. And also I like how she shows remarkably how these seniors, who are despite being socially and politically marginalized, create these very strong social networks with other Chinese in the US to make the best out of their retirement in the United States. Despite what their expectations might have been when they came. I wanted to say something briefly about how impressed I am that Nicole worked with Cantonese speaking population, her Cantonese is way better than mine, because I'm one of the descendants of Cantonese migrants from the early 20th century, so I did not grow up speaking, but like she said in her introduction, this is not an accident, not just because she's fluent in Cantonese, but because it makes a lot of sense to study this population of recent migrants, because of their specific economic positioning, because of their connection to this historical diaspora in US Chinatowns. She talks about how Cantonese/Toisanese people have a specific orientation to both other parts of China and to the outside world. As we know, the coastal region of China, particularly Guangdong

province, particularly, Pearl River Delta area has a long history of outward migration and connections to the outside world. And also I think the potential or process of imagining what the outside world might be like. Like in my own work, I looked at how in the mid 90s, people in that region had access to Hong Kong TV, access to stories of people who had come back from abroad. And at that time, a lot of the people I talked to were reconsidering whether or not they wanted to migrate, whether life for them in China, which was at the time becoming a lot more prosperous than before might be a better choice. So yeah, her book is not just an ethnography of Boston Chinatown as a discrete locale, but rather of its dispersed and transnationally oriented community. So we get a sense of these elders' lives in regard to their transnational orientation and the shifting layers of identity over the life course. So even though you're looking at them in their sixties plus, their memories, their experiences of being in China and of imagining what life would be like in the United States and so on, play into all of this. So it's very rich in terms of its time depth, even though your fieldwork is very specific in terms of its time period. Just gonna skip a couple of things. Just one second, I have an alarm going off in the back. Can you hear that? I hope it's not. Okay. I will just try to ignore it then. It's my son's alarm to empty the dishwasher and clearly it's not working. All right. So, oh, he's not here. Okay. So until I read Nicole's book, I had previously thought about 1949, which is the beginning of Mao's revolution, mainly as a moment of rupture and disconnection, where from the perspective of Chinese American studies, Asian American studies, it's this moment when the Chinese abroad were cut off from their relatives in China. So for my dissertation research for my first book, I studied the insert of Roots Program, a program co-sponsored by the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco and the Office Overseas Chinese Affairs in China, that brought Chinese-Americans to do their ancestral villages in the Pearl River Delta, these very immigrant regions that we're talking about, to search for roots. And this was necessary because of the social marginalization experienced by Chinese Americans in the US, this idea that their roots weren't here, but also because of China's opening up. The reason they had these programs in the first place. And so, this is very much rooted in Toisanese or Cantonese migrants whose families came in the first half of the 20th century and their descendants and their changing relationships to China as a homeland. My current book project is, I guess I ran this by Nicole, I felt like talking about my own research, which obviously connects to my own identity as a Cantonese American is relevant, I think because of how her book allowed me to think about this community in a newer way, or this larger diasporic, larger diaspora in a different way. My current book project focuses on my maternal grandmother, who came to the United States at the age of 29 in 1921 from Toisan. And she was selected as US Mother of the Year in 1952. And I'm not saying this, obviously it's a big deal, but this was certainly part of the cultural Cold War. This is part of the Cold War period in the United States, in a way for the United States to say that they were treating its

minorities well, contrary to how they may have been criticized for, being hypocritical, a hypocritical democracy. Also this was the time when the model minority myth that Nicole mentioned earlier arose in the United States, and my grandmother's story was very much a part of this. And the public telling of her story was one of assimilation and Americanization, but as part of this book project that I'm working on, I have one chapter that focuses on how, in this moment in history, when she was chosen as US Mother of the Year, which appears to be the pinnacle of acceptance as an American. She was brought to the White House to meet Ms. Bess Truman, national news coverage and so on, it was all premised on this idea of assimilation again. Occurred in the same Cold War context that made it impossible for ever to return to her village in China again. And it cut off, to a large extent, her relationship to her relatives and friends in China, but she nevertheless remained oriented toward China and the Chinese community, because that was socially significant, that made me think about this idea of the transnational social field. That she was part of that, these new senior migrants are part of, but also how it's an uneven and very transnational social field. So even when my grandfather died, she continued to donate money in her son's names to the Gun Family Association, sent remittances back to China and so on. So I was telling Nicole that I was thinking about what the flip side of her experience was. So she was able to come to the US, she became celebrated. She never got to go back, but what about the people who didn't come to the United States for whatever reason? Weren't able to, didn't want to, those Toisanese residents who didn't immigrate abroad, the people in Nicole's book would be the next generation down from that. I think they're more like my parents' age instead of my grandparents' age, but still, the people who sort of had these continued connections to the US, but, again, were cutoff for many years. And to make a long story short, three of my uncles married three sisters who could read and write Chinese, so my grandmother was actually able to reestablish contact with her family in China in the early 1950s. So things were not totally cut off, the letters were able to get through, but they were sometimes censored or whatever, but they began to get letters back from China. And one of the letters was written in this handwriting that was apparently not very good. So one of my aunts who was writing these letters commented to her sister about this horrible handwriting. Well, years later, the sister found out from her hairdresser who had, I think, since migrated to the United States, that these letters were written by my grandmother's sister. Her sister had learned, gotten a tutor and learn to write in Chinese, so she could communicate with her sister in the US. And that's, I think, a pretty amazing thing, cause she would've been born around 1900, at the time she would've been in her fifties, and very rare for women at that time to have been educated. Of course some of this might've been instrumental to get these remittances, but I'd like to imagine that some of this had to do with the affective ties that she had to her sister that she might never see again. So I use this as a way to think about Nicole's study and her contributions, how did

those who stayed in China remain oriented to the relatives abroad, how did their imagining of life in the US changed throughout these years of separation, and so, like I said, I had been thinking about this relationship in terms of disconnect. I really, until I read Nicole's book, hadn't thought about reconnection. And I think that's what's so powerful about her book, that these seniors migrating after retirement, after the such a long period of separation, finally able to fulfill their hopes of diasporic connection through a migration to the United States. Coming with these hopes and expectations that are fueled by this longstanding diasporic imagination, that characterize migration as a way of life in Cantonese culture. But they were also very much shaped by their experiences in socialist China and post socialist China. And so her ethnography allows us to think beyond this moment of being cut off, to look at what happens when families are reconnected. And I think what she talks about, also powerfully, especially because it's through the lens of these seniors, is how these seniors had placed hope in socialism, in the government, and with the withdrawal of socialist supports and privatization in China, they weren't able to have this kind of retirement that they had hoped to have in China. They weren't able to experience the egalitarianism that had been promised to them in socialist China, so they were looking for that in the United States. I'm gonna just skip over this paragraph here, and sort of just end with, Apotheray talks about this idea of the social imaginary, and I think that's a very compelling concept, but I think Nicole's book shows us how the imagination exists in terms of being able to imagine yourself as a diasporic community, but also how it's reformulated through the experiences and expectations that these seniors live in China, through these socialist and post socialist Chinese reforms, and then how these were kind of reality tested once they arrived in the United States, and how they had to actively and resourcefully navigate the gaps between the imagination and the reality that they experience. And then just quickly, my questions really have to do with also follow up, but mainly I'm wondering what they think about the rise of anti-Asian hate and xenophobia. That has certainly changed the situation for Chinese Americans, but particularly Chinese American elders. How does that affect their sense of safety and security that they were seeking in the United States and within their Chinese community networks, and to what extent are they aware of racism, and to what extent is that changing how they feel, the hopes, I guess, that they are placing in America.

- Thank you so much, Andrea. I love having the sort of, your grandmother is the flip side, right? The one who was here versus the ones who, my group, who were not able to come. Just super briefly, and then we'll turn this over to Ken. I don't have a full answer. I haven't followed people as much as I should have the last couple of years, but I would just say that they've always had the sense of insecurity combined with what I do talk about as a sense of security in terms of social support here in the US, right? So there are always

such stories that they have had to tell about, if not being overly attacked because of their race, at least a sense of insecurity related to living in Boston's Chinatown, which borders the Theater District and has several universities nearby, so that there're always loud people out drinking and carousing late at night in ways that have rendered many individuals to feel very insecure in their own neighborhood. Also, for people who have a longer-term engagement with Boston, you may remember a time when Boston's Chinatown was also linked very much with sort of a red light district. So that actually, within that area, there's also a history of people mobilizing to protect themselves through having different kinds of security walks and other processes to help safeguard and security. So I haven't, in part because things cut off so quickly when COVID started, right around the time when I was sort of hoping to be able to reconnect with people more, and people have been sort of very removed during this period of time. I don't have a lot of in-depth conversations with people about sort of how the immediate effects of the last year and a half have effected them. Other than to say that, in some ways I think that they would tell me that while there are increasing concerns now, they've always felt different kinds of concerns in these areas as well. So Ken, I'd like you to introduce yourself as I turn it over to you.

- Sure. Hi, my name is Ken Sun. I'm currently Assistant professor of Sociology and Criminology at Villanova University. Is a huge honor to serve on the same panel with Ross and Andrea, I'm a big fan of both of your work, and I'm really excited to read Nicole's book. I really think our works compliment each other. And I will keep my comments short, like probably under 10 minutes. There are three major contributions I want to focus on from Nicole's book. First of all, I think Nicole's book really challenged the perpetual foreigner images associated with aging immigrants in general, and older Asian migrants in particular. As Nicole points out in her book, many scholars ask whether older migrants can be assimilated or incorporated into American society. Obviously, Nicole's answer is yes, even if they are recent arrivals, and more interestingly, they are incorporated into the working class communities in Boston area. And she argued that whether, and the extent to which older migrants can be incorporated into American society depends on how they are socialized, transnationally and transtemporally. Many of these older migrants Nicole studies develop aspiration to come to the US even when they are physically in China, and after they arrive, the social welfare programs here motivate them and enable them to construct a sense of belonging to the United States. So these examples convincingly show immigrants pre and post migration socialization play crucial roles in their adaptation to American life. And another interesting example about cross border socialization and it's implication it's the conflicts between and among older migrants. In her book, Nicole identified two types of division among older Chinese migrants, a cross regional differences, and this has a lot to do with the language they

speak and also across cross class differences. So as Nicole mentioned in the book, many recent arrive older migrants from China are middle class and better educated. So this finding suggests migrants present and futures are path dependent. How they are socialized transnationally and transtemporally, not only affect their identities and practices, but also influence the dynamics within their social networks. Another interesting thing I found in Nicole's book is the discussion on how China has been changed over the past two decades. Nicole's work debunks the convention assumptions about Chinese diaspora. Many people assume Chinese immigrants are always oriented to their homeland. Many of Nicole's interviewees emphasize their Chinese identities, but they also criticize how China has changed over time. For example, many of Nicole's interviewees miss the past, they believe contemporary China has become more and more unequal or corrupt. As Nicole convincingly writes, senior express nostalgia for a life in which ideological values they work for in early years of PRC collective cooperations, their support of workers, equality and financial security are still the hallmarks of daily life, rather than flashy consumption oriented lifestyle that characterized Chinese society today. So for them, China is their home, but they also know their home has changed. Another thing Nicole talks about in her book is the rural urban disparities. And this is a very, there's at large literature on rural urban disparities in China. And so basically Nicole also realized that the rural urban inequalities also profoundly shapes how this older migrant perceive their homeland. Again, these older migrants may believe they are Chinese and maintain a strong sense of Chinese-ness abroad, but they also try to negotiate new ways of being and belonging in relation to their changing homeland. Another example is intergenerational relationships, as Nicole acknowledge in the book, the intergenerational relationships in China are also changing, and the changing social and cultural landscape in China also motivates them to rethink how they should negotiate their own intimate relationship with family members here. Third, Nicole's book also convincingly analyzed how they experienced individual and family transition transnationally. One example I want to give here is grandparenting. They come here to provide care for their grandchildren, but as their grandchildren grow older, they also experience a lot of estrangement and alienation, or even conflicts. So on the one hand, they feel empowered to be able to prove their self worth to their family members. But at the same time, they also feel disempowered as their grandchildren no longer need their care. So how do they find their self-worth and value? They try to provide care for their community members. So this book has a lot of ambivalence, on the one hand they feel migration can be very empowering, but at the same time, they also have a lot of frustration, nationally and transnationally. I want to skip the rest of my comments and jump to the questions I have. So I basically have two major questions. In Nicole's book, she mentioned the concept of temporal positioning a few times. I wonder whether you can elaborate the concept of temporal positioning, what do you mean by temporal positioning and how can we

extend and use this concept in our own work? I also wonder how you think about your respondents, your interviewees grab whole with the multiple roles of China on global stage, and the complicated relationships between China and the US today. For example, China is a rising global superpower, but rural urban equalities have deepened. China gained new economic and political muscles globally, but China also become a major competitor with US, in some cases, enemies with the US. Then how do this older immigrants position themselves in relation to their home and host society, and how do their transnational and transtemporal positioning affects their ways of being and ways of belonging. This is all I have.

- All right, Ken. So thank you. I appreciate your comments very much. And appreciate sort of from all of you a sense of which that the book is, in some ways, push you to think in new ways about the experiences of older individuals. And I think, to a certain extent, that's also where I started from with the book itself, in the sense that as I started listening to those stories of the individuals who I got to know, first through being a voluntary ESL teacher in Chinatown, was that I think story after story, that I heard as I started listening more and more, really sort of beat up on whatever preconceived notions I had of what life might be like for them or why they might've migrated and what was going on for them and these different kinds of situations. And which is in part what drove me to go sort of deeper and deeper into this one community, if we can even think of it as a full community, rather than trying to move beyond that and do anything more comparative, which in fact, I was encouraged to do it at one or more points and decided not to. But I think you've hit on a lot of the key things that were really mattered as I was working on this project in many different ways, I guess, just to respond briefly, so Ken, your question about sort of my thinking about temporal positioning, is interesting because, in many ways, I think in your book, your articulation of what we think of these temporalities of migration actually gets more at what I was maybe thinking of in some ways in the back of my head, but which for me, I just frame more about sort of age, because I didn't have that kind of comparative perspective that you do, which we're gonna talk about in just a minute. And instead, I was focused more on how, how being sort of at the life stage in which they were, and having had the life experiences that they had, how those were the things that were really fueling them, both in terms of their motivation to come and their reception here. And at the same time, it led to a very different kind of experience than if they had come when they were younger. I mean, there's sort of perception that I talk about, particularly in one of my chapters, of their US as being somehow more egalitarian than China, or sort of allowing them to live sort of a lifestyle more in line with what they had hoped to be able to achieve when as younger adults, they sacrificed for the ideological principles associated with Mao's China. On the one hand, that's a very strange idea for anybody who's thinking about anything related to migration related concerns in the United States, that somehow that

this would be a place where they would find support, where they would find possibilities for equality. I mean, healthcare is a primary example, for example, which is something that comes up in your work, so we'll talk about that in a minute, I'm not gonna go into it more here, but because they were coming at a life stage in which they were in fact able if they were here long enough ahead of time to qualify for social security or because they did have access, particularly in Massachusetts it was quite generous, subsidized housing for seniors, they had possibilities to help aid them structurally. And that's sort of a little bit of that economic piece that Russell was asking about earlier on, that enabled them to be able, even though their lives were precarious, they actually weren't as precarious as one might imagine. And certainly there're ways in which had they come in an earlier period of time, their lives would have been more precarious before some of those supports were in place. When many of the migrants of the same, individuals Chinese Americans of the same age who I met, who had come say in the 1970s, who were also working class, they had much more overt stories of racism experience throughout their lives. And these individuals who had come later on and lived in somewhat protected situations among other communities of older adults, obviously there were exceptions, Russell made a reference to one of those earlier. So it's a lot of sort of dynamics that were taking place in one housing estate, between the older, white working class residents and the Chinese older American residents. Sorry, I got a little bit lost here. Anyway, I'll come back to some of the way I was thinking about those kinds of sort of commonalities across life stage, when I provide some comments for your work, Ken. But for now, we'll just say that I think that there are ways in which I could still flesh out better what I was sort of getting at in terms of thinking about sort of their age, their positioning, sort of temporal aspects of what they had lived through and where they are now, when they have made those moves. In terms of your question about the multiple roles of China on the global stage and how they have interacted with that. I think that I would get a very different answer. So one of the things that's important to notice, because my research largely finished in 2013, and since then, I've had much more sort of fleeting interactions with folks in this group. I think that in the last 10 years, the relationship between the US and China have gotten a lot more complicated, obviously we've seen that particularly in the last couple of years, and it's possible now that I would be hearing somewhat different things, but a lot of them, I had the group that social scientists would think of as a biased sample, right? Because I had people who had decided to stay in the United States. A lot of them had, I did know of or had heard of people who had returned back to the mainland and I did not have that comparative sample, but what I had instead were people who, the fact that they had stayed still was very important that they stayed and they were actively engaged. And how they thought about themselves in relationship to the US, and had done throughout many parts of their life. In addition to the actual sort of ties that they had start to set down here, mattered a lot in terms of why they had made that

decision. So that's not really a full answer to your question, but I think it's worth pointing out that talking to people now, I would get different kinds of responses than I did during the period I was doing most of my research.

- And Nicole, do you remember earlier this year, we talk about writing together and compare our findings. We should totally do it.

- Okay. All right. That sounds great. All right. I think it makes sense for us, it is five o'clock. I think it makes sense for us to take a three minute break. When we return, we're gonna start with Ken's brief precis of his work, and then move forward with commentary about that, and hopefully have enough time at the end to do some more general group discussion about putting the two books in conversation with each other. Russell, I'm sorry to have skirted all of your questions so much. Oh, I think you're muted.

- Okay. I'm unmuted now. Yeah, you had a lot to take onboard from three commentators so, but it was fine. I mean, I hope that all of our comments were useful, so yeah.

- Yeah. But yours in particular around the economics, I mean, part of that is, and also about history of Chinatown, I'm realizing how much maybe there is in my imagination about those things that didn't make it onto the page. Like sometimes that happens when you're working on something. You forget sort of what it is that you know, versus what other people will know or be able to imagine when they read something.

- Yeah. I mean, I probably came to your book much more as an outsider, because I think the other two, obviously the other two commentators, Andrea and Ken, their own, both their own personal experiences and their academic work are rooted in Chinese migration and the diasporic experience. And, you know, I knew before I read your book next to nothing about China, as a locus for migration research. I mean, I learned a lot and I think my questions probably reflected, I mean, on the one hand, more naivety on my part, but also perhaps, my ability to kind of think in a much wider context, which perhaps is also a characteristic of geographers, to think in a broader temporal and comparative framework. That I guess is a little bit how we're trained to think. Also to combine various scales of analysis as well.

- And Nicole, I see that you've talked about social security also, so that relates to the pension, some of the economic pension issues, I guess, I see it in your index.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah. I do talk about their social security support a little bit, but Russell's like, I really have it. It's sort of a, it's a little bit of a footnote, like it's in there, but I think, I probably assume more knowledge about like the fact that they're in subsidized housing or Russell picked up on the reference, like the one

time somebody gave me sort of a quote of how much they got from social security, which is 800. People in my group were living off of very small amounts of money compared to overall. Yeah. So I don't know. So are we all, we're back except for Andrea. Should we go ahead and get started?

- Yeah, probably.

- Yeah. Okay. Mark, if you wanna put us back. Okay, great. Okay. It looks like we're back. So let's turn it over to Ken, you're in charge now.

- Thank you. And I think I will answer all the questions in the end. Okay, so thank you for joining my panel. Many people ask me why I write a book about older migrants. There's short answer. There's a long answer. The short answer is I was raised by my grandparents and my grandparents are long-term residents in Taiwan, although they are originally from mainland China. So I didn't understand a lot of the stories they told me when I was a kid. By becoming a sociologist and in the process of writing this book, I reflect critically about the impact of time, migratory experiences. And in my book, I also studied long-term migrants, but these long-term migrants are not in Taiwan, they are in the US. In the US we actually witnessed unprecedented, increasing older migrant populations. And two third of them have live in the US more than 30 years. But this group of people have received very little scholarly attention. As a result, we overlook how long-term immigrants in the US transform. Their daily life and social work, nationally and transnationally. In my book, I make two theoretical interventions. First of all, I highlight how immigrants adapt and incorporate themselves into American society over time. Right now, much scholarly attention on immigrant incorporation or adaptation focused on so-called second generation, i.e the children or grandchildren of first-generation immigrants. But this scholarship largely overlook or downplay how immigrants can change over time or how long-term stay in the US can transform these migrants. So they are no longer newcomers. The second theoretical intervention I make in this book, is how migrants navigate their everyday life, in a transnational social field that is changing. Right now we have learned a lot about how cross border ties immigrants have shape their lives and how this cross border lives shapes non migrants everyday life, through economic and social remittances. At the same time I want to, in my book, emphasize time can change not only people, but also place. So my book foreground tie in migrants transnational networks and the cross border fields in which they are embedded in. My book use Taiwan's case, because I think Taiwan is a good case to study all the theoretical issues I discussed in my book. Not just because I'm originally from Taiwan. First of all, Taiwanese immigrants arrived to the US several decades earlier than mainland Chinese migrants, and Taiwan also embody what scholars call compress modernity in East Asia. It experience rapid and profound social, economic, and cultural

transformation over the past two decades. And Taiwanese immigrants also display what Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou call hyper-selectivity. They are better educated, not only than people who are staying, who are remaining in Taiwan, and also the average American in the US. So I used Taiwan as a case to examine how contemporary Asian American immigrants navigate the changing social cultural landscape in the US and transnationally. My book incorporates the voices of both immigrants who stay here and return migrants who decide to move back to Taiwan after returning from work in the US. My book centralizes time onto the analysis of immigrant identities and practices. I demonstrate how aging immigrants transform their relationships with families, communities, and nation states. I also analyze how they strategize their familial, social, and cultural wellbeing transnationally, and specifically how these immigrants utilize public social welfare programs in Taiwan, public transportation infrastructure in Taiwan, and the affordable elder care services and facilities back home. And I think that my analysis have profound implication, not only for older migrants here, but also for older non migrants Americans here. First of all I think, especially in relation to, in comparison to Nicole's work, we should try to think more critically about the diverse types of older migrants we are facing today. And I also want to emphasize, unlike my respondents, many of older Americans don't have a homeland to return to. So when they need health care, when they need public benefits, who can they turn to? So I think that this book is about older migrants, but it's also about older non migrant population in the United States. And I welcome, I look forward to hearing your comments and thoughts.

- Okay. Should I go next, Ken or?

- Sure.

- Okay. Hello, everyone. My name is Sara Friedman. I'm professor of anthropology and gender studies at Indiana University, and it's really a pleasure to be here, to be part of this exciting panel and to have long-term exposure to the various projects that have culminated in these books. So it was really a great pleasure to read them. So I'm gonna talk briefly about what I see as a few of the key contributions of Ken's work. And I will intersperse that with a few questions and comments as well, and I will keep them short, so we have more time for a discussion. So I see Ken's book contributing to three major bodies of literature. I'm gonna focus first on migration studies, because that's obviously a prime interlocutor for his project. And what really struck me, as I was reading, was his explicit focus on temporality in the way that he's integrating literature on the life course with literature on migration, from a processual perspective. So not a one-time act, but something that extends over the life course and can involve movement back and forth or to new destinations, even in some cases. So I think he's really helping us understand how migrants values and life goals and understandings of a good life and a good

family life, are changing through their migration experience. How, in the process, their own feelings of rootedness and belonging are also shifting, and how these transformations affect their emerging expectations for aging well. And I would really like us to talk more about this concept of aging well or wellbeing in older age, because I think both books are addressing this from various perspectives. So as a question here on the temporality front, Ken, I'm curious how your research might help us think differently about temporality itself. So in the way you talk about time in the book, it's rather linear, right? Which makes sense, given the approach you took and your interviewees' own experiences of migration, but I'm wondering whether in reviewing their narratives and your observations, you began to rethink what time or temporality actually means, whether in regard to migration or aging or both. And I really liked Russell's aging migration nexus concept, in that regard. One thing that I think comes across both Ken, in your book and in Nicole's book is this role of imagination. So how modernity and the future are imagined at different points in time, and, Nicole, you also talk about nostalgia in that context, right? Ken, I mean, there's some nostalgia actually for the returnees maybe, a little bit more, in thinking about a simpler Taiwan that was less consumerist maybe or materialistic. But how imagination might encourage us to think about temporality in nonlinear ways? Circular, otherwise, and putting aging individuals in a transnational frame, maybe encourages a different understanding of temporality as a consequence. A second contribution to migration studies, obviously is this focus on older migrants, which in the vast majority of the migration literature is not the primary focus, although it is increasingly so, as the world's population ages. But I think one of the elements that Ken brings to this conversation is also deepening our understanding of belonging. Which is often invoked in somewhat vague terms in a lot of literature on migration and immigration. But here he's proving it explicitly in terms of family and community ties, professional networks, social networks, access to aging and medical care resources, and how that shifts over time. And I like that term "economy of belonging" that you used, and again, this is something I think, maybe could be deepened in future research. And then a third migration related insight that really struck me, and again, I think relates to some of Nicole's analysis as well, is the deep and lasting consequences of entrenched racial hierarchies in the US and other destination societies. And how your interlocutors think differently about racialization and co-ethnic community ties over time. So maybe that kind of negative associations with Chinatown communities as being too insular, too enclosed, not willing to adapt, when they're in the prime of life, but really turning to co-ethnics for support in retirement. And that is where they find their source of belonging and the irony then for returnees to Taiwan, that those ties have to be renegotiated, and they're not as comfortable in some ways. So how that also affects conceptions and experiences of belonging transnationally, I think is interesting to consider more. A second contribution of the book is to scholarship on family, gender, and intimacy. And I think,

Ken, you make a really powerful point that intimacy for these individuals and couples is something that has to be managed, rather than assumed. It requires work. And you do a really nice job of detailing for us, the incredible kinds of work and the real thoughtfulness, especially the senior generations bring to their relationships with their adult children and to grandparenting. And how clearly some of that work is very clearly gendered. With the feminization of care labor more generally. And that's another place where there could be really interesting contrasts with Nicole, because the mainland Chinese context has very different kinds of gender expectations and more grandfather participation in care work, shall we say. A lot in thinking about that body of literature, I was really struck by the fact that almost all of your interviewees, if I'm not mistaken, originally migrated to the US as married couples. It seems that very few migrated as singles. And I'm curious how they may be mused about how their lives might've turned out differently if they had married after migrating, those who got divorced, there are a few, it seems, not too many. And those who remain single, you have one intriguing, as I'm sure y'all knew that I would pick up on this intriguing reference of a man who tries to marry a woman from China and that falls through. So how are those, you talk about spousal relationships, but you presume a kind of normative trajectory of arriving as a married couple and except when deaths or very rarely divorce intervene, remaining married. And I think that assumptions of heteronormativity are striking not only in the senior generation, but also with respect to their children, because I'm gonna guess that not all the children are following a heteronormative life path, and there's no mention of it, in the book at least. I'm curious whether there is some mention of it in your own data that could make that a little more complex, especially given the greater acceptability of LGBT identity and relationships and family formation in Taiwan, and also increasingly recognition of that in China, as well. Okay. And then finally, I was struck by the insights you give us for thinking about mobility, both in terms of physical mobility, obviously moving multiple directions, but also class mobility and status mobility. I mean, this group are really striking as both lumpers and splitters, in terms of status categories and identity categories, who they bond with, how they distinguish themselves as immigrants to the US from native born communities. But then also those who return to Taiwan distinguish themselves from Taiwanese who never left. And then what are the divisions and hierarchies within immigrant communities, based not only on class, but education, political affiliation, native Taiwanese versus mainlander populations, et cetera. So there's a real, interesting way that we get a much more complex picture of how status and mobility are being reconfigured in immigrant populations over time, as well. So one of the things that I was surprised by and this came out a little bit, I think, in the questions posed to Nicole as well, they didn't talk very much about death or plans for death, where they wanted to be located in death. And I think that jumped out for me also because I remember a moment in Julie Chu's book about Fuzhounese

sending communities to the US, where she discovered elderly Fuzhounese who were doing the paperwork to become US citizens through their children, not because they wanted to move to the US, but they wanted to be citizens of another country so they didn't have to be cremated in China, and they could have a ground burial. So clearly this is on people's minds. And yet they're thinking about care, they're thinking about aging well. How do ideas about dying well also factor in to ideas about aging well? And then two points, just brief points, the lifestyle migration literature. Maybe because I've been thinking about this literature in a very different context, I would've loved to see more critical reflection on how so much of that literature takes the global north as its point of origin and takes definitions of lifestyle and the good life, whether it's in retirement, and Nicole, you do a nice job of breaking down those various types of lifestyle or retard aging migration, or whether it's as younger people, but so much of that takes a Western ideal of the good life as its starting point, and how to achieve that through maximizing resources in less expensive locales. How can your research really can speak to that focus? We might even call it a bias in the lifestyle migration literature, and really think more broadly about what a transnational resource environment means. If our point of departure is not the one that has dominated the literature to date. I think about care seekers who return to Taiwan as also being a kind of lifestyle migrant. And I'm struck, obviously this is speaking to another literature, but I'm really struck by the way they think about caregivers in Taiwan, especially migrant caregivers, and how they're bringing sometimes an American sensibility to the way they think about that. And given the vast literature on migrant caregiving in East Asia, how that viewpoint differs from that of seniors who never left using caregivers and some of their own sort of entrenched stereotypes and forms of discrimination. And then finally, I would love to hear more about the children's generation. That the assumption seems to be that there is considerable intergenerational upward mobility, but if we compare them to their peers in Taiwan, is that true? I don't know. And I would love to hear more about what the adult children, and this also applies in Nicole's case too, hear more about what the adult children say about their parents and their parents' choices for retirement and aging. And maybe that's because I'm very much feeling myself part of the sandwich generation at the moment, but I think there's a lot of rich material there to work with to really extend it transgenerationally as well. I will stop there.

- Thank you so much. I will answer some of your questions in the end, so maybe I will give the floor to Sarah.

- Okay, great. Thank you. It's wonderful to be here. I'm unmuted okay. So yes, it's my honor and pleasure to participate in this event to celebrate the publication of these two exciting books, which I have enjoyed reading here and my own remarks stem from my position as a cultural anthropologist, I'm a professor of anthropology and of

women's gender and sexuality studies at Brandeis University. And I have long had a central research interest in aging, in India and in the US and transnationally. And I see both books as wonderful new contributions to the field of anthropology and sociology of aging transnationally. And I also fondly remember working with Ken when he first embarked on this project for a PhD student in sociology, at Brandeis, my own neighboring department. So it's exciting now to see his impressive book and print. So both books we are celebrating today are beautiful examples, I think, of how rich longterm ethnographic and interview-based field work, highlighting the voices and experiences of individual people, not only makes for books that are compelling and engrossing to read, but also leads to powerfully illuminating discoveries. And both books feature the voices and perspectives of particularly situated individuals, highlighting ambiguity and nuance, situated variety across social distinctions, such as gender and class. We get so many different points of view in each case, and Ken's chapters, he goes through and we get, some people feel this way, some people feel that way, and that is what social life is all about. And I think the best sociological and anthropological research highlights those issues. They both also emphasize a sense of agency, the potential for seniors' agency and self-definition, quoting from Nicole briefly there, and also like Sara Friedman before me, the sense of aging well. And in this way, I say that Ken's book, and Nicole's, both go beyond this. A lot of the emphasis on migration in our public discourse and in a lot of scholarship in anthropology at least has focused on sort of the suffering slot, migrants as sufferers, who are in precarious positions, and you get a real strong sense in both these books of older people creatively pursuing, imagining, and achieving, in many ways, very hopeful scenarios and creative scenarios, scenarios of aging well. So let's see, I'll organize my remarks around three themes where I integrate three questions for Ken also, and I think I'll keep my remarks quite brief, so we have more time for discussion. So first I'll highlight the unique contributions Ken's book makes with its focus on long-term migrants. So "Time and migration", his book, makes unique and valuable contribution to the growing transnational aging field by focusing on long-term migrants who are older now, but who migrated much earlier in life, from Taiwan to the US, and sometimes going back to Taiwan. And much more of the work on aging and migration, at least that I know in anthropology and the aging transnational migration field, has focused on younger adults. Right now this is a big trend, who migrate away from homelands, and so then there's that kind of care crisis back at home, how are we gonna care for the older people left there. And younger people creatively sending remittances and talking to their elders over Skype, et cetera, that's important work, but it's not what Ken does. And then also there is work like Nicole's important book, too, focusing on older people who migrate to pursue retirement migration or to be with their children, to seek something new, et cetera. Ken's book on aging and transnational migration experiences through the lens of people who are old now, but who first migrated much earlier in life, when they were

young adults, is quite unique and valuable, understudied topic. And so this leads to my first question for Ken regarding temporalities of migration. So this lens of temporalities of migration is a central one in Ken's book. One of its major theoretical and conceptual contributions, which either develops explicitly here and there throughout the book. And by this, he means that he's focusing on migration as an ongoing process that takes place not only across national cultural borders or places, but also over time. So a dual process there, that he calls temporalities of migration. And he explores how interlocutors, his respondents' narratives about their changing life experiences, their worldviews, their subjectivities and senses of self as they move physically and conceptually across social cultural worlds of Taiwan in the United States and also across their lives. And one thing that struck me is that this seems not only to be an analytic theme that Ken was drawing out in the book, but that you could really see it in his interlocutors' quotes. So it seemed to both be an analytic, like etic perspective, and what anthropologists call an emic, an insider's perspective at the same time. So my question for Ken I was interested in, did you approach your field work with the temporalities of migration framework already in mind, or did you really see this emerging centrally from your field work materials and from the perspectives of your interviewees themselves? So a second theme I wish to raise, concerns the issue of a creative agency, a theme important, really important in Ken's book and in Nicole's, how we see how quite self-consciously often the older people transform what they see as Chinese and Taiwanese traditions, in quite purposeful self-conscious, creative, strategic, and innovative ways, very thoughtful as they move through their everyday lives. So we see in the rich ethnography, well, for one, it challenges popular conceptions that we see both in public discourse and in some scholarly discourse, it represent older people as basically compared to the young, the ones fixed in time and tradition and lacking the creative agency to refashion social practices and cultural expectations over time. And instead, these older people are just full of sort of creative refashioning. They transform their census of who they are, meanings of family intimacy, gender relations within marriage, very self-consciously and creatively think about how to be a better grandparent, and they felt like their experience was when they were grandchildren. How to make sense of racial, where they fit into the racial landscape in the US also, just a lot of really creative rethinking. So one thing that struck me in this theme is how Ken's Taiwanese-American interlocutors create and use a lens of Americanization as an important interpretive framework to explain their transformed sensibilities and circumstances often. And so for instance, Americanization is a key lens Ken's respondents use to explain why their US born children are so independent, and why they themselves, the elders, actually want and accept their children's independent, and their own independence, thinking that this is okay, maybe better, and it will sustain more harmony, et cetera. And as Ken explains here, I'm quoting from page 69 of his book, "many of the Taiwanese returnees I interviewed "mobilized

the concept of Americanization "to manage their emotions "when their children fail to respond "in the ways they wanted." And he quotes from an informant right after that, who says, "children growing up in American culture "will not act as you want them to. "If they want you to do it, "like listen to you or visit, they will do it "if they don't ask you too much "will only hurt your own feelings." So I thought this compelling sample of Americanization, which runs throughout the book is here a useful tool for mitigating hurt that the older migrants employ. And it made me think that actually non immigrant elders in the US might, it would be nice if they had such an interpretive tool, because I'm thinking, let's say if my mother-in-law who thinks that her son never calls enough, et cetera, instead of blaming on like that he doesn't care, to be able to invoke a tool like Americanization could be useful for other people as well, too, or different. It would have to be a different term. So let's see, my question for Ken on this theme was, were you surprised at how salient the theme of Americanization as an explanatory theme and what people seem to feel as a natural expected phenomenon, was in your field work? And in what ways maybe does this theme of Americanization also fit into your temporalities of migration framework? So my last set of remarks relates to one technique and Ken's style of writing this ethnography. And this was that I was really struck by and truly enjoyed your rich interlocutor quotes throughout. Each chapter is filled with so many quotes, I mean, he conducted like a hundred or so interviews, so many interviews, rich in-depth interviews, you can tell. And I loved the rich variety that were conveyed through all these diverse quotes. So each chapter, whether focusing on things like rethinking forms of intergenerational reciprocity and care in later life, or on gender and the conjugal marital relationship, or a new modern ways of creating intimacy that people saw, with grandchildren, on attitudes toward receiving state support, such as through social security or welfare. And when you deserved it, when you wouldn't deserve it. All of this he highlights beautifully, not just one perspective, but we hear a lot of diverse voices, different interpretations, which reveals a very complex and very realistic sense of variety in the research, that he's getting it, the complexity. And some of these different social positions are tied to social class and gender, but also just a different individual proclivities, and different life family circumstances. So the particularities that make up the really fascinating stuff of social-cultural life. And we really see their thoughtfulness as well also, and the creative agency through these quotes. And they do also, a wonderful job of effectively showing rather than merely telling, but Ken wants to highlight. And so actually, let me just quickly, I'd love to read one or two of the quotes of the interlocutors, so I can also show rather than tell. He has some great stuff. So people brought up race before, too. Well, his interview's focused on people's really long-term trajectories, so they spoke about when they first arrived in the US also, which was often around the 1960s. Here's one who arrived in the 1960s, and he was confused about defining his race in the US context. And he had been

very poor he landed on the West Coast, but he was going to Boston, so he took a bus across the country as something that he could afford. He says, Mr. Chang, this is on page 32, "I remember taking a Greyhound bus from Seattle to Boston." Mr. Chang explained, "most of the passengers were white. "Then we went through Nevada and Alabama. "When we arrived in Alabama, "there were some black people getting on the bus. "When the bus stopped in Texas, I went to the bathroom. "I noticed the bathrooms were divided "into white and colored. "There were two bathrooms for white "and two bathrooms for colored. "One of them was for men and one other was for women. "And I did not know which bathroom I should use. "I was not white or black. "I was worried whether someone would beat me up "if I entered the wrong bathroom. "Back then, I did not know that this was "so-called racial discrimination. "I finally decided to use the bathroom for the black people. "On the bus, white people sat in front "and black people sat in the back. "I did not know where to sit, "so I sat in between. "I started to think what's going on and where do I fit?" And there's many more reports like this in this chapter, you see people over time, how they change and evolve their understandings of race in America, and where, the complicated ways they fit in. And let's see, I was just gonna read one more about also, there's a lot of really rich discussion on how to rethink relationships with your children in the US context. And whether you should expect care from them or not. And most of the older people say that, no, I'm not gonna expect care from my kids. Well, for one, cause I didn't give it to my parents, cause I moved away. Okay. So why do I deserve it? So that's one theme. And also just that this is the American way, and people are more independent. So one fellow, Mr. Chao says, he has a lot of women, too, I just happened to be choosing two men quotes, I guess, but "it is just impossible to expect the younger generation "in the US to care for their parents. "Respecting older people is necessary, "but expecting your child "to look after you is just too much. "We, first-generation immigrants "need to adjust our expectations, too. "Children have their own family "and career to be busy with, "asking your children to give you money? Don't be silly. "They don't even have enough money for themselves "and their own children. "If we keep expecting our children to care for us "in traditional Chinese ways, "we would only end up being disappointed and upset. "Taking care of aging parents "is just not part of the American culture. "We have to realize that." And actually just below, here's another person who says briefly, I'll read this too, "the US is a society that encourages people "to become independent. "Everyone should be self-sufficient "and be responsible for their own business. "In the US, someone who is above 18 "will be required to be independent "and will be kicked out of his or her parents' house." And goes on there. So anyway, you can see that they're really rich materials in Ken's book. And my last question for him was if you have a favorite quote that you might like to read and share, but we might not have time for that, but if you do, I'd love to hear it. So thank you.

- Thank you so much! Nicole, I think you are the last person.

- Yeah. So I'm gonna cut my comments shorter than where I'd originally started, because I really would like to be able to have a little bit of time, hopefully, to sort of come back to the group. But I will say that there was so much that I loved about your book, really echoing Sarah, Sarah Lamb's comments in particular, with like you're focused on this sort of nuance, and your attention to detail. I mean, there were all sorts of wonderful things all over, but I also just love your simple framework, your theoretical concept and conceptual concept around temporalities of migration. I wanna say that, like, when I was reading it, in addition to, I'm not gonna go into all the other things I think were great about it, but one of the things that came across is, you've got this very interesting methodology where you've got this group of long-term migrants who came to the United States when they were younger adults. And then once they reach retirement age, they're trying to make a decision. Do I go back to Taiwan or do I stay in the US, where I've been now for a long period of time? And the fact that you have this comparative across the different groups is really interesting, it allows us to get at sort of a very different facet of like understanding how all of these different experiences that they've had over time help build to this time in which they're making that decision to stay or to return, and sort of what's all wrapped up in that for them. But the other thing that you say that you're trying to do with your methodology is that you have a spread across both kind of, some working class and some professional class migrants, and honestly for me, when I read this book and particularly reading it against mine, in which my interviewees were primarily working class or lower class migrants, it was really, it came across for me much more as a sort of generalizable story for the professional migrants, or that professional class aspect of it came across. And so, in part, this was because I think that probably it's true that Taiwanese migrants were more likely to be able to migrate to the United States in the '60s and the '70s through professional categories rather than through family ties, and the sort of the long history why that might be the case. But it's also because there're so many moments in your book when we hear about how your interviewees are actively defining themselves in opposition to my Cantonese speaking senior migrants. And they look down, your interviewees look down on my interviewees. Because they're working class, because they perceive them to be trapped in Chinatown and unable to participate in more mainstream American society. And because they assume that because my interviewees lived in subsidized senior housing, they are purposely trying to take advantage of the US government social welfare for senior citizens, all of which, we know, well, for those of you who read my book know that, that's not in fact at all how they see themselves in their roles. At the same I think Sarah Friedman, maybe you were talking about this, as Ken's center view is age, they find themselves often marginalized in their own Taiwanese American community. The largely marginalized would have to return to their Taiwanese American community networks for

their primary means of support, or they go back to Taiwan and they find that it hasn't become as modern or as westernized as they had expected since they left. And so some of them start to question whether their lives are actually as different from this other group of Chinese senior migrants that they've previously disparaged after all. So this class based differential between your interviewees and mine is a real one. It's also tied as we know to regional differences related to being Taiwanese-Chinese versus from mainland China. But I will note, just to throw out there, that my lower income Cantonese speaking senior migrants also looked down on, I mean, that is the question, the migration motivations of newer senior migrants from mainland China who were wealthier than themselves, and who did not have that long-term sense of personal connection through generations of family ties in Chinese diasporic life to the US, that they themselves did. So in other words, no matter which of these groups you look at, they find someone else to define themselves against as part of their attempt to counter, which generally racist anti-immigration rhetoric that requires them to create a moral justification for their presence in the US, no matter how much they actually feel that they belong to, in or to this country and the very network, various networks of social support that they find here. So my thinking is that the similarity hence has other kinds of common experiences that we can track for these two groups of transnational senior migrants. And so I wanted to spend a few minutes, I don't really have a question for you so much, I just, this is sort of for everybody, I'm just hoping to throw out, how, in some ways, I think using Ken's focus on temporalities of migration as a way to underscore migrant experience can allow me to focus on other commonalities of experience between his interviewees and mine, even though they have such substantial differences in life experience overall. So the first is that through this framework, I feel like we can see how both groups of seniors negotiate their sense of belonging and identity as aging migrants through their previous life experiences. So Ken's interviewees have a sense of engagement with the US that dates to the past, maybe for some it began with American military presence in Taiwan. But it seems like by the 1970s, they have this kind of idealized focus on America as a modern country with strong possibilities for the kinds of social and economic mobility that they hope to achieve, but through their longterm life and work in the US over their adult years, Ken, it seems like many of your interviewees have become disenchanted with some aspects of life in the US, particularly because of encounters with racism and their work in personal lives over time. In the end, we see that many of them have this kind of ambiguous sense of belonging to the US, which may at least partially fuel some of their desires to return to Taiwan. But those who do return to Taiwan may find that their expectations of life there aren't on point either. Some senior migrants feel like Taiwan isn't modern or Western enough, even though it provides that familiarity of language, food, or culture, that seems reassuring to them in their sort of older years. From my interviewees, on the other hand, their sense of connection to the US began decades earlier.

Andrea talked about this a little bit, as children in the first half of the 20th century and remained influential throughout their adult lives before they were finally able to migrate in their sixties and their seventies. Generationally, we've talked about also how for my interviewees, they admire what they perceive to be a more egalitarian society in the US, or the possibility because of social supports and other kinds of resources, that they can achieve a sense of wellbeing that wasn't available to them for some reason, had they stayed in China. They're able to live a more ideal lifestyle as seniors than what they had expected or it's what they had hoped for, but not what they were able to achieve in China. So for my interviewees, it's their Chinese cultural experiences, but not that they live long or adult lives in the US that allow them to forge a sense of connection with, and sense of belonging to the US. So I'm interested in how these very disparate past experiences still play into how they see themselves as being connected to, or imagine themselves, and for both groups as being able to be in the US as older adults and the possibilities for their well-being through making that move. Second, Ken, I think your framework allows us to see how both groups benefit, but in different ways, from the possibilities of structural and community supports available in their locations of residence. So for my group, I think they've, I show some ways that they're able to find both kinds of support in the US, sometimes through access to social security, low-income housing, Chinese language services, activities, peer networks in and around Boston's Chinatown locations, that's both downtown Chinatown and also Quincy, but Ken, in your group, which seems seemingly much more financially and linguistically secure than my group, they speak English, they have much larger social security checks than my interviewees did. They spent decades living in the United States, often in desirable middle income neighborhoods, and they are grateful for what they have achieved. And you give us many quotes that make that clear, but they actually find out as they age, that they may have better structural support in Taiwan because of the government subsidized health care services available there. So that provides a little bit of a complication maybe to what they had imagined, or that it's during their younger years of that support, didn't quite play out in the same way as they would've expected in their older years. We see this again, I think, through their mixed experiences of community support, as they age in the US, we've already talked about, they had more experience with largely ethnic Taiwanese communities, but those who return to Taiwan have to reform community ties after having lived abroad for so many years. Their outcomes just aren't maybe what they had expected in either location. And we have this almost sort of a surprising situation in which my interviewees, as seniors, end up feeling like they have a better sense of support in the US, even though they've been there for a much shorter period of time. Finally, we see that for both groups, there's similarity of like stage as senior migrants results in some commonalities of experience, despite having lived in vastly different cultural contexts as well, younger adults, right? So we've already heard about how Ken's group

left Taiwan for the US as younger adults. They had this longer-term residence, they created new forms of family ties in the United States that prioritize nuclear family forms. In part, this was because of their separation from extended family in Taiwan, but also because of the influence of their perceptions of American individualism, I think Sarah was talking about this in terms of that Americanization of their children. From my group, in contrast, there was this focus on dreams deferred from their childhood, or even their adult years. And that sense of separation from family members over decades. In some cases, that's both within China because of CCP policies about work allocation and placement, but also that's because of those sorts of separations of policy that prevented them from being able to migrate abroad, and join their family members there. So, for this group, it fuels a later life desire to rejoin or least no longer be separated from spouses, children, or other family members as they age. But what I see as similarity, is similar across both groups, is that there's a similar kind of effect in terms of how they're renegotiating their intergenerational family relationships. Neither group wants to be a burden on their adult children. Each group seems to strive to be financially independent or even independent in other ways, sort of lifestyle ways, a desire that on the one hand seems to be at odds with more traditional ways of thinking about elder care in many traditional Chinese cultural context, even though it's clear that throughout all Chinese cultural contexts, we're seeing ways that filial piety, or thinking about filial piety are currently in flux. Another similarity is through their interactions with their American born grandchildren. Both groups take pride in passing on key cultural and life skills that their grandchildren born in the United States might not otherwise learn by being raised here as well. So these aren't really questions so much, it's just I'm curious to hear what other kinds of points of interaction or engagement, Ken, do you see, or the others in this group see, that we might wanna think about moving forward with. So that's all I have.

- Thank you so much. And I think I want to address some of the comments I hear from three panelists. I want to start from Sara Friedman's comments, I agree, time is not linear. Time is social and cultural. So people's memories about the past play a crucial role. I also think that many people believe older people hold onto their past, but many of my respondents are very forward looking. They are plan for purposeful and think about the future. And if you look at the sociological literature on immigrant incorporation, many scholars will tell you that, well, the longer immigrant stay in here, the more likely they are lose their transnational connections. This is not the case with my respondents. This is also not the case with Nicole's respondents, right? A lot of the times, even they are older, but their encounter with US society reinforce or strengthen their cross border ties and connections, or even imaginary. About heteronormativity. This is a really good question because we are recorded, I don't know how much detail I want to delve into. I talk a little bit about this in

the appendix. They do have certain ideals and ideas about how you should live your life, especially regarding younger generations. But, at the same time, I also witness some of them are changing, especially when they realize their children are non-binary or LGBT population, and there was a debate about earlier gay marriage, legalization of gay marriage in the US and the legalization in Taiwan, and people from different political camps have different views on this issue. And I do think that this is a really good question. So I think the short answer is that, I do think that for their generation, in many ways they are traditional, but I also think they are not as conservative as we expect, they actually adapt to the new reality very quickly, in part because US changing, in part because Taiwan is also changing. And some of them, most of them may move as married couple, but some of them actually met each other here when they were younger, but the thing is for their generation, you just need to get married, like really early in your life. And that's the advice they give me. And it's a lot of social and moral pressure. About death, I think that it's a really good question. Before they pass away, their health also declines drastically. So some of my respondents really thought about moving back to Taiwan, and spending their time, in part because the more affordable care services, but their children usually object. If you die and bury in Taiwan, what are we going to do? We are not going to Taiwan and deal with all the complicated legal matters. So there's a lot of complicated negotiation within family. Okay. And Sarah Lamb's question, when I entered the field, do I have questions or conceptualizations with time? No, I did not know what I'm doing. So if you read my dissertation, I have no idea, there's no mention of time. And I did not talk about the fact that a lot of long-term migrants, I actually come to this realization, that time is really important based on my conversation with Sara Friedman in Hong Kong, I don't know if you remember, we had the conversation in a coffee shop and we talked about what kind of topics and theoretical things can capture people's eyes, right? We go through different possibilities. So basically people are now interested in the term migrants, so what capture people's attention is time. So I think that's a good idea. So I re-read my transcripts, I re-think how to frame my case. And that's how time becomes a really essential thing in my book. So thank you, Sara. So Americanization, I think both Sara Friedman and Sarah Lamb, mentioned this point, how children's generation in the US are different or similar to non migrant children generation, generation in Taiwan. Initially, when I entered the field, I think they are probably not that different, after living in so many different places, and moving back to Taiwan, I truly think there's a huge difference between children growing up in the US and people growing up in Chinese societies, like Hong Kong, mainland China, and Taiwan. For example, many of my students in Hong Kong do believe they need to give some money, a significant portion of their money to their parents. Like they are young, their parents' also young yeah, but they think they need to reciprocate, so younger generation. And many people, for structural and cultural reasons, they still live with their parents.

And they receive support from their parents. So I always say that in Chinese societies like Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, mainland China, people's relationships are more interdependent, but again, it's a matter of degree. It's not like really categorical differences, but I do think there are differences. My favorite quotes. I don't have a favorite quote, at least not on top of my head, but I do have my favorite student, it's Zhang-Lau's story. It's really, really hard to find working class or poor, disadvantaged return migrants. So I actually, I tried very hard to find Zhang. And he actually refused to talk to me, so he's a janitor in my friend's apartment. So I have to come and talk to him when he was off work and used up. So every time I talk to him for like about 10 minutes and he has a really bad temper, so he yelled at me every time I ask him things about the US, in part, because the image of Taiwanese American is, are successful people and he doesn't live up to that kind of social expectations. But I also, I'm very grateful I can interview him, because I do think his narratives and stories enrich my analysis. Nicole, you have a lot of good questions. I don't have time to address all the questions, but I do think we should write together, so like economy of belonging, how their past influenced their judgmental future, how their perceptions are different and how their perception of the American society informed by their different life trajectories. I do think these are important things we can work on together. And I really like your point about no matter what class background or social background you're from, you always discriminate against each other. We always perform this boundary, managing strategies in relation to one another. And I think that's a really important point.

- Thank you. All right. So I'm sort of unhappy to say we're actually at six o'clock already, cause I don't know if we wanted to have a little bit more time to talk, just to hear sort of other voices come back in. I guess I'll just ask super quickly. Does anybody have any other last comment or point that you wanna add? Great. All right. Oh, go ahead, Russell.

- Yeah. I just like to pick up on two things, kind of looking to the future, somebody, I'm sorry, I can't remember who, mentioned that there was relatively little research on aging migrants in the global south, particularly with reference to lifestyle migration. I think maybe it was Sarah who made that point. That lifestyle migration is largely looked at through a sort of Northern or Western optic. There's an upcoming special issue of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, which is precisely on aging migrants in the global south, which is kind of going through the refereeing process at the moment. It's co-edited by Megha Amrith and Dora Sampaio, who work out of the Max Planck Institute for migration and diversity, I think it's called, the one that Steve Vertovec directs in Gottingen. So that's something which is in train. And then the other thing I was going to mention, yes, about time and temporalities, the next IMISCOE conference, I don't know whether the word IMISCOE means anything to you, I see Ken

nodding his head, but it stands for International Migration, Integration, and Social Cohesion in Europe. It's basically Europe's largest network of migration and integration scholars, and it has a wonderful annual conference, which next year, summer 2022, is in Oslo. And I think reflecting the interests of Jorgen Carling, and Marta Bivand Erdal, the overarching theme of the conference is precisely time and temporalities of migration. So that's just two little things kind of looking forward, which picks up on some interesting points that different people have mentioned in our discussion. So, thanks.

- Thank you so much, Russell, and thank you everybody for coming. I know that people have other things after this, they need to go to, but I just appreciate so much everybody. I appreciate everybody so much taking the time to come and provide both of us feedback on our work and give us all lots of food for thought, for thinking about future directions of research and what we can continue to work on, and what we should be continuing to think about as we move forward with these topics.

- Thank you, all. Congratulations!

- Thank you! Bye.