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Identity Construction on Social Media: Chinese American Women City Supervisors' Political Performance of Ethnicity and Gender in Sanfrancisco

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Abstract. This study interrogates how Chinese American women city supervisors discursively construct ethnic and gendered identities through their Facebook political communication. Drawing on a sociocultural linguistic approach to identity, the study conducts a discursive analysis of 370 posts published by two supervisors on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors between November 2024 and January 2026, aiming to elucidate the mechanisms through which discursive narratives fashion identity and what sociocultural factors make them possible. Two correlated political identities are coded: the context-sensitive ethnic navigator, who strategically shifts among Chinese-specific, pan-ethnic, and ethnically neutral registers depending on issue context, and the care-oriented female leader, who constructs governance legitimacy predominantly through covert care discourse, supplemented at particular symbolic moments by overt celebration of female role models. To account for the amalgamation of these two identities, this study proposes an overarching identity assemblage—the compassionate guardian—that transforms ethnic visibility work and gendered governance into a distinctive form of political authority, sustained through Facebook's media affordances. The findings illuminate how Chinese American women negotiate the intersecting constraints of racialized and gendered political expectations at the local level, advancing scholarship on minority women's political communication in municipal politics.

Keywords: Chinese American women, identity construction, political performance, gender, ethnicity

1. Introduction

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial group in the U.S. population, yet they remain severely underrepresented in electoral politics. Chinese Americans, the largest subgroup within this category, have seen particularly limited descriptive representation—especially among women [1]. In recent years, social media has become a central arena where political figures conduct public communication, mobilize constituents, and craft identity narratives. From the presidency to local offices, platforms such as Facebook are widely used to articulate policy positions and perform public selves. However, existing research on Asian American political expression has largely relied

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on electoral data, surveys, or offline behavioral analysis [2, 3]; little attention has been paid to how Chinese American women subjectively and strategically express their ethnicity and gender on social media as part of everyday governance.

Within this landscape, Chinese American women in local politics constitute a particularly revealing case. Their position is doubly distinctive: as racial minority women, they must balance representing a specific ethnic constituency while appealing to a multiethnic electorate. At the same time, social media offers them a continuous, multi-audience stage for self-presentation [4], making ethnic and gendered expression an integral component of local political practice. Existing scholarship has examined Asian American women's electoral disadvantages [5], intersectional politics [6, 7], and pan-ethnic mobilization [8]. Yet few studies have trained an analytical lens on the social media political expression strategies of Chinese American women at the municipal level—specifically, how they modulate their articulation of ethnicity and gender across different issue contexts and what identity work these strategies accomplish.

This study addresses this gap. It focuses on two incumbent Chinese American women on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors—Chyanne Chen and Connie Chan—analyzing the 370 Facebook posts they published from their election in November 2024 to January 2026. San Francisco offers a strategic research site: it has a long-established Chinese American community, a complex multiethnic political environment, and a high proportion of foreign-born residents [9], making ethnic and immigrant identity highly salient in local governance. The research questions are: (1) What identities do Chinese American women city supervisors construct through their social media political performance of ethnicity and gender? (2) How are these identities discursively fashioned?

2. Literature review

This section begins by surveying scholarship on the performance of political identity in online spaces, then positions the present study within the particular setting of Chinese American women's participation in municipal governance. Then this study outlines the analytical framework—sociocultural linguistic approach to identity —which provides a lens for examining how Chinese American women city supervisors construct themselves on social media.

2.1. Political performance of ethnicity and gender on social media

Previous studies have examined how elected officials construct and manage their public images in recent years. Identity serves to connect with the public and meet their convergent expectations within the political representation system [2,10]. Online platforms are spaces for ongoing public performance of political identity that are constantly being curated and modified [11]. A key insight from these studies is the hybridity of online political identities: politicians are required to reach a diverse range of people, including core supporters, swing voters and minority groups, who review the same platforms or even the same post simultaneously.

The pressure to perform is more severe for minority politicians. They are expected to represent both an individual ethnic figure and a broader, multiethnic electorate [5]. Drawing on Goffman's dramaturgical theory, scholars have theorized that social media serves as a "front stage" for constructing a public self by political actors, and their "back stage" deliberations remain hidden. On this front stage, political expression, which refers to the discursive act of expressing one's political ideas and identity claims in public settings, such as on social media [12], should tell the audience not only what the politician supports but also who the politician is.

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Gendered expectations also create performance pressure for female politicians. Gender, like ethnicity, thus functions not merely as a fixed identity category but as a discursive resource that must be strategically managed. Scholars have pointed out that women in public office face a "double bind", where gender stereotypes create a perceived incongruity between femininity and leadership [13], thus forcing them to "walk on the line" [14] by being competent without violating social expectations for women. On social media, the tension among women politicians is prominent, making them strategically conform to or defy gender stereotypes regarding certain issues [15, 16]. Although social media has offered women a new path to participate in politics, gender stereotypes have consolidate—even when women receive online likes, these are often regarded as an "authority" and thus reinforce the the association of authority with masculinity [17].

2.2. Chinese American women in local politics

Existing research has been found that Asian American women are less likely to be elected officials than Asian American men [5]. However, the gender gap is not the same at all the times. Lu believes that Asian women are trailing Asian men in local positions but are excelling them in federal and state-level offices, and they account for 81% of the state- and local-level Asian civil rights organizations [18].

Within this broader context, Chinese American women occupy a distinctive yet understudied position. As women of colour, they face an added burden of double marginalization due to the intersection of race and gender; specifically, sexism among co-ethnic or panethnic communities combines with racism from white populations [6, 7, 19]. Although growing research has been conducted on the electoral disadvantages and managerial styles styles of Asian American women [5, 20], few of them have investigated how Chinese American women at the municipal level construct themselves for political purposes on social media.

2.3. A discursive approach to identity construction

Identity can be displayed through speech to explain, defend and situate oneself in the context of others and the surrounding society [21, 22]. To explore how Chinese American women city supervisors discursively construct ethnicity and gender on Facebook, this study applies a sociocultural linguistic approach to identity [23] and asserts that identities are not rigid qualities but rather dynamic accomplishments that are constructed through discourse. This approach will focus on the discursive resources, such as labels, frames, self-referential language and emotional registers. Discourse functions simultaneously as a carrier of power which could subject people to the discipline of established social norms or empower them to resist [24, 25]. A discursive approach to identity is thus requiered to show how individuals' will and influence change under dominant ideology [26].

3. Methodology

Given that identity is inherently dynamic and formed through semiotic resources, Bucholtz and Hall's sociocultural linguistic framework [23] is suitable for this study. This framework does not consider identity as a fixed psychological or social trait but rather as a product that arises from language and interaction with five representative analytical dimensions, including the emergence principle, the positionality principle, the indexicality principle, the relationality principle, and the

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partialness principle. The following sections present the data collection process and operationalise a framework (Figure 1) for analyzing identity construction by the two supervisors on social media.

Facebook was selected as the data source for the three main reasons of this study. First, Facebook is the leading platform in the United States for the sharing of political information by elected officials, such as the president and members of Congress [27]. Second, it has an interface for storing and querying posts persistently that can be accessed by the public, thus supporting systematic data collection and longitudinal analysis. Third, Facebook's architecture contains text, images, videos and interactive functions such as comments and likes; politicians can therefore construct identity through multiple semiotic resources. Therefore, Facebook is an ideal platform for research on how Chinese American women city supervisors strategically use ethnicity and gender in their daily political communication.

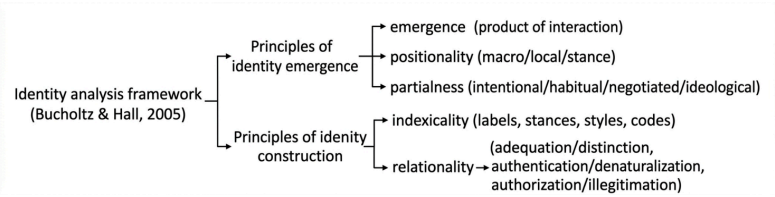

Figure 1. Analytical framework for sociocultural linguistic construction of identity (Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K 2005)

3.1. Data collection

San Francisco was selected as the research site because it has a long-established Chinese American community (21.4% of the city's population), a complex multiethnic political environment, and a high proportion of foreign-born residents, all of which make ethnic and immigrant identity highly salient in local governance [9, 28].

Two incumbent supervisors were chosen: Chyanne Chen (District 11) and Connie Chan (District 1). Their terms overlap (2024 to present), both post actively on their official Facebook pages, and both are first- or second-generation Chinese American women. Of the six Chinese American women who have served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the other four were excluded because they served before social media became prevalent, posted infrequently, or had term contexts that differ significantly from the current political environment.

The dataset comprises all public Facebook posts published by Chen and Chan between their election in November 2024 and January 3, 2026. The final corpus contains 370 posts. Each post was transcribed verbatim and assigned a unique numerical identifier. Visual materials (images, videos) were described in text where relevant. Official campaign platforms and policy statements were reviewed to ensure that online expressions were broadly consistent with declared political positions. All data are publicly available.

Table 1. Basic information of the two supervisors

Supervisor	District	Term start	Follower count	Posts analyzed
Chyanne Chen	D11	Nov 2024	352	212
Connie Chan	D1	Nov 2024	2008	158

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3.2. Data analysis

Data were coded and managed in Microsoft Excel, guided by a discursive approach [23]. It was operationalized at two interconnected levels: (1) a discursive analysis to identify what identities do Chinese American women city supervisors construct through their political performance of ethnicity and gender on social media (RQ1); and (2) a sociocultural analysis to examine how are these identities fashioned (RQ2).

At the discursive level, the analysis traced the linguistic means of evaluation and positioning through which the supervisors fashioned their stances and identities (e.g., overt self-labeling as "Chinese American," or using "we" to align with a collective). Specifically, this study adopted an analytical framework (Figure 1) operationalizing Bucholtz and Hall's concept of indexicality into two core dimensions: ethnic framing and gendered expression, cross-classified by issue context. Ethnic framing was coded as Chinese-specific (explicit mention of Chinese American), pan-ethnic/inclusive (e.g., immigrant community), or neutral. Gendered expression was coded as overt (explicit reference to female leadership, e.g., honoring Kamala Harris), covert (care-oriented stance indirectly performing a nurturing identity), or absent.

These coding operations instantiate multiple principles of the framework. In ethnic framing, Chinese-specific enacts adequation with the Chinese American ingroup, while pan-ethnic/inclusive enacts distinction from narrow identity politics, illustrating the emergence of identity as the same supervisor shifts position across contexts. In gendered expression, overt codes draw on authorization and authentication, while covert codes perform gender indirectly through care discourse, which performs a gendered stance without explicit gender labels. The supervisors' shifting between frames demonstrates identity as emergent and relational. The analysis also attends to the partialness principle that implies identity construction is constrained by larger ideological structures.

The author coded identity attributes indexed in each post. Recurring topics (e.g., cultural heritage, community safety) were identified from 370 posts and, through iterative comparison, crystallized into abstract identity elements. These were synthesized into two core identity categories. One is the context-sensitive ethnic navigator, who shifts between particularistic and superordinate ethnic categories per issue, supported by situational ethnicity and common ingroup identity [29, 30]. The other is the care-oriented female leader, who utilizes ethics of care in gendered expressions [31]. Their integration yields an identity assemblage—the compassionate guardian—elaborated in the discussion. The above categories were mapped onto macro-discourses that connected micro-level choices with broader structural issues of race, gender and political legitimacy in urban governance.

The author conducted the coding. To ensure the reliability of intra-coder agreement, a random sample of 20% of the posts (n = 74) was re-coded after a two-week interval. The intra-coder agreement was 0.94. Disagreements were resolved by revisiting the coding definitions and refining the scheme, with the final coding reflecting these refinements. At the same time, the author have also been aware of her status as an outsider in San Francisco politics and have thus cross-referenced the patterns of the posts with other sources of information, such as official campaign platforms and policy statements.

4. Findings

In exploring what political identities Chinese American women city supervisors construct through their Facebook political communication (RQ1), two interrelated identities were identified: the context-sensitive ethnic navigator and the care-oriented female leader. Across the 370 posts, ethnic

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framing appeared in 165 posts (44.6%), and gendered expression appeared in 183 posts (49.5%), with 72 posts containing both simultaneously (Table 2). The former identity operates through strategic shifts among Chinese-specific, pan-ethnic, and ethnically neutral registers depending on issue context. The latter centers on the protective care of children, seniors, families, and vulnerable communities as its core discourse, supplemented at particular symbolic moments by the public celebration of female role models.

With regard to how these identities are discursively fashioned (RQ2), the findings show that the two supervisors construct ethnic belonging through contribution narratives, build governance legitimacy through the tone of care, while they signal leadership indirectly through the symbolic representation of female role models. These two identities do not operate in isolation. Rather, they intersect most densely in posts concerning immigration enforcement, housing security, and community protection, cohering into an overarching identity which grounds its political legitimacy in the sustained, visible labor of protection and care. The following subsections unpack these findings by specifying the discursive strategies and social and cultural meanings associated with each index.

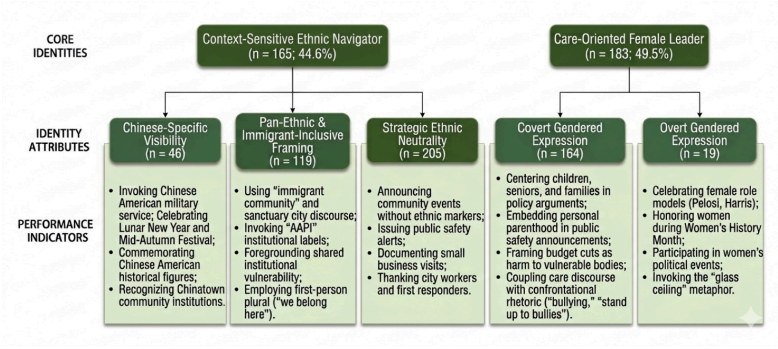

Figure 2. Framework for Chinese American women supervisors' identity construction on Facebook

Table 2. Co-occurrence of ethnic framing and gendered expression

	Overt Gendered	Covert Gendered	Gendered Absent	Total
Chinese-specific	4(21.1% of overt)	16 (9.8% of covert)	26 (13.9% of absent)	46
Pan-ethnic / Immigrant-inclusive	2 (10.5%)	60 (36.6%)	57 (30.5%)	119
Neutral	13 (68.4%)	88 (53.7%)	104 (55.6%)	205
Total	19	164	187	370

4.1. The context-sensitive ethnic navigator

The identity of the context-sensitive ethnic navigator operates through strategic shifts among Chinese-specific, pan-ethnic, and ethnically neutral registers depending on the issue at hand. As Table 3 shows, this pattern follows a clear logic: Chinese-specific references cluster in posts concerning cultural heritage and commemoration, pan-ethnic or immigrant-inclusive framing dominates posts on immigration and sanctuary policy, while in the everyday governance domains of community safety, labor rights, and small business activities, ethnic markers recede altogether.

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Table 3. Distribution of ethnic framing by issue context in Facebook posts by two Chinese American women supervisors (n = 370)

Issue-Context	Chinese-specific	Pan-ethnic/Immigrant-inclusive	Netural	Total
Cultural heritage &commemoration	29 (33.7%)	24 (27.9%)	33 (38.4%)	86
Community safety & public security	3 (8.1%)	2 (5.4%)	32 (86.5%)	37
Immigration & sanctuary policy	0 (0%)	38 (100%)	0 (0%)	38
Healthcare & food security	3 (13.0%)	8 (34.8%)	12 (52.2%)	23
Housing, budget & economic policy	2(6.1%)	13 (39.4%)	18 (54.5%)	33
LGBTQ & progressive values	0 (0%)	16 (76.2%)	5 (23.8%)	21
Labor & workers' rights	0 (0%)	6 (24.0%)	19 (76.0%)	25
Youth, education & family services	1 (2.8%)	7 (19.4%)	28 (77.8%)	36
Small business & community events	5 (5.5%)	4 (4.4%)	82 (90.1%)	91
Gender & women's leadership	3 (30.0%)	1 (10.0%)	6 (60.0%)	10
Column Total	46 (12.4%)	119 (32.2%)	205 (55.4%)	370

4.1.1. Claiming chinese american visibility in cultural and commemorative contexts

In the event of a Chinese-specific frame, the two supervisors invoke their belonging in Chinese American history to emphasize patriotism. The discursive resources mobilized for this work fall into three carriers: the patriotic contribution narrative of military service, the community service narrative of cultural heritage, and the cross-ethnic participation narrative of festival observance.

This strategy finds its most symbolically potent expression in commemorative posts invoking military service. In February 2025, both supervisors posted tributes to Sergeant Yuen Hop, a Chinese American soldier killed in action during World War II. Chyanne Chen wrote that of the 100,000 Chinese Americans living in the United States, 20,000 had served in the US military. This statistic weaves the Chinese American experience into the narrative of national military sacrifice by quantifying collective contribution. The mass military service of Chinese Americans during World War II constituted a pivotal historical moment for claiming American citizenship [32]. By transforming this individual sacrifice into a shared historical narrative, the two supervisors upgraded personal experience into collective memory to foster affinity and thereby enhance Chinese American visibility [33]. At the same time, the post noted that Hop's "last surviving sibling Margery Wong (age 92) could have some peace and closure." This familial detail transforms an abstract statistic into an intimate narrative, inviting the audience into a shared emotional space of kinship and establishing cross-community empathy through affective immediacy [34].

Chen's commendation of Master Ying Heng Ho, a clinician trained in traditional Chinese medicine, is in parallel encoding. Master Ho "embodies the selfless service spirit of traditional Chinese medicine," having "treated many SF residents for free through his own clinic". Chinese cultural practice is presented here as a public good that exceeds the boundaries of the Chinese nation and is offered to all the people of the city. By demonstrating that the Chinese American community contributes to broader society in certain way, the two supervisors' Chinese culture gains persuasive justification [35].

Thus, the work of ethnic visibility is effective precisely because it strategically utilises rather than challenges the acceptable routes for minority participation in mainstream society. However, under

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the same conditions, if the subject of dispute is no longer historical honour but the contestation of current resources, the efficacy of this frame markedly attenuates.

4.1.2. Shifting to pan-ethnic framing in policy contexts

When the issue shifts from cultural commemoration to immigration enforcement, housing and budget policy, the supervisors' ethnic expressions accordingly transfer. Chinese-specific labels have significantly receded, which have been replaced by general-identity categories such as "immigrant community", "working family", and "San Franciscans". As Table 3 shows, all immigration and sanctuary policy posts employed pan-ethnic framing, nearly forty percent of housing and budget posts used pan-ethnic framing, and Chinese-specific labels virtually disappeared from these two categories.

Connie Chan's sanctuary city statements repeatedly invoke "our immigrant community" and "we belong here," while Chyanne Chen, in response to ICE enforcement actions, invoked "a three year-old child, youth with bright futures ahead, hard working parents", whose vulnerability derives from immigrant status itself rather than from any particular ethnic affiliation. Across all these expressions, the first-person plural fuses the elected official with the threatened community into a single collective subject. This narrative carries a distinct coalition-building function: in a multiethnic city like San Francisco, where undocumented immigrants hail from every continent, a Chinese-specific frame would fragment the cross-ethnic political subject that the rally seeks to mobilize. By constructing a pan-ethnic identity, political connections can be effectively established while maintaining the distinctiveness of each constituent group [8].

This logic of ethnic calibration extends further into housing and healthcare advocacy. In her congressional campaign post, Chan invoked the pan-ethnic institutional label "AAPI" to secure political endorsement, pledging to fight for affordable housing, workers rights, small businesses, and families. Here, "AAPI" as a superordinate ethnic category integrates Chinese Americans with other Asian subgroups into a shared institutional identity. When a higher-order group identity is activated, the intergroup distance among constituent subgroups is reduced [30].

Together, the context-sensitive ethnic navigator masters when to bring to the forefront Chinese American identity for the purpose of stirring ethnic pride and when to integrate it into a wider political subject to maximize coalition building. The former sustains the visibility of Chinese Americans through the narrative of historical contribution, responding to the core constituent's demand for cultural recognition. The latter builds cross-ethnic coalitions by presenting a narrative of shared vulnerability and belonging to foster support for policy objectives.

4.2. The care-oriented female leader

The care-oriented female leader grounds her influence in a dual capacity, which can be regarded as the continuous performance of protection and care for vulnerable groups in daily governance, and the invocation of female leadership narratives at certain symbolic moments to increase gender visibility. As shown in Table 4, the construction of this identity is unevenly distributed, where covert care discourse makes up 44.3% of all posts and overt gendered expression accounts for only 5.1%.

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Table 4. Distribution of gendered expression by type in Facebook posts by two Chinese American women supervisors

Gendered Expression Type	Chyanne Chen (n = 212)	Connie Chan (n = 158)	Total (N = 370)
Overt	10 (4.7%)	9 (5.7%)	19 (5.1%)
Covert	102 (48.1%)	62 (39.2%)	164 (44.3%)
Absent	100 (47.2%)	87 (55.1%)	187 (50.6%)
Total	212 (100%)	158 (100%)	370 (100%)

4.2.1. Care as political legitimacy

Women in public administration often exhibit a governance style distinct from that of men, which more inclined to consider the impact of decisions on specific populations and to prioritize relationship-building and responsiveness over abstract institutional procedures [20]. The coupling of careoriented gender expression with collective framing would amplify political appeal, merging gendered affective labor with crossethnic coalition building. In her post protesting federal budget cuts, Chen announced a fast in solidarity and constructed her argument through a series of care utterances: "No child should have to learn hungry, our families shouldn't go to work sick, or lose their jobs as school or food assistance staff. We need schools! We need food! We need care!" Here, the criterion for evaluating policy is displaced from budgetary efficiency onto the concrete impact on the vulnerable. The speaker also embeds herself within the collective crisis, using "we" as a self-referential index to reduce the social distance between herself and her audience. Care discourse thus functions not to reinforce power and rules, but to launch moral appeals from the specific context of responsibility and interpersonal relationships [31].

Beyond the display of care, legitimacy is also constructed through the performance of confrontational rhetoric. By emphasizing the threat, the speaker's policy stance demonstrates the protector's resolve to defend the vulnerable protected. In her community safety announcement, Chan embeded the news of an arrest in a case of sexual battery at Golden Gate Park in a personal story —"my family included. Our 12 year-old kiddo practices soccer in Golden Gate Park weekly"— implying that she is more concerned about the safety of children than about performing her duties as an municipal official. Thus, the two supervisors can make care legitimate and, in doing so, present it not as political weakness but as a model for governance that is understood by all genders. A positive gender stereotype is effectively leveraged in their care strategy, which diminishes the possible negative interpretations associated with petty kindness to certain extent [15]. However, this application reinforces rather than breaks the structure that links caregiving to femininity.

4.2.2. The symbolic representation of female leadership

The construction of the female leadership identity has enhanced political legitimacy. The two supervisors choose specific symbolic moment and public celebrations for gendered expressions, constructing their own images of leadership by praising female role models indirectly. Chan called Nancy Pelosi "the lioness of San Francisco" in her tribute, praised her for breaking "one of the most difficult glass ceilings in our nation by becoming the first female Speaker of the House", and presented herself as a successor to this legacy. Due to the double marginalization of gender and race [5], Chan opts to employ the metaphor of a glass ceiling to refer to the institutional impediments for ethnic minority women in politics. Such gendered expressions highlights the governing capacity of

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powerful women, recognizes the social value they create, and then inspires group members to achieve a sense of belonging [10].

Moreover, women politicians often have to navigate a delicate balance between projecting the masculinity that shows off leadership skills and avoiding any perception of deviating from the typical image of women, in order to satisfy the expectations of different genders among the public [14]. For example, in her tribute to Kamala Harris, Chan said that "there will be generations of young women leaders who owe her the strength and hard work to fulfill the promises of a better America". For female audiences, a role model is less an abstract symbol and more a measurable guide to action, redefining political participation as the fruit of tenacity and self-reliance. A strategy for the male audiences that evokes the perseverance of female heroes without publicly asserting the inequality of women will not violate their expectations. Since extensive emphasis on gender identity in political performance yields little result [6], and may even fragment cross-ethnic coalitions with a mental burden that men do not bear [36], the two supervisors chose to avoid gender conflicts and enhanced political representation by celebrating broadly accepted female role models.

In short, the gendered discursive performances of these Chinese American women city supervisors incorporate the ethics of care and the symbolic capital of female leadership in a non-confrontational way that conforms to existing norms. The construction of this identity is achieved through a discourse of resilience, and gender norms are continuously employed in the face of constraints to gain legitimacy and operating space for women's political authority.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study investigated how two Chinese American women city supervisors discursively construct their own ethnic and gender identities online. Empirically, two intertwined political selves emerged: that of a situation-sensitive ethnic navigator and that of a care-oriented female leader, both of which were realised through the deployment of ethnic registers and gendered leadership styles. These results are in line with the research on digital identity branding [11], extending its insights to the specific intersectional terrain that Chinese American women navigate in local politics. The two dimensions are not independent; rather, they continuously adjust in terms of their relative salience.

To account for this recalibration, this study proposes the concept of "identity assemblage": a dynamic and context-sensitive organisation that supervisors use to proactively summon, integrate, and adapt discursive resources according to changes in political requirements to present disparate identity positions simultaneously [21, 37]. This study argues that the two supervisors' online self-performances can be regarded as a single provisional political identity: that of a "compassionate guardian". Through this assemblage, the tension between the particularistic ethnic visibility and the universalistic coalitional reach, as well as the contradiction between gendered expectations of care and the political requirements of authority are resolved. Thus, a coherent "front stage" performance is formed [4], with the materialised Facebook semiotic affordances, where texts, images and videos could construct multiple identity dimensions in a single post.

It is worth noting that the "compassionate guardians" identity assemblage is subject to the racialized and gendered realities of local politics. Although the integration of the two identities seeks to meet the divergent expectations of the constituencies, it may also reduce attention to the long-standing lack of representation for minority women in elected offices. Asian American women have held only 1.7 % of the U.S. House seats. Congress [1] and Chinese American women at the local level are represented at rates far below their share of the population [5]. Meanwhile, nearly twothirds of Chinese Americans report experiencing regular discrimination in daily life [38], and the rise of antiChinese rhetoric during the COVID19 pandemic has directly contributed to systematic

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disadvantages for Asian workers in the labor market [39]. Under this dual pressure, the supervisors' identity assemblage—which situates Chinese American contributions within a grand collective narrative—may exclude those Chinese American experiences that cannot be subsumed under the rubric of "contribution" (e.g., lowwage laborers, undocumented immigrants, linguistic minorities) from the narrative of political legitimacy. Moreover, enhancing gender visibility through the model of female elites may render invisible the struggles of ordinary women who lack the resources to approach political power. Thus, while the identity assemblage effectively responds to structural expectations, it may also reproduce the very boundaries it seeks to bridge.

The evidence reinforces the view that social media platforms are far from impartial conduits for information [40]. They function instead as ideologically saturated arenas in which racialized and gendered norms are continually reaffirmed and reencoded through the selfpresentation practices. The present analysis suggests that Facebook actively molds the repertoire of political identities that can be credibly enacted and publicly validated. Consistent with earlier findings on digital influencers, the labor of crafting a public self entails considerable emotional management—the continuous effort to manage affective displays in ways that retain audience attention and loyalty [41, 42]. For the two Chinese American women city supervisors, the narrative of everyday governance bridges the affective distance between elected officials and their constituents. Under a post where Connie Chan announced the arrest of a suspect in a sexual assault case at Golden Gate Park, constituents response that "Thank you for your dedicated handling of children's safety issues", forming a mutual recognized discourse [23], where care generated trust, and trust translated into legitimacy. In this sense, Facebook enables the coexistence of affective resonance and strategic selffashioning, thus demonstrating how the connective capacities of platforms simultaneously define the boundaries within which identity assemblages are constructed [43].

In conclusion, this paper puts forward the concept of strategic identity assemblage to explore how different facets of one's identity are consciously assembled with resources available on platforms to deal with the demands put forth by racialized and gendered expectations for political figures. Since Chinese American women involved in local politics are a persistently underrepresented and understudied group, new insights on how they make their political identities in light of race and gender has been added in this study. Recognizing their social media identity construction as a proactive practice would help promote online forms of political participation among minority women. Although there are limitations in the scope of application due to being a single city, only two political entities and one platform design, it still offers research directions for future studies. Comparative research in various cities can also explore the extent to which the concept of identity assemblage can be applied, and including Chinese American male politicians as a comparison group will help to identify gendered differences in the strategies listed above. Finally, thorough investigations into how the audience has received these carefully constructed political selves and whether they have been accepted, reinterpreted or challenged by the public have not yet been carried out.

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