EAST ASIAN MEN

Masculinity, Sexuality and Desire

Edited by
Xiaodong Lin, Chris Haywood
and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill

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Editors

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In support of
LGBTQI communities in East Asia

Foreword

Experimental Masculinities, Narrative Empathy and Cosmopolitan Genders Across the Globe

All around the world, men are experimenting with their masculinities. And here in this fresh and exhilarating study we have a welcome, lively and inspiring new collection of essays on East Asian Masculinities that makes clear a few more of the multiplicities of ways in which men are doing this. Here, with a focus on China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, we find *experimental masculinities* are busy at work. And this book can be seen ultimately as a mature product of the growing concern about "men" and gender as topics of research and study that have been developing over the past century. This development of what is now often called "critical masculinity studies" can be seen to go back a very long way.

Briefly, four waves can be suggested. First, there was a very long wave of latency and slow gestation that started at least back in the late nineteenth century, when travellers, anthropologists, emerging psychologists and others started to question the nature of gender (and sexuality) and demonstrate the cultural variability of what it is to be a man or woman in different countries. (We think of the celebrated works of Mead, Malinowski, Freud and the rest.) Out of this gradually emerged the writings on the male sex role that, by the early 1970s, had started to become quite widely

discussed. This was indeed the time when my own nascent interest in the problem of masculinity developed. As a very young "gay" "man" (and both words were indeed problems for me), I wondered more and more about the links between what it means to be a man and have sex and fall in love with "men"; it made me start questioning my own masculinity and what it meant. I encountered trans people in the gay movement, read about men's consciousness raising in the early 1970s (through a book *Unbecoming Men, 1972*) and went to a Kinsey Institute Summer Conference in the summer of 1976, where I recall a male beauty cat walk being organized by men's activist Wayne Farrell (1975) in which all the men had to take off their shirts and walk in a male fashion parade while the women at the conference watched on and jeered! A little later I ran a short course with my colleagues, Ian Craib and Leonore Davidoff, on "masculinity" (Craib 1987; Plummer 1988). By the mid 1980s, a flurry of exciting books had appeared: enough to establish the contours of what was to become "Men's Studies". Back then the main focus was largely on the "male role" in Anglo Saxon countries (Brannon and David 1976; Hearn et al. 2012). But it was clearly also starting to build a critical approach.

A decade or so later on saw the arrival of a third wave that heralded a major Western publishing boom of "masculinity studies" and was exemplified in new journals, books galore, courses and compendiums and collections. Its summit was probably the publication of Hearn, Connell and Kimmel's *Sage Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (2004), and its editors were probably the world's most prominent scholars of masculinity at the turn of the millennium. The galvanizing key ideas came from Connell's notion of hegemonic sexuality (developed between 1984–1987) (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005); and, to a lesser extent, the arrival and development of queer theory, which deeply problematized all sexual and gender categories, as well as any binary system of thinking. Critical studies on men and masculinities started to develop as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, and flourished in association with feminist and LGBTQ studies.

Growing out of all this has been a lively awareness of the globalization of masculinities. Indeed, by the early 1990s, Michael Kimmel was editing a series of books on "Global Masculinities" (published by Zed Books). We were entering a period of international awareness for a new

millennium, an era of global and transnational critical gender studies. And so, over the past decade or so, we have seen a flow of new studies with titles like *African Masculinities*, *Islamic and Muslim Masculinities, Men and Masculinity in Contemporary Japan, Theorising Chinese Masculinities, Asian Masculinities*, *East Asian Masculinities, Masculindians,* and *Mexican Masculinities.* Some scholars, recently Jeff Hearn (2015), have also detected the existence of global trans-patriarchies at work: global men in corporations, social movements, academia, and digital communications, working across many institutions in the global system. All in all, we are starting to make large strides in understanding the global complexity of masculinities. And *East Asian Men: Masculinity, Sexuality and Desire* makes a wonderful addition to this new worldwide critical discourse.

The discussions to be found here are wide-ranging and come from a new group of scholars exploring new fields. Here we find a wide range of men: migrant workers, professional men, military men, men in cyberspace, the young, gay and transgendered. Together, they show how men face traditional masculinity and evolve new modes of handling it. Thus you will find here the stories of single migrant workers in China (discussed by Xiaodong Lin), the corporate "salaryman" in Japan (discussed by Romit Dasgupta), young professional men in Taiwan (Bo-Wei Chen and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill), the story of young Chinese men and TV dating in China (discussed by Chao Yang); the contrasting experiences of gay men from mainland China and local Hong Kong (Yiu Tung Suen and Miu Yin Wong), and the men in the military in Taiwan (Ying-Chao Kao). All live on the edge of hegemonic masculinity; all highlight new forms, patterns of adjustment, resistance and change. Many indicate the development of a possibly progressive gender consciousness. In Japan, for example, since 2008 there has been the arrival of the much celebrated "herbivore" masculinities, where a rejection of aggression has become the norm (discussed by Justin Charlebois). In Korea, we hear the stories of women consuming the bodies of the K-pop boy dance bands (Chuyun Oh). In China, Hongwei Bao discusses negotiations around a "same sex wedding in Beijing" in which de-Westernisation and internationalisation of queer theory and activism in a transnational context are discussed; while Siyang Cao discusses the role of *diaosi* (losers). And in Taiwan we find the formation of a new gender consciousness (discussed by Herng-Dar Bih).

The stories told in the book come from a wide range of sources and engagements. Here are interviews and field work, of course; but also we find an array of media. Here we have film (the *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* and *M. Butterfly*); TV sitcoms (*Diaosi Nanshi* and *Wanwan Meixiangdao);* videos *(K-Pop Dance)* and advertising (the beers *Singha and Chang).* All the discussions background the centrality of a strong version of patriarchal men—"hegemonic masculinity" as has been conceptualized these past thirty years)—in order to foreground the emerging struggles over experimental masculinities that distance or play with it in some way. In this sense the book is part of an ongoing global refashioning of what it means to be a man in the 21st century. As Siripai and Haywood argue in their examination of alcohol advertising, there may be a new global branding of the Asian man that is starting to create a new, if postmodern, hegemony.

In each of these accounts, a different strand of masculinity emerges and a new story of emerging experimental masculinities told. The book displays a differing array of desires and sensibilities of men across the world. And as I read these accounts I become more and more aware of the importance of what might be called *the politics of narrative empathy*. Here are some important new stories of experimental masculinities around the world to stir our imaginative empathies. They allow us, indeed encourage us, to grasp the complexities and dilemmas of modern global men's stories. At the heart of the politics of this kind of qualitative story telling research lies empathy—the ability to "climb into the skin" of another person and see the world from their point of view as deeply as we can. And this is crucial. For, as I have argued elsewhere:

> This takes us to the heart of what makes us human. Listening to the stories of others and engaging in dialogues with them is both a key indicator of our humanity and a key strategy for politics. It means an ingrained habit of grasping and appreciating the differences of others (including enemies)… Empathy is the foundation of social care, part of a "circuit" of human cruelty and kindness, connected to a deliberative democratic reasoning, and linked to a developmental theory for social justice…… As societies move forward they accelerate their empathic potentials. And it comes with two close companions: dialogue and compassion. Together they help in our

> humanization and civilizing. Stories are the key sources of this empathy as we get glimpses of other worlds and start trying to live with them in various ways. (Plummer, 2015: 15–16)

Ultimately, *East Asian Men* is a book full of significant global storytelling, nudging us towards an emerging *Cosmopolitanism Genders*. By this I mean that we are starting to develop a global ability to live across positive differences as we seek a "universal concern and respect for legitimate difference" (Appiah, 2006) and develop a "decent world culture" and "a world moral community" (Nussbaum, 2006). It will help lead us, personally, to cultivating multiple empathies for diverse forms of gender. It will help lead us, interpersonally, to cultivating plural dialogues across differing visions of what it means to be gendered and the multiple forms this takes—multiple masculinities, multiple femininities, and multiple "trans worlds". It will help lead us, sociologically, to an understanding of how institutions, structures, actions and cultures can facilitate and cultivate this living together of diverse genders. And politically and ethically, it will mean demanding a search for common grounds that enable us to live "good, caring, just, and flourishing lives for all" around our gender diversity. This exciting book reveals a little more of the diversities, changes and experiments going on in the world today, and encourages a growing empathy and cosmopolitanism in these dark times. It sends out more stories of hope, helping us to sense how, in these myriad, everyday, but global, struggles, we just might be nudging towards a better gender order.

Ken Plummer
Wivenhoe, January 2016

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1

Introduction

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At present, contemporary agendas around men and masculinity are overwhelmingly driven by discussions in Europe, the USA and Australia. Although such work is providing an invaluable contribution to the theoretical and conceptual developments in the field, these agendas tend to be limited by the duplication or modification of existing models and approaches to masculinity. Alongside this existing work, in the area of East Asia, gender studies has started to engage with men's experiences and the changing nature of masculinity (Louie 2014). However, one of the areas that has yet to be fully explored is the relationship between masculinity and sexuality. Therefore, although there are studies that are

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exploring men's identities in East Asia, there remains a lack of knowledge and understanding of the interplay between masculinity and sexuality. This book provides a fresh and contemporary renewal of the study of men and masculinity by highlighting new and exciting approaches to men, masculinity and sexuality that are being explored in East Asian contexts. In short, this book responds to this absence by making the interconnections between masculinity, sexuality and desire a key focus. Existing work on gender and East Asian studies has in the past focused primarily on women, power, control and violence. Building on this work, this book provides a re-engagement with gender by exploring the experiences of men, and in so doing, moves beyond such a traditional agenda through the work of a group of international scholars in this collection.

The starting point for this book is to see men, masculinity and sexuality configured through a range of culturally specific epistemologies. Epistemology in this collection refers to a range of, but is not reducible to, academic, scientific, medical or "common sense" knowledge that is used to understand men's everyday experiences, attitudes and behaviours. Such epistemologies are constituted in specific temporal and spatial moments where " the shapes of knowledge are ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and encasements" (Geertz 1983: 4). It is suggested that epistemologies circulate in different cultural contexts at particular historical moments, and as a result it is argued that they are never fixed but are subject to ongoing transformation. With the potential for multiple epistemologies operating at one time, Goetz et al. (2008) suggest that: "These beliefs about the world and the nature of knowledge influence attention processes (Masuda and Nisbett 2001), causal attribution (Choi et al. 2003), the resolution of social contradictions (Peng and Nisbett 1999), and contradictory self-views (Spencer-Rodgers et al. 2004; Chen et al. 2006)". However, we argue that epistemologies do not simply access "real" phenomena, rather it is the epistemological frames themselves that *produce* the phenomena that is being looked at. In other words, the frameworks that we use to understand masculinity and sexuality become performative. Therefore, this collection begins to challenge and question existing knowledge configurations around men, masculinity and sexuality in East Asia, and it does this in the following three ways:

First, current work that does focus on men and East Asia is underplaying the complexity of masculinity by reducing men's experiences to gender. This collection addresses the lack of discussion around men and sexuality (Kong 2011) by exploring the imbrication of masculinity and sexuality to offer new ways of engaging with men's identity formations. More specifically, the relationship between masculinity and sexuality has been underexplored, with earlier commentators suggesting that masculinity "leans" on sexuality. In other words, "in men sexual expression is developmentally critical to achieving self-worth and autonomy through gender identity" (Saint-Aubin 1994: 1057), whilst Maynard suggests that: "The problem of masculinity…is its seeming inability to address sex and sexuality" (Maynard 1998: 184). More recently, in debates in the US and Europe, the relationship between masculinity and sexuality has emerged as a key point of discussion. However, this is often a highly circumscribed debate that reduces sexuality to levels of homophobia.

One of the key themes embedded in discussions of masculinity and sexuality is that they are often understood as identities that are constituted through the subjective alignment, demonstration and internalization of normatively ascribed masculine idioms (Frosh et al. 2002; Redman 2005). It has also been argued that masculinity and sexuality are established, often simultaneously, through the "Othering" of that deemed less authentically masculine or sexual. An example of this can be found in work in the field that has suggested implicit tensions within the identities of East Asian men. Hirose and Pih (2010: 191) usefully summarize how East Asian masculinities often operate through two mutually exclusive binaries. They suggest that: "Asian men have been seen as weak, nerdy, feminine, and asexual compared to the idealized form of white masculinity. At the same time, the changing cultural milieu surrounding the construction of masculinities has added a seemingly contradictory image of Asian men as hyper-masculine kung-fu masters". Hirose and Pih unpack and problematize how Western versions of masculinity are positioned as hegemonic, which in turn marginalize other (East Asian) forms of masculinity and sexuality. In a similar manner, Woo et al. (2011) study the multiple ways in which sexuality has been set up through a notion of difference between Western and East Asian sexualities. A main dynamic of theories of the formation of gender and sexual identities is that: "like has

only to identify with like, and acknowledging difference means respecting the boundary between what one is and what one cannot be" (Benjamin 1995: 50). In effect, theories of gender and sexuality—even in pluralized or expansive forms—require a uniformity and coherency between that which is deemed the same and that which is identified as different. Therefore it is important to decenter this underlying theoretical dynamic by holding in critical tension in popular and academic interpretive frames that are dependent on gendered similarity and difference.

Second, this book moves away from Western-led debates by examining how the relationship between masculinity and sexuality can be explored more expansively. More specifically, the book moves beyond understanding masculinity as constituted by more or less homophobia, to move towards understanding masculinity through a focus on the erotic. This means recognising that the erotic may exist outside conventional sexual categories, and recognising how erotic meanings and practices surpass sexual identities. Or, as Featherstone (1999: 1) suggests, the erotic takes the form of the cultural manipulation of erotic energy that exceeds the sexual reproductive act: "Eroticism is this infinite variety of forms based upon constant invention, elaboration, taming and regulation of the sexual impulse". As such, we can begin to see the erotic as standing outside contemporary sexualities and institutional regulatory regimes. The result of this is that the book opens up new ways of thinking about masculinity and sexuality that move beyond viewing identity as an accumulation of gender, sexuality, "race"/ethnicity, to one that recognizes gendered and sexual configurations outside conventional thinking.

The emphasis here is that not only do we need to challenge the hegemony of particular versions of masculinity and (hetero)sexuality, we also need to challenge the assumptions that underpin the conceptions of identity that are embedded within masculinity and sexuality. This means questioning the borders and parameters that hold and constrain identity categories. It is acknowledged that East Asian masculinities and sexualities covered in this collection provide evidence that conventional identity frameworks do have purchase on how we understand attitudes, behaviours and practices. However, the diversity of work in this collection shines a light on other potential configurations. As Lancaster (1997: 14) suggests:

> Sexual practice is more complex than the enactment of a norm, the realization of a code, or the performance of a script. As creative beings, people bend rules, disperse grammars, re-inscribe codes, and improvize practices. Any approach that forgets this forgets much of what is creative, sensuous, and playful in culture—but also much of how manipulation, trickery, and circumvention play out: both within cultures and at their busy borders, both within identities and at their openings to experience.

The significance of Lancaster's emphasis on the creative and productive nature of sexuality provides an important dynamic in the renewal of studies of men, masculinity and sexuality in East Asia. The process of challenging the dominant cultural logic of similarity and difference enables the exposure of circuits of desire that operate both within and outside of masculinity and sexuality. By moving beyond binary configurations of identity, we are able to challenge structures of power that designate and authenticate that which is dominant and marginal. In many ways, by moving beyond conventional authorizations of identity we begin to dismantle projections of "safe" gendered and sexual Otherness. This means that we need to take particular care to recognize that alternative ways of understanding masculinity and sexuality tend to carry the properties of the system of thinking that this sanctions "acceptable" forms of such Otherness (Blagojević 2012).

It is also argued that in order to explore the spaces of gender and sexuality that operate beyond hegemonic frameworks of identity, we need to recognize that masculinity and sexuality may exist as part of a series of passing, fragmented and transitory identifications: a series of (dis)alignments that may be dispersed across other social categories such as race/ethnicity, class and age and nationality (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2011). As Floyd (2011:46) suggests: "It is one thing to deconstruct or defamiliarize masculinity in some new way or to insist that, ultimately, there is no such thing as masculinity in the singular but only a dizzying range of masculinities in the plural, as so much scholarship has done so powerfully for so long now. But it seems quite another thing to push the conceptual limits of masculinity studies itself, to try to think an outside to masculinity that does not immediately and predictably reveal itself to be femininity." This edited collection suggests a need to push the

conceptual limits of categories and be open to the suggestion that there may be moments in men's lives where explaining those moments though masculinity might be inadequate. Butler (2004), for example, explains how gender can operate as a regulatory concept that operates to link masculine and feminine attributes to culturally designated bodies. In her account of gender, masculinity and femininity do not necessarily have to be reducible to gender, and that gender does not have to be reducible to masculinity or femininity. The result of this is that a conceptual space can exist between masculinity and femininity on one hand and gender on the other: "To keep the term gender apart from both masculinity and femininity is to safeguard a theoretical perspective by which one might offer an account of how the binary of masculine and feminine comes to exhaust the semantic field of gender" (ibid., 42). We would extend this idea of semantic field to that of sexuality and recognize that East Asian contexts may provide multiple opportunities for a range of theoretical and experiential possibilities both inside and outside sexuality models of identity.

Third, the complexity of identity formation is further intersected by a number of social, economic and cultural transformations. For example, economic uncertainty, heightened levels of migration and increased transnational (digital) media consumption are contributing to the (de) stabilization of traditional identities. For example, whilst non-traditional forms of masculinity and sexuality may travel across East Asian contexts, it is not predictable how this is manifest at the local level. In this process of familial practices, traditional gendered and sexual roles are being reworked. For example, rather than globalizing forces displacing the need for traditional familial ideologies, the reworked gendered interplay around familial sexualities and masculine expectations can result in the re-establishment of local gendered and sexual identities and practices. In other words, processes of late modernity may operate to ensure the cultural continuity of the traditional family–based heterosexual normativity. More specifically, the family in certain contexts continues to operate as an important resource in the construction of masculine identity. At other moments, global forces can reconfigure traditional institutional structures and resources in such ways that make it difficult to navigate traditional gender and sexual discourses. As global processes become worked

through local contexts, the micro-negotiation of global impacts such as individualization, de-traditionalization and liquidity provide new gendered and sexual possibilities through "do it yourself biographies" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001: 24–25).

The proliferation of gendered and erotic possibilities, through an interplay of the global and the local, does raise questions at a political level. Although it is argued that masculinity and sexuality constrain the possibilities of new experiences, new rationalities and circuits of desire, they provide a foundation for political action, and again injustice is often found in heteronormative-centred contexts. By re-considering the constitution of masculinity and sexuality there is a disruption of the analytical frames being used to explain structured inequalities. For example, gender and sexuality have become important tools in understanding the dynamics of social (in) justice, such as heteronormativity. Thus a shift to identifications that operate outside of conventional identity frameworks "…works in the service of maintaining a compulsory ignorance, and where the break between the past and the present keeps us from being able to see the trace of the past as it re-emerges in the very contours of an imagined future" (Butler 1999: 18). In short, as we move from structural explanations, where surveillance, control and censure are premised on predictable institutionally led regularities, to one where, for example, erotic, sexual, masculine, gender histories, experiences and affects converge in irregular assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari 1984), we may lose explanatory purchase on structures of inequality. Therefore, as Butler argues, once sexuality is marginalized, the possibility of contesting such power relations is also potentially displaced. The implication of this is that global shifts that de-cente and reconfigure gender and sexuality in new ways could simultaneously disengage the potential to challenge and contest normative and regulative practices that are enmeshed within institutionally defined gendered /sexualized configurations.

While cross-cultural comparisons with Western countries can be productive, this collection understands the importance of considering masculinity in the context of other regional changes, which include a growing demographic of an older population, the increasing visibility of discourses of gender and sexual equality, and the growing importance of militarization and national security. Therefore, the book provides a platform for the

development of masculinity studies by in-country researchers, enabling connections between local issues and global agendas (see Connell 2014). In so doing, each of the chapters provides a renewal of the key concepts that underpin studies of masculinity, such as homophobia, homosociality and heteronormativity. As a result, the chapters in this book develop new ways of thinking about masculinity, as local contexts provide scholars from across the world with new ways of thinking about men, masculinity and sexuality.

About the Collection

There are three sections in this book. The chapters are selected to illustrate and critically engage with the processes that we argue are important in understanding how contemporary (global) masculinities and sexualities are performed. Our aim is to highlight the imbrication of masculinity and sexuality, in order to offer new ways of engaging with men's identity formations in the light of social, economic and cultural transformations.

The first section, "Being and Becoming: Subjectivities, Identifications and Intimacy", particularly focuses on the social aspect of how meanings of masculinity and sexuality are constructed, articulated and intersected in men's intimate relations in various social spaces and institutions. This will be located in response to rapid global and local (national) socio-economic transformations in different East Asian contexts. In so doing, the papers address an under-researched area in East Asian studies of men, making the interconnections between masculinity, sexuality and desire a central focus. We see the papers in this section as exploring a transitional process, attempting to capture the "bigger picture" across national and regional contexts.

The second section of the book, "Representations: Producing and Consuming Sexual Masculinities", explores and theorizes the production and consumption (identity formation) of masculinity and sexuality identities across diverse representational spaces. Moving beyond the limitations of Western scholarship and its epistemological assumptions about categories of difference, the papers in this section open up new and

exciting ways of rethinking men, masculinity and sexuality, with a focus on the erotic. Innovative methodologies are deployed in teasing out the meanings of the erotic through different forms of representations of East Asian men.

The third section, "Emerging Masculinities: Configuring Men's Futures", tracks the ways in which new identities are emerging. In so doing, the papers in this section seek to open up the discussion on the future of masculine and sexual identity for East Asian men. Of specific significance in this section is the generational specificity of the development of new forms of masculinity and sexuality. For example, whilst non-traditional forms of masculinity and sexuality may travel across East Asian national contexts, and have often been adopted by an earlier generation, among a younger generation of East Asian men (and women), tradition and modernity are being reworked, as young men (and women) embrace and articulate new ways of being a man and a woman.

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Part I

Being and Becoming: Subjectivities, Identifications and Intimacy

2

Single Male Rural-Urban Migrant Workers and the Negotiation of Masculinity in China

Xiaodong Lin

Introduction

Since the late 1970s, China has been undergoing rapid transformation as a result of economic reform. There is an emerging discussion in the study of gender and intimacy on the issues of single women, the "Sheng Nu" (leftover women) phenomenon (To 2013). What is under-reported here is that singleness is also relevant to men. In particular, within the East Asian context, single men equally experience both social stigma and marginalization in a heteronormative society (Kong 2011), where being in a heterosexual relationship and getting married are seen as a cultural norm in society.

Recently, critical studies on Chinese men and masculinities have emerged in the field of social sciences and humanities on studies of migrating masculinities (Lin 2013) and middle class masculinities

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(Song and Hird 2013), as well as research on "the crisis of masculinity" (Yang 2010). However, the question remains as to "What is masculinity in China?" in its contemporary form. Cultural anthropologists and sociologists (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Connell 1995) have offered frameworks to understand men and masculinities located in different contexts. For example, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994: 12) maintain that:

> Meanings of masculinity also vary across cultures and admit to cultural borrowing; masculinities imported from elsewhere are conflated with local ideas to produce new configurations.

Rural-urban migration has resulted in a series of socio-cultural transformations and dislocations in China. In light of China's strict *Hukou* (household registration system), internal migrants are a group of people that have been discursively categorized as un-modern others, in direct contrast to the modernization ideology of progress and development. Of importance, the migrant population are also experiencing changing geographical re-locations and living arrangements, as well as interpersonal relations (Lin 2013; Yan 2008). This chapter investigates a particular cohort of single men, exploring a group of male migrant workers' narratives about the negotiation and enactment of being single, against the dominant cultural discourse of heteronormativity within the family and in a wider social context. More specifically, with particular reference to notions of "responsibility" and "obligation", being and becoming a responsible man has become an important lens through which to understand Chinese masculinity. The chapter suggests that the single men in this study can be seen as active agents in producing knowledge of the meanings of masculinity through their negotiation to become a "capable" man. In so doing, interconnections between masculinity, heterosexuality and class status are made manifest. Through a critical engagement with a Western notion of the crisis of masculinity (McDowell 2000; Morgan 2006; Robinson 2000), the chapter also seeks to contribute to a broader theoretical discussion regarding the meaning of "masculinity" within an East Asian context that is beyond a Eurocentric perspective.

Being a Single Migrant Man: Choice, Masculinity and Obligation

According to China's National Statistic Bureau, there will be 30 million more men of marriageable age than women by 2020.[1] Being single contains negative connotations. This can be demonstrated by the term that people use to describe a bachelor. In China, people use the term "guang gun" to refer to a bachelor. It is literally translated as "bare branch". This metaphor has a strong association with the family tree and the central cultural value of sustaining a heterosexual family life. Being a "bare branch" means that there is no extension of the family. Historically, heteronormative cultural values and practices have been of central importance within a patriarchal society, such as China. Of importance, practices of members of the family in terms of their roles as mother, father, son and daughter, play an integral part in the construction of the meanings of femininity and masculinity. These values are seen as reference points in making sense of the social structure within traditional Chinese society, where patriarchal gender power relationships are sustained (Fei 2008).

The emphasis on family values and obligation resonates with a Western discussion on "heteronomativity" (Jackson 2006), which provides a critical reading of the cultural values of the family and their associated gendered practices in China. Heteronormativity is perceived as "the ideological production of heterosexuality as individual, natural, universal, and monolithic" (Ingraham 1996: 173). It is seen as a dominant cultural value that penetrates modern interpersonal relations and intimacy in contemporary society. More specifically, it plays an important role in the negotiation of singleness identity. Research has illustrated the social marginality of single women (Reynolds and Wetherall 2003) in the context of coupledom. Jackson (2006) has theorized the complexity of the concept of heteronormativity by highlighting the intersection of gender and sexuality. She (2006: 105) extends the utility of heteronormativity by maintaining that the analysis of the concept "needs to be rethought in terms of what is subject to regulation on both sides of the normatively

[1] http://english.cntv.cn/program/china24/20140124/100675.shtml (accessed on 10th May 2015).

prescribed boundaries of heterosexuality: both sexuality and gender." In other words, heteronormativity is informed by the institutional normalization of gender divisions. It is this close connection between gender and heterosexuality that strengthens the normalization of heterosexual practices and cultural values, such as the central significance of Chinese Confucianism (Lin 2014).

While highlighting the continuity of traditional cultural values in the family and marriage, Western theorization of identity, advocated by the "reflexive modernisation" thesis (Giddens 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995), has informed a critical understanding of men's gender identities, particularly focusing on individualization and the self. It has provided a productive interpretation of the meanings of gender as a result of socio-cultural changes. The "do-it-yourself" identity focuses on the transformation of identity formation from being *given* to a self-making entity that emphasizes issues of *choices* and individual lifestyles. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) maintain that individual interests rather than inherited family responsibilities have become the primary driving force for decision-making. Such a late modernity framework (Giddens 1992) suggests that individualization has led to alternative lifestyles and intimate relations, reflected in debates on gender, sexuality and desire in contemporary society. In other words, individual reflexivity has transformed intimate relations, which have broken away from traditional institutions such as the family. Hence, women are seen as late modernity "winners" being able to pursue individual empowerment, given their personal choice and reflexivity. The "reflexive modernisation" thesis (Giddens 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995) has informed a critical understanding of singleness, emphasising questions of choice and self-autonomy. It has provided a productive interpretation of being a practice of self-realization.

In response to a late modern understanding of identity, Lawler (2013: 19) maintains that identity needs to be understood "not as belonging 'within' the individual person, but as produced between persons and within social relations." Similar accounts have also been articulated by Bourdieusian feminists such as Skeggs (1997: 94), who maintains that "identities are continually in the process of being reproduced as responses to social positions, through access to representational systems and in the conversion of forms of capital." Such an understanding of materiality, focusing on

the importance of social interaction involved in identity formation, has provided an informative and productive frame in studying singleness. This has been critically engaged in a recent study on single women (or the "*Sheng Nu*" phenomenon) in urban China (see To 2013), which has produced diverse accounts of being single. Of importance, To's study highlights the dilemmas and challenges of empowerment and individuality among single Chinese women. For example, To (2013: 1) acknowledges the centrality of parents' views in influencing single women's perspectives on personal relations and intimacy. As she maintains, "parents' traditional views have continued to exert a strong influence on women's marital choices, but this was seen to conflict with their more 'modern' views toward advocating and supporting women's strong economic achievements." The continuing reflections on responsibility and obligation illustrate that multiple power dynamics are involved in forging Chinese single women's identities. In these cases, a "reflective modernity" framework fails to explain women's modern self-identities.

Gender studies on men and masculinities in China may also provide critical insights into the meanings of being a single man in China. Current research on global masculinities advocates the importance of exploring sex/gender identities within their localized context (see Connell 1995). It is important to address shifting historical representations of masculinity and the continuing impact of Confucian gender ideology and how it plays out within a contemporary setting (also see Louie 2002). According to Song and Hird (2013), the "crisis of masculinity" in post-Mao China accompanied economic reform and its opening up to the outside world. Located specifically within the context of Chinese modernization, marked by progress and development, working-class men and masculinities have been discussed in recent sociological studies on rural-urban migrant men (Yang 2010; Lin 2013). For example, Lin's (2013, 2014) study acknowledges that traditional cultural values, such as filial piety, play an important role in understanding male migrant workers' identity formation in China. Informed by the above theoretical discussion on heteronormativity, gender and identity, this chapter seeks to critically build on these debates, highlighting the impact of multiple sources of power in understanding masculinity from the single male migrant workers' own perspectives. In this chapter, the participants' narratives illustrate

the complexity of how power relations are played out, recounting both the constraints they experience and the resources they deploy in their articulation of being a single migrant worker.

Data Collection

The data in this chapter were selected from a bigger project on rural-urban migrant men in China that was carried out in the spring of 2012 and early 2013. Informed by the tradition of British Cultural Studies, the study seeks to understand men's meanings of the social world as generated through practices within particular social and cultural conditions (Gray 2003). The study was designed to understand Chinese male migrant workers' self-identity formation, in response to the public discourse of them as marginalized urban dwellers. During the fieldwork, the study deployed in-depth, open ended, semi-structured interviews in the field, aiming to record the male migrant workers' lived experiences regarding their family life and work as a result of migration. Interviewees were recruited through access to local factories and snowballing. The chapter focuses on a section of self-identified single male migrant workers' autobiographic narratives, aged between 20 and 36[2]. The sample was selected to represent a range of transitional experiences in their life courses. This includes narratives about being single in different stages of their adulthood, from leaving home to work in their early 20s to facing the pressure of marriage, or seeking remarriage in their 30s. Thus, their narratives were important resources to tease out their diverse subjective meanings of being a man. More specifically, as particular attention was paid to their articulation of being single, the interviewees' narratives enabled me to capture the priorities and the transformations in different stages of their lives, allowing a critical exploration of the cultural values of heteronormativity in understanding the changing meanings of singleness, as well as its impact on the transformation and reproduction of their masculine identities.

[2] The migrant workers' names in this paper have been anonymized.

Negotiating Masculinity: Capability and Heterosexual Relationships

The data in this chapter attempt to capture a nuanced account of being single for male migrant workers, as illustrated in the intersectionality of different power relations operating within contemporary Chinese society. The migrant men articulated three thematic dimensions of being a single man, addressing their working experience, family responsibility, as well as their aspirations. The chapter highlights the cultural resources the men mobilize in order to negotiate being a single man.

Being Single as an Upwardly Mobile Neoliberal Subject

Rather than expressing negative views of being single that have challenged their masculinity, for some of the younger generation of male migrant workers, being single was an advantage in terms of career achievement. For example, Wang Jun, who was a factory worker, came to the city when he was 19, after completing his schooling. As there were a few *lao xiang* (fellow villagers) working in a garment factory, he joined his *lao xiang*. At the age of 23, he was aware of his status as a single man. He told me that he would have got married if he was back in his home village, where people tend to get married in their early 20s. For Wang Jun, working in the city was a good opportunity to make more money, so that he would have the ability to establish his own family. He was told what a capable man should do if he was at home. In his interview, he indicated that traditional familial values regarding gender roles continue to be of central importance in relation to his status as a single man.

> Wang Jun:… Elderly people at home always said man…should focus on career …
> Interviewer: Why?
> Wang Jun: If you don't have money, how can you marry a wife or raise your family?

Wang Jun's rationale for later marriage reflected a sense of responsibility that entails two dimensions. On the one hand, it reflects his internalization of being a career driven, self-responsible young man. On the other hand, it also reflects his consciousness of the need to become a responsible partner. Wang Jun's narrative in relation to his economic motivation for migration simultaneously spoke of the continuity of the cultural tradition of being a capable man in the family.

For some migrant men, being single is an important resource for them in their quest to pursue upward mobility. In the same garment factory, a machine operator, Da Yuan, revealed that he had been changing jobs since he left his hometown. At the age of 25, Da Yuan had been working in the factory for only three months when I interviewed him in 2012. Being single had enabled him to make easy decisions about changing jobs for the purpose of upward mobility, which he believed benefited his future career.

> Interviewer: Have you got used to working here?
> Da Yuan: Nothing about getting used or not getting used to… I am learning…
> Interviewer: Where were you before this job?
> Da Yuan: I was in Dongguan.
> Interviewer: Why did you leave Dongguan?
> Da Yuan: I just wanted to change to a new environment. *Laoxiang* (a fellow villager) told me they were recruiting new workers here. Anyhow, (I am) a piece of "*guang gun*". (bare branch, meaning: single man) The wage is better. (I can) make more money… otherwise you won't be able to find a wife in the future.

Both Wang Jun and Da Yuan revealed the symbolic significance of having a good job with a good income for demonstrating their capability of establishing a (heterosexual) family. At the time of our interviews, they revealed the positive impact of being single, which was enabling them to choose a good job while aiming to make money for a future marriage. For them, being able to secure a good job was an important resource in articulating their masculinity as an adult man. In their narratives, they also implied the central significance of the notion of capability in demonstrating their masculine identities. For example, making visible their career progress, thus being able to achieve/fulfil the familial

expectation of getting married as an adult (man) became a central reference point. At the same time, their attitude towards employment might suggest that they had no commitment to the job they did and that the decision was economically driven. However, through a gender lens, for many young migrants, being single can also be interpreted as important symbolic "capital" to maintain mobility to achieve better career prospects, as illustrated in Da Yuan's account. This is compatible with traditional cultural values that "men rule outside, women rule inside" (Jacka 1997). At the same time, the primary purpose of their work was to enable them to establish a relationship, get married and have children.

Being Single, Heteronormativity and the Construction of the Other

In light of rapid socio-economic changes, there was intense discussion among the migrant men about which should come first, marriage or career. This is of particular salience for young people for whom the neoliberal discourse of "*Suzhi"* (quality) has become central in negotiating their masculine identities. For Anagnost (2004: 189–90), "in the movement from a planned to a market economy, the representation of value has undergone a reorganization in the realm of the bio-political in which human life becomes a new frontier for capital accumulation. This changing relationship between value and bodies is encompassed by the term *suzhi*, which roughly translates into English as quality"; while for Sigley, (2009: 539), "*suzhi* is a key concept for articulating value in a capitalist (or postsocialist) mode of production." This was internalized in some of the single migrant men's narratives above in terms of self-improvement and upward mobility. However, in Chinese culture, "Cheng Jia Li Ye", translated as "establishing a household and building up a career", is of central cultural significance in defining an adult man in China. For men in their 30s, heteronormative cultural norms in relation to the family have often been interpreted as a disadvantage for single male migrant workers. Nevertheless, historically establishing one's own household with a growing family and career development has been a landmark in regard to role expectation for men in China. Therefore, remaining single could

be seen as a major stigma within the patriarchal culture of heteronormativity, based on cultural values such as filial piety (Lin 2014; Qi 2014), in which failing to fulfil gender expectations such as passing on family names to the next generation has been considered the biggest offence (Lin 2014).

The notion of social stigma can also be understood through the Chinese concept of face (also see Qi 2011), which is deployed to highlight that individual identity is relational, as it indicates an individual's prestige and respectability from other people's perceptions of them (Ho 1976). Ho (1976: 883) defines the concept of "face" as "'the respectability and/or deference that a person can claim for him/herself from others, by virtue of the relative position he occupies in the social network and the degree to which he is judged to have functioned adequately in the position, as well as acceptably in his social conduct." Da Tian, a 30-year-old single migrant man, explicitly spoke about the issue of "face", specifically as it is played out within the context of masculinity and heterosexuality for single men.

> Da Tian: If you are in your 20s and you are single, people think you are still young, career is more important. If you are in your 30s and single, people would question your "nengli".
> Interviewer: What kind of "nengli"?
> Da Tian: I have heard people laughing at someone (who is still single), saying there is some biological (sexual) problem with him. The reaction people have will make you feel very "mei mian zi" (no face: feeling shameful) if you let people know you are still on your own.

Da Tian's narrative resonates with Reynolds and Wetherall's finding that the idealization and privilege of marriage and long-term partnerships serve to materialize the marginalisation of single women (Reynolds and Wetherall 2003: 489). In Da Tian's narrative, there is also resonance with Skeggs' (1997) account of respectability as a dominant social value among English working class women. Da Tian spoke of the notion of "mian zi" (face), and what counts as having "mian zi", as simultaneously coded as a consequence of being "capable". More importantly, he claims, "being single" in his 30s has been constructed as abnormal. As indicated above,

Jackson (2006) maintains the importance of empirically connecting gender and sexuality to contextualize heteronormativity in society. For Da Tian, the opposite of being single is being "normal", which is defined by heteronormative cultural values. This has been illustrated by his extended family and friends' concerns about his sexuality and health, with the stigmatization of homosexuality implied within his narrative. This is salience in a society where heteronormativity is privileged. In other words, being a single man corresponds to the notion of a crisis of masculinity being coded as being feminine, which challenges normative Chinese notions of masculinity and sexuality.

The Negotiation of "Capable" Masculinities

The single men's narratives illustrate the simultaneity of masculinity and sexuality in defining a capable adult man in China. Being single as a man entails a series of connotations—-initiated by family members and friends—of being incapable, which serve as attributes to challenge their masculinity. For example, being incapable ascribes negative judgements about a young man's sexuality. Yu Wei, a 29-year-old garment factory worker, strategically manipulates his marginalized social-economic status to defend his marginalization as a single man.

> Yu Wei (age 29): Whenever people in the family ask about your marriage. I always say the "yuan fen" (destiny) hasn't arrived yet.
> Interviewer: Do you believe in "yuan fen"?
> Yu Wei: I have to believe in it. Haha…Can I say I have no money? It is so embarrassing. It is hard to find a suitable partner.
> Interviewer: What do you mean by "suitable"?
> Yu Wei: It is difficult to say… someone who doesn't mind suffering some hardship and would like to establish a family with me together.

Yu Wei's account of "yuan fen" (destiny) implies his internalization of taking responsibility for his being single. In China, the notion of fate or destiny is regarded as the core of people's understanding of the self. However, it is a paradox that while the notion of "fate" and "destiny" is superstitious and something that is out of one's control, it is also regarded

as something that one can change by self-enhancement (Bond 2010). A similar discourse such as "fortune is grasped in our own hands" (命运掌握在自己手中) illustrates such a paradox and it is widely accepted in society. Yu Wei's account indicates that material marginality, represented by the lack of economic resources, is a barrier for most single migrant men to find a (heterosexual) relationship. For him, his economic marginality can be used to articulate another layer of meanings of being a single migrant man. In response to the public discourse of neoliberal modernization, marked by self-improvement and development, the migrant men's lack of social-economic resources has prevented them from being a desirable candidate for a "heterosexual" relationship. This is compatible with the discourse of "low suzhi" in Yan's (2008) ethnographic research on rural-urban migrant women. Yan addresses the central role of the discourse of "low suzhi" in the formation of rural women's identity formation as lacking and inadequate in the "suzhi" discourse[3]. Some of the men in my study developed a range of tactics to create a good impression. For example, Lu Hua was a security guard at a factory. He outlined why he needed to lie about his occupation in order to present himself as a "capable" man when.

> I told my *lao xiang* (a fellow villager) not to tell that I work as a security guard. I said I work for a company. In fact I am quite anxious. (But) first impression is very important. You need to let them feel that you are reliable. We have a guy in the village. He couldn't find a girl to marry him. As soon as he has built a new house, everyone tried to introduce him to a wife. They (girls) feel more assured. (Lu Hua, age 30)

Yu Wei and Lu Hua illustrate the notion of "ben shi" (capability) as an important symbolic attribute of an ideal type of masculinity. For

[3] According to Yan (2003: 494), "suzhi": "refers to the somewhat ephemeral qualities of civility, self-discipline, and modernity…(*suzhi*) marks a sense and sensibility of the self's value in the market economy… it is often used in the negative by the post-Mao state and educational elites to point to the lack of quality of the Chinese labouring masses. Improving the *suzhi* of China's massive population has become vitally important in the planning of governing elites for China to become a competitive player in the field of global capital… a new ontological valuation and abstraction of human subjectivity through examining the linkages among poverty-relief campaigns, labour migration, and development."

example, Lu Hua felt the necessity to lie about his job in order to demonstrate that he was a capable subject. For him, a good job would create a good impression to his online date, as he indicated that only men with "ben shi" had the opportunity to date and have a (heterosexual) relationship. This could be read as an external impact from a wider society regarding the value of work and its imbrication with masculinity. More importantly, such a perspective needs to be located within the wider society's gender hierarchy and associated understanding of heterosexual family relations. Within Chinese traditional culture, women are seen as dependent on their fathers before their marriage, on their husbands after marriage and on their sons when they are old. For Yu Wei and Lu Hua, single migrant men were assigned to their relational gendered positions within family relations and needed to demonstrate their abilities in order to secure and maintain the structure of (extended) family life, which is still central in understanding masculine and feminine identity formations in China.

This chapter has explored how normative (heterosexual) relationships are a central reference point in the men's narratives in demonstrating their masculinity, symbolically manifested as a form of "capability". As Burke (2006: 731) argues: "aspirations (and competition) are not constructed exclusively at the individual level but are tied in with complex structural, cultural and discursive relations and practices." More specifically, while my research reveals aspirations for (heterosexual) love and relationships, the men also indicate the productive meanings of the interplay of gender and class, in which their under-class economic status undermines their masculinity simultaneously. For example, 21-year-old Xiao Liu is one of the youngest workers and is hierarchically positioned at the bottom of the workforce. In his workshop, he informed me that he has a close female friend called Xiao Xie, as they are from the same place in Fujian Province. He really admired Xiao Xie, who would be ideal for him as a partner, as both of them were from the same place. Xiao Liu was reluctant to admit that Xiao Xie was his girlfriend, as he was never brave enough to ask her. Therefore, he also presented himself as being single. In our conversation about his friendship with Xiao Xie, he appeared not to be confident regarding his social position within the factory and his unconfirmed relationship with Xiao Xie.

Xiao Liu: …Haha, it is difficult to say. I am too embarrassed to open my mouth to ask her.
Interviewer: Why?
Xiao Liu: Who would like a "qiong guang dan" (penniless vagrant)? I am a three "no": no money, no culture, no looks…It is still an issue of feeding myself. It is not realistic. (I will) wait for some time. I am quite contented just looking after her like my sister…I think she must think it is good to have someone like me to depend on….
Interviewer: Why do you wait?
Xiao Liu: Everything has not been settled yet. I am just a normal worker…. Wait until I can make more money. The possibility for success is not high now. If she said no, then it is quite embarrassing.

Xiao Liu's humour seemed to suggest his embarrassment, which was also expressed through his concern about being a failure. It helps us understand the meaning of his subjectivity of being single. For example, his notion of "qiong guang dan" was in contrast to the ideal affluent urbane citizen whom he aspired to become. Furthermore, his excuse to "wait until he can make more money" illustrates his internalization of the neoliberal ideology of self-development, while simultaneously there is an acceptance of an implied subordination and a sense of inadequacy in response to the ideal type of man he would like to be. In his case, he spoke about what he lacked. Similar self-deprecating humour also appeared in other single migrant men's narratives. However, Xiao Liu's narratives also provided evidence of an active negotiation of attempting to mobilize alternative social strategies to overcome the material disadvantage of his socio-economic status. For example, he represents his relationship with his female friend Xiao Xie as that of a brother and sister, which he strategically played out in order to enhance his masculine identity through practicing a brotherly role, and as an opportunity to show his sincerity and his intention to look after Xiao Xie as a caring man. Such a brother-sister relationship replicates the traditional gender order and hierarchy within the traditional patriarchal Chinese family (see Potter and Potter 1990). In this case, heteronormativity, in terms of acting out gender expectations within a heterosexual relationship, is informative in understanding the negotiation of single men's practices with their female friends. Such self-deprecating humour enabled single migrant men such as Xiao Liu to illustrate their self-reflection on their inferior socio-economic

positioning in the making of their preferred self-identities, sustained by a heteronormative relationship in a rapidly changing society.

Neoliberal ideology is impacting upon late modern subjects' lives through globally inflected modernization projects at a local level (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2007). For example, being as well as becoming "modern" has become a central theme underpinning subjects' everyday lives. This can be achieved and displayed through different locally-based strategies and negotiated through diverse practices. Rural-urban migration has created a class division between the migrant working class and urban middle class, which is currently under-theorized (Pun and Chan 2008). As I suggested above, for the male migrant workers, being single was often defined in terms of what they were not, most visibly illustrated by their ascribed low social-economic status and their lack of cultural resources, such as education. While using the word "Gao Fu Shuai (Tall, Rich and Handsome)" to describe affluent, well-educated middle class single men, the meaning of "guang gun", regarding single male migrant workers entails the opposite of the "Gao Fu Shuai". In many cases, they would be identified, or self-identified themselves as a "diaosi"[4] man. They were aware of their social-economic status as they were actively negotiating their identities through their aspirations, which were intensified within a neoliberal Chinese context.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the meanings of Chinese masculinity through a group of single male migrant workers' articulation and negation of being a single man. Contributing to this edited collection has enabled me to be sensitive to the epistemological gaps in research on East Asian men's masculinity, sexuality and desire, suggesting an international reading in relation to the other chapters in the book. The chapter does not intend to emphasize the stigma and marginalization of singleness among male migrant workers in China. Rather, the chapter aims to illustrate the complex power relationships illustrated in the men's accounts that could

[4] The term "diao si" is web-slang. It literally means "pubic hair". It refers to unprivileged young individuals with low social status.

potentially contribute to such social stigma and marginalization, and the men's agency and resistance.

The chapter critically engaged with the concept of "singleness" in attempting to explore Chinese male (rural-urban) migrant workers' negotiation of masculinities. Although we cannot generalize from their experiences, as a result of carrying out a small-scale qualitative research project, the chapter illustrates an alternative account of how the concept of "singleness" has been negotiated throughout the different stages of migrant men's life course. Connell maintains the importance of such accounts in exploring the meanings of masculinities from the global South:

> There is a rich archive of accounts and analyses of masculinity from around the global South, in a variety of genres. These provide an important foundation for post-colonial thinking about masculinities. The formation of masculinities needs to be considered on a historical terrain, including worldwide processes of conquest and social disruption, the building of colonial societies and a global economy, and post-independence globalization. (2014: 217)

Also, the engagement with the notion of "capability" has proved to be productive. On the one hand, being single can entail negative connotations of being without "ben shi", or "neng li" (capability), which positions single migrant men as operating outside the normative discourse as a "heterosexual" adult man. On the other hand, they actively referred to traditional gender expectations and obligations in their social practices in order to negotiate their singlehood identities. Heteronormativity that can be seen as shaping their aspirations for a future family life and intergenerational familial relations played a key role in their self-identity formation. The family, defined by heteronormative values and practices, marked by traditional familial ethics and norms, provided an important resource in the negotiation of their (migrant) masculinities. In particular, the single migrant men's narratives suggest a tension between the structural constraints of the workplace and family life and their active agented practices (with brotherly non-kin relationships and female colleagues), and the development of alternative practices in the negotiation of their singleness subjectivities within urban spaces.

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3

Acting Straight? Non-heterosexual Salarymen Working with Heteronormativity in the Japanese Workplace

Romit Dasgupta

Introduction

There has, in recent decades, been a shift in organizational culture away from regarding the workplace as an exclusively "sexless and rational realm" (Hall 1989, p. 125) towards a greater recognition of the significance of gender and, indeed, sexuality to the dynamics of workplace culture. Moreover, while the culturally privileged discourse within the workplace continues to be "relentlessly heterosexual" (Pringle 1989, p. 164), there has also been a growing recognition of the diversity of sexuality within organizational cultures (eds. Hearn et al. 1989; Douglas Creed 2006; Fleming 2007; Williams and Dellinger 2010; Gregory 2011; Hearn 2014). However, the bulk of the discussion has been in the context of Western (largely Euro-American) organizations. This applies to studies of Japanese organizational cultures too. While there

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has been considerable discussion of the intersections between gender and work (e.g., Brinton 1993; Ôsawa 1993; Funabashi and Miyamoto 2008; Nemoto 2010), sexuality, particularly non-heteronormative sexualities, has largely remained outside the orbit of discussion. This chapter focuses on the intersections between Japanese corporate culture, masculinity, and sexuality—specifically the experiences of non-heterosexual white-collar male employees of organizations, the so-called "salaryman" (*sarariiman*).

The "Salaryman" and Corporate Masculinity in Japan

The springboard for this chapter is previous research on expressions of corporate masculinity in Japan: specifically the discourse of the white-collar "salaryman" (Dasgupta 2013). As a sort of "everyman" of corporate Japan over the post-World War Two decades, the salaryman came to signify both corporate masculinity and also Japanese masculinity as a whole. In this regard the discourse of the salaryman could be considered to have been a powerfully entrenched, culturally privileged hegemonic discourse, along the lines suggested by Raewyn Connell (Connell 1995; also Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Expressed another way, the salaryman came to signify the "archetypal citizen" of postwar Japan. This was despite an on-the-ground reality that, even at the height of Japan's economic strength in the 1970s and 1980s, only a minority of the male workforce would have fallen within the strictest definitional parameters of the term—full-time, white-collar employees of private-sector organizations offering such benefits as a lifetime employment guarantee, and promotion and salary-scale linked to length of service, within an ideological framework of corporate paternalism. Rather, it was the discourse surrounding the salaryman and his lifestyle that was far more extensive in its reach. Thus, regardless of what the *reality* may have been, large swathes of Japanese men identified with, and were defined against, the salaryman discourse. Moreover, even after almost two decades of economic slowdown since the 1990s, with significant shifts in workplace

ideology, the salaryman continues to be pivotal to the ways in which corporate culture, masculinity, and indeed Japanese national identity are framed.

An integral element of the salaryman discourse has been the operation of a particular ideology of gender and sexuality, at the core of which has been the equation of masculinity with the public, work, and *production* sphere, while femininity has been equated with the private, household, consumption sphere. Notwithstanding the reality that women have always participated in the workforce, and despite the not insignificant inroads made by women since the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in the mid-1980s, discursively, work continues to define masculinity. The articulation of this thinking is the figure of the "archetypal citizen" salaryman, someone who is "a male, heterosexual, able-bodied, fertile, white-collar worker" (Mackie 2002: 203). Thus, underpinning the discourse of salaryman masculinity was an ideology of regulated heterosexuality, signified through the notion of the salaryman as a husband and father for a dependent wife and children—the *daikokubashira* (literally, "central supporting pillar") of a household coupled with the *sengyô shufu* ("fulltime housewife").

The commonly used expression *shakaijin* (literally, "social person/member of society") is the term used in Japan to refer to socially responsible adult members of society. While the connotation is that an individual attains *shakaijin* status upon entry into fulltime work, in actual fact, as Wim Lunsing notes, linked into this status is the notion of becoming "*ichininmae no shakaijin* (a fully adult social being)" through marriage (Lunsing 2001: 74–75). Conversely, not being married beyond a certain age implies not living up to the expectations of socio-culturally responsible citizenship, signified, for women, through being a wife and mother, and for men, through being a *daikokubashira* provider.

However, given the considerable socio-cultural and economic upheavals since the "Lost Decade" recession of the 1990s, there is a growing anomaly between the discourse of the *daikokubashira* husband and father, and the reality of an increase in marriage age, and a growth in the proportion of single persons within the population (Dales 2014; also Dalton and Dales 2016). In 2007, for instance, the average age of first marriage

stood at 30.1 for men, and 28.3 for women (Yuzawa and Miyamoto 2008: 100). At the same time, the proportion of never-married persons in the 30–34 age category (arguably, the peak years for marriage and childbirth) in 2005 stood at 47.7 percent for men, and 32.6 percent for women; up from just 14.3 percent for men in the same age cohort in 1975, and 7.7 percent for women (Shimoda 2008).

Intermeshing with these demographic shifts have been significant restructurings within the employment sector since the 1990s. As corporations sought to cut personnel costs and downsize, there was a shift towards relying more on non-permanent and part-time labour, best embodied in the figure of the *freeter* ("freelance" temporary/casual worker). The term first emerged during the prosperous 1980s boom years, and initially had positive connotations of flexibility and choice over being locked into fulltime, permanent employment (Allison 2009). However, through the 1990s and 2000s, as corporations reduced their intake of new permanent staff, *freeter* work and other forms of irregular employment increasingly became the only option for growing numbers of young graduates; by the mid-2000s there were over two million Japanese under the age of 35 engaged in part-time or temporary work (Yuzawa and Miyamoto 2008: 156–157). Moreover, whereas initially *freeter* were largely in their late-teens and early twenties, as the economic slowdown extended beyond the 1990s, many of these individuals continued working in the non-permanent sector into their thirties, and even forties—by the mid-2000s, over 800,000 *freeter* were in their thirties (Allison 2009: 98–99).

This had implications for the discourse of the *daikokubashira* provider. On the one hand, the ideological hold of the institution of marriage, with the male as primary breadwinner, has not significantly weakened—surveys point to the continued desire among younger people (close to 90 percent) to get married and have a family (Dasgupta 2013: 105; Taga 2011: 192–193). However, the *reality*, particularly given the continuing strength of the work/masculinity nexus, is that marriage and family are increasingly an unattainable ideal for growing numbers of men approaching middle age (Taga 2011). Thus, in present-day Japan there is a discernible disconnect between those men (embodied in the salaryman) able to enter the permanent sector, and hence gain access to the dividends of

patriarchal heteronormative masculinity, and growing numbers (embodied in the *freeter*) who are unable to access these dividends.

Queering the Salaryman

The other issue, one that is the primary concern of this chapter, is the pervasive socio-cultural perception of the salaryman as unequivocally heterosexual, as reflected in the *daikokubashira* discourse. In actual fact, the flip-side of the salaryman as heterosexual provider is another discourse, far less visible (and audible), that links the salaryman with *non-heterosexuality*.

For instance, at the level of gay popular culture, the equation of the salaryman with unambiguous heterosexuality has ironically resulted in the salaryman becoming a trope of desire and fantasy, in much the same way that other icons of hypermasculinity, like the policeman, or soldier, or construction worker, have long been fetishized and/or parodied within male gay popular culture. Such subversive imaginings—indeed, *queer(y)ing*, in the empowering/de-stabilising theoretical sense of "queer"—of the salaryman (the "*riiman*", in everyday popular culture-speak) include pornography revolving around *riiman* fantasies, non-pornographic representations in male gay popular culture texts like *manga* and magazines, salaryman-themed *manga* and *anime* in genre like Yaoi, B/L ("Boys Love") and *shôjo* ("girls") *manga,* catering to predominantly heterosexual female fans (e.g., Nagaike 2012),[1] and *riiman* bars in areas of Tokyo like the Shinjuku Ni-chome "gay precinct" or the business district of Shimbashi, catering to gay salarymen or to men attracted to them (*riiman-kei*).[2]

The above points to the dissonance between the overwhelmingly heteronormative public discourse of corporate masculinity and an on-the-ground reality that may not necessarily fit seamlessly with this discourse. The reality is that there *are* salarymen who may not be heterosexual, but

[1] There is a whole sub-genre of Yaoi/BL *manga* (written by, and predominantly targeting heterosexual *fujoshi* women) revolving around sexualized same-sex salaryman fantasies – one example, for instance, is Guren Naomi's 2010 *Shachō wa Eroshikku* (The Company President is Erotic/Ero'sick').

[2] One such example of a popular gay *riiman* bar in Shimbashi is "Townhouse" http://townhousetokyo.web.fc2.com.

nevertheless need to negotiate and engage in varying ways with the hegemonic expectations on a day-to-day basis. However, unlike the visibility of the "gay" salaryman in popular culture, with some notable exceptions (e.g., Fushimi 2000; McLelland 2005), discussion in the academic literature is largely absent, both within studies of gender in organizational culture, *and* within Japanese queer studies. Even in the context of diversity discourse in the organizational sector, it has only really been in very recent years that there has been some very limited visibility emerging—for instance, with support groups like *Nijiiro (Rainbow coloured) Diversity* (2015, August 25) (http://www.nijiirodiversity.jp/english-home/) and websites like *LGBT Shûkatsu* (LGBT Job-Seeking) (2015, August 25) (http://rebitlgbt.org/project/career) offering workplace-related advice and support to sexual minorities (*The Japan Times* 20 May 2015).

Accordingly, this chapter seeks to address the gap in the academic literature on non-heterosexual salarymen. I draw upon narratives and accounts of around fifteen salarymen (or, in some cases, former salarymen), ranging in age from their twenties through to their forties and fifties, who self-identified as "non-heterosexual" (in general, "gay"). These men came from a variety of industries, ranging from the public sector across to private industry areas like finance, publishing, and trading companies. Apart from sexuality, the common denominator was their various individual relationships with the expectations of the salaryman discourse. Interestingly, nearly all of them presented me with personal imaginings of a "typical" (*tenkeiteki*) salaryman quite at odds with the changes of the past two decades discussed above. For instance, the description provided by Ryôsuke, a former salaryman in his mid-thirties, was of a person "whose life centred around his work (*seikatsu ga shigoto chûshin*)".[3] Similarly, Hisashi, an informant who had only recently entered the workforce, stressed the fact that to him a salaryman was someone "who has a strong sense of responsibility (*sekininkan motteiru*)". Masaki, another young salaryman working in the financial sector, actually used the term *kaisha ningen* ("company person") to describe his image of the salaryman,

[3] The names of all informants are pseudonyms. Japanese names, when the full name is used, follow the order of family name/personal name. When referring to my informants, I either use their whole name (e.g., Arai Jun), or I use their personal name (e.g., Jun).

despite the fact that this was an informant who had come into adulthood long after the *kaisha ningen* of the 1960s and 1970s economic growth years was no longer a fixture. For most, the "typical salaryman" remained a suit-clad, heterosexual, married husband and father, who dedicated himself to his organization at the expense of all else—in the words of one of the men, Keisuke, the *tenkeiteki* (typical) salaryman is "*kekkon shiteite, asa kara ban made shigoto shiteite, shûmatsu gorogoro shiteite, kodomo no sewa mo shinai…*" ("married with children, works from morning until evening, lazes around doing nothing on weekends, doesn't help with the children").

What is interesting is the juxtaposition of this kind of one-dimensional, static (*and* heteronormative) image presented by these men, and their own self-positioning vis-à-vis the image. A few mentioned seeing themselves approaching this caricature, or indeed, trying hard to perform this caricature, in certain situations. Thus, Hiroaki, a former salaryman who worked for an elite trading company before quitting, used the expression *isshôkenmei* (earnestly, with all one's effort) when reflecting back on how he tried to live up to the expectations of the salaryman discourse, despite at another level hating to do so. Ryôsuke, another former salaryman in the banking sector, actually used the term *enjiru* (perform) to describe his efforts to meet the expectations, prior to quitting and opting out of salaryman masculinity. Perhaps, Jun, the first gay salaryman I interacted with (and who triggered my subsequent interest in the topic), summed it up best. He described the "typical salaryman" as a "*peko-peko shita hito*" (literally, someone who is constantly bowing and scraping to others), someone who "works earnestly, whose hobby is work". He mentioned seeing himself approaching this caricature when he was dealing with customers and members of the public in his workplace—something rather at odds with the image of himself he had presented me earlier in our discussion of a gay activist who had marched in the Lesbian and Gay Parade during his student days.

It is this disconnect, or perhaps parallel coexistence, between the informants' (implicitly heterosexual) salaryman work selves and their (self-acknowledged non-heterosexual) non-work selves that I wish to tease out further in the remainder of this chapter. Moreover, in spotlighting these issues, I foreground the narratives of a few selected individuals at various points in their life and career trajectories, rather than generalizing across all. This, I believe, will bring out the textured complexities and *individual*

"micro-negotiations" vis-à-vis macro ideological frameworks of gender and sexuality within which these informants were operating.

Micro-Negotiations with Heteronormativity: Individuals' Narratives—Becoming a Salaryman

The first, Hisashi, at the time of our discussion, had only recently made the transition from student to salaryman, still making his way through a liminal zone between pre-*shakaijin* and *shakaijin* status. Hence, his awareness of the micro-negotiations that are needed to engage with the expectations of corporate heteronormativity was arguably more palpable (to himself) than might have been the case for individuals who had been *shakaijin* for longer.

In many regards, Hisashi could well have been a poster boy for a nostalgic pre-recessionary narrative of Japan as a middle-class success story. He came from a "typical" (*tenkei-teki*) middle-class nuclear family, with a full-time homemaker (*sengyô shufu*) mother, a father who was an executive in an elite electronics firm, and a high-school age younger sister. After high school, Hisashi had entered the education faculty of a top-ranked public university, where he specialized in educational policy and sociology. After graduation, rather than going into the private sector, as most of his peers did, he opted to sit the competitive public service examination, and after passing it, entered into an elite track within one of the public sector bureaucracies.

At the time of our interview, Hisashi had been a *shakaijin* for only six months, and hence was still in the process of making the student-to-shakaijin transition, coping with such things as the sudden reduction in his free time and learning to interact with colleagues and seniors of different ages. Technically, as a public servant, Hisashi could be regarded as falling outside the definitional parameters of "salaryman". However, he himself was quite emphatic in stressing that he *did* see himself as a salaryman – he was not, in his words, "a business owner/entrepreneur, did not have a specialization (*tokugi*) like a doctor or lawyer", and significantly, was "working as one part within an organization (*soshiki no ichibu*)". Also, his image of the typical salaryman as someone who has "a strong

sense of responsibility to the workplace", characterized all his colleagues, who defined themselves primarily through their work. He saw himself as rapidly becoming this kind of *"shigoto yûsen* (work prioritizing)" person. Given this type of self-description Hisashi could easily signify the typical, albeit slightly elite, emergent twenty-first century salaryman.

However, he also self-identified as unambiguously gay—he had been dating his male partner for six months, and in his university days he had been involved in the campus gay social club. As with many of the other informants, Hisashi was representative of the shift that has become more pronounced in recent decades in the way sexual orientation gets framed: not just as the enactment of a sexual act that happens to be between members of the same sex, but as integral to identity and constant over the entire life-course. At the same time, while he was quite comfortable within himself with his sexuality, and quite openly defined himself as "gay" to his non-heterosexual friends, to others—his family and at work—he defined himself as "straight", not even "bi" (he used the English terms). With family and friends, he deployed tactics of *gomakasu*, a strategy (made easier in Japanese by the vagueness of gender pronouns) that Wim Lunsing describes as "avoiding answering a question, ideally in such a sophisticated [and playful] manner, that the questioner does not notice that one is evading the subject (Lunsing 2001: 221). However, he was not particularly careful about performing heterosexuality flawlessly, and while he did not plan to "come out" of his own volition, he would not be averse to being accidentally "outed" (*shizen-na katachi de barete shimau*).

At work, however, it was different. On the one hand, he did not regard his workplace as homophobic, and felt that if he *did* ever "come out" the reaction would probably be an unremarkable "*sou nan da…?* (Oh, is that so?)" response. However, despite the non-homophobic atmosphere (which he attributed to his colleagues being highly educated), his workplace was still overwhelmingly an "*otoko shakai*" (male-dominated/masculinist), with colleagues who were "strait-laced" and "held strong moral values (*dôtokushin ga takai*)". Consequently, it was unlikely that any "coming out" gesture would be met with open approval. Moreover, he was in an area of work with future possibilities of transfers to the provinces, where the workplace environment was likely to be a lot more

conservative, and even openly homophobic (something attested to by other informants who had worked in organizations in regional areas).

Consequently, Hisashi made some effort to present himself as heterosexual. Although at twenty-three, marriage itself was not yet an issue, the topic of girlfriends did come up—in Hisashi's words, for people with little else in common other than work, talking about girlfriends was "like talking about the weather (*tenki no hanashi no you ni*)". So Hisashi's *gomakasu* strategy (something mentioned by other informants too) was to replace "boyfriend (*kareshi*)" with "girlfriend (*kanojo*)", and transpose his boyfriend's attributes onto an imaginary "girlfriend". Denying he had a girlfriend, he felt, would just make things "cumbersome" (*mendôkusai* — a word several other informants used when talking about dealing with workplace expectations), as colleagues would constantly badger him, and try and "match-make" for him.

In terms of negotiating between his ostensibly heterosexual weekday work identity and his openly "gay" weekend identity, while he acknowledged that his weekend identity felt "more comfortable", nevertheless he emphasized that work occupied a significant part of his identity, and he did not regard it as a fake part of himself. The shifts he performed within himself between his work and non-work selves was something Hisashi was particularly conscious of: more so, perhaps, than others. He articulated this as "the two 'modes' within myself—a "work mode" (*shigoto môdo*) and "play mode" (*asobi môdo*)". In particular, he recognized the closely calibrated bodily adjustments involved going between "modes". For instance, he performed his "play mode" when going out to the Shinjuku Ni-chôme gay precinct by "wearing contacts, styling my hair [with product], wearing a t-shirt, through the kind of scent I use", in contrast to his "work mode" when "I wear glasses, don't style my hair, speak differently". However, as noted above, there was no sense of Hisashi regarding his work self as a fake *tatemae,* against a true *honne* weekend identity.

Moreover, he did not see himself (in his salaryman "work mode") as some kind of closeted "victim" who was uncomfortably "passing". For instance, while he did not see a necessity (*hitsuyôsei*) to "come out" along the lines promoted by LGBT activists, he saw his role as more long-term and indirect, working from within the system to change societal attitudes,

through the incorporation of issues of sexuality and sexual minorities into the school curriculum (an area, as a education policy specialist, he was involved in). This, in his view, was an approach better suited to conditions in Japan than agitating for change in the short term.

Similarly, while he was conscious of the reality that moving beyond mid-management as an unmarried man was not the norm within Japanese organizational culture, he had no intention of getting married for the sake of social convention or his career. Indeed, his response to my question about how he would deal with the issue in the future was to point out, quite correctly, that by the time he reaches mid-management age, the situation in Japan will probably be quite different, given the increasing number of heterosexual males choosing not to, or being unable to, marry, as noted in a previous section of this chapter.

Leaving Salaryman Masculinity

If Hisashi represented one strand of the informants' voices—individuals who did not necessarily see their ostensibly heterosexual work identities as "fake"—Hiroaki and Shinji represented another strand. For a start, both were older: Hiroaki in his mid-thirties and Shinji in his late forties. Second, in contrast to Hisashi (and some of the other younger informants) who were entering into salaryman masculinity, Hiroaki and Shinji had actually opted out of "salaryman-hood", and were, at the time of our discussions, engaged in completely different occupations—Hiroaki had returned to higher education, and Shinji was giving private language classes from his home. Both had graduated from top-ranked universities, and had worked for elite private companies. However, both subsequently quit, partly due to the pressures of conforming to workplace heteronormative expectations.

Hiroaki's career trajectory was one that went against the expected pattern (of leaving an oppressive work environment for a more open one). After graduating from an elite private university he had started working for an international new media outfit, involved in, among other things, designing an LGBT web portal. Given the nature of the workplace, Hiroaki was completely "out". However, that company folded, and

Hiroaki then started working for a trading company. Although the work itself was fulfilling, the workplace atmosphere was stiflingly conservative. The office culture was still heavily gender-segregated, with male employees concentrated in managerial and marketing/sales areas and female employees in administrative roles. The few female managers were, in his words, "marginalized ... and delegated to 'shitty jobs'. For Hiroaki the three years he spent at the company were an ordeal—he used the expression "*jigoku mitai* (like hell)" to describe his time there. He went into work each morning with a feeling of "*iya da naa* (what a pain)", and the business suit he had to wear became, for him, an oppressive "symbol of the male principle". Not surprisingly, his reaction the day he quit his job was one of a liberatory "*yattaa* (yay, I've done it!)".

Heteronormative expectations were at the forefront of the organization's culture. Hiroaki mentioned striving hard (*isshôkenmei*) to calibrate his day-to-day bodily behaviour to match these expectations.[4] Consequently, the presentation of his weekday self was "totally heterosexual", in contrast to his "true" (*honne*) weekend self. Significantly, he seemed quite conscious of the deliberate performance aspects involved, reflecting that "at work everyone presents a false front, don't they (*kaisha wa minna uso deshô janai? Dono hito demo?*)". Most of his colleagues assumed he was heterosexual, as evidenced through the usual questions about girlfriends—to which his *gomakasu* strategy was to retort back to his boss, that "if you want me to find a girlfriend, reduce my workload"! However, there was one senior colleague (*senpai*) who made disparaging homophobic comments about Hiroaki's bodily comportment and way of talking, at one point asking him bluntly if he was gay (*"omae gei ka?"*). This *senpai*, although relatively young, was "a typical Japanese salaryman who did a lot of entertaining". As Hiroaki had to report to him, he was often obliged to go along on these junkets to entertain corporate clients. One involved a visit to a sex establishment, where customers were entertained by half-naked women sitting on their laps. Hiroaki's response to the situation was to go along with this performance of heterosexuality, even though '"deep down inside (*honne*), I didn't want to go, but it couldn't be helped

[4] He mentioned regarding himself as "feminine/effeminate", something that did not strike me during the interview.

(*shiyô ga nai*), the situation forced me to go". Interestingly, he was sure that the woman sitting on his lap noticed that he was not sexually aroused, but as far as he was concerned "I didn't care". The important thing was both sides going along with the *performance* of corporate heterosexuality.

This demonstration of heterosexuality was also integral to success within the corporate structure. In Hiroaki's view, there is an assumption that after a certain level of seniority, men "*have to have* a family", something related to the trust accompanying the status of *daikokubashira* ("*daikokubashira ja nai to shinyô ga nai*"). This results in a sort of "glass ceiling" for non-married men; had he stayed with the trading company he felt it was unlikely he could have gone beyond the level of *kachô* (section manager). Moreover, this applied not just to Japanese firms, but even to local subsidiaries of international corporations (*gaishi-kei*), where despite gender and sexuality affirmative policies being in place, the reality on the ground may be quite different.[5] Hiroaki actually drew upon Judith Butler to present an interesting take on the intersections between (non-heterosexual) sexuality and success within corporate culture. He felt that the daily, often exhausting and cumbersome (*mendôkusai*) micro-negotiations and engagements that non-heterosexual individuals have to constantly carry out necessitates the expending of both time-capital and energy-capital, resulting in making non-heterosexual people economically and socially disadvantaged in a way that does not apply to the heterosexual majority, where there is no need to consider such micro-negotiations and practices. Expressed another way, this was perhaps what another of my informants, Keisuke, whom I discuss below, meant when he noted that as a gay person he felt that he "lacked the skills to manage people (*hito wo kanri-suru no ga nigate*)", thereby inadvertently contributing to his inability in the future to accumulate economic and social capital, as a consequence of expending his time and energy-capital.

This was perhaps brought out in Shinji's narrative. Shinji was a decade older than Hiroaki, but both shared quite similar career histories. Like Hiroaki, Shinji had graduated from an elite university. He then started

[5] Some foreign multinational corporations in Japan (like IBM) have active LGBT-friendly policies and support services for staff. However, as Hiroaki and a couple of other informants noted, non-heterosexual friends working in these organizations were reluctant to be associated with such efforts. For discussion of IBM's LGBT peer support group in Japan, see H. Sunagawa (2010).

working for a major electronics firm, and remained there for close to twenty years. During these (almost) two decades, he seemed the exemplary salaryman—bringing in the sales numbers, earning a good salary, and liked by his boss. In his words, despite not wanting to conform to the expectations of the salaryman discourse, he compromised—trying to strike a balance between, on the one hand, "the nail that sticks out gets hammered down", and on the other, needing to stick out a bit and be ever so slightly different (as a better, more talented employee, for instance). However, despite being a model corporate employee (or perhaps because of it), he still had to contend with the kind of heteronormative expectations Hiroaki talked about. At stake was the need to perform the expected roles of respectable, regulated heterosexuality—in other words, get married, and play the part of the breadwinner. Like Hiroaki (and a couple of other informants too), Shinji's excuse was a lack of time. However, on one occasion he was bluntly advised by a senior colleague, that "if you want a promotion, you need to get married". Shinji interpreted this as amounting to a perception in Japanese organizations that if men remain single, they are considered immature (and hence, not deserving of the responsibilities that accompany a promotion). Or, that if a man was single above thirty there must be something physically or psychologically wrong with him. Succeeding at higher levels of management within his former organization required not just your "work performance", but also such considerations as your family background and your school and university background. Being married, was, of course, assumed to be a given.

Shinji tried to contend with these pressures, either through *gomakasu* tactics like publicly commenting on the attractive attributes of female colleagues, or, at one stage, even going into an emotionally one-sided relationship with a woman for whom he felt nothing. However, Shinji's personality was possibly one that did not cope well with the kind of identity games required to negotiate the workplace expectations. In the end, his health suffered, and after taking extended sick leave he quit the company he had been with for almost twenty years. Following this, he moved to North America for further study and lived there for several years. He subsequently returned to Japan, but instead of re-entering the corporate sector started giving private English lessons from home. His decision to run his own business (if it could be called that), and maintain minimal

contact with people other than his students, appeared to be a follow-on from the anxiety that his corporate experience had left him with. Far more than Hisashi, and even Hiroaki, Shinji struck me as someone not at ease with *any* of his identity definitions—while defining himself as "gay", he mentioned not being comfortable with the label. At the same time, one of the reasons he stated for avoiding people after returning from Canada (where he had been openly "gay"), was because he "didn't want to continue pretending I'm straight". He was, as he confided, "afraid of losing my identity", whatever that "identity" might be.

Returning to Salaryman Masculinity

The final informant whose narrative I draw upon here is Keisuke, who had quite an unusual relationship with salaryman masculinity. When we met he was in his late thirties, working in sales for a small private company in the education services sector. Originally from western Japan, he had moved to Tokyo for university, and it was only then, at around the age of twenty, that he became aware of his sexual identity. Prior to that there were only fuzzy feelings, no clear contoured sense of a sexual identity. What triggered this awareness was a television documentary on Shinjuku Ni-chôme gay life, which struck me as an interesting insight into the way knowledge can crystallize and construct an identity. By the time of our discussion, however, he unambiguously identified as "gay", and was in a long-term relationship with a male partner. He regarded the relationship as significant enough to make him think about "coming out" to his elderly parents, despite knowing that this disclosure would not be well received.

As mentioned, Keisuke worked in a white-collar job, and defined himself as a salaryman; in his words, "really feeling like I'm working in a Japanese company" when out on sales rounds or talking to clients on the telephone. However, Keisuke had not always been a salaryman. Of all my informants, he perhaps had the most varied career history, which involved weaving in and out of salaryman masculinity. Upon graduation from university, like Hiroaki, he too had found employment with a large elite trading company. However, he only lasted four months. The same kind of pressures to perform and appear to embrace heterosexuality that

Hiroaki had talked about, things such as going along to sex clubs and massage parlours with customers and colleagues, played a part in his decision to quit. He then changed career paths quite dramatically, becoming a truck driver for two years. The appeal, he noted, was the ability to work by himself, and not interact constantly with others. Following his stint at truck driving, Keisuke went to Hawaii in order to obtain a helicopter pilot's license, after hearing that work opportunities in the area were good. This, however, turned out not to be the case, so after returning to Japan, he became a *juku* (cram-school) teacher, before moving to his current employment. Significantly, it was only when he was at the trading company, and in his present job, that he identified as a salaryman, something which provides an interesting insight into the definitional slipperiness of the term, alluded to earlier in this discussion.

Despite his willingness to "come out" to his family, the situation with regards to work was a bit different. On the one hand, there was nothing stopping him. He was in a workplace where his boss, and the majority of his colleagues, were female, and presumably less homophobic than men. Also, unlike at the trading company, where the pressure to marry was such that a gay male friend who had continued working there was even considering getting married to a lesbian acquaintance, in Keisuke's current workplace there was no overt pressure to marry. His female manager, also in her late thirties, was unmarried too, and he did not envisage that being single would impact negatively on future career prospects. Yet at work, Keisuke deliberately played it straight—to him there was "no necessity" (*hitsuyô mo nai*) to "come out". Interestingly, in a previous workplace, Keisuke *had* "come out" to some colleagues. This was when he was a truck driver, not an occupation that normally comes across as "gay friendly". However, Keisuke's disclosure had no negative repercussions for him. His decision was prompted, according to him, by the fact that around the time (in the late 1990s), the discourse surrounding "coming out" had become something of a fad (a "*mai bûmu*"), and there was a perception, encouraged by LGBT activists, that "unless you 'came-out' you couldn't truly get close to people (*shinmitsu ni narenai*)". However, a decade or so down the track, an older, more mature Keisuke no longer saw the necessity. His position, possibly reflecting a self-comfort that Shinji was still trying to grapple with, was that he would tell his colleagues if they accidentally found out (*baretara*).

Like Hisashi, Keisuke also had quite distinct weekday and weekend identities. However, there was no sense in which he regarded his "gay" weekend identity as his "true self", and the other a fake. Moreover, despite his remark that remaining single would have no impact on his future career within the organization, he did bring out some tangled feelings about the interweavings between his sexual identity and his workplace salaryman identity. First, despite not expecting there to be any problems with remaining unmarried down the track, he still wondered how he would be regarded as a single man in his fifties. Second, somewhat related to this, and echoing perhaps Hiroaki's observations about "time capital" and "energy capital", Keisuke also expressed concerns about the automatic career progression expectations that still characterize Japanese organizational culture, despite the supposed dismantling of the lifetime employment/seniority based promotions system. Keisuke questioned the assumption that after a certain age (usually late thirties to mid-forties) it was expected that men would take on managerial responsibilities. As mentioned above, he felt that as a gay male he was not suited to "manage people (*hito wo kanri suru*)". He linked this with the ideological expectations of heteronormative and patriarchal capitalism. Heterosexual men had clearly delineated goals and had commitments structured for them—such things as paying for their children's education—and it was through working towards meeting these hegemonic expectations that power was expressed in the form of promotions and "managing" subordinates. As a non-heterosexual male, there was a lack of such specific goals, which may, on the one hand, work to the detriment (economically, socially) of the individual, but may also translate to a questioning of the core (masculinist) assumptions of organizational culture, linking success and fulfillment with power and moving up the hierarchy.

Conclusion

By focussing on just a couple of specific individual narratives, what I have tried to do is tease out and untangle some of the complexities involved in these processes of "micro-negotiations" with the expectations of hegemonic workplace masculinity. As Shinji's and Hiroaki's accounts signalled, there is no denying the pervasiveness of the heteronormative

discourse, and the need to (outwardly) conform to it. At the same time, the dynamics at play were definitely not situations of naked coercion or of the informants being "brainwashed" into conforming. Rather, the informants' voices brought out the variety of (sometimes contradictory) ways in which individuals engage with hegemonic ideologies (including those relating to sexuality) in the workplace.

Perhaps this was articulated best in the subjectivity of Kenji, an informant in his late twenties. Kenji too had been (relatively) open about his sexuality in his student days, and had a boyfriend. However, upon becoming a *shakaijin*, he had made a deliberate choice (despite scathing criticism from his gay friends) to get married to a woman and start a family; at the time of our interview, he had just become father to a baby girl. What he quite emphatically stressed, though, was that he *did not* see himself as a "victim", nor did he think that being gay was "a sin" or "bad". Indeed, he was quite unequivocal in acknowledging that he remained "gay" (not even "bisexual"). However, in his view, being gay and being a *shakaijin* in corporate Japan were incompatible; hence, to him it was a personal *choice* he was making, rather than through any desire to become straight. Challenging though his sentiments may have been to me, what they did highlight was the reality that *all* individuals—male, female, heterosexual, non—heterosexual—negotiate with hegemonic ideologies of both work (performing *shakaijin*-ness) *and* sexuality, as well as the intersections between the two, and in the process, ultimately "queer" (in the de-stabilizing/interrogative sense of the theoretical concept) and bring into relief the performative nature of seemingly fixed categories of sexual identity.

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4

Negotiating Family/Filial Responsibilities: Reflexivity, Tradition, and Taiwanese (Younger) Professional Men

Bo-Wei Chen and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill

Introduction

Late modernity scholars (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991, 1992) have provided useful insights into exploring the notion of gender and change in contemporary (Western) societies. In particular, they address the notion of contingent gender relations and flexible gender configurations, in which they claim there is a decline in the significance of tradition, as individuals are freed from the constraints of existing social structures and gendered norms (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). However, what is

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often underplayed in their analyses is how existing social categories continue to restrain "freed" agency and the living of "a life of one's own" (Adams 2006). In response, feminists have highlighted that entrenched gendered experiences continue to operate alongside notions of flexibility and contingency, thus addressing the pervasive impact of the current gendered configuration that shapes particular forms of gendered life (Jamieson 1998; McNay 1999). Of key importance in this chapter is how the "structures of tradition" are (re)interpreted in the context of the emerging cosmopolitanism of Taiwan (Farris et al. 2004).

This chapter hopes to contribute to this under-developed notion of tradition within a late modernity framework, exploring two generations of Taiwanese professional men and their gendered experiences of marriage, family and kinship. Specifically, Beck's argument that "the more societies are modernized, the more agents acquire the ability to reflect on the conditions of their existence and change them" captures, albeit unevenly, a changing, global-based Taiwanese society (Beck 1994: 174). Furthermore, Giddens suggests an increasing self-monitoring capacity that usefully captures the notion of identity as an active process of seeking, enacting and becoming within the context of the social development of Asia (Giddens 1991: 75; Farris et al. 2004). However, despite the appearance of a greater reflexiveness, it is not clear why such changes in agency are leading *only* to detraditionalization. In particular, Beck has not explained why agency cannot be deployed to reflect upon local traditions and their rules and resources as familiar cultural routes or meaningful practices. Giddens' oppositional logic on tradition and modernisation fails to convince us why "tradition exercises influence only in a non-cultural way, through the repetition compulsions of addictions" (Alexander 1996: 136). In light of these limitations, if agency can undo tradition, it could also be possible that traditions themselves can be reforced and promoted, as agency does not simply have to be concerned with a break with tradition, it could also be about choosing tradition.

We explore this debate further. In contrast to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Giddens (1994), who perceive tradition as something gradually dis-embedding that has lost its legitimacy as the result of reflexive agency, we argue that gendered reflexivity is a necessarily creative energy and a contemporary strategy for the continuation of certain traditional values.

In arguing this, we are not claiming that processes of detraditionalization are not occurring. Rather, we find that the dualistic oppositional stance on tradition and reflexive modernization has explanatory limitations within a Taiwanese context. Hence, we argue for the need to understand such processes as necessarily contextual, complex and asymmetrical with reference to the economic developments and societal transformations in Taiwan.

These asymmetrical processes of tradition and reflexive modernization become apparent if one recognizes the different dimensions of tradition and gender reflexivity (Williams 1977; McNay 1999 also see Adkins 2002). Specifically, derived from Williams (1976), we understand tradition in two primary senses: strong tradition as cultural comfort and weak tradition as cultural formality. The former perceives tradition as "an interpretative scheme" that invites agency to make sense of its cultural values as significant past or meaningful practice (Thompson 1996). The latter operates through exclusion and sacred authority, embedding itself as something in explicit contrast to innovation and the contemporary. Unlike formulaic truths or traditional habits (resembling weak tradition), strong tradition must be *responsive* to the alternatives and oppositions which question its hegemonic position. Hence, it "has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified" (Williams 1977: 112), in order to maintain its contemporary relevance, not by exclusion or eradication, but by the strategic incorporation within subjects.

Additionally, we explore simultaneously *both* social *and* cultural dimensions of gender reflexivity. Through a Bourdieusian analysis (McNay 1999), we understand the former as a sense of "the lack of fit" (1999: 107) that explains the discontinuities of certain gendered practices, where the subject has distanciated her/himself from (weak) traditional gendered values. The latter, derived from Williams' notion of hegemony (1977),[1] explores how gendered reflexivity- as a sense of endorsement, with necessary negotiation involving conflict and tension-functions as a contemporary strategy for the continuation of (strong) tradition as meaningful practice.

[1] By noting how the concept of tradition has been radically neglected in Marxist cultural thought, Raymond Williams (108–120) appropriates Gramsci's notion of hegemony in order to develop his notion of tradition (as a continuing and "active" process) and its mechanisms for domination (as well as the limitations it encounters).

Our analysis begins with the first section: distancing (weak) tradition as a cultural formality that explores changing family practices amongst younger professional men. This is followed by the second section: endorsing (strong) tradition as cultural comfort that addresses the younger generation and the continuation of family/filial practices. We then move to the third section: reinterpreting local kinship in a global context that focuses on the elder generation and the discontinuation of family practices. We set out to challenge a dualistic understanding of tradition and reflexive modernisation. In so doing, we focus on both strong tradition and weak tradition and use reflexivity as a mechanism for detraditionalization. While class is not a central analytical theme here, our focus on younger professional men makes clear how their gender reflexivity and their way of endorsing strong tradition is class specific.

Distanciating Weak Tradition as Cultural Formality

> Lin: For my father's generation, to be a man is to get married and to have a son carrying the family's name. You don't ask them what they would like to do when they turn into 30s because they are like "Taiwanese buffalos", working all the time with few complaints in order to support their families. They simply lead a life for others (a 29-year-old PhD student).

"What does it mean to be a Taiwanese man?" is the primary research question of this project. Participants from an elder generation suggest that "to be a man is to get married, have a son and work hard in order to support his family". By the elder generation, we refer to those whose age is above 55 years old. The socio-economic conditions of disadvantage during the post-war period did not encourage men who grew up in the 1950s and the 1960s to lead a life outside of a standardized route.[2] Traditional male roles, such as breadwinner and filial son, were the cultural

[2] After the Chinese Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan in 1949, following their defeat by Communist forces, Taiwan fought against poverty. In 1961, the average national income was $143 per capita with an average $104 private consumption per capita in Taiwan. See, http://www.stat.gov.tw/public/data/dgbas03/bs4/nis93/ni.pdf (in Chinese).

repertoire for constructing the gendered self for men from the elder generation. However, it is less straightforward if we explore the younger generation's understandings of what it means to be a man. Their diverse and complex gendered experiences indicate how processes of detraditionalisation occur in contemporary Taiwanese society (Beck 1992). This can be exemplified by their changing gender practices in marriage, family and kinship, as we elaborate respectively in the following discussion.

Marriage was once understood as a direct component of the social order or the material anchor for gendered lives. However, Charles (a 26-year-old postgraduate student) has rejected prescribed gendered roles-the husband as "a long-term rice ticket" (meal ticket) and the wife as "someone good for the family":

> Charles: …the concept of marriage is more varied now. Before it was to do with parents' decisions, but now it is down to individuals…simply marrying someone for having kids is not enough for me.…I want someone who I can talk about my problems in life or to share wonderful things in life…I hope the other person will feel the same about me…

For him, marriage needs to be based on personal choice and is similar to what Giddens (1992) terms "the pure relationship". Yet, one who makes choices is also subject to those made by others. Marriage therefore has become contingent and is only good "until further notice". Thus, for Charles, personal investment becomes essential to maintain a relationship at the present time: "A good relationship needs to be earned…you shouldn't take the other person for granted… I jokily tell my friend that if you want to drive a Ferrari, you shouldn't expect it only to cost the same as a Ford."

If marriage becomes a personal choice, individuals can decide whether or not they want to be married. Whereas marriage was an obligation or personal safety net for men from an elder generation, it could be perceived by the younger generation as an obstacle to achieving self-autonomy:

> Wong: …If I get married, I can't be the way I am but the way I am expected to be…Marriage is likely to be the threat to a couple's social life if kids come into play and we need to put ourselves second in the relationship… (a 30-year-old PhD candidate)

Marriage was a ritual path for becoming a "proper" man for the elder generation, but is perceived as a social apparatus of male norms that mould individuals into a standardized manhood. Unlike the elder generation, who perceived marriage as the cornerstone of one's relationship and were ascribed by social roles, the exploration of self for the younger generation is acquired through knowing and managing the self. Thus, one may suggest that the articulation of a "do-it-yourself" biography is where (weak) tradition is fractured.

Alongside marriage, we can also witness how the traditional family form and its gendered values are unsettled. Specifically, family in the conventional context as strictly blood-related has become plural in its nature. For example, Zing (a 29-year-old PhD student) maintains that the conventional understanding of "family" cannot capture what a family means at the present time:

> …the concept of family has become broader for me. Rather than strictly based on blood-relation, it is a sense of belonging that counts. This sense of belonging can occur when I stay with my close friends… It can also happen if I choose to be alone in a place where I can find myself and make myself comfortable…

Zach (a 33-year-old art gallery manager) presents a similar account:

> For my father, he was obliged and expected socially to set up his family through which he fulfils his manhood. For me, it is more to do with the self. It's not saying I am an irresponsible person, quite the opposite, I am very responsible in my own way…In terms of caring for the family, my father and I are doing exactly the same thing. The difference is that I make up my own family, and marriage and children make up my father's.

Traditionally, we do not associate family relationships as options to be chosen. However, for Zing and Zach, a family can go beyond bloodhood and is organized around one's choice. For Zing, it is "a sense of belonging" that constitutes a family rather than a conventional family bond (Weeks et al. 2001). Neither children nor a partner is a prerequisite for his idealized family. The concept of family is defined by the self, rather than being a norm that defines everything else. This is further

echoed by Zach, who perceives family as an *elective* biography. Rather than social expectations, he is the centre of his own life course and is able to choose a lifestyle that suits his own preference. Family, therefore, becomes the outcome of one's own choice rather than a biological or moral necessity.

Changing gender expectations can also be found via contemporary kin practices. To have a son that carries the family's name is of major cultural significance for Taiwanese men from an elder generation. However, as Chris (a 35-year-old research director and a father of three daughters) points out: filial piety should not be fulfilled solely through traditional rules. Both Chris and his partner want to have children, but they do not think it is necessary to have a boy. Yet, their decision has caused some concern for their parents (-in-law):

> My parents worry if we don't have a boy, who is going to worship the (zǔxiān) pai-wei (ancestral tablet) [3] and family ancestors after we die? My father said my grandfather had passed the pai-wei to him and it's his responsibility to pass it to me. My parents-in-law also regretted that their daughter could not give a son to my family. In Taiwan, ancestor veneration is an important cultural ceremony and the inherence of pai-wei signifies filial piety. I understand their (the parents) concern, but for us *it is not the formality that counts* when it comes to filial practice (emphasis added).

With his partner's support, alongside his Christian beliefs, the symbolic meaning of the zǔxiān pai-wei and its ritual practices have been downplayed as cultural formality, where (weak) tradition and its obligations are rejected. As Chris comments, "our parents have their belief of what a family should be, but it is really down to us to decide what kind of life we want to have…." Here we can see how weak tradition and its kin practices become references rather than inevitable social forces that determine what a son ought to do. Unlike the elder generation, whose lives were grounded by the normative perspective of tradition (i.e., "that's what we've always believed"), Chris has decided what constitutes the significant past for himself.

[3] Zǔxiān pai-wei (ancestral tablet) is a placard traditionally designated as a symbol of ancestor veneration.

Endorsing Strong Tradition as Cultural Comfort

While there is much evidence pointing to the processes of destabilising family/filial practices, we also witness the re-traditionalization of gender relations among the younger generation. For example, in our previous discussion, Chris rejects the idea of having a son in order to carry on the pai-wei, as his father expected him to do. To reject tradition as cultural formality is one thing. Yet it is another matter to repudiate the fundamental cultural practices that are meaningful and significant for individuals:

> I understand the significance of the zǔxiān pai-wei for my parents and I don't want them to think that since I became a Christian, I have forgotten my cultural roots…My wife and I have spent more time with our parents whenever we can. I also tell my wife that we should pay for the monthly cost of the food supplement for my parents-in-law…. I think when it comes to conflict [between what we want to do and we are expected to do], some compromises are needed. We expect them [our parents] to accept our decision, but *we also have to comfort them in our actions that we don't forget where we come from* (emphasis added).

Acknowledging his parents' disappointment, Chris is aware of the meaning of rejecting the pai-wei and its potential implications and consequences. To turn down the pai-wei-as the symbol of filial piety-could be interpreted by the elder generation as the denial of tradition, and more importantly, as the denial of the traditional Chinese parent-child relationship: to take care of parents when they are old. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary for Chris to assure his parents by demonstrating tradition as cultural comfort, such as caring for the elderly.

The process of re-traditionalization can also be found in the context of marriage. As we discuss above, Charles highlights how an individual's choice is the prerequisite for marriage, yet such a position does not transfer into his understanding towards divorce. Specifically, despite the intensification of romantic love and (re)marriage as personal choice, Charles *does not* consider divorce as a "meaningful" option for him:

> I don't rush in and out from a marriage simply because I can get divorced… The possibility of getting divorce will make me pay greater attention to my wife's need, having greater investment and commitment to my marriage. Also, I want to set up my own family with someone who I love, and play basketball with my children like my father did with us. This is my ideal family picture and divorce isn't in it.

Interestingly, Zach has a similar account, emphasizing family as a sense of "self-belonging"; marriage is also a possible option, which can be accommodated within his project of the self. However, Zach insists that the concept of marriage must come from personal decisions rather than cultural obligation. During his childhood, his father was away from home for long periods due to work commitments, so Zach also realizes how difficult it was for his mother to bring up children by herself:

> …If I meet someone I love, I can't see why not get married. But I will think more about having children, not simply because to raise children is expensive…For me, financial stability is just a ticket rather than a key for a family. To support my children financially is simply not enough for me. I want to be with them rather than being taken away from them by work when they grow up…

Therefore, the option of having children becomes possible only when Zach and his partner are financially stable. Hence, neither Charles nor Zach rejects the idea of having their own family. Yet, such an idea needs to be perceived as an option rather than an obligation. For Charles, the concept of having children is a "cultural ideal" from his childhood memory. For Zach, on the other hand, his memory of his absent father makes him actively negotiate with the idea of having children. Such an option is not completely ruled out, but its difficulty is acknowledged by a possible tension between work and family life-an important facet we are going to explore next.

The endorsement of traditional gendered values is not straightforward. It is often accompanied by conflicts and tensions and can be accomplished through potential exhaustion. This can be identified in Chris's experience of fatherhood and his endeavour to achieve a work-life balance.

For Chris, the ideal type of fatherhood is to be both a breadwinner and an attentive father. The former is strongly influenced by his father's traditional values, whereas the latter was acquired through his experience of being a PhD student in America, where he witnessed close relationships between his male university lecturers and their children. As Chris comments, "in an elder generation, a man might be ashamed of telling you that he has to go home to spend some time with the family…it is different for me, my students know I am very family oriented.".

Chris understands that without his partner's support, he could not devote himself to work and fulfill the traditionally approved male role. Unlike men from his father's generation, who "tend to think actions are more important than words,", his gratitude towards his partner is demonstrated by *both* emotional care *and* verbal appreciation. The changing attitude towards intimacy may be a result of generational differences in gendered expectation: "For a woman from my mother's generation, it was considered as 'normal' for her husband to spend most of his time at work…but my wife scarifies her career …to become a full-time mother… [and she] would complain if I spend too much time on work and claims that both of us should be responsible for taking care of the girls, not just her alone." The continuing process of communication/negotiation between him and his partner is essential in order to work out how to do things together, where a shared sense of fairness is pronounced.

In order to become a hands-on father as well as a respectable breadwinner, it is not enough for Chris to rely on his partner's sacrifice. A flexible timetable for work is also necessary. Indeed, this is the main reason why he chooses to work in the university sector, where he can arrange his time flexibly. However, his promotion to the director of the institute where he works has increased the tension between his professional and family life:

> The value of being a hard-working man I have learned from my father is still very significant for me. To be honest, it's one thing to tell your students you have to finish a meeting early in order to pick up your kids; it's another matter if you want to tell your boss you can't come in on Saturday for the meeting because of your family time… But trying to be a good husband and good father at the same time as a good employee is not an easy task. It can be quite exhausting.

Such tension is stretched by his traditional gendered value of the man as the hard-working breadwinner and his drive towards being an attentive father. Although there is space for manoeuvre (e.g., to rely on his partner for help), his practices of being a respectable/responsible father create a constant struggle to achieve a balance between work and family life. A sense of arduousness is suggested here, in which Chris, on the one hand, clings tightly to the ideal of performing the traditional role of the breadwinner, and, on the other, endeavours to grasp firmly his desire of "being there for my family." At a time of rapid socio-economic change, the work/life balance can only be achieved through exhaustion.

In sum, through the above participants' narratives, we can see how strong tradition operates through incorporation and negotiation. Specifically, strong tradition reinvents itself as meaningful practice by inviting individuals to actively make sense of its cultural practices (which in turn might paradoxically perpetuate rather than distanciate the existing gendered configuration, as Chris's narrative suggests). The younger generation and their family practices are an outcome of continuing negotiation in which there is always social space for individual manoeuvre, though it is never entirely open-ended and sometimes can be quite tightly constraining and exhausting. Unlike weak tradition that defines what one ought to do, through strong tradition, one is able to ask who does what, for whom and in what circumstances? (Finch and Mason 1993).

Reinterpreting Local Kinship in a Global Context

Whereas processes of detraditionalization are occurring among younger professional men, such processes are less apparent amongst the elder generation, who were born into post-war Taiwan, where the socially and economically disadvantaged conditions did not encourage men to lead a life outside of a standardized biography. As Tom (a 60-year-old professor) comments, "I suspect if I hadn't got the scholarship and my father's permission in the first place, I would never have had the chance to leave the village and would have married with kids in my early twenties, like most of my childhood friends."

Here, we are not denying that the specific biographical route of the elder research participants (i.e., to obtain a scholarship and higher education and then work in the university sector) has enabled them to develop a different gender understanding from their fathers. Yet, the elders are still under the influence of traditional gendered values. For instance, while talking about changing family practices, Tom comments that:

> The term housewife is problematic since in the present society there is less housework than there used to be…The family and housework are socialized…For example, cooking has become less compulsory…my two sons are away studying, my wife and I buy our breakfast and lunch in university and bring our dinner back from the cafeteria.

Being an educated and professional woman who works in the university, Tom's partner, Helen, is also involved in their children's education and decision-making for the family. This is very different from Tom's mother, who mainly quietly helped her husband. Additionally, rather than one being subordinate to the other, Tom suggests that the relationship between Helen and himself works "like a team." However, as the narrative develops, when we asked Tom to give more details about how the co-operative relationship worked out, Tom's account resonates with a more traditional gendered division:

> When it comes to housework, we do what we are good at… I am responsible for tasks that demand more labour, such as gardening, clearing the car-park, taking the bins out, mainly stuff outside of the house. Helen is responsible for cooking from time to time, doing laundry, tidying the house, those things in the house.

This is very different from the younger generation, who have a more ambivalent feeling towards who should do what for whom regarding domestic chores. As Xiao-Wei (a 30-year-old Ph.D. student) suggests:

> Doing laundry can be a bit awkward for my girlfriend and me in the sense of whose turn is it to laundry, how often should it take place, and how to do it. Instead of two washing machines, a couple need to have two separate laundry bags. Eventually, she will wash hers and I will wash mine separately.

> The relationship between men and women is changing; there are few things that can exclusively be done by men or women…

Interestingly, doing laundry is not such a problem for Tom and Helen because it is seen as a "woman's job." Yet, for Xiao Wei, a pre-assigned gendered role for the arrangement of domestic chores is no longer applicable. Instead, a continuing process of negotiating domestic chores is required. Moreover, we can see how gendered space in Tom's house is actively orchestrated by the "family myth" (Hochschild 1990). Both Tom and Helen appear to accept that things fall into place according to circumstance, competence and preference. The *obviousness* of domestic arrangements in day-to-day contexts for Tom and his partner is operationalized via the cultural production of traditional gendered values. Their cooperation in carrying out chores is realized via a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992); the question of who should do what for whom, under what circumstances, is worked out not by them, but by their shared gender values.

Yet with the elder generation, their sense of "obviousness" regarding domestic arrangements can result into conflict and disjuncture when they interact with their children. Specifically, there is an increasing tension between what the parents want their children to do and what their children prefer to do. This is illustrated in Tom's decision to send his son to study in America, who preferred to stay in Taiwan with his girlfriend. Constant arguments and conflicts were involved between Tom and his son. This leads us to wonder why he insisted upon such a costly and tendentious decision. As Tom explained, both he and his partner work in the university, and they know that a degree from America increases the opportunity to teach in a university in Taiwan. Yet, this leads him to a dilemma. By sending his son to study, Tom is able to fulfil his cultural ideal of being a responsible father who can choose a "safer route" for the children. Nevertheless, he could face the situation that his son wants to live abroad permanently. In response, Tom needs to reinterpret what kin practice means to him:

> …We felt that we needed to adjust ourselves, to accept that our children want to have their own lives… Society is different now. In our generation,

> being able to support our parents financially and take care of them physically when they are old is very normal, since there is a need for it. But for us, we simply would like them (our children) to spend more time with us (Tom).

A similar account could also be found from Scott (a 58-year-old professor), who suggests how the disembedding of tradition and its ritual practices are simultaneously re-embedded through the invention of modern technology:

> …the loosening up of tradition is a necessary process…where old values can be carried out with new practices…Nowadays young people… don't often see their parents in person, the family connection can be maintained through modern technology. For example, my daughter now is in America studying for her Ph.D. We Skype at least twice a week… You [the researcher] asked me if the filial piety has changed, I think the practices are different but the value itself speaks through a modern way…

The distinct feature of re-traditionalization in contemporary society is in how (strong) tradition opens itself up for reinterpretation as meaningful practices. There is no exception for the elder generation. Specifically, for Tom, whose life is informed by traditional values, to be a filial son is to follow what his father says. Yet, he realizes that he cannot expect the kin practice between his son and himself to be the same as that between him and his own father. The traditional gender language for kinship has transformed itself from financial support and physical care to companionship. The reinterpretation of filial piety seems to be a necessary strategy for the elder generation to accommodate the tension between the values with which they grew up and the changing filial practices at the present time.

Additionally, despite the fact that the ritual practice of tradition is challenged by a new global condition, the "uprooting" of filial piety can be "re-mooring" through modern technology, in which tradition and its filial piety can be spoken within a contemporary vocabulary, as Scott suggests (also see Thompson 1996: 99–104). Thus, in line with Adams (2006), we suggest that when the values of local tradition are coterminous with emerging global conditions, a new gendered space is created that allows-even demands-investment, negotiation and creative

appropriation from the reflexive agency to produce meaningful gender identifications and practices.

While the process of detraditionalization is less apparent among the elder generation, the process of re-traditionalization -similar to the younger generation-involves reinterpretation of tradition as meaningful practice, where reflexive agency is the mechanism for the continuation of strong tradition. Yet, it is one thing to suggest that the elder generation in our research is able to reinterpret kin practice with a contemporary language. It is quite another to suggest that such cultural practice is accessible to all. Economic resource is of key significance here. As Tom clearly indicates, "unlike our parents, we can financially support ourselves and take care of ourselves." The reinterpretation of kin practice as companionship rather than financial support is therefore privileged for those who are not pressured by money. Thus, in exploring gender reflexivity as a cultural artifice for re-traditionalization, one needs to bear in mind where it speaks from and how it speaks (Skeggs 1997).

Conclusion

This chapter has contributed to the under-explored notion of tradition in a late modernity framework, which overestimates the extent to which tradition declines in significance as the capacity of reflexive agency increases (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). This dismissal of tradition is partly the result of the legacy of early modernization theory's dualistic and oppositional logic between tradition and modernity (Alexander 1996). Furthermore, theorists of reflexivity tacitly presuppose a disembedded agent and, as a result, do not consider gendered experiences as entrenched,to the extent that they confront the transposition of gender habitus into different fields of action at a time of rapid global change (McNay 1999). This particular stance becomes apparent if one explores the sense of uneasiness as an amplified gendered awareness rendered by the tension between (dis) continuities of gendered practices in contemporary Taiwanese society. Accordingly, McNay's social conceptualization of gendered reflexivity, as an irregular manifestation dependent on a particular configuration of power relations, provides a counter-balance to influential late modern

theories of gender, as voluntary transformations that fail to situate changes and their complex implications for the play of power relations. We further deploy Williams' (1977) notion of hegemony in order to explore the internal and actively generated structure of strong tradition. This also enables us to capture another dimension of gendered reflexivity that comes from agency and its active appropriation, selection and use of local tradition, and its cultural material for making the gendered self. From this perspective, we maintain that it is necessary to understand gender relations in late modernity as *both* social *and* cultural. By only focusing on the former, one fails to understand that gendered reflexivity may not necessarily transform but further perpetuate the existing gendered structure. In prioritizing the latter, one may risk overlooking the ambivalent feelings one may have towards conventional masculinities/femininities. Through a social-cultural approach, we are able to situate gendered reflexivity, and then to sketch out how strong tradition is culturally lived out by agency via negotiation, resistance or complicity.

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5

Male Homosexuality in Hong Kong: A 20-Year Review of Public Attitudes Towards Homosexuality and Experiences of Discrimination Self-Reported by Gay Men

Yiu Tung Suen and Miu Yin Wong

Introduction

It has been argued that masculinity has been traditionally equated with homophobia. Gay men are often seen as feminine and therefore emasculated. Connell suggested the concept of hegemonic masculinity and pointed out that in the formation of hegemonic masculinity in society: "the relation between heterosexual and homosexual men is central, carrying a heavy symbolic freight" (Connell 1992: 736). Gay men are excluded in the membership of the dominant group of men in society, and by such exclusion hegemonic masculinity is thus defined as explicitly and exclusively heterosexual (Connell 2005). Hegemonic masculinity, which is distinguished from and symbolically higher than subordinated masculinities, creates a hierarchy among men, which reflects on gay men's experiences of prejudice, discrimination and violence from straight men.

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Homophobia, embedded in both interpersonal relationships and social institutions, consolidates and reinforces the hierarchy of masculinities in society (Theodore and Basow 2000).

A socio-cultural approach to understanding sexuality analyses the historical and cultural contingencies of sexuality (Foucault 1978). This social constructionist approach "is about understanding the historical context which shapes the sexual" (Weeks 2003: 18). Evidence from historical and anthropological research across time and cultures has revealed that same-sex sexual practices take a number of forms, and can be assigned very different meanings and hence be very differently received, socially. It has been argued that in Greek culture, sexual acts between two men were seen as nothing extraordinary, but more as an expression of friendship and mentorship. Likewise, historians have argued that in China, early emperors and scholars engaged in homosexual relationships alongside heterosexual engagement. In Europe, religious authorities, through defining sexual norms, and sexologists, through medicalizing sexuality, played crucial roles in the formation of a sexual hierarchy (Rubin 1984) that privileges heterosexuality as a dominant, all-pervading social category that is naturalized, universalized and absolved from scrutiny (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 1993: 3). In China, such a process of marking same-sex sexual acts as different could be attributable to increased contact with the West. Historically, this resulted in the formation of a social category called "the homosexual", which is a relatively new social construct of less than 100 years old. Such a social organization of sexuality in turn influences the lived realities of non-heterosexual people (Plummer 2003), informally through social discourses and stereotypes, and formally through laws, policies and practice on an everyday basis. Sexual minorities, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, are Othered, stigmatized, marginalized, excluded and persecuted as a result. These social and cultural configurations influence how sexual desires are expressed through different behaviors, and whether and how sexual identities are formed. This chapter focuses on the lives of gay men in Hong Kong, whose sexuality and desire have been subject to social as well as legal control.

Historical Development of Homosexuality in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an interesting case for discussing masculinity and sexuality in East Asia, given the intersecting influences of British colonial history and traditional Chinese culture in its understanding of male homosexuality. In 1842, Hong Kong became a British colony, and the Offences against the Persons Act, which stated that the law rules against "unnatural offences", including sodomy and bestiality, was adopted in Hong Kong in 1985 under British governance. Such laws targeted men who had sex with men, rather than the behavior of women. The penalty for sodomy committed by two men could be up to a life sentence, while "gross indecency" could be punishable by up to a two-year sentence.

Although in England and Wales, homosexual acts in private between two consenting male adults (over the age of 21) were decriminalized in 1967, there were no corresponding changes in Hong Kong with regard to the legal status of men who had sex with men. It was only after the death of the Scottish police inspector John MacLennan in Hong Kong in 1980 that more public debates ensued about revising laws governing homosexual conduct. With the Crime Amendment Bill in 1991, homosexual acts in private between two consenting male adults over the age of 21 were decriminalized in Hong Kong. It was notable that the age of consent was unequal between gay men and heterosexuals, 21 for gay men and 16 for heterosexuals. It was only in 2005 that a judicial review was initiated to challenge the unequal age of consent between men who have sex with men and heterosexuals. The government finally equalized the age of consent in law formally in 2014. Although homosexual acts have been decriminalized in Hong Kong since 1991, no anti-discrimination legislation on the ground of sexual orientation exists in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, there are four existing anti-discrimination ordinances protecting individuals from discrimination on the grounds of sex (1995), disability (1995), family status (1997) and race (2008), but no legislation to protect an individual from discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation (and gender identity).

Non-governmental organizations working on homosexuality issues have exerted pressure on the Hong Kong government to legislate against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, but vocal opposition has been received from some religious groups. In response, the Hong Kong government so far has chosen to adopt public education programs to raise awareness of discrimination experienced by homosexuals. The government has promoted the adoption of a voluntary "Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation" (1996–1997), which is not legally binding. In 2012, the Legislative Council debated on whether the government should conduct a public consultation on legislating against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation, with the motion proposed by the Legislator Cyd Ho. Finally, the original motion and other amendments were defeated in the Legislative Council. Alongside this, same-sex marriage and civil partnership are not legalized in Hong Kong. Same-sex couples who have married or have registered in a civil partnership overseas are not recognized and protected in Hong Kong. Homosexual couples whose relationships are not recognized face visa issues as well as issues related to fringe benefits in the domain of employment.

However, despite the above, homosexual issues have become much more visible in the public domain in the past 10 years. The most well-attended events include IDAHO (International Day against Homophobia) since 2005, Pride Parade since 2008 and PinkDot since 2014. IDAHO, with the aim of promoting awareness of sexual orientation-related discrimination, is organized every year and the number of participants has increased steadily from 500 to 1,000. The Pride Parade was attended by nearly 1,000 people in 2008, and the number rose to 8,000 people in 2014. PinkDot, celebrating love and equality in a more depoliticized way, originated in Singapore and was organized in Hong Kong in 2014 and 2015. In its second year in Hong Kong, it was attended by more than 15,000 people in September 2015. In the past few years, a few public figures, including the first openly gay legislative councilor in the greater China region, Ray Chan, and popular singers, Anthony Wong and Denise Ho, came out of the closet and have become outspoken on LGBT issues in the media.

Public Attitudes Towards Homosexuality in Hong Kong

Previous studies on homosexuality in Hong Kong have usually focused on gay men's lived experiences, whereas public attitudes towards homosexuality as a subject have been relatively less discussed. However, studying public attitudes towards homosexuality is not only telling of the specific social situation of sexual minorities, but also society's cultural, legal, religious, medical and political arrangements.

Research on public attitudes towards homosexuality has been conducted since the 1970s. Such research has formally investigated public attitudes towards homosexuality through representative survey datasets. In the USA, the question "What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex – Do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?" has been asked in the General Social Survey since 1973. In the UK, the British Social Attitudes Survey has asked the question "'About sexual relations between two adults of the same sex. Do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?" since 1983. Analysis of such datasets has been carried out by sociologists, political scientists, as well as gender and sexuality researchers. They have documented sea changes in terms of public attitudes towards homosexuality. For example, support for same-sex marriage rose from 16% in 1975 to 69% in 2014 in Britain, and rose from 27% to 54% in the US (Brewer 2014).

However, research about attitudes towards homosexuality have mainly been conducted in the US and Europe, and little research on public attitudes towards homosexuality has been conducted in Asia. Such a gap needs addressing, as Queer Asia Studies is advocating a decentring of sexuality studies, from global gayness with a Western connation to "a critical analysis of local expressions of sexualities, and from queer Asian diasporic societies to local communities" (Tang 2012). A review of existing studies on public attitudes towards homosexuality in Hong Kong reveals that homosexuals in Hong Kong are living in a social environment ridden with negative conceptions about them. The earliest large-scale public opinion report on homosexuality in Hong Kong is probably the opinion survey

"Equal Opportunities—A Study on Discrimination on the Ground of Sexual Orientation", conducted in 1996. An overwhelming majority of the public surveyed held negative attitudes towards homosexuality, giving homosexual people a score of only 3.4 out of a total of 10. Also, the majority of the public surveyed did not support any legislation to protect homosexuals in Hong Kong (Home Affairs Branch 1996).

In the 2000s, homosexuality was still perceived negatively in Hong Kong according to different surveys. Homosexuality was usually associated with immorality and psychological disorder. 38.9% of the general public in one survey agreed that homosexuality contradicts the morals of the community (MVAHK 2006) and nearly 30% perceived homosexuals as more promiscuous than heterosexuals (27.7% in Lee and Siu 2002, 29.4% in MVAHK 2006). 47.9% of the respondents agreed with the statement that: "Homosexuality is a psychological disorder, which needs therapies" (Lee and Siu 2002). In 2006, 41.9% (MVAHK 2006) and 62.9% (Chan 2006) of the respondents strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement that: "Homosexuals are psychologically normal people" (MVAHK 2006)/ "Homosexual related behaviors are normal" (Chan 2006).

However, changes have been witnessed in the late 2000s and early 2010s. In 2012, only 3% of the respondents perceived that sexual orientation is related to psychological disorders/issues. In contrast, over 30% of the respondents attributed the major causes of sexual orientation to "upbringing or environment" and "they are born that way" respectively (Vernon and Yik 2012). 18% of the general public thought that homosexuality was "a matter of personal choice" (Vernon and Yik 2012). In 2006, only 29.7% of the respondents perceived discrimination against homosexuals as "very serious/serious" in Hong Kong (MVAHK 2006). In 2012, however, 43% of the respondents perceived the level of discrimination experienced by homosexuals as "very/quite serious". Another study (Chung et al. 2012) revealed that 75.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that: "Hong Kong people in general discriminate against individuals of different sexual orientations" to a large/certain/small extent.

Following the increase of awareness of discrimination experienced by homosexuals, the percentage of the Hong Kong public supporting legislation against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation increased rapidly in these six years. In 2006, nearly 30% of the Hong Kong general

public surveyed disagreed that the government should not launch anti-discrimination ordinance protecting against sexual orientation discrimination (MAVHK 2006). In 2012, 63.8% of the general public surveyed very much/somewhat agreed that there should be legislation in Hong Kong to protect individuals with different sexual orientations from discrimination (Chung et al. 2012).

Experiences of Discrimination Self-Reported by Gay Men in Hong Kong

Although there have been changes in public attitudes in Hong Kong society, at least according to the survey data reviewed above, experiences of discrimination self-reported by gay men were still highly notable in the above period in different aspects of their lives, with clear evidence in the domains of education and employment.

Education

Christianity, which perceives homosexuality as unnatural and sinful, has dominated different social institutions in Hong Kong. This is especially the case in the domain of education because many schools were first set up by religious institutions when Hong Kong became a British colony. Almost half of the secondary schools in Hong Kong are religiously affiliated (about 45% are Catholic or Protestant). This has resulted in lingering influences since Hong Kong's handover to China. The concept of homosexuality as an immoral and sinful practice is commonly taught in formal and informal curricula in schools in Hong Kong, which creates an unfriendly atmosphere for gay students.

In Hong Kong, gay students reported facing severe discrimination in schools from teachers and peers, especially when their sexual orientation was disclosed by themselves or when they were perceived to be gay by others. In a report "The situation of Tongzhi students in secondary schools", published by Project Touch of the Boys' and Girls' Club Association (BGCA) in 2009, which surveyed nearly 500 self-identified

"Tongzhi" secondary school students, nearly 80% of the respondents reported that their classmates knew their sexual orientation and 53% of them had experienced different degrees of discrimination, including being verbally insulted (42.3%), being socially excluded (39.8%) and suffering physical injury or sexual harassment (13.5%). For example, a gay student was verbally insulted as being feminine by his classmates (Project Touch of the Boys' and Girls' Club Association 2009). In another example, water was thrown over a student by his classmates after he presented his project about homosexuality in Rwanda in the Liberal Studies class (Kwok 2015). There was a case in which a school forbade students to discuss LGBT issues or study LGBT issues in school projects, even in the Liberal Studies curriculum (Kwok 2015).

The unfriendly atmosphere renders redress ineffective or even impossible when discrimination is experienced by gay students. According to a 2014 research "Tongzhi and Transgender Equality Report", a gay student sought help from teachers and a social worker when he was bullied by his classmates. However, they did nothing to stop the bullying, but said that homosexuality was a sin and asked the gay student to change his sexual orientation. Finally, the gay student left the school (Hong Kong Christian Institute et al, 2014). According to the BGCA study, a great majority of the students (90%) would not seek help from teachers, as they believed teachers could not offer anything to help (72.4%); more than half of them (53.4%) even perceived teachers themselves to be the main source of discrimination against the sexual minority in the school setting. Nearly a quarter of the respondents (24.8%) reported that teachers, who were supposed to be the authority and the source of support, stigmatized the sexual minority (24.8%) by accusing them of being immoral (16.5%), suffering from trauma in childhood (12.4%), and being promiscuous (9.1%) (Project Touch of the Boys' and Girls' Club Association 2009).

Such experiences of discrimination had an adverse impact on gay students' experiences in schools. Different forms of mental health issues have been reported by gay men who experienced discrimination in education. For example, 81.7% of the respondents in the BGCA study tried to conceal their sexual orientation through lying (68.9%). Among them, 51.5% reported feeling lonely and helpless, 36.8% reported being anxious, and 14% of them contemplated suicide. Among those who had

experienced discrimination targeted at them personally, 61.1% felt helpless, 54.2% felt anxious, and 22.3% of them had contemplated suicide.

Employment

In a 2012 study, LGBT employees rated the score for the overall attitudes towards LGBT people in the workplace to be an average of 5.19 out of 10 (Vernon and Yik 2012). 13% of the LGBT employees reported that they had personally experienced negative treatment because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Nearly 60% of the LGBT employees did not come out to their colleagues because of concerns about other people's thinking (50%), the possibility of being stereotyped (46%), or the possibility of losing social connections or personal relationships with colleagues (42%). According to an academic study entitled "Employment discrimination based on sexual orientation: A Hong Kong Study" (Lau and Stotzer 2011), 29.3% of the employees reported having experienced sexual orientation discrimination in employment in the last five years.

Discrimination against LGBT employees takes many forms. For those LGBT employees who had experienced negative treatment, as reported in the study conducted by Community Business (2012), nearly 80% stated that they had been treated with less respect and nearly 60% suffered from being verbally insulted or mocked. Besides such unfriendly attitudes, the LGBT employees also reported that they had received less favorable training or development opportunities (28%), been denied a promotion that they were qualified for (24%), or been fired or asked to leave the job (15%), or denied a job offer (13%). Notably, 11% of the LGBT employees who had experienced negative treatment reported experiencing sexual harassment and 5% reported that they suffered from bulling or physical violence in the workplace. Anti-gay jokes or negative comments about LGBT people are common in the workplace (67% according to the Community Business study), and more than half of the respondents (58%) reported that there had been rumors about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In Lau and Stotzer's study (2011), statistical analysis was applied to examine the association between discrimination experience and

psychological outcomes. Among the 792 respondents who self-identified as sexual orientation minorities in Hong Kong, discrimination experienced was significantly associated with both reduced life satisfaction and increased internalized homophobia. 71% of them felt that they needed to lie about their personal life at work, 54% found it difficult to build up authentic relationships with colleagues, and 38% would avoid certain situations/working opportunities. The LGBT employees felt exhausted, depressed, or were stressed because they had to pretend to be someone else (53%); they felt unhappy at work (40%); they wasted energy worrying about the consequences of coming out (51%); or they were deciding/considering whether to leave their job (22%). Such energy wasted on covering up their sexual orientation could well have decreased their productivity at work.

The Challenge of Coming Out to Families for Gay Men in Hong Kong

Traditional Chinese culture, which emphasizes family values, conforming to traditional gender and family roles, and the production of offspring to continue the family name, are still influential in Hong Kong. Ong (1993) and Kong (2011) have suggested that family bio-politics shape modern heterosexuality in Hong Kong. The family serves as a site of social regulation and power, where heteronormativity is installed and enforced (Kong et al. 2015). These micro-power regulations performed by closely connected family members force gay men to stay in the closet, and silence any discussions on homosexuality at the micro level and subsequently in society in general.

Although gay men in Hong Kong face challenges in different domains of life, the family is the biggest site of struggle for many. In 2012, 792 LGBT individuals were surveyed and nearly half of them (44%) were not open with their parents about their sexuality; only 28% of them were fully open. The reason why they did not disclose their sexual orientation was that they thought their family would not understand (66%), not accept (63%), or would perceive their sexual orientation as bringing shame on their family (38%); there were also concerns about receiving

bad treatment (34%) and the fear of being rejected or even abandoned by their family (31%) (Vernon and Yik 2012). Comparatively, LGBT people felt less constrained to come out to their friends. Nearly a third of them (33%) reported being fully open with their friends and more than half of them were somewhat open (51%), while only around one tenth of them (12%) were not totally open with their friends. Comparing these figures, it would seem that LGBT people were nearly four times as likely to remain in the closet with their family rather than with their friends (Vernon and Yik 2012).

This challenge of coming out to families for LGBT people can be further illustrated by the social distance with which the public accepts LGBT people. In 2006, the public was asked whether they would accept homosexuals in different roles: as colleagues, neighbors, supervisors in offices, friends, teachers and family members. ("Is it acceptable to you that your [role] is homosexual?") Nearly 80% of the respondents accepted homosexuals as colleagues (79.9%), as neighbors (78%) and supervisors (77.5%). Also, nearly 80% of the respondents thought that it is strongly acceptable/acceptable to make friends with homosexuals. 60% of the public also accepted homosexuals as teachers. However, the acceptance level dropped dramatically when the public was asked whether they could accept homosexuals as family members. Only 40% accepted their family members' homosexuality, while over 51.5% perceived that it is strongly unacceptable/unacceptable. Among the public, people who were married (33%), had children (31.8%) and were religious (31.2%) showed even lower levels of acceptance of homosexuals as family members. Furthermore, nearly half (49.1%) of the respondents agreed that there are conflicts between homosexuality and family values (MAVHK 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed homosexuality in Hong Kong, and its emergence from perceptions as social and legal deviance through its colonial past. It has provided a review of public attitudes towards homosexuality in Hong Kong from 1995 to 2014, which has revealed dramatic changes in public misconceptions and the acceptance of homosexuality. In six

years, the number of people associating homosexuality with psychological disorders fell. More people in Hong Kong became aware of the level of severity of discrimination that homosexuals faced, and the rate of support for legislating against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation rose from around 30% in 2006 to more than 60% in 2012. Such a change in more positive attitudes towards homosexuality in Hong Kong is in line with changes in other parts of the world (Kohut 2013). However, experiences of discrimination self-reported by gay men were still highly notable in the above period in different aspects of lives, with marked evidence in the domains of education and employment. Gay men in Hong Kong also face particular challenges in coming out to their families, due to family bio-politics.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, homosexual issues have become much more visible in the public domain in the past 10 years. As debates on public policy issues such as legislating against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and same-sex marriage grow, research on public attitudes towards homosexuality and the lives of gay men will provide useful social scientific evidence on these debates.

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Part II

Representations: Producing and Consuming Sexual Masculinities

6

Sinoglossia Incarnate: The Entanglements of Castration across the Pacific

Howard Chiang

Introduction

Sinophone studies emerged in the early twenty-first century as a long overdue analytical framework to overcome the disciplinary limitations of Chinese studies. According to Shu-mei Shih, whose work has pioneered the field, the Sinophone world refers to Sinitic-language communities and cultures outside of China or on the margins of China and Chineseness

Earlier versions of this essay were aired variously in 2014 at the "Sinoglossia: Taiwan, China, and Beyond" conference at the University of Texas, Austin, the 129th Modern Languages Association Annual Convention in Chicago, the "Chinese Films and the Medical Humanities" workshop at University College London, and the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies at National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan. Questions and comments from the audiences have enabled me to clarify specific points. My discussion of how castration is represented in Sinophone films, especially the *Reign of Assassins*, is adapted from Chiang and Wong (2016). Some of the ideas in this essay matured alongside my extensive conversations with Alvin K. Wong about queering regionalism. Helen Leung's work on postcolonial queer Hong Kong cinema and Rey Chow's reading of *M. Butterfly* have been especially inspirational for my analysis. I thank Xiaodong Lin, Chris Haywood, and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill for their editorial suggestions, and Roberto Ignacio Diaz for germinating my fascination with Hwang's original play. I am immensely indebted to Andrea Bachner, Yu-lin Lee, and Chien-hsin Tsai for stimulating dialogues on the conceptualization of Sinoglossia.

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(Shih 2007). Conceived as such, the concept of the Sinophone disrupts the chain of equivalence—established since the rise of modern nation-states—between language, culture, ethnicity, and nationality. This innovative framework demands a rethinking of what the word "Chinese" encompasses and signifies, which often goes unquestioned in Sinological, transnational, and diaspora studies (Chiang and Heinrich 2013; Shih et al. 2013; Yue and Khoo 2014). With an analytic calculus that is at once global and local in focus, Sinophone studies represent a systematic attempt in taking modern China seriously as a growing global superpower.

The theorization of the Sinophone concept has attracted various criticisms to date, but perhaps the two most popular strands concern its language-centrism and its apathy towards translation (or deferral of translational issues, challenges, and problems). In order to wrestle with these two sets of limitations, this essay proposes Sinoglossia as an alternative but complementary theory that is defined by culture in the way that the Sinophone is defined by language.[1] The concept of Sinoglossia thus combines a heteroglossiac and heterotopian approach to the critical study of mediated discourses of China and Chineseness (Bakhtin 1981; Foucault 1970 [1966]). It is interesting to note at the outset that since both Sinoglossia and the Sinophone contain the prefix "Sino," for better or worse, one of the recurring motifs that cut across both theoretical frameworks is their consistent bind to, despite their resistance towards, the symbolic seduction of "Chinese." As we will see, this motif brings to light the productive power of Sinoglossia as the site of transmedial possibility for translating meanings of embodiment across different language-based cultures. This essay exposes the heuristic appeal of Sinoglossia by situating a series of Sinophone martial arts (*wuxia*) films and the Anglophone film *M. Butterfly* (1993) within a broader framework of "entangled analysis." This comparison, or modular analysis as the case may be, is informed by Rey Chow's (2012) recent work on "entanglements" as enmeshments of topics, and as partition and disparity rather than conjunction and similarity.

[1] I first embarked on the theorization of Sinoglossia together with Chien-hsin Tsai and Andrea Bachner in preparation for the conference in Austin in 2014.

Specifically, I draw on transgender theory to examine the representations and meanings of castration as a ground for comparing a body of works that tend to be considered separately. In Sinophone cinema, martial arts prowess denotes a crucial marker of the resulting embodiment of castration, a specific narrative technique employed to distinguish the gender liminality of eunuchs. Because the immense physical power associated with eunuchs in these films exceeds the actual physical strength of eunuchs in China's past, this depiction of exceptional castrated corporeality reveals a highly original expression in queer Sinophone cultural formation, contrasting contemporary *peripheral* adaptations with historical *mainland* Chinese culture.[2] On the other hand, whereas critics have tended to analyze *M. Butterfly* from the viewpoints of Asian-American identity politics and, by extension, of anti-Orientalism, I resituate the film in a global transfeminist framework by arguing that despite its popular reception, its ultimate object of critique is actually China. If *M. Butterfly* is contextualized in the global politics of the 1960s, China emerges as the Lacanian phallus embodied by the supposed Oriental "Butterfly"—as a phantom of the colonial project whose detachment from the French white man signals its own demise. Read in this way, the martial arts films and *M. Butterfly* loosen representational claims about China from earnest ties to Sinitic languages, scripts, or texts, make room for multi- and extra-linguistic comparisons across shifting parameters of translation, and strategically position Chinese culture at the center of the Sinoglossiac theoretical critique.

Monstrous Transmogrification

In my previous work on Chinese transgender history, I posited a genealogy of sex change: from the demise of eunuchism in the late Qing to the emergence of transsexuality in postwar Taiwan (Chiang 2011; Chiang forthcoming). This narrative rests on the extinction of Chinese eunuchs in the last century. Indeed, the historical demise of eunuchism in the early twentieth century marked a transitional phase, when the castrated

[2] On queer Sinophone production, see Chiang (2013).

male body, women's bound feet, and the leper's crippled body all seemed out of sync with the Chinese body politic at large (Ko 2005; Leung 2009; Chiang 2012). The transcultural traffic of these corporeal "types" culminated from a longer historical process, whereby the Chinese empire and body came to be associated with a distinctively pathological identity, as captured in the label of "the Sick Man of Asia" that China appropriated from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century (Heinrich 2008). The last Chinese eunuch, Sun Yaoting, died in 1996, and his biography—translated into English in 2008—has made possible the global circulation of stories about the eunuchs of the last Chinese dynasty (Jia 2008). Despite the physical death of Qing eunuchs, castrated figures continue to fascinate popular cultural producers and consumers, and contemporary Sinophone cinema presents many examples of their cultural imagery, especially in *wuxia* films. Focusing on some of the best-known Sinophone films featuring castrated protagonists, this part of the essay utilizes transgender theory to analyze the representations and historicity of castration. By pinning extraordinary martial arts strength as a staple feature of castrated subjects, Sinophone filmic production features an innovative technique that enables the queer articulation of eunuchism in the Sinophone peripheries, even as the practice of castration itself has long disappeared from the center of Han Chinese culture.

In order to analyze the various bodily and subjective transformations in Sinophone films, I find the concept of "transmogrification" proposed by Nikki Sullivan (2006) particularly helpful. By assigning the term a new critical theoretical edge, Sullivan undermines the exceptionality of any given type of body modification and, by extension, the moralistic tendency to dichotomize forms of embodiment by which oppositions are set up between, for instance, transsexualism and transgenderism, cosmetic surgery and "non-mainstream" body modification, conforming and subversive corporeal changes, or "bad" and "good" practices. In considering all forms of body modification as distinct manifestations of "transmogrification," which she defines as "a process of (un)becoming strange and/or grotesque, of (un)becoming other," Sullivan (2006) makes room for acknowledging "important similarities, overlaps, resonances, and intersections between a range of modified bodies" (p. 561). The trope of transmogrification helps shed light on the connections across a range

of corporeal transformations in Sinophone films, immersing the signification of castration in a web of relations to other examples of embodied and experiential change.

Some of the earliest examples of transmogrification can be found in films such as Chen Kaige's *Farewell, My Concubine* (霸王別姬 1993) and Tsui Hark's *Swordsman 2* (東方不敗 1992). In her essay, "Trans on Screen," Helen Leung (2012) offers a refreshing reading of the character of Cheng Dieyi in *Farewell, My Concubine* precisely through the prism of transmogrification. Although the film does not belong to the *wuxia* genre per se, and has raised all sorts of problems for critics who try to identify a contemporary gay subjectivity in Dieyi's character, it merits some discussion in light of its unique deployments of gender (un)becoming. Leung follows Sullivan's ethical imperative to bracket concerns about the "positive" versus "negative" representational effects of Dieyi's gender and sexual semiotics. Instead, Leung (2012) considers Beijing opera training itself as a historically specific mode of transmogrification: "a life-long physical training that molds pliant bodies into stylized theatrical role-types" (p. 194). In Dieyi's physical transformation from an untrained boy to a perfect *dan* actor, his extra finger is chopped off by his mother so that he can be accepted into and trained properly in the troupe; he endures recurrent merciless beating for the perfection of theatrical form and movement; and his body *transgenders* with the successful enunciation of the line "I am by nature born a girl" after repeated mistakes and corporal punishments (Fig. 6.1). Dieyi essentially exemplifies, quoting Susan Stryker's terminology (1994), a "monstrous" trans subject, "not in the conventional identity sense but more provocatively in the sense that he assembles gender and constitutes his self within the contingent structure of power that produces him" (Leung 2012, pp. 196–7). Not surprisingly, the film's closure seals the fate of such a doomed subject with the onstage realization of Dieyi's suicidal imitation.

Whereas Dieyi's transformation into a feminine subject unfolds in a series of corporeal changes that do not involve castration, the most direct example of male-to-female transmogrification can be found in the Dongfang Bubai character in *Swordsman 2*. The arch villain in the film, Dongfang Bubai, castrates himself to practice a lethal form of martial art (documented in *The Precious Sunflower Scripture* [葵花寶典]) that

Fig. 6.1 Cheng Dieyi enunciates the line "I am by nature born a girl" after repeated mistakes and corporal punishments. Chen Kaige, *Farewell, My Concubine*, 1993

elevates him to the top of the common martial world (*jianghu*). This accomplishment earns him the assignation of the "undefeated in the East," the literal meaning of his name (and an unambiguous allusion to Mao Zedong's pompous appetite for power at the time when the original novel was written). Leung (2008) has argued that in this loose filmic adaptation of Jin Yong's 1963 novel, *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer* (笑傲江湖), the casting of Brigitte Lin, an actress famous for her immense beauty, exemplifies a genuine attempt to enable certain aspects of transsexual subjectivity to emerge on the screen (pp. 71–77). Above all, the telling differences between the novel (written in the Maoist era) and its cinematic rendering (produced in the context of increasing queer visibility in Hong Kong) challenge other homonormative critiques of the film (Chou 1995, p. 300; Yau 1996, p. 165). Whereas Dongfang Bubai dies within a chapter in the four-volume novel, she becomes the most prominent character in the movie, usurping even the limelight of the male protagonist Linghu Chong. With its plot revolving around Dongfang Bubai's transmogrification, *Swordsman 2* also departs from the original novel by orchestrating an erotically charged relationship between Dongfang Bubai and Linghu Chong. The casting of Brigitte Lin is significant in this regard, because it

allows Dongfang Bubai to re-emerge on screen as a beautiful *woman*, no longer a half-castrated man (Fig. 6.2).

In a later reading, Leung highlights the negative connotations of Dongfang Bubai's transformation. According to Leung's reassessment (2012), Dongfang Bubai's transsexuality "is explicitly figured in the film as evidence of the character's ruthless ambition, destructive power, and monstrosity. By intimately linking Dongfang Bubai's will to dominate the world with the transformation of her body from male to female, the film has displaced anxiety about totalitarian rule onto the sex-changed body, which it portrays to be both dangerously seductive and violently destructive" (p. 188). For our purposes, it is worth noting that this displacement works only because Dongfang Bubai has been assigned an unrivaled measure of martial art skill. Her self-inflicted sex change, then, mimics not only the castration experience of Chinese eunuchs, but also their infamous image of being politically threatening agents. This personification of insubordination enables castrated men to exhibit extraordinary skills superior to other gender "normal" characters in the film, but, at the same time, conditions the demonization of their social role and significance. In this regard, eunuchs and castrated figures in Sinophone cinema represent

Fig. 6.2 Dongfang Bubai's first encounter with Linghu Chong, already appearing as a beautiful woman rather than a half-castrated man. Tsui Hark, *Swordsman 2*, 1992

subjects of what Stryker (1994) calls "transsexual monstrosity" and "transgender rage."

More recently, two films have appropriated and reinvented this image of eunuchs as at once powerful and demonic: Su Chao-Bin and John Woo's *Reign of Assassins* (劍雨 2010) and Tsui Hark's *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* (龍門飛甲 2011). Set in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the *Reign of Assassins* tells the story of an assassin gang called the Dark Stone, whose goal is to collect all of the mummified remains of an Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhi. In one of the most climatic and shocking moments in the film, the Dark Stone gang's leader and an accomplished martial artist, Cao Feng, is revealed to be a eunuch who has served the imperial palace for over five decades, but remains the lowest rank of the nine-grade system of public servants. Throughout the film, Cao embodies two opposing social statuses, standing at both the top of the Dark Stone gang and the bottom of the Chinese imperial court. His intention in tracking down and unifying the two halves of Bodhi's mummified remains is to stimulate the re-growth of his phallic organ by way of acquiring the mystical power promised by Bodhi's cadaver—in short, to reverse his castration permanently through an ultimate one-time transmogrification. Incidentally, Ming China is notorious for being one of the historical epochs during which eunuchs wielded an unprecedented, enormous measure of political power (Tsai 1996). When mapped onto Cao's martial art invincibility, this form of political threat to the Chinese world order symbolized the historical backdrop against which the nationalist condemning rhetoric of eunuchs began to accumulate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Chiang 2012). The demonization of Cao in the *Reign of Assassins*, therefore, strikes resonance with the culmination of an anti-eunuch sentiment emerging from the waning decades of the Qing imperium (Chiang and Wong 2016). Like Dongfang Bubai in *Swordsman 2*, Cao Feng exhibits a form of "transsexual monstrosity", underpinned by martial art prowess that surpasses all other gender "normal" characters, at the same time being portrayed as the most malicious fighter in the film. Like Cheng Dieyi in *Farewell, My Concubine*, Cao Feng's death serves as a vigorous reminder of the ultimate fate of eunuchs in the despotic past: to physically disappear from the world, but posing an abiding phantasmic presence in our cultural consciousness.

Also set in the Ming dynasty, but more precisely during the reign of Emperor Chenghua (1464–1487), the *Flying Swords* is in fact a sequel to the *New Dragon Gate Inn* (龍門客棧 1992). By drawing again on the historical context of the Ming dynasty, the film unambiguously uses the infamous manipulative power of Ming eunuchs as a concrete cultural resource for demarcating the gender alterity of eunuchs in the film. As is well known, Emperor Chenghua (1447–1487) established the secret service Western Depot (西廠) in 1477 under the directorship of the ruthless eunuch Wang Zhi (汪直), who, according to the historian Henry Tsai (1996), "practiced the worst aspects of terror during his tenure" (p. 115). It is reasonable to assume, then, that Yu Huatian (雨化田), the most powerful eunuch character presiding over the Western Depot in the *Flying Swords*, is a fictional representation of Wang. Identical to Wang's reputation, the Western Depot under Yu's leadership offends many influential ministers, especially those working for the Eastern Depot. To paraphrase Tsai's (1996) depiction of Wang, "officials and ordinary were so frightened by [Yu's] entourage that everyone hid as soon as they heard the depot agents coming to their vicinity" (p. 115). In fact, the storyline of the *Flying Swords* mirrors the fate of the Western Depot and its leaders—their eventual elimination. However, there is one notable difference between Yu in fictive construction and Wang in real life: martial art prowess. Although there is evidence to suggest that Wang loved martial arts and military science as a child, the physical power of Yu surpasses any imaginable measure of reality that can be associated with Wang's military skill in terms of both degree and quality (Tsai 1996, p. 116). In short, by being Wang Zhi's Sinophone reincarnation, Yu exhibits "transsexual monstrosity" in ways similar to Cheng Dieyi, Dongfang Bubai, and Cao Feng. Despite of, or precisely because of, their invincible martial art strength, all of these characters take on the arch enemy role in Sinophone films. Captured in the structural correlations of the body biopolitical and the body geopolitical, the transnational traffic of governmentality in queer Sinophone cultural production precipitates from the *peripheral* adaptation of historical *mainland* Chinese culture—a chronological leap in appropriation of an anti-eunuch mentality that first emerged in late Qing China but continues to linger and define the global cultural imaginary.

The Transfeminist Butterfly

David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1989) and its cinematic adaptation directed by David Cronenberg (1993) have attracted significant scholarly attention, but no critic has approached them from a decisively transfeminist perspective. That is hardly suggesting, of course, that the transgender elements of the story—notably the gender transformations of the two protagonists Song Liling and René Gallimard—have escaped much of the existing critical analyses of *M. Butterfly*. Nonetheless, most serious commentaries on the play or the film tend to center on the primacy of a *mimetic displacement* between gender, on the one hand, and other indexes of social identity on the other. Thus Dorinne Kondo's (1990) astute deconstruction of the mutual imbrication of racial and gender stereotypes, and David Eng's (1994, 2001, pp. 137–166) extension of such method by way of incorporating sexuality, often look *through* rather than *at* transgenderism as the epistemological tenor of political change. Marjorie Garber's (1992) otherwise compelling reading highlights this potential pitfall more carefully, claiming that transvestism operates in the story as symptomatic of what she calls a "category crisis"—since it is "once again, something to be looked *through* on the way to a story about men or women, Asian or European" (p. 17).

Yet, the kind of transfeminist inquiry I propose here far exceeds a mere polemic about the cultural anxiety of cross-dressing. In extending other scholars' critiques of the essentialist and overlapping constructions of gender, racial, and sexual identities, I argue that the category of transgenderism itself reorients the political agenda of feminism beyond a sheer intersection of gender with other identitarian grids in a confined geopolitical context. This globalization of feminist politics subverts a quintessential root of cultural (dis)identification that has heretofore garnered insufficient attention in deep interpretations of *M. Butterfly*: the governing hegemony of cultural nationalism.[3] By incorporating *M. Butterfly* into the remit of Sinoglossiac production, my following analysis asks questions that are meant to acquire valence across different medial contexts: How does class revolution matter to *M. Butterfly*? Is the story a critique of

[3] On minority subjects' negotiation with mainstream culture, see Muñoz (1999).

Orientalism or the East, or more specifically, of American society, French politics, or China? Is the butterfly a metaphor for displacing the boundaries of being human and, ultimately, embodiment itself?[4] Extending my analysis in the previous section, we might also add: In what ways can we map the cultural politics of life onto the geopolitics of history? How to approach the shifting grounds of imperial hegemony through the lens of gender and (trans)national entanglements? By making transfeminism the basis of a multidirectional critique, my goal is not to offer an inclusive, singular response to these questions (Enke 2012). Rather, I aim to enunciate a set of Sinoglossiac feminist modulations that centralizes the category of transgenderism in order to re-present the political ambition of *M. Butterfly* in a robust transcultural frame. These modulations develop a critique of the symbolic phallus in its imbrication with the cultural reach of China's geopolitical rise.

A lasting legacy of *M. Butterfly* stems from its staging of a psychoanalytic catharsis, culminating in the climax of its finale. This cathartic surprise would not have worked without a longstanding motif lurking in the popular imagination about cross-cultural romance, especially one between a Western man and an Asian woman (de Lauretis 1999). In fact, the title of *M. Butterfly* proclaims itself unambiguously as a descendent of Puccini's infamous opera, *Madame Butterfly*, one of the few well-known Italian operas that actually casted an eye on Asia (Tarling 2015). As the love story between Gallimard, a French accountant working in China, and Song, a Chinese opera singer, builds up its momentum, the audience is suddenly shocked by a dual gender inversion: not only does Song turn out to be a male spy working for the Chinese Communist Party, but after finding out Song's actual identity, Gallimard decides to transform himself into the Oriental butterfly that he has always fantasized about. This reciprocal inversion calls into question the very realness of their mutual affection. Instead of the Asian heroine committing a suicide, a familiar ending in such tragedies as *Madame Butterfly* and its Broadway variant *Miss Saigon*, the white male protagonist succumbs to his own death, an ironic sign of liberation (Clement 1988, pp. 43–47). The cathartic twist is only a twist insofar as it redirects dominant assumptions about

[4] On the history of being human, see Smith (2007).

cross-cultural sexual fantasy and the reciprocal intersections of gender and race in contemporary Western society.

Rather than seeking to uncover a "repressed truth" (the real penis, the real Whiteness, the real homosexual, the real lover, and so forth) behind this double gender reversal, it is perhaps more promising to view the gender transformations themselves as occupying some metaphysical primacy (Chow 1996, p. 70). By this, I mean to consider gender as constitutive of the core parameters of being human and, accordingly, the transgender metamorphosis of the two protagonists as representing a more foundational political outlook of human lifehood. This echoes Stryker's (1998) insight that the analytic power of transgenderism "promises to offer important new insights into such fundamental questions as how bodies mean or what constitutes human personhood" (p. 155). Focusing transfeminism back on to the question of gender, Gayle Salamon (2008) has argued that "the transgendered subject is the constitutive outside of binary gender" (p. 118). In order to bring in the relevance of class conflict, for example, or the cognate question of human endeavor into our reading, we must tackle the historical background of the 1960s, the communist fervour that fuelled Maoist inclinations in Paris in particular, as the larger context for rethinking the transcultural critique of *M. Butterfly* (Bourg 2004).

It is important to bear in mind that while the play *M. Butterfly* quickly built up its fame in New York City between 20 March 1988 and 27 January 1990 (and eventually around the world), a similar Broadway musical adaptation of Puccini's opera was premiered in London in September 1989: Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil's *Miss Saigon*. Evidently, there is a stark contrast in the geographical settings between the original opera, on the one hand, and the subsequent dramatic and musical adaptations on the other. Whereas *Madame Butterfly* tells a story between an American naval officer and a Japanese well-to-do lady, in both *M. Butterfly* and *Miss Saigon*, the settings are relocated to a communist country: China and Vietnam respectively. Moreover, the lead female character in *M. Butterfly* turns out to be a transvestite secret agent, whereas Miss Saigon is crowned as such only at the place where she works as a prostitute. There is one more notable difference in the *M. Butterfly* variant: the Western man no longer comes from America, but France,

where the May 1968 movement serves as the backdrop for the story. In a different way, *Miss Saigon* also picks up on the theme of communism in Cold War Asia by building on the Vietnam War and the Fall of Saigon as its main historical stage. If *M. Butterfly* presents a genuine critique of *Madame Butterfly*, one of its chief mechanisms comprises the narrative positioning of class struggle at the center of world revolutionary politics.

The centrality of global economic systems to the plot (un)layering of *M. Butterfly* embeds a different, perhaps more universal, sediment of social strife: the question of being human itself. As Kristin Ross (2002), Richard Wolin (2010), and others have convincingly demonstrated, French interest in Maoism reached a peak in the May 1968 movement, after which it evolved into a new vision of social democracy, grounded in a language of "human rights" for which French citizens have always prided themselves since its invention in the Enlightenment (Robcis 2012). High-profile public intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva weighed in, and their brief political allegiance with Maoism in the late 1960s was quite pivotal for their subsequent intellectual reorientation (e.g., resulting in, most notably, Foucault's conceptualization of biopolitics) (Wolin 2010, 288–349). The French discourse of human rights as an axiom of human life, connected as it was to a communist rhetoric and more specifically to an ideological Sinophilia at the time, casts light on the mirroring of gender and cross-national mimicries between Song and Gallimard. This demands a rethinking of their transgender subjectivity on its own terms: not as conditional of appending other social objectives, but as expressive of a broader historical struggle over the meaning and legitimacy of human organization.

The global politics of the 1960s, then, provides a key ingredient to our contextualization of the Song-Gallimard love story. This is a time in China when both the Peking Opera and European operas are considered "bourgeois" and relics of the past. In 1968, at the peak of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Song is sent to a labor camp for "re-education." While the camp's loudspeaker is gradually replaced by the familiar music of *Madame Butterfly*, the scene of Song in the camp fades and the camera shifts to Paris 1968, where Gallimard is watching a performance of the opera in tears. Afterward, Gallimard reminisces about China in a bar, and the man sitting next to him looks out of the

window and remarks that Paris is looking more like Beijing, with students shouting Maoist slogans and rioting in the streets. As we know from the work of Wolin and others, this initial upsurge of mass student interest in Maoism actually emerged from French students' decisive *lack* of concrete engagement with Chinese culture. The meaning of "cultural revolution" in Paris changed over time as the educated class became disillusioned with Maoism, but here it unveils the ugly side of the Butterfly fantasy. As Rey Chow (1996) puts it,

> "Is "revolution" itself, the film seems to say, not simply another type of "fantasy stereotype"—the fantasy stereotype that exploits in the name of the collective, the people? If we mobilize, as we must, criticism against Western "orientalist" and "imperialist" fantasies about the East, then should the cruelties committed by way of this other fantasy stereotype not also be under attack? The pro-Chinese Communist fervor in France of the 1960s—is it an awakening from Western imperialism and orientalism, or is it not simply the other side of that dream called Butterfly, which fetishizes the East this time not in the form of an erotic object but in the form of a political object, not in the form of the beautiful "oriental woman" but in the form of the virile oriental man, the Great Helmsman, Mao Zedong? (pp. 79–80)"

Perhaps the dream of the Western masculine subject has never been of a submissive butterfly, but of a revolutionary prototype (from the Middle Kingdom) with the vision and power to overthrow the conditional present and to inculcate a utopian future.

This connection between Paris and Beijing, therefore, suggests that the gender crossings of Song and Gallimard represent a deeper yearning for cross-national politicization. This conflation, convergence, and confluence between gender transgression and interregional mimesis is driven home most forcefully by the most famous and yet controversial scene in *M. Butterfly*, when Gallimard decides to transform himself from a white middle-class male subject into an Oriental butterfly (in this concluding scene, he announces "My name is René Gallimard, also known as Madame Butterfly"). After putting on a wig, applying thick layers of lipstick and facial powder, and wearing a kimono, Gallimard

Fig. 6.3 After transforming himself into Madame Butterfly, René Gallimard looks into the mirror with which he eventually takes his life. David Cronenberg, *M. Butterfly*, 1993

commits suicide by cutting his throat with a piece of mirror (allusion to the "mirror stage" in Lacanian psychoanalysis; Fig. 6.3). Different critics have approached Gallimard's fate differently, but there seems to be a general consensus that his suicidal transgenderism symbolizes an abrupt about-face of the processual manifestations of castration. Whereas throughout the bulk of the story, Song is depicted as the "castrated" (wo)man, *M. Butterfly* actually concludes with Gallimard castrating himself. However, what Gallimard castrates is not his sex, race, or gender. These readings would lure themselves into the myth of a "repressed truth," because they merely reify the normativity of the real penis, the real Whiteness, and the real androcentric manhood. Rather, borrowing from Chow's (1996) description of Gallimard's final gesture as exemplifying the visible painting of fantasy, I consider what he castrates in the very act of slashing his throat to be *the projection of political and erotic fantasy* (pp. 84–85).[5] The cut signals the white man's death, but it also represents an act of removing the symbolic phallus—the quintessential ground of white masculine identity.

[5] Here, Chow is drawing on Lacan (1981, pp. 91–104).

If *M. Butterfly* is historicized vis-à-vis the global politics of the 1960s, China emerges as the Lacanian phallus embodied by the supposed Oriental butterfly—an ontological symbol that signals its detachment from the French white man (the real Oriental woman, however ironically) the moment such relinquishment defines his death.[6] China, it seems, carries the seat of hyper-virile masculinity, having long been considered the historical origins of all things "under heaven" (天下) through and beyond the Maoist period (Chen 2001). Indeed, the film ends with the "butterfly" (Song) flying back to China. With that, France is left in a vacuum—a dispossession—of Maoist passion, and we are left not with the Western misperception of the East, but with the decolonizing traces of communist China itself.

As I have been suggesting, Gallimard's transmogrification is a form of castration, compounding aesthetics and ethics, but it is not simply a sexual, racial, or gender castration on the level of bodily erasure. Instead, his self-slashing castrates the promise of projecting a political and sexual fantasy. This is mirrored in Song's double inversion (from a man into a woman and back into a man). Again, at the end of the film the butterfly flies back to China. But we must also not forget that Song is no longer the "butterfly" by this point; rather, Song's very presence implies the symbolic status of China as the phallus that has been cut off from the white man's identity constitution. In other words, this ending makes a powerful statement about China itself: that Gallimard's death also resembles the death of China's own projection of political fantasy. Much like the way that scholars have understood empires to contain the origins of their own decline, Song's homecoming to China echoes the demise of Maoism in Paris in the late 1960s: a political formation that is ingrained with the ground of its own undoing. The colonial phallus, after all, retracts back to its homeland under a different guise and relinquishes its project(ion) of political desire.

[6] Although de Lauretis (1999, p. 330) calls attention to Song's yearning in intriguing ways, her reading tends to take for granted the homosexual nature of Song's desire and inadvertently risks ontologizing the myth of a "repressed truth" about the normativity of the real penis—Song's penis. Regardless of their physical make-up, the butterfly fantasy can easily operate in a reciprocal fashion between Song and Gallimard, making a primordial presupposition of homosexuality always volatile.

Whereas most critics have construed Hwang's play as an effort to challenge Orientalism from the viewpoint of disenfranchized minorities, my rendering of Song and Gallimard's gender transitions as a political end per se, rather than a means through which to look, makes possible understanding *M. Butterfly* as a critique of global "China" as much as it is of late capitalist America. The different crossovers featured in the film oftentimes subvert wider national and geopolitical frameworks at the same time that they trouble gender. Gallimard's transformation into a Japanese butterfly makes the Orient all the more opaque than a simple citation of the beauty of Chinese operatic arts; Song's conversion into a powerful communist spy highlights the trope of class struggle (as political struggle) absent in Puccini's opera, from which the power of his romance narrative with Gallimard originally derived; and Hwang's rerouting of the racial and gender oppression of Asian Americans through a historical context rooted in both an European genealogy of human rights and a revolutionary modularity of Sinocentrism undermines any subsidiary articulation of nationalism for anchoring a story about, above all, transgenderism itself.

Conclusion: Entangled Fate

Rey Chow (2012) has recently defined "entanglements" as "the linkages and enmeshments that keep things apart; the voidings and uncoverings that hold things together" (p. 12). This essay highlights the fate of transmogrified subjects as the common ground around which the "entangled" meanings of castration cohere in cultural Sinoglossia across the Pacific. In presenting *M. Butterfly* as a "Sinoglossiac" rather than a "Sinophone" film, my aim has been to supersede the lingo-centric and translational limitations of Sinophone theory. The representation of castration in Sinophone *wuxia* films tends to be routed through the embodied experience of martial art prowess, a cinematic technique that foregrounds the gender liminality of eunuchs. Yet, this unorthodox personification functions as a convenient rationale for the social denigration of castrated subjects—taken as symptomatic of their "transsexual monstrosity." The Sinophone filmic articulation of castration thus emanates from a contemporary

adaptation in the cultural periphery of an earlier anti-eunuch sentiment that epitomized the heart of fin-de-siècle revolutionary Chinese consciousness. On the other hand, castration in *M. Butterfly* is depicted most colorfully in Gallimard's transmogrification from a French white male accountant into an Oriental Butterfly. Yet his transformation climaxes at the enactment of his suicidal outro, representing the eradication of the possibility to project a political and sexual ambition, a resisting denunciation, if you will, of Maoist colonial fantasy. The kaleidoscopic operations of "castration" converge in its fatal excess—death as the common destiny of feminine subjects, whether it is Cheng Dieyi or René Gallimard—across different medial contexts within and beyond the cultural signifier "China." Sinoglossia theory therefore brings Sinophone martial arts films and *M. Butterfly* together by construing the global Chinese cultural imaginary as the fulcrum of its critical vitality.

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7

"Same-Sex Wedding", Queer Performance and Spatial Tactics in Beijing

Hongwei Bao

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the articulation of queer politics in contemporary China by using the public performance of a "same-sex wedding" event that took place in Beijing on a Valentine's Day as a case study. Through my analysis of the case, I suggest that queer activism in China today has developed new forms of practices that recognize both the impact of the transnational Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) movement and the cultural specificities of Chinese society. These practices include performative enactment of the body and identity, constant negotiations between visibility and invisibility, and the strategic deployment of public space. All these practices are underpinned by a non-dogmatic and culturally sensitive understanding of identity and politics. This has significant implications for the de-Westernization and internationalization of queer theory and activism in a transnational context.

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"Same-Sex Wedding" in Beijing's Heartland

On 14th February, 2009, the Valentine's Day, a "same-sex wedding" took place on the newly-renovated Qianmen Street, a tourist spot featuring pseudo-ancient architecture in downtown Beijing, in the vicinity of Tian'anmen Square. Dressed in Western-style suits and wedding gowns, a gay couple and a lesbian couple displayed various intimate poses in front of the onlooking public. The event attracted a large number of people, including both Beijing locals and tourists. As the photo shooting was going on, several young people, claiming to be volunteering for a local LGBT Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), held digital video cameras and microphones and interviewed spectators on their attitudes towards homosexuality and same-sex marriage. A foreign journalist from Reuters joined them in the interview. The onlookers reacted differently to the scene: some expressed disagreement and disgust; some showed support and sympathy, while a few others seemed considerably confused and shocked. After the photo session, the couples distributed flowers to the passers-by and wished them a happy Valentine's Day. The whole event took about half an hour before the "couples" and the photographers packed up their equipment and left the location.

A couple of days after the event, discussions about the event mushroomed in Chinese cyberspace. The event was covered by a few print media platforms in China, including the *New Beijing Daily (Xin jingbao* 新京报*)*, *Southern Metropolitan Weekly (Nandu zhoukan* 南都周刊*)*, *China Times (Zhongguo shibao* 中国时报*),* the Hong Kong-based *Wen Hui Pao* (文汇报) and the national English newspaper *China Daily* (中国日报). The Guangzhou-based *Southern Metropolitan Weekly* cheered the increasing public visibility of the gay community with an eye-catching caption: "Same-Sex Wedding in Beijing: from Underground to the Street", highlighting the political significance of this event.

This news title vividly captures the "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977) of the gay community and identity in mainland China today, although its tone may sound over-optimistic. Same-sex weddings in China are still largely underground and are far from being on the street. Since the emergence of the issue of homosexuality in China's public sphere thirty years ago, with the effort of sociologists, medical

professionals, journalists and LGBT activists to bring the group identity into visibility, the general public in China have been increasingly aware of the existence of homosexuality in China through media reports and public LGBT events. Notably, same-sex marriage has never been legalized in China, although homosexuality has not been illegal in mainland China since 1997, when "sodomy" (*jijian zui* 鸡奸罪) was deleted from China's Criminal Law. In 2001, homosexuality was depathologized in the third edition of the *Chinese Classification of Mental Disorder* (中国精神疾病分类与诊断标准第3版CCMD-3).[1] Since 2001, sociologist Li Yinhe has made repeated proposals to legalize same-sex marriage to China's legislative body, the National People's Congress; although her proposals have been routinely rejected, they have generated controversy in Chinese media, which serves to increase the visibility of LGBT issues. Meanwhile, there have been constant calls and petitions from LGBT individuals and NGOs all over the country to legalize same-sex marriage, together with numerous publicly performed "same-sex weddings" unrecognized by state law. The "same-sex wedding" event in Beijing was one of them.

Performative Queer

The issue of performance and performativity seems central to this highly orchestrated media event. People were rather disappointed to learn that the event was a public performance organized by Tongyu (同语 meaning "Common Language"), a local LGBT NGO, in order to raise public awareness about LGBT issues and that the two "couples" are not "real" couples. In fact, the two bridegrooms had never met each other before this event. The "couples" were simply gays and lesbians who volunteered for the event. In a sense, the "couples", the photographer, the journalists and the NGO volunteers were all actors and actresses; they made

[1] This remains controversial. Guo Xiaofei (2007) points out that the deletion of "hooliganism" in China's 1997 Criminal Law did not aim to decriminalize homosexuality, although in effect it produced an unexpected result that seemed to have decriminalized homosexuality. Also, the 2001 version of the *Chinese Classification of Mental Disorder* (*CCMD-3*) stated that only those "self-discordant" (*ziwo buhexie* 自我不和谐) homosexuals need to seek medical treatment. This is not a complete depathologization, either.

tremendous efforts to put on this elaborate show in front of the viewing public. Here arises the question: why did they do this? What roles do performances play in the construction of LGBT identity and community in China?

Newly graduated from Beijing Film Academy, Fan Popo is a queer activist who engages himself actively in the LGBT movement in China. He was on the spot with a digital video camera when the event took place. While I do not think that documentaries can give absolutely "true" and "objective" representations of histories and realities, Fan's 2009 documentary *New Beijing, New Marriage* (*xin qianmen dajie* 新前门大街) offers us an interesting perspective in understanding the event. More importantly, the shooting of the film itself becomes part of the "same-sex wedding" event and a form of social activism. For Luke Robinson (2015: 305), the documentary has a performative effect: "As the couples at the heart of *New Beijing, New Marriage* uses performance to enter public space and discourse as queer subjects, so the directors use the act of filming to do the same."

In Fan's film, the preparation of the "performance" takes place in an apartment. In one room, a make-up artist is helping brides and bridegrooms to apply make-up. In another, some Tongyu volunteers are preparing flower bouquets for the audience. People in both rooms make casual conversations and play friendly jokes with each other. The brides and grooms try to overcome their nervousness by talking to each other. The whole scene reminds us of the "backstage" in Erving Goffman's (1973) dramaturgy, that is, the space for preparation before performing a social role. Meanwhile, it is the practice of working together in the same place, at the same time and towards the same goal that gives the participants a shared sense of identity and community. The conversation, the smiles and laughs, the tediousness of wrapping flowers, along with a shared sense of anxiety and mutual support, all play a role in imagining same-sex identities and communities in China.

The performance begins when the group arrives at the Qianmen Street, their chosen "stage" for the performance, dressed up in costumes appropriate to their assigned roles, and getting all their "stage props" ready in place. The "couples" display various poses showing love and intimacy in front of the public, or rather, in order to attract the attention of the public.

They have to immerse themselves in the scene by imagining themselves to be the characters (of brides or grooms) to make the show appear effective. Whether they are performing a Stanislavsky theatre or a Brechtian theatre (or, whether they forget the "self" or remain conscious of the "self" in their performances) does not matter here. The important thing is that they are performing socially scripted roles and the performance itself makes the difference. These performances are necessarily performative; that is, they bring gay identity into existence by language and corporeality (Butler 1990). Indeed, as people speak or act, and as they enact certain scenarios or perform designated roles, an identity gets enacted and translated into materiality.

Apart from the body, two other factors help to bring identities into existence: first, the role of affect in constructing identities; second, the presence of the other, that is, the audience. Affect, as Sedgwick (2003) and Elspeth Probyn (2005) suggest, makes people come to their embodied identities: "'Affect is a process of existential appropriation through the continual creation of heterogeneous durations of being" (Guattari, cited in Gonesko 1996: 159).To some extent, the repetition of bodily practices only reveals the physical form of identity; the internalization of an identity requires the use of emotions. As the brides and the grooms pretend to be "wedded couples", they convey their joy and happiness, as well as their ease and confidence about their sexual identities, to the spectators and to themselves. As spectators watch the same-sex wedding scene, they are either surprised, or amused, or curious about the event, thus constructing their subject positions as "straight", "pro-gay", "anti-gay", or even as "gay" in the process of watching. Even when some are deeply convinced of the "absurdity" of the event, they still have to acknowledge the existence of a group of people whose social identities might be different from the majority of people. In this field (*chang* 场) of emotional flows, connections and interactions, gay and lesbian identities became known and visible to the participants of the event.[2]

[2] I use the Chinese term *chang* 场 here to indicate an assemblage of bodies, emotions and affects that work together at a particular time and place to produce certain effects. In Taoism, *chang* is always associated with *qi* 气 (free-flowing energies characterised by *yin* 阴 and *yang* 阳) and referring to a terrain of such energies that accumulate, reform, transform and disintegrate. Please note that *chang* should be understood as multiple, contingent, and fluid. *Chang* affects and is deeply affective.

Emmanuel Levinas (1979) and Judith Butler (2005) remind us of the importance of the Other in constructing self-identities. Indeed, the self is necessarily bound up with the Other, politically and ethically, whether through face-to-face encounters, or through practices such as hearing other people's names and stories. Being is necessarily being with others. Face-to-face encounters often put one in an ethical relationship with strangers and force one to think about one's own subject positions: "the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation" (Levinas 1979: 198). In the wedding scene, the question of the Other, namely the audience, plays a significant role. We need to ask here: for whom did the actors and actresses perform? What role does the audience play in the construction of gay identities?

Consider the following conversation, between Bride A (named Dana in the film) and a member of the audience:

路人:我想看新娘子。
大拿:这是我的新娘。
路人:来,新郎官,给你照个相好不好?
大拿:哈哈!我们都是新娘。
Spectator: I want to see the bride.
Bride A: This *is* my bride.
Spectator: Hello, bridegroom. Can I take a picture of you?
Bride A: Haha. We are both brides.

By making a statement such as, "this is my bride" or, "we are both brides", Bride A is clearly pointing to their lesbian identity. The performance of an identity requires a witness. The spectators act as witnesses in this scene. Wedding ceremonies speak as much to the brides and bridegrooms as to the ceremony participants. By holding a wedding in public, the "couples" in fact make a clear statement of the existence of gay identity and community, as well as their demand for equal rights. In this process, they also bring gay identities into existence.

The most commonly-used Chinese term for gays and lesbians is *tongxinglian* (同性恋 lit. same-sex love, meaning homosexual). *Tongxinglian* is gendered male by default. When it refers to female, a character, *nü,* (女, meaning female) is used, as in the term *nü tongxinglian* (女同性恋 lit. female same-sex love, meaning lesbians).

The Other can be both visible and invisible. For instance, when Zhang Yi, one of the bridegrooms, speaks to the camera, he has his target audience in mind:

> 这个社会里头,有很多不同的人群,不同的爱。
> 这个问题不是只发生在我们这两个人身上,
> 因为,比如说你,你,你,然后你的朋友、同学、亲人、家人、同事,都有可能,
> 只不过他们没有告诉你而已。
>
> In this society, there are different communities and different forms of love.
>
> It does not only happen to the two of us. You, and your friends, classmates, family members, colleagues … they may be gay, too, except that that you do not know about them.

The pronoun "you" in this speech does not refer to a particular person, but is a generic term to address the speaker's assumed target audience, presumably heterosexual. In bearing the Other in mind when making speeches, the speaker actively constructs his own identity as gay.

Indeed, the target audience, or the Other, is addressed in a variety of ways: when people watch this event, they are addressed by the speakers and performers to be the target audience; when readers read the news from newspapers or websites, they become the target audience too. Moreover, when Fan Popo's documentary film is shown in different parts of China, the film audience is also addressed. Louis Althusser's (1969) concept of "interpellation" is pertinent in this context. "Interpellation", in the typical case of a police hailing "hey, you!", necessarily requires the Other to recognize the self. Although people may react differently to the hailing, and although we are not sure if there is such a powerful "hailing" coming from an authoritative voice that conveys a clear message, "hailing" still acts as a vivid metaphor for discourses and ideologies to have impact on people, and for identities to be attached to and internalized by people.

I invoke the trope of "hailing" here to talk about the necessary existence of the Other in order for the identities to be effective. In the wedding scene, spectators are inseparable to ensure the success of the show, hence the successful construction of identities. It is important to note that the construction of identities takes place in multiple and dynamic

ways. As the performers construct their gay identities, some audiences may construct their own identities, too, be they gay, straight, or bisexual; or liberal, or conservative, or even homophobic. It is thus useful to consider identity construction as a process subject to the interplay of different social factors such as time, place, and people.

Between Visibility and Invisibility: The Politics of Masking

Yinshen, (隐身, lit. concealing one's body, meaning staying closeted or hiding one's gay identity from others) and *chugui* (出柜 out of the closet or coming out as gay) are two commonly used terms in Chinese language to describe queer existence. These two terms are translated from the English language via LGBT activists in Taiwan and Hong Kong, but they are understood and practiced differently in specific locations. In this section, I consider the politics of "coming out" and how it might serve as indigenized queer politics in the Chinese context.

As Eve Sedgwick (1990) argues in *Epistemology of the Closet*, homosexuality contributes to the formation of several binary oppositions in Western culture, including secrecy and disclosure, the public and the private. One has to be either "closeted" or "out"; "coming out" is often privileged in gay identity politics, as it is directly linked to the notions of "truth" and "authenticity" in the modern episteme. The importance of seeing and visibility is also raised in this context. Michel Foucault's (1979) discussion of the "panopticon" vividly dramatizes the relationship between light and the subject, and between being seen and being known. It seems that in modern society, only those that can be seen are considered to exist; anything out of sight would be considered as either non-existent, less authentic or less legitimate. The call for gay people to "come out" to their families, friends, and even the general public in gay identity politics, follows this logic. This rhetoric has also been picked up in China's LGBT Movement with the globalization of LGBT politics and neoliberal governance. As we examine the case more closely, we can detect more complex and nuanced situations than the simple visible and invisible, as much as out and in dichotomies would allow.

Are the brides and bridegrooms out in the "wedding" scene? Yes, in the sense that they made a public statement of their gay identities in a public space. Furthermore, after the news spread in cyberspace and in print media, the volunteers were hailed as the "harbingers of China's LGBT Movement" (Yu 2009: 44). No, because they invariably used pseudonyms for this event.[3] Also, Tongyu, the organizer of the event, chose four strangers who did not know each other before to perform "gay couples", as this would reduce their risk of "coming out". If any of the performers' parents, relatives, or colleagues happened to hear about the news of the "same-sex wedding", the performers could still deny their same-sex identity simply by insisting that they did not know the other person and that they were there only to "perform". In this context, "gay identity" ambivalently situates itself between being "in" and "out" of the closet, and between being "visible" and "invisible". Moreover, it refuses certainty and definition by embracing ambiguity and ambivalence. In this sense, the type of gay identity constructed through the event of performing a "same-sex wedding" is intrinsically "queer".

Fran Martin's (2000, 2003) theorization of "masking" is helpful for us to understand the case. Masking is a strategy to shift between identities without hiding the body. Using pseudonyms is a form of masking; so is denying one's gay identity under particular circumstances. Masking effectively conjures up the image of theatrical performance and pinpoints the performative nature of identities. Masking does not necessarily tell a story about "truth" and "authenticity", as is the case in theatrical performances. The boundary between what is reality and what is a staged performance is often blurred. Masking offers people alternative ways to perform identities. Truth does not matter in the case of masking; it is the context: that is, wearing the right mask at the right time and place, that matters.

Inspired by Martin (2003: 62), I suggest rethinking indigenous Chinese queer politics with two idioms: *ruoyin ruoxian* (若隐若现 "now concealed, now disclosed") and *shiyin shixian* (时隐时现 "at times concealed, at

[3] Many gays and lesbians use pseudonyms, cyber names, or English names in the gay community. Only a few out public personas use their real Chinese names in LGBT public events. This is generally considered as understandable and necessary by people in the community. The politics of "naming" and identities is an interesting issue that requires separate treatment elsewhere.

times disclosed"). We must note that the relationship between "concealment" and "disclosure" is not dichotomic ("either .. or …", or "neither … nor …"). Rather, it is multiple, contingent and sometimes fleeting. For many gays and lesbians in China, one does not need to be completely "in" or "out". Being "in" and "out" depends on the specific context and the person that they meet. Hai Bei, one of the "bridegrooms" in the scene, captured the trickiness of the concealment/disclosure relationship when he said: "I am not married. Taking wedding photos was a staged event. I am a model. I am looking for my prince on a white horse." (Yu 2009: 44)

From Tian'anmen to Qianmen: Public Space, Contingent Activism

Since the publication of Jurgen Habermas' (1992) influential book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* the notion of the "public sphere" has generated heated discussions. China Studies scholars have debated about the applicability of such a "Western" term in the Chinese context (Yang 1999). They have also pointed out that the notion of *gong* ("public") has a specific history and different genealogy from its English or German counterparts. Many scholars agree that "public sphere" is still a useful category for historical and social analysis, at least in contemporary China, when new media play an increasingly important role in promoting citizen's rights. Notably, LGBT people in China are actively participating in China's emerging "public sphere". Here I use the term "public space" instead to highlight the spatial dimension of the public sphere. A spatial perspective offers us new insights into LGBT culture and social change in China.

In the case of the "same-sex wedding" in Beijing, two factors are salient in relation to space. First, the event was held in Beijing, the political and cultural centre of China. The organized event, therefore, has a pioneering role among LGBT communities and groups in China. Second, the event took place at Qianmen, the centre of downtown Beijing, which adds to its symbolic significance. However, it is its vicinity to Tian'anmen that gives the event a political touch. Although the organizers had reiterated

that the event was "apolitical", netizens and foreign correspondents can still read the political subtext into the event.

The Qianmen's geographic location is significant in this case. Qianmen stands south of Tian'anmen Square and the two locations are next to each other.[4] Tian'anmen is the place of the nation state. Monumental buildings surround the Tian'anmen Square: the Forbidden City, the Great Hall of the People, the National Museum, Chairman Mao's Mausoleum and Monument of People's Heroes. All these monumental buildings narrate a linear, progressive and triumphant national history. Ordinary people do not necessarily have a place in such a historical narrative. Only fifty meters away from Tian'anmen, Qianmen reveals a different picture, a picture of the ordinary and of the everyday. Local people live in small alleyways (*hutong* 胡同) in Qianmen; tourists frequent the place with fascination. This is a place for bargain hunters; peddlers and tourists negotiate good prices. Ordinary people, rich or poor, find their favorite shops in the district. One can smell freshly cooked Chinese doughnuts or hotpot on the street, or watch the hustle and bustle of the market. National history seems insignificant here. Anything that happens in Tian'anmen affects little of what goes on here. Time seems to have stopped; the trading scene here today looks similar to that of a hundred years ago. Tian'anmen and Qianmen represent different aspects of today's China. Whereas Tian'anmen represents the power of the State, the official history, the authority and the order, Qianmen, on the other hand, unfolds a picture of the everyday, the ordinary, the mundane and the chaotic. The juxtaposition of Tian'anmen and Qianmen reminds people that behind the grand narratives of the nation state, there are ordinary people's lives going on which tend to be overlooked. To get a better understanding of China and of the LGBT movement in China, it is as important to attend to the everyday lives of the ordinary people's lives as to focus our attention on the state policies and regulations, on the political and on landmark historical events.

The politics of space and place is also relevant to indigenous queer politics in China. The "same-sex wedding" took place in Qianmen. It did not have to be held in Tian'anmen in the form of a political demonstration

[4] Tian'anmen means "the gate of heavenly peace" and Qianmen means "the front gate" in Chinese.

for LGBT rights. This is a type of queer politics that does not directly confront the state power. It is culturally sensitive and context specific. The organizers knew what price they would have to pay if they held a "same-sex wedding" at Tian'anmen, and they were wise enough not to do so. They chose to hold the event at Qianmen, in the guise of taking wedding pictures and with the aim of publicizing LGBT rights through the right to marry. The event took shape as a form of performance. Like in a carnival, it only occurred during a particular period of time. After the disruptive moments, everything goes back to the normal. But such events are performative, in that they not only have impact on the performers but also on the audience, both on the spot and through media reports.

It is not difficult to discern the importance of the "Western influence" in this scenario. The Valentine's Day, often considered as a "Western" holiday, has come to gain popularity among the urban youth in China in the last decades. Practices such as sending Valentine's Day's roses, wearing Western-style suits and gowns, and taking expensive wedding pictures, form a sharp contrast with the traditional Chinese style wedding ceremonies characterized by elaborate bowing, kowtow rituals and a lavish banquet attended by friends and relatives. Most important of all, gay identity is a new social identity that has emerged in China in the last thirty years. Although same-sex eroticism has existed in different parts of Chinese history, it is only in the post-socialist era that "gay" has become a label for certain groups of people and certain desires. This type of identity and desire is generally conceived to have come from the "West". Loretta Wing Wah Ho (2010) argues that the sense of same-sex identity in Beijing is articulated by a material reality of *kaifang* (开放 meaning opening up to the West), which is further complicated by a presence of transnational gay practices and ideologies. It would seem that Dennis Altman's (2001: 86) prophecy of "global sex" becomes true: "Globalization has helped create an international gay/lesbian identity" which seems to model the Euro-American "West". Yet from the detailed analysis of the "same-sex wedding" case, we can still detect the cultural specificities in local LGBT politics, which is not modeled on Western LGBT politics and which takes China's political situations and cultural traditions into consideration. In many ways, taking "same-sex wedding" pictures in public at Qianmen is an indigenized form of queer politics that effectively challenges the "global queering" or "opening-up" theses.

Michael Warner (2000) considers all the people who are conscious of their subordinate positions to be "counterpublics". Although the internal differences within the gay community begs further investigation, many a gay man and lesbian feels that they are indeed marginalized in society. In this sense, we can call the gay community a "counterpublic". The question is: how do the counterpublics fight for their own spaces, or appropriate spaces of their own in a strategic way?

The case in question provides a good answer: Qianmen Street is not a gay street; yet under such circumstances, it is appropriated by LGBT people to demonstrate their visibility and to voice their opinions. This type of spatial strategy is called "tactics", in Michel de Certeau's (1984) words. Indeed, urban spaces are not only politicians' and city planners' spaces. Once they have been designed, marginalized social groups may find creative ways to use them, to appropriate them and to subvert them. The "same-sex wedding" event thus disrupts the heteronormative state space and creates its own identities and social relations.

In transnational LGBT activism, there has been an emphasis on the necessity to establish fixed and physical "queer spaces", as demonstrated by geographical entities such as the "gay street", juxtaposed with supposedly "heterosexual" spaces, often in an antagonistic manner. In a social context where political expressions of sexuality are not possible, space becomes contingent and relational; it relies more on social relations than geographical locations. It comes into being not by replacing the "heterosexual" space, but by appropriating it. In this context, gay identity does not have to constitute a person's "core" identity; it often coexists and negotiates with other types of identities. Indigenous forms of queer politics must take this understanding of identity into account in order to speak to the needs and lived experiences of ordinary LGBT people.

Conclusion

In this chapter, through conducting a cultural analysis of the "same-sex wedding" in Beijing, I have explored indigenous forms of queer politics in contemporary China. By linking such issues as identity, performance and space, I have asked how gay identities are constructed and how queer spaces are created through such an event. I have suggested that indigenous

forms of queer politics have been devised by LGBT activists and ordinary gays and lesbians in China to take into account the cultural specificity of China and the influence of transnational LGBT politics. These practices include performative enactment of the body and identity, constant negotiations between visibility and invisibility, and the strategic deployment of the public space. All these practices are underpinned by a non-dogmatic and culturally sensitive understanding of identity and politics. I hope that my analysis will open up spaces for more discussions about space, identity, performance, and indigenous queer politics in contemporary China. I also hope that these context-specific and culturally sensitive forms of activism will help us rethink about the production of queer theory and activism in a transnational context, beyond a Euro-American cultural geography.

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8

"Cinderella" in Reverse: Eroticizing Bodily Labor of Sympathetic Men in K-Pop Dance Practice Video

Chuyun Oh

A group of young men are practising dance movements in a small studio. The garments they wear look loose and worn out. A cold, compact fluorescent light casts its light on their bodies. The camera is located in front of the dancers at the other side of the room. The room is remarkably shabby and tiny. It is full of odds and ends, such as speakers, electric fans, a small fridge, tables, and drawers. Behind the dancers, there is a green exit sign on the wall, which signifies that the studio is located right in front of the exit. Despite such stringent conditions, the dancers fully focus on their rehearsal. They work hard. They gasp, and their bodies are sweating. On the video thread, female fans leave comments that address the bodily effort of the performers, such as "Heavy breathe [sic.] after the dance… so sexy!!!" (ID: ****momo). Other comments express sympathy: "[T]hat small room […] [T]hey work so hard to proof others

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that they capable to doing anything from nothing to everything […]" (****ung).[1]

Introduction

I draw this scene from K-pop boy group Infinite's dance practice video titled "Paradise Dance Ver. (2015) (Woolliment 2011)." Since the 2000s, K-pop has become a global phenomenon, along with the transnational circulation and popularity of Korean pop culture, called the Korean Wave. The Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, refers to the increasing popularity of South Korean popular culture since the late 1990s, including music, drama, film, and fashion (Iwabuchi 2002). These products have gone global and entered a number of regions of East Asia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Oceania, Latin America, the USA, Canada, and parts of Europe (Ravina 2009, pp. 3–9). Currently, K-pop is the driving force of Korean Wave. As dance-driven music, K-pop is characterized by young idols' spectacular visual performances. Among many other K-pop groups, Infinite consists of seven male singers, and is one of the most well-known boy bands that has been groomed by Woollim Entertainment since 2010.

Recently, major K-pop music agents, such as SM Entertainment, JYP, and YG Entertainment, began to post their singers' dance practice videos on their official YouTube websites and share them with fans around the world. Woollim Entertainment, too, has released dance practice videos of their trainees and singers, including Infinite's. Unlike official music videos, in which viewers would be exposed to highly polished and decorated images of singers, these videos are barely edited. Instead, they simply show singers' dance practice scenes in small studios. Nevertheless, many of them get high views on YouTube.[2] So then, why do fans watch these ordinary and often unofficial low-budget videos?

[1] Inspirit is the official fan club of Infinite.

[2] For example, SNSD, arguably one of the most popular girl groups in K-pop and East Asia broadly, has almost 19 million views for their dance practice video of "Mr. Mr." (2014). Dance practice videos provide viewers with full choreographies of K-pop songs, which are useful for participants of K-pop flashmobs and cover dances. Yet, such practical reasons are not enough to explain K-pop fans' avid consumptions of dance practice videos.

This chapter particularly focuses on Infinite, given the group's elevation in status—from a poor, unknown group in the "Paradise Dance Ver." video to rising K-pop super stars today.[3] I argue that fans enjoy the dance practice video because of an intimate and erotic sensation while watching the bodily labor of the men, as well as sympathy toward the male dancers, which allow the female viewers to reverse gender power dynamics. I first closely read the singers' bodies and movements in relation to the song lyrics, using descriptive analysis. I also look at the rehearsal space and the setting/editing of the camera angle. I look at how these visual signs indicate socioeconomic status, and how the intersectionality of class and sexuality shapes the gendered experience of the female audience. For audience reception, I observe and collect comments on the video thread published from October 2011 to July 2015. I classify the entire comments into several categories and select the key themes.[4] As YouTube videos can be circulated globally, it would be difficult to provide definite biographies or geographical belongings of this particular study group. Nevertheless, their use of language, ID, profile pictures and subscribed channels are indicative. In this chapter, K-pop female fans refer to YouTube users who use English as their primary language. It can include Koreans, but Korea has its own search engines that are popular among local Korean youth, such as Naver. Korean K-pop fans would also prefer to use Korean when leaving their comments. Thus, ethnic and racial diversity of the audience group could vary, and it should be understood as a more inclusive and fluid group of people in terms of multiple categories of ethnic and national identities.

As gender studies scholars and feminist critics have demonstrated, masculinity is a social construction, and thus constantly challenged and reshaped depending on different sociocultural circumstances. Today, ideal Korean masculinity has been transformed from "manly" breadwinner types

[3] Infinite started their career under the support of Woollim Entertainment, founded in 2003. The agent was not considered as a major record label until it merged with SM Entertainment in 2013, one of the biggest record labels in K-pop. Nevertheless, Infinite has gained relatively huge attention from K-pop fans around the world.

[4] The number of the comments is 5,220 in total (accessed by 21 July 2015). Viewers' comments are written in various languages, but this article analyzes comments written in English, due to the author's limited linguistic ability other than English. The categories organized by comment themes are: supportive comments, singers' virtuosity and bodily practice, agent, and erotic experiences of the viewers. Among these, I did not analyze the first one, as most of them consisted of simple acclamations.

to soft and even androgynous looking men (Oh 2015). This soft masculinity currently dominates Korean and East Asian pop culture (Epstein and Joo 2012). K-pop emblematizes such soft masculinity in the twenty-first century. The term "flower boys" is widely used to describe K-pop idols who have perfectly groomed and polished appearances, and often have androgynous and feminized features, which become the predominant male prototype in K-pop (Xiaolong 2014). Changes in men's grooming should not be conflated with a subversion of patriarchy, as the society still struggles with and confronts entrenched misogyny, responding to the growing women's rights movement and the improved social and economic status of women (Lee 2015). Nonetheless, men's grooming and "flower boys" come in response to relative shifts in perspectives on male bodies. In K-pop, male bodies become consumable objects; the more consumable they are, the more desirable they become. Such fluid gender representation in K-pop and the subsequent consumption of male physicality set up a new criterion in evaluating ideal masculinity and have a potential to challenge the stigmatized notion of conventional Korean masculinity as "authoritative," "militarized" Confucian men (Sea-ling 2000; Moon 2005).

As K-pop is circulated globally, K-pop is not just a local issue limited to the Korean context. Asian-American men have been stigmatized due to racialized stereotypes—being coded as effeminate in comparison to normative white masculinity (Wong 2010; Shimakawa 2002). The majority of K-pop singers are Korean.[5] Nevertheless, their bodies are often reminiscent of Asian-American stereotypes in the gaze of Western viewers, as demonstrated by the success of the "Gangnam Style" (2012) music video by Korean rapper PSY, whose short, non-muscular body and round face has been viewed as "authentically" Asian (Pan 2013; Bevan 2012). PSY, however, does not resemble typical K-pop male singers but rather fits into the historically constructed "inferior" and "asexualized" Asian-American male stereotypes (Kang 2013).

Analyzing K-pop dance practice videos not only complicates and expands our understanding of masculinity, but also issues of female

[5] As K-pop appeals to global youth, K-pop agents often seek to create a "multicultural" group, consisting of members with diverse cultural backgrounds and who are fluent in speaking languages in addition to Korean. An increasing number of K-pop groups include members who were born outside of Korea, and some of them are Asian-Americans.

spectatorship in a global context. Gaze is power; the construction of masculinity is not monolithically determined but informed by polysemic interactions with (female) gaze projected on their bodies (Goddard 2000). In the process of decoding pop culture, counter-hegemonic readings are possible (Hall 1980). Female spectators and critics engaging in diverse racial, gender, and sexual identifications have resisted the male-dominated gaze via female-oriented readings (Gamman and Marshment 1989; Hooks 2003; Schauer 2005; Thornham 1999), which Bell Hooks calls "the oppositional gaze." [6] In the era of "pornographication" of mainstream culture, men's objectification is maybe not a strange phenomenon (Schauer 2005, p. 62). What makes K-pop fans unique, however, is that they move beyond objectification of the male body by de-stigmatizing and rather eroticizing Korean/Asian/Asian American masculinity, and actively redefine the subjectivity of female spectatorship, which I will elaborate on throughout this chapter.

Like the gaze, the body physicalizes the symbolic mechanism of subversion and/or subordination. Moving bodies "reinforce the ideologies that act on and through them, but they also have the potential to issue a dynamic challenge to static and repressive notion" (Rossen 2014, p. 63). Although each dance practice video exhibits different performers and choreographies, they share some similarities. Physicality matters. Fans watch the videos to see moving bodies, and performers or their agents upload the videos to share their movement practices. How is male sexuality embodied, expressed, and consumed in the global social media in which fans freely speak of their desire without censorship? What does the consumption of the male body tell us about female spectatorship, gaze, and shifting gender relations today? How do dancing Korean men and their fans challenge stereotypes of East Asian masculinity in a glocal milieu? These questions lie at the core of my analysis.

Tragic Heroes With "Hot" Dance Moves

The lyrics of "Paradise" describe the deep sadness of parting and desperate feelings of love. The chorus explains the meaning of "Paradise" in the context:

[6] She uses the term to specifically refer to African-American women's resistive gaze.

> [Chorus] This place is a paradise only if you're here
> A paradise that has locked you in against your will
> A sad paradise that you won't go if you're awake
> A paradise that we can be together forever […]
> The best paradise, without you it's a hopeless world

As the lyrics express sorrow and joy, the choreography of "Paradise" compendiously exhibits both sides of love through passionate and tempestuous movements. In the dance practice video of "Paradise", the choreography consists of speedy and powerful movement sequences. Each group member has his own solo part. During a member's solo, the other members do not take rest but constantly move across the space. For their group dance scenes, all of them execute the same movements and create a great level of harmony, moving identical ways. Despite the limited space, none of them hit or bump into each other. Indeed, Infinite is well known with their synchronized group dance style, which is called "knife group dance", or *Kalkunmu* in the Romanization of Korean. *Kal* means a knife and *kunmu* refers to a group dance. Kalkunmu means that each group member does exactly the same movements as sharp as a knife; their accuracy in terms of timing, speed, level, space, and movement quality is so homogenized, synchronized, and identical, like an object cut by a knife.

In the video, the dancers express intensive emotional engagements in the movements. All members stand in two lines. They slightly hop and step forward, kicking their feet and stretching their arms and pointing their fingers to the front, and then they drop them together. With the lyrics, "This place is a paradise only if you're here," they point out the audience when they speak out "you." [7] They catch their arms again and place them on their chests with passion, as if telling their lost lovers that they are still in their hearts. They quickly swing their arms and legs backward, step back, and kick their knees briskly in the air, bending the other legs, stretching their arms downward and palms facing front, and stare at the audience with faces that are full of strong emotions, which successfully illustrate the lyrics "The best paradise, without you

[7] The original lyrics are Korean. The English translation is available at: https://kpopquote.wordpress.com

it's a hopeless world." Positioning their feet back and forth, they lean on their back legs and throw up their arms forward with clenched fists for a couple of times, while holding the other arm to the side, facing their palms forwards. Punching the air with their fists, they gradually descend to the floor, opening and closing their front knees repetitively. When opening their knees, they thrust their pelvises together with their thrown arms, and magnify the tightness and tautness implied in the movement. During the entire rehearsal, they constantly maintain their focus. They dance hard with full effort, like cheerleaders do onstage. Their dance is powerful, strong, rigorous, and firmly staged with full of energy.

The scenario of the song resembles an epic poem, due to the grand scale of melody and music style. The dancers envision this tragic scenario through movements. Their gestures often resonate with those of heroic or legendary figures in an epic film. At the climax of the song, the sound gradually quietens. Sung-kyu Kim, the main singer of the group, kneels down on the floor in a dramatic manner, singing "I'm gonna hold you in a little longer, I'm gonna look at you a little more, until my heart cools off a little more." He stretches out his hand, clenches his fists, and beats his chest, lowering his head to express sorrow. He looks desperate and desolate. The other members circle around him, dragging their feet, and descend to the floor slowly, undulating their entire bodies, as if their hearts are melting because of sadness. On the floor, they make sudden, explosive movements, sharply flicking and bouncing their chests back and forth, as if their hearts and fever are still alive. Their facial expressions deliver pain and agony in a realistic way. The singers successfully transform themselves into the roles they play—the tragic heroes—by embodying the chivalric code via dramatic movements and facial expressions with the melancholy lyrics. This chivalric code, accompanied with physical expressions, enhances the believability of the tragic images of their characters. By portraying pitiful characters with their sensual, powerful dance movements, the performers play double-sided characters: tragic heroes in narrative and entertainers in physicality. This raises the question: how do fans decode such a double-layered presentation of masculinity and discover meaning identified with and for themselves?

"My Poor Babies!": Reversing The Cinderella Complex and Empowering The Female Gaze

For fans, the performers' explicit exhibition of bodily labor evokes sexual connotations. As the movement style is strictly rigid and requires a significant level of physical energy, their bodies and faces become slick with sweat as time goes on. Some of them wear sleeveless shirts, and their muscular arms also become agleam with sweat. The video culminates with the singers standing on their own spots, showing their final poses. The music is just over, so there is no background sound. The audience now hears the performers' breathing. Due to the fierce, demanding choreography, the dancers' breathing comes in short gasps, and at the end of their practice, all of them are short of breath and panting. Responding to the last scene, fans write:

> [A] moment of silence for all our nonexistent ovaries (ID: ****e Kim)
> OMG ! Their breath at the end ! They're exhausted ! x) Infinite are the best <3 (ID: ****a Rahary)
> I think I replayed their heavy breathing at the end like a million times….. ;_;" (ID: ****paradaisu)

Other comments also contain emoticons, such as "<3", which means love, or kiss. As the performers' sweating bodies metaphorically suggest an erotic sensation, fans connect heavy breathing as resulting from intense physical labor with sexual connotations.

For fans, the performers' heavy breathing signifies more than sexual excitement. It is also an issue of sympathy. "Breathings at the end of the video kinda [sic.] broke my heart" (ID: ****z Catak), "Bouncy hair. Poor babies, breathing so hard at the end of the dance" (ID: ****h DC), fans describe. In addition to the bodily labor of the performers, lyrics also help fans to better experience sympathy. "Paradise" describes sadness, and the lyrics resemble stories in a tear-jerking soap opera due to a dramatic storyline of the song. Love is so important that it can be compared with death:

> Please stay here, I'm asking you a favor, I'll treat you better, I can't let you go yet
> I must live, I must survive, 'cause I will stop some day

The lyrics sound intense because of the lexical choice, such as "must live." It implies that love is the reason they live. If a female viewer could identify herself with the heroine in the lyrics, she would create a perfect moment of sympathy because these men cannot exist without her and desperately need her love.

The practice room of "Paradise" also evokes pity among viewers. Since the room is too small, some of them could accidentally hit props or furniture behind them while dancing. Fans write:

> [S]eriously[,] I can barely focus on the dance in this video because I'm too busy thinking about how much this practice room looks like a HUGE FIRE TRAP: like look at all those exposed wires! and [sic.] that weird black material covering the walls!! Yikes […] (ID: ****ka Young)

> Poor [S]ung [Y]eol they have such a small room to practice he accidentally hit the table at a moment with his long leg. It's okay oppa you still dance the best! (ID: ****m Syed Ali)

Fans' sympathy regarding the practice room connotes issues of class. The shabby small studio implies a harsh working environment that the practitioners might confront, as well as the potentially low socioeconomic status of the singers.

This class status of the dancers affects fans' reception of the male bodies. Infinite has noticeable dance skills among many K-pop idols. Hoya, a member of the group, is often called a "dancing machine" due to his versatile and bold dance techniques (Kpooop 2015). But due to sympathetic feelings, the viewers become more generous while watching the group's performance. The severe condition further illuminates the dancers' work ethic. Fans praise not only the singers' virtuosity but also the group's diligence and sincerity as artists:

> Yup! Think about they didn't have a big company to back them up. I can only say it's pure talent that has brought them this far. And they've been always living up to their name, never disappoint fans in terms of how amazing they are on live stage […] (ID: ****k Fann)

> They did not have a sleek practice room back then. But look what they have delivered to fans under that circumstance. Instead of whining,

> complaining, or filing lawsuits against their agency, these guys' work ethic deserves my most respect (ID: ****nite Musik)

Infinite's hard work and work ethic inspire fans. Given the lack of social and economic capital, Infinite's virtuosity reveals the group's tremendous effort in achieving the fame that they currently have. The group could be a role model for the young generation, as the performers have worked up from the bottom and achieved their success through their bodily effort and virtuosity, perhaps without much help from their agency.

The fans' approval goes beyond the issue of the work ethic. It is a complicated negotiation process of one's identification as much as it is gendered and classed. On the comment thread, fans act out a certain role by playing or masquerading a particular position. In this virtual scenario, the fans become Infinite's old friends, who have watched their success and who have helped to raise Infinite. Some of them said that they are proud of their "babies," and "my boys," as the group "got successful enough to get a better practice room eventually" (ID: ****ka Young).

> That small room. [B]ring many memories for both INFINITE and inspirit. [T]ime flies. [T]hey work so hard to proof others that they capable to doing anything from nothing to everything. hahha. [W]e proud of u INFINITE (ID: ****jung)

> [I] cried when they got a new dorm … how they work really hard to get where they got now … [W]e inspirit really proud of you, infinite :D (ID: ****a Winchester)

> Watching this dance practice is just…goodness i can't even explain the feeling. Too overwhelming. So proud of my boys! […] (ID: ****gale)

Accompanied by the words "babies" and "my boys," the fans' use of "proud" is significant, as the word implies and is applied to a hierarchical relation. Female fans' ardent support resonates with "the Cinderella complex," the conventional rhetoric that is still pervasive today (Dubino 1993). The Cinderella complex is named after a fairy tale *Cinderella*, the well-known story of a diligent, beautiful, and kind woman who was unable to change her destiny, including her lower social status, without

the help of a prince. K-pop fans reverse this rhetoric. They like this video because here, Infinite is low-class "poor babies." They pity Infinite having to work such long hours, often with mistreatment by their agency, despite the group's talent. Fans are also aware of the fact that they take pleasure from watching the dancers' moves, and that the dancers would not be able to succeed without their fans' help.

Indeed, Infinite's fans have "protected" their stars. K-pop fans are famous for their full-hearted dedication to their stars through both online and offline activities. Infinite's fans are no exception. Inspirit, Infinite's official fan club, has helped the group to increase visibility. In 2014, Inspirit launched a movement and urged Infinite fans worldwide to vote for Infinite so that the group could win at the "Mnet Mwave World Championship 2014." [8] The fan club also accused "Golden Disk Awards" of not properly treating their stars. According to Inspirit, while Infinite traveled to Beijing in China to attend the ceremony, the agency did not provide Infinite with safe transportation and appropriate snacks during the stay. Infinite took a train and were provided with cup noodles, while other artists were provided with luxury car transportations and healthy lunch boxes, Inspirit said.

By celebrating the male dancers' success from unknown, hard-working "poor babies" to rising K-pop stars, fans celebrate themselves—their power and ability to support their idols. They watch K-pop dance practice videos not just because they are fans of the group, but also because they feel *empowered* by watching the videos. By "saving" and "protecting" the group, female fans complicate and reverse the conventional rhetoric in gender construction: a heroic man and a tragic female who desperately needs men's help. They enact power upon the male bodies to demonstrate their authority by complimenting their own labor to prove that fans' support has sustained the male dancers.

Watching "Real" Stars with Intimacy

In a music video, K-pop singers look like stars. They wear fancy costumes and make-up and dance under the spotlight. All of these theatrical elements enhance visual splendor and transform a dance piece into a spectacular

[8] *Mnet* is one of the largest music television and entertainment channels in South Korea.

show. Infinite, too, are also clad in extremely ornamental colorful costumes with embellished accessories, such as tight glossy white skinny pants and silky blazers. Their official music videos project spectacular visual images with magnificent props, stunning lighting, and stage settings. In a live show, it would be more difficult to see "real" performers, unless the audience purchases expensive front seats. In many cases, the audience would watch the singers onstage through the big screen in a concert hall. Due to such theatrical distance, the audience believes that the performers onstage are special and different from them, which is often called "stage presence" or the "aura of theatrical presence" (Fuchs 1985; Copeland 1990). Such experience is also applied to the experience of watching music videos, given the hyper-realistic nature of modern technology today. The mediatized experience is no longer separable from the live experience, as the "experience of live performance in the current cultural climate is by reference to the dominant experience of mediatization" (Auslander 2008, p. 5). The emergence of high technology and digital media today often make music videos visibly more attractive and more real than live performances, which Baudrillard Jean might call simulacra (Jean 1981). Indeed, online is the primary platform where K-pop is circulated and consumed globally, and fans are used to watching singers via video screens. Due to the physical and metaphorical distance between the performers and fans, with the help of the mediatized presence, the singers remain stars.

Infinite's music agent aims to frame the group's public persona as romantic, fairytale-style heroes. For their song "The Chaser" (2012), the agency released another version of the original music video, entitled "The Chaser (Dance Ver)." In the official dance video, with a futuristic setting, quick moves of the camera angle, and highly fashionable and decorative clothes, all members appear perfectly groomed, like living manga characters. The original "Paradise" music video, too, exhibits Infinite as romantic, heroic figures.

On the contrary, in the dance practice video, Infinite look significantly different from the type of "chivalric" men represented by their official music videos, along with the grandiose music style of the group. Infinite wear loose T-shirts and baggy training pants in a small studio without fabulous make up, spectacular backup dancers, or accessories. They look like ordinary men. Their appearance seems plain. Lighting is limited as well, with only fluorescent lamps in the practice room. There are no

professional or theatrical props and settings. Rather, the small room is full of daily supplies. Behind the performers, there are household items, such as speakers, electric fans, a small fridge, tables, and drawers. Such a shabby background setting is unlikely to be an intentional display to cultivate the fans' response. The agent has likely shared the choreography videos with fans as a "fan service," not necessarily expecting a huge number of viewers. On their official YouTube Homepage, called "Infinitehome," this dance practice video is categorized into a playlist entitled "INFINITE Choreography", in which only eight dance practice videos are available. It is quite a small amount of videos, given their career since 2010.

Interestingly, it is the sub-par nature of the video that appeals to female fans. As it is a low-budget video, the video is also less mediatized, and thus appears less artificial. Such a "natural" look provides viewers with a different level of audience experience and a sense of intimacy. Because the room is too small, there is almost no distance between the camera and the performers. The audience can closely observe performers' facial expressions. While dancing, the performers often frown because of concentration or physical tension. Due to proximity, it provides fans with imagination, so that they feel like they are observing the performers in person. A fan wrote: "[I]f i [sic] were to be that thingy in front of them on the floor, [I] will blush like mad omg, esp [sic] that part.:3" (ID: ****han peh). [9] Fans are able to feel as if they are witnessing these dancing men closely, which is impossible in reality.

This K-pop dance practice video seems to invite fans to see the "real" life of K-pop performers. A fan described, "I love how in this particular dance practice their outfits say so much about who they actually are. Too adorable" (ID: ****ey Stydinger). The artlessness of the video provides viewers with a moment of imagining that they are accessing the stars' private, off-stage life as special guests. It is true that the idea of seeing the authentic self can be tricky and even naïve. Nevertheless, the dancers could videotape the rehearsals for their own evaluation, to see how they might look onstage, so that they can further develop their choreography and performance skills. When recording the video, they may not be aware of whether this rehearsal video could be open to the public later.

[9] "That part" refers to the chorus section in which the dancers bounce their hips.

Limited video editing is another aspect that draws viewers into the dance practice video. In the video, there is no additional visual element other than the performers per se, as "the camera just stays still" (ID: ****vedobservxer). The camera in a fixed position implies that viewers are less likely to have any other distractions, and have more agency in term of gaze, unlike music videos that tend to establish viewers' point of views and provide selected parts of the image/object.

Some of the fans go one step further and address the fact that they are replaying the videos multiple times to see specific body parts and movement sequences over and over again. The chorus part is particularly beloved by fans. It is their "favorite" because of the fierce and sensual images that the move generates. Referring to the chorus part, fans said:

> That's why he is my favorite. His exaggerated "pelvic thrust" won my heart. :P (ID: ****penas)

> This choreo [sic.] is certainly paradise when they wear those tight black wife beaters and intensify the hip thrust LAWD (ID: ****eo)

> i've [sic] never been able to watch this all the way through without my eyes wandering to sunggyu's thighs, and always as soon as my eyes land on them i [sic] cant take them away!! help [sic] me (****y S)

> So they do the epic hip action six times… not enough for me to watch all the members do it. I guess I'll have to watch it again~ You know… for science… (ID: ****oTheRain)

They enjoy watching a particular dance scene associated with a body part that symbolizes male sexuality. For K-pop fans, online technology becomes a way of "choreographing" their desire (Oh 2015), as they get "erotic ideas" (ID: ****alita) from watching the male dancers' specific moves.

The Polysemic Female Gaze

Watching the dancing male bodies, female fans switch their positions from being objects of gaze to being the ones doing the gazing. The female body has a long history of objectification by the male gaze, as "Otherness"

(Banes 1998; De Lauretis 1987; Mulvey 1975). This group of women watching the male dancers, however, reflects a new progress in the realm of spectatorship and pleasure associated with the gaze. They do not simply reverse the bodily objectification, but engage in a complex process of negotiation of gender identification. Though the female viewers take pleasure from watching the sweating dance men, they are not necessarily "Othering" these men. Rather, they emphasize intimacy and reveal an emotional connection with these men. Their status as fans, not simply as spectators, could inform such a perspective, as fans often intentionally take up subordinate positions to their idols (Fiske 1992). But unlike traditional fandom, they do not necessarily idolize these singers. They challenge a double-subjugation of female fans by rejecting the hegemony of women as the object of the male gaze, and fans as subordinated group compared to their idols, or even (white) male-centered mainstream culture. On the comment thread, they share their ideas and feelings and bring up further thoughts and emotions on the transnational platform. Through the consumption of the male dancers, they publicize female bounding that is potentially informed by counter-hegemonic identification of gender norms. They physicalize something that could create efficacy, empathy, and potential changes. They *perform* imagination.

Toward an Open Dialogue for Masculinity and Spectatorship

Fans perform imagination by consuming the K-pop dance practice video. They connect heavy breath and sweating bodies with sexual activities and eroticize men's physical labor. The performers' demanding working environment, exemplified by the shabby practice room, signifies the low class of the singers. For fans, their bodily labor evokes both sympathy and esteem, as the singers have gone through a difficult period and become K-pop stars. It also conjures up erotic feelings, as the "poor babies" are dancing hard to satisfy their (female) fans, which can be the major part of their success. By celebrating Infinite's success, fans not only praise the singers' work ethic but also celebrate and empower themselves—their power and ability to support these "poor boys." Fans become passionate protectors and benevolent patrons of these Cinderella-like K-pop idols.

Fans further pity the singers because of the dramatic and tragic scenario of the lyrics that resemble a chivalric code in which fans potentially identify the heroine with themselves. The performers play multiple-layered characters: tragic heroes in lyrics and sensual dancing men in physicality, which can amplify female viewers' pleasure as these men play both conventional and unconventional masculinity. The plainness of the video also attracts female viewers. It has no theatrical lighting effects, costumes, props, or setting, and the video is not edited either. Focusing exclusively on the men's bodies and movements without distraction or predetermined camera angles, fans claim agency in their usage of the gaze. They also feel intimacy—a fantasy that they are watching the singers' performances sitting in the room and peeking at the stars' "real" life.

The construction of masculinity is inseparable from how it is viewed—spectatorship. Dancers depicted in the K-pop dance practice video and their female fans subvert the conventional notions of masculinity in a glocal context. These sweating "poor babies" do not resemble the stigmatized notion of conventional Korean masculinity—militarized, patriarchal and Confucianist men. This change is significant not because of changing representations of ideal manhood but because it reflects the reversed power dynamics in gender relations. Female fans observe the male bodies and subvert the gendered gaze. By eroticizing the dancing male bodies, women feel dominance and enact empowerment because the pretty young idols desperately need fans' help (often both in reality and in the lyrics) and willingly please their fans. The vulnerable bodies, fully exposed to the audience's gaze, open up the room for envisioning the male body as a site of desire—the platform of destabilizing power, dominance, and eroticism on the male bodies, some of which are still in the closet. The performers in K-pop dance practice videos and their fans also challenge asexualized stereotypes of Asian-American masculinity in Western culture. Fans' appreciation of K-pop dancers ties up to sexual desire, as they consume the video in regard to particular sensual and erotic imaginations.

Western culture has a long history of male dancers who have confronted homoeroticism (Burt 2011). The notion of dance as a female realm still permeates Western culture today, which discourages men from dancing so that male bodies should not be objectified as a spectacle to the

dominant (male) gaze, and thus not challenge heteronormativity (Craig 2013). Female fans liberate themselves from the stereotype imposed upon the male dancers and construct a resistive site in which the audience takes pleasure in viewing the dancing men. Though it is clear that their attempt is driven by sexual enjoyment, they do not necessarily confine the male dancers into the categories of homosexual or objectification. In a glocal context, they actively eroticize stigmatized Korean masculinity and asexualized Asian (American) manhood by exploring a wide range of narratives with a complex negotiation between the male body versus the female gaze: devotional fans versus saviors of the Cinderella-like men, and lastly, objectification versus intimate identification with their singers. Fostering dialogue on male corporeality in motion will demystify masculinity and open up alternative ways of performing sexuality, spectatorship, and identification of gender relations via spectatorship.

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9

"Branding Men": Exploring Men, Masculinity and Thai Alcohol Brands in East Asian Global Markets

Jhitsayarat Siripai and Chris Haywood

Introduction

Transformations in social, cultural and economic life have been linked to the development of transnational neoliberal markets. Such markets are intricately connected to consumer cultures that are increasingly reflexive of the symbolic values embedded in products and commodities (Harvey 1990; Appadurai 1990; Robertson 1992). Such cultures are targeted by companies who often use persuasive strategies to embed and reflect particular symbolic values in order to generate product appeal (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998). This chapter argues that such appeal is often worked through the cultivation of brand masculinities. Drawing upon research undertaken on the use of brand masculinities in advertising and marketing by alcohol corporations based in Thailand, we explore how companies are re-making their appeals to extend their reach beyond

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national borders to global markets. More specifically, it is suggested that the aggressive marketing tactics by Thai-based alcohol companies within countries such as Japan, China, Singapore and Taiwan are aimed at celebrating and cultivating a particular new kind of brand masculinity. Although this branding has its basis in associations with Thai heritage, there is evidence to suggest that alcohol companies are dis-locating themselves from such heritage in order to project a future-facing, cosmopolitan and transnational appeal. As a result, it is argued that one of the purposes of brand masculinities is to encourage target audiences to connect to particular images/lifestyles that result in informed purchasing decisions within consumer culture (Belk 1988; Dittmar 1992; White and Hellerich 1998; Wattasuwan 2005). In short, multi-national companies are embarking on new forms of subjectification through the promotion of hybrid appeals that are premised on a tension between the cultural resources of Thai heritage and the need to expand into global markets.

The focus on brand masculinities and how they are used transnationally is grounded in the Thai beer market. The beer market in Thailand has been dominated by the competitive desire between two brands, Singha and Chang, to be the Thai market leader in the alcohol sector for nearly twenty years, in a period between 1995 until 2015, the market leader, Singha, having lost its dominant market share to Chang in 1997. At present, however, Singha now occupies the dominant position in the Thai alcohol sector. It is argued that the competition between the two companies has been fought through the promotion of different kinds of masculine representations taken from Thai society. For example, Singha uses masculine codes that are closely aligned to that of the Royal family, Buddhism and cultural traditions, such as respecting senior or older people, being grateful to someone or the reciprocation of loyalty. In contrast, Chang has developed a complex brand identity that is closely connected to national identity, rural workers and cosmopolitanism. The division is not always definitive and at times the codes embedded in a promotional activity by one brand can blur across to another. Furthermore, greater complexity is involved as both companies also draw upon global sporting and entertainment events and regional environmental concerns to try and sell their products. Overall, the struggle for market share could be regarded as a struggle between the two brand masculinities, constructing

and deconstructing a range of Thai manhood ideals for brand promotion. However, as alcohol corporations are looking to increase their market share by generating appeals to consumers across East Asia, masculine representations have also become a key device in this process of capturing the market share. Although the struggle for this share is being fought beyond national borders, little information exists on how or if companies are modifying their brand masculinity. In short, it is not self-evident what this shift to an international market will mean in terms of product appeal and the development of brand masculinities in the East Asian context.

The gendered nation of Thailand is based on images, cultures, rituals and social values that are unique to Thailand (Hofstede and Arrindell 1998). Thus, the gendered nation is not an objective construct, rather it is more like an imagined community that defines the overall gender of the nation (Anderson 1983; Hall 1991; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2003). This can be seen from the Singha and Chang "ideal male" images presented in their advertising, which symbolically represent the sense of soft culture, high collectivism, community, compassion, thoughtfulness, high societal association and caring (Hofstede and Arrindell 1998; Niffenegger et al. 2006). This is juxtaposed with the features of more conventional masculine cultural dimensions present in the cultures of Western countries, such as assertiveness, competitiveness and sexual competence (Hofstede and Arrindell 1998). As such, the male images that are presented in Thai promotions could be indicative of feminized Western versions of manhood (Richmond-Abbott 1992). Furthermore, a quantitative study of the cultural dimensions (Hofstede and Arrindell 1998) indicates that Thailand had low significance scores in "individualism and masculinity dimensions". In this context, Thailand has a high collectivist culture and low significance of masculinity, where people tend not to be assertive and competitive but are more submissive, which again reinforces the idea that Thailand, as a gendered nation, is a more feminine-based culture (Hofstede and Arrindell 1998; Niffenegger et al. 2006; Camp et al. 2011). The extrapolation of Western models of masculinity onto Asian markets creates a racialized view of masculine inferiority by operationalizing fixed universalistic measures of masculinity. Setting up masculinity as an ideal type or as a benchmark for "proper" masculine behaviour ignores and downplays the possibility that gender in a range

of cultural contexts may be made in different ways with a diversity of cultural resources.

This chapter therefore moves away from measuring masculinity on Western ideals, and rather considers the possibility of a local arrangement of masculinity that is contextually driven. In order to do this, the chapter begins by exploring the concept of brand masculinity, provides details of the methodological approach and then explores the branding of masculinities in East Asia by examining recent Singha promotions in Japan. The chapter concludes by suggesting that whereas traditional Thai heritage is used as a resource by companies to promote products, at a transnational level such a heritage can be seen as problematic.

Brand Masculinity

The use of gender and sex to sell products has long been understood as a key part of market success (Reichert and Lambiase 2014; Aaker 1997). It is suggested that associations with masculine characteristics are used to promote brands by creating positive attitudes and lifestyles orientated toward the male consumer (Schroeder and Zwick 2004, Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling 2006). In order to generate an appeal to men, it has been suggested that companies are associating their products with particular masculine norms and values. In order to do this, products are given personalities, or as Aaker (1997: 347) suggests: "… human characteristics associated with a brand". She suggested that one aspect of that personality, gender, could be used to project onto a product via imagery, endorsers and, indirectly, from other brand associations. As a result, it is possible to identify the gender of a brand's personality by measuring the prevalence of different gendered traits. This means that masculinity can be measured according to the amount of masculine content associated with a product, resulting in some brands being more masculine than others. In this account, brand masculinity (and brand femininity) are sub-sets of a gender personality and brand masculinity is therefore often understood as: "the set of masculine human personality traits associated with masculinity applicable and relevant to brands" (Grohmann 2009). Grohman (2014) argues that certain companies such as Nike and

Porsche attach values of aggressiveness and dominance to their brands in order to align themselves with the consumers' masculine self-concepts and self-expression. This happens, for example, in the use of particular fonts, where it is argued that display type fonts can reinforce consumers' perceptions of a brand's masculinity. Given that masculinity is viewed as a measurable component of a brand personality, Azar (2013) suggests that it is possible to use a brand masculine dimension (BMD) and argues that a range of brand masculinities, which include hegemonic, emerging, chivalrous and subaltern masculinities, can be identified by different scores across this dimensional measure. Interestingly, Azar argues that his research does not support any hierarchical relationships across products and therefore it is difficult to establish the power of a brand in relation to other brands.

A different approach to understanding brand masculinity involves identifying the social and cultural dynamics of the brand. Hirschman and Belk (2014) question the assumption that you can simply align a product with a symbol of masculinity and this will then result in brand appeal to men. Instead they argue that there needs to be a perceived authentic linkage of the brand to masculinity, and that the generational and regional backgrounds of the consumers have a crucial impact on how brand masculinity is perceived. They also suggest that some brands become anchors in specific product groups precisely because the link between the masculine representations and the masculine culture appear genuine. Of significance in this study is that brand masculinity has moved from a series of traits embedded in the product towards the social and cultural location of the product. Therefore, branding becomes a social and cultural process rather than a "stacking up" of particular traits. This understanding of branding as a cultural process is suggested by Holt (2003), who argues that:

> Cultural brands are brands for which the product serves as a vehicle through which consumers experience myths that symbolically "resolve" contradictions in society. When we pay a premium for Budweiser, we're paying primarily for the stories that have been imbued in the beer.

This approach to branding as a social and cultural dynamic argues that it is not necessarily the level of masculinity in a brand or the social

and cultural location of the consumer, but rather how much the brand connects with the social and cultural myths. So, according to Holt, when we buy beer, we are actively involved in the instantiation of myths in their products. In relation to gender, it is argued that brands use symbolic meanings associated with masculinity to construct meanings that would encourage the sales of their products. Brand images, it is argued, are constructed to convey images/lifestyles that represent what consumers would like in order to encourage a change in their purchasing choice (Belk 1988; Dittmar 1992; White and Hellerich 1998; Wattanasuwan 2005). It is suggested that social and cultural dynamics can be understood within the context of the discursive space of meaning making. As Leitch (2007: 73) points out: "Brands jostle with one another within discursive space to create meaning-laden connections with consumers". It is maintained that in order to explore how Thai alcohol companies are promoting themselves in Eastern Asia, it is important to examine their discursive positioning in relation to their national advertising campaigns.

Research Objectives and Methods

This exploration of branding is based on a four-year study of alcohol companies, branding and masculinity in Thailand. The research involved examining the adverts airing on Thai television channels from 1st January 2009 to 31st July 2013. This study employed an interpretivist/constructivist approach (Burgess 1984; Silverman 2000; Payne 1999; Guba and Lincoln 2005; Lincoln et al. 2011; Guba and Lincoln 1994; Patton 1990) and used a range of methods, including a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of television advertising, in-depth interviews with the alcohol company employees and focus groups with different audiences. The qualitative content analysis initially examined the 10 most popular alcohol brands[1] in Thailand. Part of this research was conducted by the

[1] The 10 alcoholic brands were selected from the top five of "Thailand's most admired brands 2013" from the categories of liquors and beers, which produced adverts aired on television. The research was conducted by the BrandAge Research Team of the Brandage marketing business magazine, which is widely recognised by the business industry and by academic scholars.

BrandAge Research Team of the *BrandAge marketing business magazine* in Thailand. The 10 most favoured alcoholic brands in 2013 were: Johnnie Walker, Regency, Sang Som, 100 Pipers, Blend 285, Singha, Leo Beer, Heineken, Chang and Archa. A total of 387 TV adverts [2] were aired by this elite group between 1st January 2009 and 31st July 2013, and all 387 were examined as part of this investigation. It was found that Singha and Chang were the two leading brands and the content analysis affirmed that the Singha brand aired on television a total of 187 adverts, the largest number of adverts that aired on television of any of the 10 most favourite alcohol brands in Thailand in 2013.

The resulting research focused on two brands, Singha and Chang. It is important at this stage to explain the brand names of Singha and Chang in more depth. "Singha" refers to a product name and the corporate company brand name, and covers the sales volume of the entire Singha alcoholic brand portfolio, which are Singha, Leo, and Thai beer (Thunyawat Chaitrakulchai 2010; *The Manager News* 2011a, b; Euromonitor International 2012, 2013). In contrast, "Chang" refers to a specific beer product brand name, and is therefore solely representative of the sales volume of the entire beer brand portfolio from the Thai Beverages Public company (which includes Chang, Federbrau and Archa) (Thunyawat Chaitrakulchai 2010; *The Manager News* 2011a, b; Euromonitor International 2012, 2013). In order to analyse the construction of masculinity in Singha and Chang commercials on television, in addition to other connotations of masculinity represented within the adverts, five key categories were examined: content, advertising appeal and execution; music; announcer overlays; celebrity endorsement; and marketing event activities. This national approach was then supplemented by a review of marketing activities across East Asia. In order to explore how Thai companies are promoting their brand masculinities in East Asia, this chapter takes Singha as a case study and its campaign of "Transportraits" that began in 2010.

[2] The TV alcohol adverts bought from the "Mediawrap Company". It is the largest and most trustworthy company that monitors and sells all advertising data in all paid media in Thailand.

From the Local to the Global

Recent research has confirmed that East Asian alcohol markets are generally dominated by domestic brands within each country (Euromonitor International 2015). This evidence suggests that countries in the East Asia region present a high intensity of local values, which is often demonstrated by the monopoly market position of local manufacturers. This corresponds to the case study of alcohol brand promotions in Thai society, where local brands dominate the market sector. Findings in the current study suggest that at a national level, in the process of achieving market dominance, Singha and Chang have been creating brands that draw upon a hybrid mix of local and global appeals. In other words, the brand builders, for example Singha and Chang, mix the brand identity of Thainess, international values and the common local values of East Asia. Branding often follows a process of building consumers' brand awareness and experiences by influencing attitudes, interest, and opinion (AIO) (Vyncke 2002). For instance, music activity, such as rock music or concerts, as well as international sporting activities, such as football, golf and motor sports, all of which are related to masculinity, are used at a national level to bring the global into the local.

The impact of globalization has resulted in a number of Thai companies adopting a more global approach, such as Charoen Pokphand (C.P.), a food retail brand that produces fresh and frozen foods sale globally (Shannon 2009). Singha and Chang currently export to both regional and global markets, particularly those in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Of key significance for this chapter is that Singha uses an elite Thai male image to promote the brand locally, which is based on "local consumer culture positioning". However, it is not straightforward how this local positioning is undertaken at the global level (global consumer culture positioning) (Alden et al. 1999; Cayla and Eckhardt 2008). The difficulty is how Singha moves from marketing that is highly dependent on Thai symbols of masculinity towards a more international market, where such symbols might not have the same emotional purchase for consumers. Thus, as the discursive space shifts from the local to the global, a different process of meaning making takes place, resulting in the reconfiguration of the brand masculinity. The question, therefore,

is to determine how Thai brands are to succeed in East Asian markets, and what kinds of masculine representations are being drawn upon and promoted.

More specifically, Boonrawd's advertising slogan, *Bia Sing, Bia Thai* ("Singha Beer, Thai Beer") demonstrates a broader promotional strategy that aims to conflate and elide Singha with "Thainess" (Jory 1999). As a result, Singha has constructed a brand image that connects with forms of "'Thainess", such as the Monarchy, Buddhism and traditional Thai culture. Furthermore, this "Thainess" is also gendered, as it promotes a number of characteristics derived from "real" men's lives (or lived masculinities), such as older, middle class, aged around 25–35, professional and successful in their career. Singha's brand masculinity is informed by masculine representations of loyalty to the monarchy, inspirational capitalism, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) images. Loyalty to the monarchy refers to forms of men and masculinities that honour and respect the King and royalty as superordinate, one of the most respected institutions in the Thai social hierarchy. Inspirational capitalism means forms of successful and professional men who work hard to achieve goals in life, think of other people and advocate ways to help or encourage others to follow or make their dreams come true. It adopts a CSR based on men who think of preserving Thai culture, art, folk wisdom, and in associating with the three pillars of Thai identities (nation, Buddhism and honouring the monarchy). The common characteristics across these representations include social stability, respectfulness and the importance of authority. Alongside this, the logo of Singha is a Thai mythical beast that takes the form of a lion. Importantly, this symbol carries values of strength, power, leadership and courage, which provide an important connection to the nation. Its colour, yellow, is commonly recognized among Thai people as the King's colour (Louiyapong 1996; Stengs 2012; Hewison 2014) and also symbolically represents the King, with connotations of value and wealth. More conservative elements in Thai culture view alcohol as a "sin business" because it is against traditional Buddhism instructions (Korpornprasert 2007; Nai Wang Dee 2011; Praew 2010). Thus, alcohol is culturally perceived as a harmful product for health and social reasons and is also against the national religion in Thailand (Sinsuwan 2012).

Singha: "Thainess" Without Thailand

If, as stated above, the "Thainess" of the Singha brand is used as a key resource to sell the product at a local level, then at the transnational level this becomes more problematic. There is much work on global brands emerging from Western metropoles as forms of cultural imperialism (Ritzer 1993; Cayla and Eckhardt 2008). However, more work is needed that examines the exporting of culture between Asian nations. The opening up of global markets has encouraged the Thai alcohol corporation's adoption of sophisticated global marketing trends and branding approaches, such as the integrated marketing communications approach, to reach most consumers' points of contact to the brands. It could be argued, therefore, that such marketing communication tools have provided the channels for building up brand masculinity in the modern Thai era. At the local level, older Thai traditional values still symbolically remain within the masculine representations that make up the brand masculinities. However, the increasing development of global markets has not only served to transform the nature of Thai society, but "Thainess" is also being exported outside of Thailand's national borders. Although it is not predictable how this is taking place, it is suggested that Thai values associated with the product both contribute to its uniqueness and also to a potential limited appeal. This means that rather than project existing national values into the global marketplace, there are new forms of hybridity emerging. As Cayla and Eckhardt (2008: 218) noted: "Although the region remains incredibly diverse and hard to unify along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines, economic exchanges are leading to new forms of integration".

One of the features of Singha's advertising campaign in East Asian countries is that it is unrestricted by the national laws governing its promotion in Thailand. In 2008, the Thai government launched strict regulations controlling alcohol advertising in the media. Generally, these firms were then not allowed to illustrate alcohol products (packaging) with sex appeal advertising, or to use in the adverts direct persuasive wording or invitations to drink. So a good example of the difference between Thailand and Japan can be seen in the way the product is marketed.

In Thailand the product itself—the beer—is not shown. In Japan, the beer is shown being held and drunk by younger people who are having fun in a range of hedonistic activities.

This in itself is re-shaping the brand and the cultivation of particular masculinities. In many ways the advertising is foregoing traditional forms of Thai masculinity, and rather appears to be appealing to different forms of masculine representation.

In 2010, Singha launched a global advertising campaign that involved bringing six up-and-coming artists and musicians to perform in the USA, France and Japan. A creative working on the project described the advertising brief as:

> Move Thailand's original beer, Singha, beyond the traditional Thai/Asian channels and drinking occasions, while connecting the brand to non-Thai/Asian consumers worldwide. Position Singha as: "the exotic beer that happens to come from Thailand."

The aim was to connect the brand to global consumers through different forms of consumption, such as sport, nightlife, music and art. The shift of moving away from non-Thai Asian channels is interesting, given that one of the inaugural events was held in Tokyo and not Thailand. The disconnection from the local to market the brand is reinforced through the company's suggested tweets of Singha as: "a lifestyle with a unique voice". The emphasis on Singha as being simply a beer that "happens" to come from Thailand results in the reframing of the brand through a number of non-Thai codes. Therefore, in many ways the promotional emphasis on the brand is to dislocate Singha from its Thai heritage, as such values appear to disrupt the global appeal of the brand. Furthermore, there is also the emphasis on the exotic. As Foster (1982: 22) suggested:

> The meaning of the exotic is what is assigned to the unfamiliar, derived from what is close at hand. The unfamiliar implies an openness that invites symbolic associations and articulations. In the process of making the unfamiliar comprehensible, what is familiar is defined anew by being associated with the remote, and so a relation, however erroneous, is set up between the exotic and the commonplace.

Thus, Singha beer involves an attempt to re-fashion the remoteness of Singha beer into something proximal, as a means of being interpreted and understood. It is argued that in order to appeal to the East Asian audience, there is a juxtaposition between the traditional ("Thainess") and contemporary (global) that can be read as a re-insertion of the exotic Other, through tropes of youth culture and hedonism.

Singha's campaign was supported by a number of different sponsored events that were captured in a range of promotional videos. The representation of Singha in these videos abandons Singha's national campaign that focused on images of older Thai men who were family focused, had successful careers and displayed a social responsibility for their society. In contrast, the Transportraits focus on young, creative and hedonistic young men. For example, in the video "Tokyo", the action begins through what appears to be a black and white surveillance camera that is capturing an apparent act of vandalism by graffiti. In the lower half of the commercial there are a number of boxes providing details such as the time and which camera is being used. There is also a box that indicates the year the beer was established (1933) and one that reads "Singha, Tokyo, Transportraits". The portrayal of a criminal act gives Singha an edgy, transgressive feel that is in opposition to the social responsibility that is attached to its national campaigns. In Tokyo, the artist (assailant) is dressed in clothes that are suggestive of a USA-style, African-American hip hop style, baggy trousers with a baseball hat, which convey notions of a counter-cultural resistance to traditional artistic practice and, as a result, appear to challenge the conventional notions of art. The use of urban rebelliousness, spontaneity and anti-authority reflect a broader global trend of large corporations buying into the use of graffiti art as an advertising campaign. As Alvelos (2004: 83) suggests: "The main objective behind the use of graffiti is not so much to generate sales (as the graffiti marks are generally too cryptic to guarantee an unequivocal product identification), as it is to instil an aura of "cool", of "street credibility", on the advertized product." Alvelos goes on to suggest that the involvement of corporations in the use of graffiti creates a scenario where the differences between authentic street art and marketing graffiti become blurred. As the video progresses, it moves from the criminality of the act towards depicting the character of the street art and the artist, and the process and practice of the street artist is captured across a number of

different venues within Tokyo. Droney (2010) highlights how the division between street art and marketing is becoming increasingly blurred in that: "The links between street art and advertising similarly confuse the binary opposition between subculture and parent culture, resistance and authority." Importantly, Singha, in the process of using a particular style of street art, uses a street art that achieved popularity in the Global North. The brand of the Singha is the mythical creature that just *happens* to be from Thailand, that the street artists are using to convey their art.

Singha's use of urban culture connects with a particular form of gendering of street artists, where "graffiti serves as a resource for constructing an inspiring form of masculinity that provides a sense of potency amid larger forces that constrain social life" (Monto et al. 2012). Self-expression, creativity and innovation become styles of a particular form of masculinity that is in opposition to the predictable regularities of the mundane, of the traditional Singha drinker. This is further emphasized in another short video entitled the "Ambassadors House", (again held in Tokyo), of an event that showcases a number of musical artists. In the first part of the video, it features DJ Yan, a Japanese DJ whose music focuses on broadly electro house music, and from Disco Duff from London, whose music is much more bass orientated. Importantly, both artists are deemed to be a new generation and cutting edge on the music scene. Once again, Singha draws upon youthful creativity and vibrancy to associate with its product. The Seco club in Tokyo is the backdrop for the video. The video attempts to capture the mood: ambient house music, lighting filtered by smoke and young people dancing with bottles of Singha in their hands, which creates a laid-back, cool feel. What is striking in the video is that the talented purveyors of the music are not seen in conjunction with the brand. Rather, the main consumers in the video are young women. This is revealing, as the national campaign specifically targeted men. In an interview with the managing director of Singha, he justified why, at a national level, targeting females might be unsuccessful in Thai alcohol consumer culture:

> *…Women drink alcohol nowadays because it indicates sexual equality. Women drink alcohol to show that they are macho. Therefore, if you have a campaign to promote women drinking alcohol… the main point is that they (males and females) might not drink…*

However, the global campaign provided much more focus on women drinking Singha, with a series of cutaways to young and older women holding Singha whilst dancing and laughing. Often, these cutaways are of women on their own, without their male or female friends. On one hand this could be indicative of a post-feminist subjectivity, where women are able to make the same lifestyle choices as men. However, as the video progresses, it could be argued that as Singha is re-gendering, it is also re-sexualizing the brand, as it fractures the centrality of a masculine familial sexuality towards the promotion of hedonistic masculinity that is connected to a more (sexualized) liberal femininity.

At the same time, the video appears to show women (and men) mesmerized and in a dreamlike state while dancing to the music and drinking Singha beer. One of the approaches to understanding brand masculinity at a global level could be through the concept of a transnational business masculinity; a concept used by Raewyn Connell and Julian Wood (2005) to refer to those men who control dominant institutions, such as business and political executives who are involved in global economic and political management. Connell and Wood argue that that these men are egocentric, have less sense of loyalty and responsibility for others, have no permanent commitments, have a libertarian sexuality and tend to commodify women. The underlying theme of this transnational business masculinity is that it operates within a world gender order—operating through progress, action and achievement exercises in business relations. It is suggested here that at a cultural level, alcohol companies, as new cultural intermediaries, are promoting transnational cultural leaders who are involved in the re-production of gender relationships. Rietveld (2013) suggests that DJs are reinforcing existing forms of masculine power through the positioning of the audience being subject to the dominance of the DJ. She maintains that: "Particularly in a patriarchal context, hegemonic masculinity is reconstructed (Middleton 2006) as both competitive, with other (male) DJs, and as subordinating (the crowd)." She continues to say that the crowd, imagined as female, are visually and sonically subject to the power symbolically embodied in the DJ. As Herman (2006: 28–29), in a review of the representations of DJs in media, such as trade magazines and online music sites, points out: "…the DJ's authorship is constructed along traditional, patriarchal lines. Mostly men, DJs are described as

masculine musical superheroes who control and dominate the crowd." Whilst it could be argued that Singha is promoting its brand by aligning it to these forms of male power, it is not predictable how young men and women are viewing these representations and what this means to them. What it is suggesting, however, is that the Singha brand is taking on new cultural forms and new styles of masculinity in order to re-create its brands and secure its appeal within global consumer cultures.

Conclusion

The shift from the branding of masculinities at a local level of Thailand to those in East Asia involves branding, which Cayla and Eckhertd (2008: 217) describe as: "horizons of conceivable action, feeling, and thought" (Arnould and Thompson 2005: 869), helping to create new ways for consumers to think of themselves as Asian." In the advertising campaign it is evident that Singha has consciously tried to move away from promoting the brand through its authentic Thai heritage to one where such heritage is seen as problematic. This has interesting implications for how we frame the relationship between the local and the global if, as Robertson suggests (1995), globalisation does not only homogenize the world in terms of economics, politics, societies and cultures, but also determines the world's pattern of consumption, when country cultural demographics are absorbed into the same consumer culture to develop a Westernisation-cultural imperialism. The difference in this case is that this is the cultivation of a South East Asian brand attempting to market its product in East Asia by attempting to downplay and minimize its local position in order to gain a more global presence.

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Part III

Emerging Masculinities: Configuring Men's Futures

10

Herbivore Masculinities in Post-Millennial Japan

Justin Charlebois

Introduction: Salaryman Hegemonic Masculinity and Housewife-Emphasized Femininity

The corporate salaryman (*sarariiman*) and full-time housewife (*sengyô shufu*) represent archetypes of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity in post-World War II Japan (Dasgupta 2013; Hidaka 2011). Hegemonic masculinity concerns "that form of masculinity in a particular social setting that structures and legitimates gender relations hierarchically between men and women, masculinity and femininity" (Messerschmidt 2011: 206). Hegemonic masculinities incur intelligibility through their relationship with subaltern masculinities and "emphasized" femininity, "a form of femininity that is practiced

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in a complimentary, compliant, and accommodating subordinate relationship with hegemonic masculinity" (Messerschmidt 2011: 206). The relationship between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity is fundamentally unequal. At the same time, however, it is crucial to emphasize that gender relations are not static and inexorable but more dynamic and tenuous. Indeed, power is never unidirectional and absolute but multidirectional and fluid, so individuals shift between occupying positions with various degrees of powerfulness and powerlessness (Weedon 1996).

A *sarariiman* ("salaryman", salaried employee) is associated with a man whose graduation from an elite university is followed by continuous employment in a single workplace organization (Dasgupta 2013; Hidaka 2011). Employees are expected to exert dedication and loyalty to the organization and in repayment receive lifetime employment, financial security, and social status. (Dasgupta 2013). The *kigyō senshi* ("corporate warrior") metaphor is frequently applied to salarymen who were expected to sacrifice their time, autonomy, family life, and even health in order to successfully perform their role in the public sphere. A section of the middle class was able to access a stable lifestyle by enacting the complementary roles of salaryman with hegemonic masculinity and full-time housewife, emphasizing femininity. Therefore, stable employment, marriage and fatherhood were crucial rites of passage for men, while marriage and motherhood were critical life milestones for women.

A *sengyô shufu* ("professional/full-time housewife") complements salaryman masculinity, and they collectively constitute the hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity dynamic. A wife's domestic support enables a salaryman to prioritize his career and corporate role. In contrast, wives are expected to concentrate on providing for the needs of their families, and thus de-emphasize other roles or professional ambitions. In reality, however, many housewives engage in part-time or temporary work, and thus balance two sometimes conflicting roles (Nemoto 2010: 205–206; Tachibanaki 2010: 227–264). Therefore, a gendered division of labor underpins salaryman hegemonic masculinity and housewife emphasized femininity.

Post Lost Decade Salaryman Masculinity

The 1990s and ensuing decades have witnessed a prolonged period of economic decline and social upheaval (Dasgupta 2013). Japan experienced a period of low economic growth, rising unemployment rates, and a resulting sense of apprehension and uncertainty that is commonly referred to as the nation's "lost decade" (*ushinawareta jûnen*) (Dasgupta 2009: 79). A significant consequence of this period is that access to the salaryman lifestyle has become even more limited in the subsequent decades. Compared to the era of high economic growth, masculinity cannot always be constructed through the social resources of stable employment, professional status, and financial wealth.

A positive consequence of this tumultuous period has been the emergence and some degree of social legitimation of alternant discourses of masculinity. Non-hegemonic masculinities are emerging, which significantly depart from and potentially undermine the force of the salaryman discourse (Dasgupta 2009: 80). Today, nascent forms of masculinity are apparent, such as the *otaku* (geeks), associated with animation and computer technology (Dasgupta 2009; Napier 2011), and the *furītā* (freelance workers), associated with unstable employment and the avoidance of social responsibility. The passage of gender-neutral childcare leave legislation was the catalyst for the emergence of *ikumen* (stay-at-home dads). In reality, however, the number of fathers who take childcare leave is exceedingly small, yet the fact that *ikumen* receive a degree of social recognition by the media and larger society reflects the dispersion of shifting discourses of masculinity.

The discourse of salaryman masculinity has also experienced various shifts in the wake of the "lost decade". While pre-1990s salarymen strengthened collegial bonds through after-work socialization, *shinjirui* (new breed) salarymen are much thriftier with both their time and money (Allison 1994; Dasgupta 2010). This generation possesses less disposable income and is accordingly less inclined to invest a considerable amount of time and money in after-work collegial socialization. Many men dutifully attend the obligatory end of the year (*bônenkai*) and New Year parties (*shinnenkai*), as well as indulge in some informal socializing,

but the time invested is considerably less than that spent by salarymen in previous eras. Simultaneously, Japanese corporate values are seemingly shifting from the prioritization of hard work (*kinben*) and group harmony (*kyōchōsei*) to self-responsibility (*jikosekinin*), individual ability, and the formation of a competitive society (*kyōsō shakai*) (Dasgupta 2010; Takeyama 2010). Understandably, salarymen are less focused on using informal socialization opportunities to build group harmony and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

At the same time, "involved father" discourses are emerging that position salarymen in a more involved parental role (Nakatani 2006). Not surprisingly, perhaps, most husbands' domestic contributions are significantly less than their wives', regardless of their wives' employment status (Dasgupta 2013: 113; Hidaka 2011: 123–125). Furthermore, the nature of the domestic contribution is also gender-segregated. Mothers perform the more instrumental, mundane aspects of care giving, such as cooking, cleaning, and feeding the children, while husbands do the less demanding and arguably more interesting tasks, such as shopping and playing with children (Dasgupta 2013: 113). Furthermore, contemporary wives expect that their husbands are not only family breadwinners but also compatible and communicative (Mathews 2014). Although discourses circulate in contemporary Japanese society that challenge the entrenched *daikokubashira* ideology, they have not galvanized a significant redistribution of gendered labor.

Regardless of these discursive shifts, participation in the labor force and the ability to perform the role of family breadwinner are interwoven into the fabric of salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta 2013: 159; Hidaka 2011: 113). The replacement of a seniority-based advancement system with performance-based assessment necessitates that employees work long hours to receive promotions (Dasgupta 2013: 113; Higashino 2011: 44–49). In addition, the precarious nature of full-time permanent employment necessitates that men who achieve these positions have to devote a substantial amount of time to work. Consequently, the lost decade period did not promulgate a complete realignment of the work-production-masculinity nexus.

Despite Japan's current state of economic malaise, the discourse of the salaryman represents hegemonic masculinity precisely because it

continues to exercise ideological force and therein diminishes other discourses. Similar to hegemonic masculinities in other sociocultural contexts, salaryman masculinity is not the most "mainstream" or common form of masculinity in Japan, but it nevertheless exercises discursive power over other masculinities (Connell 2000: 11; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832; Dasgupta 2013). In a stagnant economy, increasing numbers of younger men are unable to secure permanent employment and thus must accept non-permanent forms of employment (Dasgupta 2009: 83–84, 2010). Consequently, masculinities associated with non-permanent or temporary work—*otaku* (geeks), and *ikumen* (stay-at-home dads)—diverge from the hegemonic ideal, but may be embodied by greater numbers of men.

Herbivore Masculinity

Shifting discourses of masculinity are not solely responsible for the emergence and cultural legitimization of the "softer" herbivore masculinity. Softer forms of masculinity have a long and distinguished history in East Asian cultures. Masculinities scholar Kam Louie (2002: 10) maintains that since the time of Confucius, Chinese masculinity has been construed from the binary forces of *wen* (cultural and mental accomplishments) and *wu* (martial and physical accomplishments). Louie points out that while various degrees of both elements exist within a particular form of masculinity, *wen* is awarded primacy in Chinese culture. Consequently, the macho forms of masculinity that are regarded as desirable in many Western cultures are not idolized in East Asian sociocultural contexts.

Within the sociocultural landscape of East Asia, Japanese popular culture reveres androgynous *bishônen* (beautiful boys) and *bidanshi* (handsome men): boys and men who are thin, fashionable, and aesthetically-oriented. This trend became readily apparent in the 1990s with the debut of *bishônen* pop music groups such as SMAP and Arashi, and has continued through to the present. Within Japanese culture, then, the refined aesthete of herbivore masculinity is regarded as neither feminine nor subversive. Rather, it is a manifestation of the version of masculinity that is considered desirable in Japanese and other East Asian cultures.

At the same time, contemporary discourses of *shinjinrui* salarymen masculinity position men as bodily conscious. Therefore, caring for one's appearance is not as stigmatized in Japan as it is for men in many Western sociocultural contexts. The results of the analysis of salaryman publications indicate that contemporary salarymen are expected to exercise and sport a trendy hairstyle, and thus appear well-groomed and exude heterosexual appeal (Bardsley 2011; Dasgupta 2010). This ideal salaryman is also expected to have non-work related interests and actively participate in childrearing. In sum, these manuals contrast the sober image of an overweight, unstylish, *oyaji* (old man) traditional salaryman with that of a physically active, well-groomed, fresh-smelling contemporary salaryman. Unlike in previous eras, body-grooming and sculpting is now an integral component of the repertoire of social practices that constitutes "cool" *shinjinrui*, salaryman masculinity.

Herbivorous men refers to slim heterosexual men who are frugal, bodily-conscious, and non-competitive in the academic and professional realms (Fukasawa 2009; Morioka 2009, 2013; Ushikubo 2008). As with any form of masculinity, categories can never accurately capture the diverse and complex nature of masculinities. The herbivore metaphor conjures up an image of a grass-eating, non-aggressive, timid animal. Likewise, men who practice herbivore masculinity are passive and purportedly afraid of failure in the areas of school, work, and love. Herbivores' behavior sharply contrasts with their aggressive carnivore counterparts, whose demeanor epitomizes stereotypical masculinity. Existing literature defines herbivores in relation to their consumption and aesthetic practices, work attitudes, and interpersonal relationships.

In contrast to previous generations of salarymen, whose consumption habits included purchasing expensive cars and cigarettes, as well as frequenting costly hostess clubs, herbivores spend their comparatively limited disposable income on body-grooming related products. Their personal care regimes include dieting, hair styling, eyebrow grooming, and caring for their skin (Chen 2012: 286, Ushikubo 2008: 49). They also purportedly enjoy shopping, taking strolls, and eating sweets (Chen 2012). Even in a culture that idolizes *bishônen*, these consumption practices strikingly depart from those that constitute salaryman masculinity.

The pursuit of a professional career is not a central component of herbivore masculinity. As discussed, this trend is not limited to herbivore men, but it is definitive of *shinjirui* men, who aspire to avoid chronic workaholism. However, the combined influence of corporations' adoption of a merit-based system and shortage of secure jobs may catalyze salarymen to devote substantial amounts of time and energy to work. A significant difference between mainstream *shinjinrui* and herbivores is that herbivores' desire to pursue poorly remunerated, less demanding careers may inhibit their marriage prospects and curtail costly consumption practices. Regardless of personal attitudes toward careerism, *shinjinrui* salarymen who aspire to marry, or are married, are expected to serve as primary family breadwinners.

Herbivore masculinity is also associated with the formation of intimate, opposite-sex friendships. They purportedly form intimate bonds with their female friends through talking and engaging in activities such as shopping, cooking, and eating out (Fukasawa 2009; Morioka 2009; Ushikubo 2008). Stunningly, herbivores apparently travel and share hotel rooms with their female friends without initiating a sexual relationship. Regardless of the shifts in contemporary discourses of salaryman masculinity, heterosexual activity is still a central component of *shinjinrui* salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta 2013). A fuller discussion of sexuality occurs in the next section.

Problematizing Herbivore Masculinity

The first problematic element of herbivore masculinity is that the term is strikingly ambiguous and non-specific. Although categories are too static to appropriately capture the complexity and richness of masculinities, "herbivore" is applied to a heterogeneous group of men. Some of these men do indeed mobilize behaviors that suggest the formation of an equality form of masculinity. Others, by contrast, engage in behaviors that sustain rather than undermine hegemonic masculinity. Herbivore is used in reference to men who are both thrifty and avid consumers, career oriented and non-oriented, skilled and ineffective communicators, and

sexually active, passive, or even inactive. I will next discuss each of these elements separately.

Existing literature on herbivores presents them as both thrifty and conspicuous consumers (Otake 2009; Ushikubo 2008: 130–132). In one account, herbivores' limited disposable income necessitates that they become bargain shoppers. As a result, herbivores can apparently be found purchasing reasonably priced commodities and conserving money. In a contrasting account, herbivores purchase non-essential commodities in order to showcase recent fashion trends and have even been classified as "consumer kings" (Arima 2009). This latter depiction is inconsistent with the description of herbivores as "working poor" (Chen 2012: 292), those who lack the requisite disposable income to engage in extravagant consumption. Admittedly, cosmetics, clothing, and skincare treatments are relatively inexpensive purchases in comparison to purchasing automobiles and frequenting expensive drinking establishments. Nevertheless, it is debatable whether individuals with limited financial resources possess the necessary disposable income to fund these purchases. In summary, popular writers and media inconsistently construe herbivores either as economical or self-indulgent consumers. The latter account is particularly contentious, given that herbivore masculinity emerged in the wake of a prolonged economic recession.

Like consumption practices, the literature provides conflicting depictions of herbivores' career orientations. A ramification of the herbivores' passive nature is that they are disinterested in traditional signifiers of masculinity, such as professional success, social position, and wealth (Ushikubo 2008). This depiction suggests that herbivores are engaged in non-permanent or contract (*haken*) jobs with humane working hours, yet these jobs do not incur the same salary and benefits as more permanent (*seishain*) positions. Thus, men involved in this work possess a limited amount of disposable income and perhaps continue to reside with their families. Somewhat contradictorily, Ushikubo (2008) also claims that herbivores are interested in working for large corporations because they prefer stability and security to instability and insecurity.

The work that an individual engages in is closely related to consumption ability. Men who select temporary forms of employment will

inevitably be more thrifty consumers, due to their limited amount of disposable income. On the other hand, men employed by large organizations can afford to be less frugal, especially those who are unmarried and childless. However, in an era when the number of permanent jobs is sharply declining, it is highly unlikely that an individual could strike the healthy work-life balance that the literature portrays herbivores as able to do. Once again, there are conflicting portrayals of herbivores' work and consumption behavior.

Herbivores are depicted alternately as skilled and ineffective communicators (Morioka 2009: 20–21; Ushikubo 2008: 138–139). In the skilled communicators' interpretation, herbivores cultivate intimate friendships with women. In another portrayal, they are deficient communicators because they are timid and insecure around women. The skilled communicators' interpretation represents a striking departure from the pre-1990s reticent salaryman, whose devotion to work left little time to bond with his family. As discussed, however, younger women now expect husbands to cooperate with domestic work and communicate, so communicative ability has become integrated into the repertoire of social practices that constitute salaryman masculinity. The deficient communicators' interpretation conjures up an image of an introverted *otaku* whose primary relationships exist in cyberspace. In this interpretation, herbivore masculinity does not resist a toxic masculine practice, but their poor communication skills may be a symptom of the current digital age.

As discussed, heterosexuality is firmly embedded in the discourse of salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta 2013; Hidaka 2011). Sexuality refers to all forms of erotic desires, practices, relationships and identities (Cameron and Kulick 2003). In the sociocultural context of Japan, heterosexuality is deemed normative, and marriage and parenthood are crucial steps to become a *shakaijin*. In many Western contexts, boys who are regarded as weak or effeminate are regarded as non-masculine and are the targets of bullying (Connell 1995; Pascoe 2011). Consequently, males demonstrate their masculinity through engaging in aggressive heterosexual prowess or constructing narratives about such alleged pursuits. In contrast, boys and men in Japan are unpressured to prove their masculinity through aggressive heterosexual prowess, homophobia, and gay baiting.

The existing literature inconsistently defines purveyors of herbivore masculinity as sexually passive, inactive, or even uninterested in sexual relationships. Some herbivore men engage in monogamous relationships, but they prefer to assume a more passive role and entrust their girlfriends to assume a leadership role in the relationship (Chen 2012: 286–287; Morioka 2009: 12; Ushikubo 2008: 73). While some herbivores are involved in a physical relationship with their girlfriends, others prefer that the relationship remains non-physical. Sexual inactivity can also result from some herbivores' insufficient degree of self-confidence and resulting inability to initiate a romantic relationship.

Some authors attribute herbivores' heterosexual inactivity to their preference to consume both digital and print forms of pornography. Japan has a highly developed sex industry, and frequenting nighttime establishments was a common practice for salarymen in the prosperous decades preceding the recession (Allison 1994). Today, however, corporate expense accounts are less generous, so this practice is more uncommon. In an era plagued by recession, it is unsurprising that both thrifty and more spendthrift herbivores are choosing to focus their spending habits on relatively inexpensive items such as food, fashion, and beautification practices. Relatedly, pornographic magazines and erotic websites are much more reasonably priced and more easily accessible than actual venues. As the current generation has been immersed in technology from an early age, they may prefer to peruse digital rather than print media.

A couple of other interrelated social trends have potential implications for this discussion of herbivore masculinities. Some herbivore men choose to view pornographic media because entering a committed heterosexual relationship is unduly work intensive and involves relinquishing personal freedom. Ushikubo (2008: 68–69) points out that in an era defined by increased gender equality, the achievement of sexual intimacy requires men to expend a degree of time and effort, which some herbivores regard as *mendokusai* (troublesome). In contrast, adult websites and forms of pornography construct a submissive virtual female sexuality. This surreal, computer-mediated sexuality is entirely oriented toward fulfilling men's sexual fantasies and thus far removed from the effort and

open communication required to sustain a healthy and mutually satisfying sexual relationship.

More disturbingly, there is a social trend of *moe,* or men who are obsessed with and yearn for two-dimensional female characters (Condry 2011). These men purportedly possess affection and a desire to care for immature female characters in *manga* (comics) or *anime* (animation), yet they simultaneously realize that their feelings or love are unrequited. In one interpretation, the *moe* phenomenon represents an innocent desire to serve as a caregiver or protector of women (Condry 2011: 267). Alternatively, *moe* can be viewed as men's inappropriate yearning to care for immature girls (Condry 2011: 267). Regardless of the interpretation of this phenomenon, the fact remains that some men's desire is directed at two-dimensional, submissive female characters in print or non-print media, rather than actual women. Likewise, we can argue that since many herbivores are purportedly threatened by women, they idolize surreal, two-dimensional women rather than exert the necessary time and effort required to form romantic relationships with women who expect equality.

Discussion

This section will attempt to resolve some of the problematic aspects of herbivore masculinity by delineating a more nuanced conceptualization of herbivore masculinity. As herbivore masculinity can both sustain and undermine salaryman hegemonic masculinity, this section will argue that we must distinguish between equality herbivore masculinities and more non-progressive forms. Connell (1995: 77–78) maintains that hegemonic masculinity is a historically mobile relation and therefore transforms over time in order to maintain a position of ascendancy in relation to non-hegemonic masculinities and femininities. Therefore, a portion of this section will be devoted to distinguishing those components of herbivore masculinity that are simply appropriated from salaryman masculinity from those elements that are transformational in the sense that they indicate the emergence of a more democratic, *equality* form

of masculinity. *Equality masculinities* are "those that are harmless and/or that legitimate an *egalitarian* relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity" (Messerschmidt 2010: 161).

Morioka (2009, 2013) makes an initial attempt to disambiguate herbivore masculinity. Based on the analysis of interview data generated from a limited sample of participants, he defines herbivore men as "kind and gentle men, who, without being bound by manliness, do not pursue romantic relationships voraciously and have no aptitude for being hurt or hurting others" (Morioka 2013: 7). From this definition we can surmise that herbivore men are unaggressive, unconstrained by social expectations about masculinity, and are not sexual predators. Unlike their salarymen counterparts, herbivore men are not bound by sociocultural expectations about masculinity, such as devotion to work and accrual of wealth, but they simultaneously lack the confidence to initiate a romantic or sexual relationship with women. Furthermore, he creates a typology of herbivores that allows for diversity and variation within the same form of masculinity. For example, he distinguishes between romantically inexperienced and experienced herbivore men. For Morioka, herbivore men are sensitive and attuned to women's feelings, while carnivore men are emotionally insensitive sexual predators.

The previous discussion of herbivore masculinity exposed a tendency to classify herbivore men on external appearance alone. Morioka's (2013) categorization of different forms of herbivore men represents an attempt to provide a deeper, more nuanced conceptualization of this form of masculinity, but his perspective is not unproblematic. Regarding romantic relationships, for instance, he claims that herbivores are uninterested in women's physical appearance, and they are intimidated by women who act overly feminine because they feel pressure to assume a protective role and conform to sociocultural expectations about masculinity. In Morioka's view, herbivores prioritize emotional rather than physical intimacy. He maintains that herbivores hesitate to initiate the formation of a romantic relationship and may even be uninterested in sexual relations. Despite Morioka's attempt to unpack herbivore masculinity, his view of herbivores as relationship-oriented is overly optimistic and non-representative of herbivore masculinities. As previously indicated, other literature

portrays herbivores as aversive toward committed relationships and regular consumers of pornography.

I would like to propose a working definition of herbivore masculinity as a form of masculinity that is underpinned by non-aggressiveness in the areas of professional and academic success and romance. This definition sharply contrasts with the media's tendency to characterize purveyors of herbivore masculinity merely on the basis of appearance, and is more specific than Morioka's definition. In my conceptualization, by contrast, individuals who reject the practices of a work-centered lifestyle and aggressive heterosexual prowess can be seen as practicing herbivore masculinity. This conceptualization is also broad enough to encompass those forms of herbivore masculinity that are defined by assuming a more passive role in heterosexual relationships, or completely rejecting romantic relationships.

A distinction needs to be made between equality herbivore masculinities and more toxic forms of herbivore masculinity that inculcate many aspects of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Japan. Equality herbivore masculinities are built on the social practices of the formation of committed romantic relationships, marriage and involved fatherhood, communicativeness, and a belief in gender equality in all aspects of society. They reject a work-centered lifestyle and are much more interested in forming and sustaining strong interpersonal relationships. The more toxic versions of herbivores still subscribe to an ideology of male superiority and female inferiority, and they engage in social practices that sustain and legitimate a hierarchical position between men and women, masculinity and femininity.

Toxic forms of herbivore masculinity can be seen as a response to an era when stable employment, wealth, and social position are not always contextually-available masculine resources. These noxious forms materialize from the practices of hedonistic consumption, a rejection of heterosexual monogamy, narcissistic body-management, and overall self-absorption. While their salarymen predecessors competed in the public space of work, herbivores use their knowledge of the latest fashion and popular trends to negotiate a higher position in relation to other men. Likewise, the cultivation of an appealing corporeal aesthetic can be seen as a rich source of "body capital" (Holliday and Cairnie 2007) that men utilize to create

and sustain a superior position vis-à-vis other men. Paralleling how a lean, muscular body constitutes exemplary masculinity in many Western countries, Asian cultures extol slenderness (Coles 2009; Miller 2006).

Like salarymen who utilize professional success and social position as gendered resources, men who practice herbivore masculinity mobilize narcissistic body-management for an analogous purpose. Herbivorization can be seen as a response to a sociocultural landscape where stable employment, social position, material wealth and consumption power are no longer contextually-available masculine resources. Consequently, they are constructing a form of masculinity that simultaneously sustains and resists hegemonic masculinity. In an era of economic decline, hegemonic masculinity is reconstituted from alternate social practices that ultimately sustain and legitimate a hierarchical relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity.

To conclude this section, we must exercise caution when overemphasizing the progressive aspects of herbivore masculinity and underemphasizing the more retrogressive aspects (Dasgupta 2013: 159). As discussed, hegemonic masculinity is not a static construct but a historically mobile relation that shifts in response to different historical periods and sociocultural contexts. With this in mind, the discourse of herbivore masculinity does not represent a complete rejection of the wealth, social prestige, and other components of salaryman masculinity. While equality herbivore masculinities challenge the status quo and constitute a more progressive discourse of masculinity, the more toxic versions fail to completely sever the connection between masculinity and success.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the evolution of herbivore masculinities in contemporary Japanese society. Herbivore masculinity is defined through non-aggressiveness in the areas of professional and academic success and romance. The chapter analyzed herbivore masculinities in the areas of consumption practices, career orientation, interpersonal relationships, and sexuality, and argued that herbivore masculinities simultaneously appropriate and resist elements of salaryman hegemonic masculinity.

The emergence of herbivore masculinity indicates that some younger men are interacting with traditional and modern discourses and creating new, hybridized identities that simultaneously inculcate and resist elements of hegemonic masculinity. As argued, we must distinguish between equality herbivore masculinities that sustain and legitimate an equal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, from more toxic, non-equal forms. Equality masculinities are built on the practices of heterosexual monogamy, marriage, involvement in the domestic sphere, and striking a healthy work-life balance. Most significantly, the embodiment of this form of masculinity entails subscribing to an ideology of gender equality. In contrast, non-equality herbivore masculinities are constructed from the social practices of conspicuous consumption, the avoidance of committed romantic relationships, narcissism, and self-absorption. An ideology of gender inequality underpins this form of masculinity.

The existence of equality and non-equality herbivore masculinities demonstrates how masculinities are fraught with tensions and inconsistences and fundamentally heterogeneous. In an era when certain taken-for-granted masculine social practices are increasingly unavailable, younger men are drawing on alternate social practices to construct new masculine and sexual identities that materialize at the intersection of tradition and modernity. Time will be the judge of whether equality herbivore masculinities receive the social legitimization and ascendency necessary to contribute to the formation of a more gender equal society.

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11

Emerging Heterosexualities in an Era of TV Dating: Exploring Young Chinese Men's Experiences of Love and Intimacy

Chao Yang

Introduction

With the launch of the Chinese reality television dating programme *If You Are the One* (*Fei Cheng Wu Rao*) in 2010, TV dating has caught the attention of young people across the country, attracting them as potential participants on the show and also opening a new avenue for urban Chinese youth to experiment with a new way of embarking on a relationship. The programme, which adapted a globalized popular format from the ITV dating show *Take Me Out,* created by FremantleMedia, not only facilitated the production of other similar reality TV dating programmes on other nationwide TV stations, but also led to heated discussions amongst Chinese young people about attitudes and values towards dating and relationships (Li 2011; Wang 2011; Zhang 2010). Compared to the practice of repression of love and sexual matters under

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the guidance of the Yin-Yang doctrine, as well as Confucian and socialist collective ideology in the early decades of the PRC (Evans 1995; Higgins et al. 2002), the TV programme *If You Are the One* could be seen as a modern dating allegory, as well as a turning point that reflects a more individualized and diversified dating culture in the post-reform era. It also resonates with a sexual revolution that has been observed since the introduction of reforms and opening-up policies in 1978, during which more open discussion of sexual topics in the public domain has become increasingly common (Cheng et al. 2000; Huang 1998; MacLeod 2010).

As globalized media and cultural products, reality dating programmes reflect a modern commodity culture, which trigger new material, emotional and sexual desires and anxieties among Chinese youth (Rofel 2007; Yan 2010a; Wang and Nehring 2014). At the same time, under the influence of Western values such as free-choice marriage, romantic love and gender equality, the meaning of love and intimacy, which used to be greatly shaped by Confucian collective familial values and which was meant to serve a reproductive purpose within a lifelong marriage, has been increasingly associated with self-achievement and individual happiness in the post-reform Chinese society (Higgins and Sun 2007). For instance, with the emergence of diversified dating and relationship practices such as divorce, cohabitation, online relationships, extramarital relationships, multiple relationships and one-night stands (Donald and Zheng 2008; Li 2002; Tan 2010; Wang and Ho 2007a, b, 2011), new desires and anxieties towards personal relationships are increasingly observed among the urban Chinese youth, who are more influenced by global media and cultural flows than young people in rural areas (Castells 2005), and who are often seen as a more representative group, reflecting the changing values of the post-reform era. However, still seen as a traditionally private and sensitive topic, there is less research on love and intimacy in China than in some Western contexts, and most of the relevant studies have focused on college students (for example, Higgins et al. 2002; Higgins and Sun 2007) or young people in rural areas (for instance, Hansen and Pang 2010; Yan 2003).

Under a constructivist research paradigm, this chapter intends to examine young Chinese men's understandings and attitudes towards mate-choosing values and practices in the TV dating programme *If You Are the*

One, and further explore their value orientations towards approaching a relationship and the strategies needed to sustain a traditional lifelong marriage, as well as their attitudes towards the emerging dating and relationship practices such as cohabitation, extramarital relationships and multiple relationships in contemporary urban China. In other words, personal relationships become an avenue to examine the changing identity of urban Chinese men, who have often been seen as dislocated from a traditional collectivist ideology and holding more individualistic values compared to members of previous generations (Hansen and Svarverud 2010; Sun and Wang 2010; Wang 2006; Yan 2003, 2009, 2010a, b). Born at the beginning of the economic reform era, young Chinese male professionals tend to share a generational identity, reflecting the changing values in an industrializing and urbanizing Chinese society undergoing radical economic and social change. At the same time, with the implementation of the one-child policy in 1979, most members of the young generation, who grew up in nuclear families, are likely to be the products of a child-centred family culture (Fong 2006; Fowler et al. 2010; Lau and Yeung 1996; Wang et al. 2000; Xu et al. 2007), which is often seen as being opposite to the familial practices in traditional patriarchal families, and they have also been greatly influenced by an increasingly individualized youth culture.

By drawing on Foucault's (1979, 1982) work on subjectivity and on the power/knowledge model, love and intimacy are examined as a historical construct, greatly shaped by the changing socio-cultural environment in Chinese society. Simultaneously, the reality TV programme *If You Are the One* is employed as a mediated dating text for young Chinese men to construct their attitudes and understandings of reality TV dating, and further link it to their own values and experiences of dating and relationships in everyday life. In other words, the sample group of Chinese youth is situated into an active audience research framework, in which the TV dating program is seen as an avenue to generate various attitudes and interpretations by audiences with different cultural competencies (Fiske 1987; Hobson 1982). The program serves as a catalyst for these audiences to further relate it to the way they structure their own dating and relationships. Specifically, this chapter intends to present an analysis based on semi-structured interviews, conducted from June to September

2013 in Beijing, with 17 Chinese male professionals aged between 23 and 30 years old. As the respondents have various family as well as professional backgrounds, and Beijing is a metropolitan city gathering young professionals from all over China, the analysis can be seen as representative of a bigger group of Chinese youth, who have higher educational backgrounds and are working in other parts of urban China.

TV Dating: An Individualized Dating Platform or Reinforcing Traditional Matchmaking Values?

Alongside a number of ways for people to embark on a dating relationship in urban Chinese societies, such as newspaper ads in the 1990s and online dating since the 2000s, TV dating has gradually become a relatively new avenue to establish a relationship in recent years (Li 2011). By recruiting "ordinary" people as its guests, reality dating programs (RDPs) facilitate the shift in dating practices from a private sphere to the public domain, which resonates with Hermes' (2006) argument that the private-public boundary has been blurring in popular culture. In other words, as a public platform for people to approach love and intimacy, TV dating may offer a performance about relationships generated by "ordinary" people on a reality program set that is likely to be different from relationships being performed in fictional TV genres such as soap operas, and can be seen as more authentic and representative in its immediacy by the changing identity of Chinese youth. In addition, compared with the first wave of RDPs broadcasted in 1997, which lasted only for a few years, the new wave of TV dating programmes that have been on screen since 2010 are more illustrative of the social and cultural changes that have been taking place in post-reform Chinese society since the twenty-first century.

At the same time, the program is likely to enable a critical and reflexive viewing experience among its audiences, who, as Hill (2005) indicated, often tend to engage with it actively, trying to identify the motives in the performance of the "ordinary" participants (p. 9). In other words, rather than adopting a referential reading to see the guests on the dating

program set as real people in their daily lives (Liebes and Katz 1990, p. 100), my respondents often tend to follow a "critical-cognitive" viewing mode introduced by Livingstone and Lunt (1994), in which audiences tend to see the televisual text as a commercial product and use "a distanced, informed, or analytic approach" to respond to it (p. 71). For instance, one of my interview participants indicated that:

> For example, some male guests wanted to start a business and they thought why not pay some money to appear on *If You Are the One*? Then people at least would know something about this brand. Then if they wanted to start a business, they could write in their CV that they had been on *If You Are the One* and attach a clip link to it. (Hao Dongsheng, 27, man, interview)

In other words, audiences believe that some guests on the program are likely to have other intentions than mate-seeking and use their performances to cover their true intentions. This resonates with a performance of ordinariness and naturalness under a reality setting (Bonner 2003; Turner 2010: 19). Hill (2005) further argues that the "performed selves" and "true selves" are often fused with each other in reality formats (p. 67). Alongside this, it seems that viewers tend to identify the guests' motives via examining their personal information and social interactions on the programme, which may align with Corner's (2002) argument that the "true selves" of guests are likely to be projected from "performed selves" (pp. 263–4). At the same time, although the authenticity of the TV dating programme *If You Are the One* tends to be questioned, my interview respondents often see it as primarily an entertainment show instead of a realistic or reliable way for ordinary people to approach a relationship.

Also, the programme is often believed to reflect traditional gendered values in the mate-selecting process, in which women tend to think highly of the economic status of a potential partner, while men are inclined to attach a lot of importance towards the physical appearance of the other side. For instance, one of my interview participants indicates that:

> When they (male guests) were asked to choose an ideal girl at first sight, unless they had already chosen a particular female guest before taking part in the program, basically they were members of the good-looks club, (who tended to attach a lot of importance to the appearance of a potential

partner). A male guest would use the aesthetic standards of men or himself… (Zhou Jun, 29, man, interview)

In other words, the shortened dating time was likely to facilitate the mate-choosing process to follow an assumption of "love at first sight", in which guests often tend to attach more importance to some "visible" and "realistic" factors such as appearance, family and professional background. Hence, the program *If You Are the One* was likely to reflect more pragmatic mate-choosing considerations, which are manifestations of a materialistic culture and the pressures associated with it. For instance, the considerations of the guests on the programme are sometimes assumed to reflect partner-selecting values in matchmaking arranged under an everyday life setting, in which young people are likely to be under pressure to marry at an early age and tend to accept the use of matchmaking rituals and traditions, or at least the principles behind such practices.

Furthermore, the popularity of the program is likely to reflect a problematic dating market, in which free-choice marriage becomes more difficult to pursue and the principles behind traditional practices of matchmaking may have been re-asserted as a main way for people to choose a potential partner. However, as many respondents believe that a reliable dating relationship is often established over a relatively long period of time, matchmaking, which is sometimes seen as a risky dating strategy, has sometimes been strongly rejected or has been reluctantly seen as a last resort choice. Alongside this, the assumed commercial interests of the guests in the program *If You Are the One* may further increase feelings of uncertainty towards authentic love and relationships in real lives.

Emerging Heterosexualities in Various Forms of Relationships: From Reproduction to Sexual Fulfilment?

Some relevant studies suggest that various forms of relationships and relationship outcomes, such as divorce, cohabitation, extramarital relationships, multiple relationships and one-night stands, can be increasingly observed in urban China and that Chinese youth are likely to have diversified

expectations towards romantic relationships, which are sometimes understood as dislocating from a traditional lifelong marriage (Donald and Zheng 2008; Farrer 2002; Huang et al. 2011; Li 2002; Tan 2010; Wang and Ho 2007a, b, 2011; Zha and Geng 1992). This connotes a changing sexual morality focusing on the fulfilment of sexual pleasure rather than procreation, and is likely to reflect a changing understanding of personal happiness, which, as Ahmed (2010) argued, is increasingly embracing a creative subjectivity and a possibility of living diversified lives (pp. 218–19).

Specifically, with the increasing popularity of cohabitation among Chinese youth, premarital sex, which used to be a social taboo for the members of their parents' generation, is becoming more morally acceptable (Farrer 2002; Yan 2003). For instance, one of my respondents argued that:

> As young people in a passionate dating relationship want to have an intimate relationship with the other half, cohabitation is a good way for them to know each other… Now premarital cohabitation is not universally accepted. Many parents think that the premise of cohabitation is a legal marriage, but I personally support premarital cohabitation, namely a trial marriage, which in a way can relatively reduce the divorce rate. (Fu Zihan, 27, man, interview)

From the above example, cohabitation is seen as a process of getting to know one's partner better, which implies a self-reflexive avoidance of potential risks in future marital lives. Hence, rather than drawing upon traditional mechanisms of relationship establishment, which emphasized proximity and kinship ties, nowadays the stability of young people's relationships depends on their understanding of and familiarity with each other. In other words, cohabitation is seen as a state from which to develop young professionals' relationship management skills, and is likely to become a pre-stage of a more stable marital relationship. This is opposite to the argument that the experience of cohabitation would bring a lesser degree of commitment and a more flexible nature of a marital bond (Ben-Ze'ev 2004: 233).

Alongside this, the popularity of cohabitation is likely to connote a shopping metaphor in the modern consumerist culture—trying before buying. Specifically, young people exhibit a mentality of objectifying a

potential partner as a product, and premarital sex is likely to become an important aspect for them in order to test the suitability of their partners for a future life together. In other words, premarital sexuality, emphasizing sexual pleasure and satisfaction, is at times seen as dislocating from reprosexuality, which, as Warner (1991) argues, refers to "the interweaving of heterosexuality, biological reproduction, cultural reproduction, and personal identity" (p. 9). This understanding of premarital sex suggests that the centrality of sexual fulfillment is likely to become a contemporary criterion for a happy marital tie.

In addition, apart from a transformative stage towards a future marital life, cohabitation has at times been understood as an alternative to marriage. Compared to an unconditional commitment towards a lifelong companionship in marriage (Mendus 2000: 79), cohabitation is likely to be an inter-personal tie with a conditional promise. In other words, cohabitation among young Chinese professionals in megacities may suggest a changing understanding of a happy relationship, which embraces more freedom and greater change. This aligns with Ben-Ze'ev's (2004) argument that cohabitation often includes the benefits of a marital tie, in which partners embrace a convenient mutual care, "increased sexual access, and lower financial costs and risks" (p. 232). However, when understood as a non-marital relationship, cohabitation is sometimes seen as less morally acceptable among Chinese youth.

Simultaneously, multiple relationships are sometimes seen as a premarital practice and a process through which to select a suitable marital spouse for some Chinese men, who are often in a transition from a one-to-many towards a one-to-one relationship. For instance, the popular reality TV dating programme *If You Are the One* could be seen as imitating a mate-selecting process with multiple potential partners, in which one male participant intends to choose a partner from 24 female guests. In other words, the popularity of reality TV dating programs may imply that multiple partners in dating relationships is becoming an increasingly legitimate social phenomenon in everyday lives. Alongside this, users of matchmaking websites are sometimes seen as having multiple relationships, as another interview participant indicates that:

> One of my friends is a VIP user of baihe.com and jiayuan.com (*Chinese dating websites*), which constantly recommend suitable women to him… He has a very simple goal to find a suitable partner, whom he could marry in the future… He gets to know this one… He also gets to know that one… For some people, this is a selecting process. For some others, this is not such a responsible process. (Xia Kai, 29, man, interview)

In other words, the increasing availability of multiple relationships is likely to cause confusion for young Chinese men, who at times cannot identify their real needs in personal relationships. On the other hand, as multiple relationships are often seen as existing for a short period of time, the meaning of a multiple relationship is understood as pursuing temporary gratification with a reduced emotional investment (Klesse 2007: 137), which was the opposite of a responsible relationship emphasized in traditional morality. This can further imply a subversion of happiness hierarchies, in which a lifelong marital tie is usually seen as more morally valuable than other forms of relationships, as Ahmed (2010) indicated that "some forms of happiness are read as worth more than other forms of happiness, because they require more time, thought, and labor" (p. 12). In other words, in dislocating from traditional dating practices, the understanding of love in multiple relationships is perceived as different from the emotional attachment within a monogamous relationship, which used to be considered as having paramount importance in the self-identification process and as central to a shared future life trajectory (Giddens 1992).

In addition, like premarital relationships, extramarital relationships are increasingly observed in post-reform China. For instance, in a survey about extramarital sex among urban residents between 1988 and 1990, Zha and Geng (1992) argued that about 29% of married men and 23% of married women had engaged in extramarital sex (p. 13). At the same time, a gendered difference was observed, in which males were more likely to conduct extramarital relationships in order to fulfill sexual desires with multiple partners. For example, one of my interviewees argues that:

> I have agreed with a sentence by Freud very much since junior high school. He talked from a male's angle and he said that for males there are only two desires. One is to become a great man, which can be understood in a broad

> way, like achieving money and wealth. The other one is the desire for sex… Of course some things will attract a man, such as spiritual communication and common interests at a deep level, but these are on the basis of sex. (Zheng Anchi, 24, man, interview)

Anchi's statement resonates with the concept of "confluent love" introduced by Giddens (1992), which is seen as aiming to fulfill a "reciprocal sexual pleasure" within a more casual form of personal tie (p. 62). Alongside this, the above example can be linked with a notion of gray women introduced by He (2005), which refers to mistresses and "second wives" (ernai) of elite men in economic and political circles. A gendered economy can be observed, in which sexual and emotional exchanges between men with high economic and socio-political status and young and beautiful women is often seen as the main rationale for extramarital relationships (Farrer and Sun 2003: 16). This is likely to resonate with a utilitarian form of reasoning and market principles underpinning the formation of personal relationships (Osburg 2013: 165–9, 2014; Zelizer 2005).

Also, a gendered difference in the motives and consequences for pursuing extramarital relationships can be identified, and it implies that married men are often seen as being less serious towards extramarital relationships than married women. As Farrer and Sun (2003) indicated, Chinese men often intend to interpret their extramarital relationships with the rhetorical code of "play", which refers to a casually structured relationship based on sexual exchange, and is also a way to express a strong masculine characteristic. At the same time, for young male professionals, an extramarital relationship is seen as a subordinate or complementary dating practice compared to married life, which is often considered as vital in achieving personal happiness.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the mass media in present-day China, as an increasingly privatized modern institution shaped on one hand by a free market economy and on the other by state control, distributing socialist political ideology under government censorship (Curtin 2007; Li 2001: 3; Wang 2011),

tends to work as an effective avenue for exploring the power relations between modern individualized values and traditional collective values pertaining to personal relationships. Specifically, the popularity of reality TV dating reflects a diversified dating culture in which young people tend to have more individualized mate-choosing strategies and values. This is both caused by, as well as further facilitating, a sexual revolution observed since the economic reform era, in which a growing interest in self-expression about love and relationships in public domains is being observed (Cheng et al. 2000; Huang 1998; Inglehart 2003: 105–6). On the other hand, TV dating is often seen as reflecting a combination of traditional matchmaking principles and modern consumerist culture, inspired by a globalized popular media genre, which resonates with market principles emphasizing efficiency and material transactions within personal relationships in the context of the economic reform era (Osburg 2013: 163–5, 2014; Zelizer 2005). This may further suggest that mass media, especially reality TV dating shows, tend to work as a modern institution not only mirroring the value orientations in the post-reform era but also producing media content with both neoliberal logic as well as socialist ideology, which are likely to influence Chinese youth's identity construction in more subtle ways.

Alongside this, growing up in a fluid modern life setting, Chinese young people are at times seen to be dislocated from traditional values (Hansen and Svarverud 2010; Sun and Wang 2010; Wang 2006; Yan 2003, 2009, 2010a, b), which implies the appearance of new forms of affect that can be understood in the context of new emotional engagements and investments. For example, the various forms of dating and relationships, such as cohabitation, multiple relationships and extramarital relationships discussed in this chapter, reflect the diversified desires of young male Chinese professionals, who are likely to have at the same time desires towards a lifelong monogamous relationship, as well as a more casual form of dating practice. Specifically, the emergence of new dating practices indicates the emergence of self-centred relationship ethics, in which partners prioritize their own needs and expectations and link their personal happiness with greater freedom within a relationship. In addition, a more tolerant attitude towards various forms of personal relationships can be observed, which is increasingly shaped by the involved parties themselves rather than by any general moral principles.

In addition, by identifying a boundary between themselves and guests in the reality TV dating program *If You Are the One,* and re-emphasizing the importance of a traditional lifelong marriage, the sample group of Chinese men are drawing upon a traditional value system to understand their needs and expectations of a happy relationship and develop their "individualized" relationships, which indicates a negotiated relationship between tradition and modernity. Young male Chinese professionals intend to become self-managing subjects and employ traditional Confucian and socialist values as a cultural resource to construct their own relationship-related values and practices, which connotes the emergence of a post-socialist romantic subjectivity. This also resonates with "a Westernized Chinese subjectivity" introduced by Chow (2003: xi), who states that ethnicity is a socio-historical force and serves as a cultural technology for Chinese people to develop a collective identity. By reasserting traditional values, personal relationships are likely to become an avenue for Chinese youth to identify themselves as a modern subject, which, as Bond (1991) argues, is different from both traditional Chinese people and Westerners. This tends to be further linked to an argument that people tend to (re)assert a local or national identity, while at the same time embracing global values and lifestyles (Lipschutz 1992).

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12

Weapons of the Weak Soldiers: Military Masculinity and Embodied Resistance in Taiwanese Conscription

Ying-Chao Kao

Introduction: A Triangular Complex

War and militarism are masculine and hetero-normative institutions (Higate and Hopton 2005). Despite increasing participation by female and civilian personnel in the armed forces, the dissemination of the warrior image and the operation of military institutions remain predominantly male-identified (Johnson 1997). The link between militarism and masculinity has been bolstered by the gendered socialization and the division of labor that constructs the military, like much of society, as masculine and male-dominated (Höpfl 2003; Richet al. 2012; Sion and Ben-Ari 2009). Guidelines for recruitment and soldier/officer training regimens in particular reproduce hegemonic masculine bodies and ideologies. Formally written and unconscious criteria that favor heroism and patriotism are implemented throughout the military's daily interactions: evaluation, promotion, and retirement/demobilization/dismissal

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procedures, for example. Connell and Pearse (2014) correctly indicate that the military, as part of the state apparatus, is an essential element of a larger patriarchal regime.

Indeed, studies of military masculinity show that militarism and masculinity reciprocally constitute each other. Based on data from the British military, Higate and Hopton (2005: 434) suggested that "'politicians have utilized ideologies of idealized masculinity that valorize the notion of strong active males collectively risking their personal safety for the greater good of the wider community" while "militarism feeds into ideologies of masculinity through the eroticization of stoicism, risk-taking, and even lethal violence." Militarism and hegemonic masculinity work hand-in-hand to uphold masculine values—e.g., domination, endurance, glory, and respect. On the other hand, extreme aggression, at least in the British military, is not admired: only those men whose aggression is restrained and moderated by the State would be recognized and appropriated (Higate and Hopton 2005).

The current literature of men's and masculinity studies underrepresents the heterogeneity of Asian masculinities, and of Taiwanese masculinities in particular. Even when scholars have intentionally addressed East Asian masculinity (e.g., Taga 2005; see critiques in Kao and Bih 2013), it is still unclear how multiple sexualities are articulated within the borders between masculinity and militarism. At the structural level, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality are fundamental to establishing hegemonic masculinity in the military, education, and other institutions (Mac an Ghaill 1994). But, surprisingly, many scholars of military masculinity seem to assume that warriors are non-sexual beings. Few studies have explored how structural constraints, such as military rank, are actualized in daily interactions to shape soldiers' sexual and social practices. In other words, how do soldiers' embodied masculine performances reveal the operations of gendered *and* sexualized military structures?

Joan Nagel (1998, 2003; Nagel and Feitz 2007) is one of the few scholars who have articulated the influence of sexuality in nation making, war, and gender regime formation. She elaborates that sexuality is deployed as a weapon during war and nation-building, such as Japanese colonizers' use of Korean "comfort women" to provide sex services to the army in WWII, and rape in European wars as means to shame male

(heterosexual) enemies, to "pollute" the blood of the enemy population, and to reward allies. Nagel's findings, using transnational perspectives to incorporate East Asian cases into her scope, shed light on the evolution and consequences of a triangular complex—militarism, masculinity, and sexuality. Unfortunately, she disproportionally represents negative uses of sexuality in this complex, while failing to explore how sexuality could serve as a strategy to challenge existing military structures.

Following the tradition of sex-positive feminists who theorize sexuality as one way of challenging patriarchy and achieving gender emancipation, I use the cases of Taiwanese male-only conscripts' sexual and intimate lives to uncover how their sexualities could serve as "weapons of the weak" in their resistance against a dominating military rank system and sex hierarchy (Rubin 1993). The concept of "weapons of the weak" originated from political scientist James C. Scott's (1985) anthropological studies of Malaysian peasants who were not able to generate structural rebellion or revolution against the elite. Instead, their small-scale struggles included verbal strategies, such as malicious gossip among the poor about the rich, arson, sabotage, pilfering, foot dragging, and boycotts (Scott 1985; Gaenslen 1987).

Applying Scott's concept to military and gender studies, Miller (1997) found that lower-ranked male soldiers in the American Army who imagined themselves as oppressed used "weapons of the weak" to resist female authority. Considering women officers incompetent or to be unfairly taking privileges due to their gender, these men at the bottom of the military system constantly scrutinized women officers' daily practices to find minor mistakes, and gossiped and disseminated rumors about them. These men sexually stereotyped their women officers or colleagues as either "dykes" or "sluts," and kept sabotaging female colleagues' work until these women earned respect from the men within their profession. Indirect threats, such as anticipated rapes, were frequently mentioned to remind female colleagues that the military is a male-dominated environment and that men, therefore, might "legitimately" lose their humanity in unbearable combat situations (36–39).

Following the "weapons of the weak" approach, this study sets out to reveal how Taiwanese conscripts use their gender and sexual performances as platforms for small-scale acts of resistance in order to challenge the

oppressive rank and sex hierarchy system with which they are confronted. The data derive from historical analyses, newspaper archives, and fieldwork among Taiwanese troops, including in-depth interviews with 35 young Taiwanese conscripts who served between 2000 and 2006. I will, first, briefly introduce the embodied post-WWII history of Taiwanese conscription and then discuss four types of "embodied weapons": *fracture*, *implosion*, *blasé*, and *blasphemy*. I will theorize this typology as a symbolic resistance framework that reveals sexualized attempts to bridge the distance between the conscript and authority. My research is intended to complement other chapters in this collection by furthering our understanding of East Asian masculinities, articulating sexuality and masculinity, and giving voice to those men who have executed micro resistances against militaristic forms of gender and sexual oppression.

Embodied History of Taiwanese Conscription

During my research period, the Taiwan Military Service Law required most 18 to 35-year-old male citizens, except those few exempted for medical, family, or religious reasons, to serve one to two years of obligatory military service. The conscription system in Taiwan began in 1944, the second-to-last year of Japanese colonization.[1] After WWII, the National Government implemented its own conscription law in the name of anti-Communism and of reviving the older Republic of China.

Based on archival studies of government documents and news reports over the 60-year history of Taiwanese conscription, Kao (2006) has shown that masculinity and sexuality have been fundamental, but disguised, throughout the established culture of conscription and promotion. The government uses a specific, state-sponsored hegemonic standard of masculinity and sexuality to evaluate which bodies are valid to serve,

[1] In response to the defeat in the Pacific War in 1944, the Japanese Cabinet resolved that the colonized Taiwanese had the obligation of military service. The Taiwan Governor implemented conscription inspections on the island the following year and created the Rules of Imperial Training Bureau for the training of new recruits. Moreover, the Governor used the National Volunteer Military Service Law to require both male (15–60 years old) and female (17–40 years old) citizens to serve (Lin 1996).

generating a hierarchy of male bodies based on military utilitarianism. Masculinity and sexuality have also been maneuvered to persuade anti-militarist civilians to buy into the discourse of military citizenship. Men's "collective" experience in the service has been deployed to create an imagined national male genealogy.

Using feminist, queer theory, and Foucauldian approaches, Taiwanese researchers have revealed three layers of hegemonic military masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Qin 1997; Pei 2001; Chen 2004; Kao 2006). First, the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinities is based on a state-produced myth suggesting that "doing soldier"—that is, learning to perform military masculinity—is a mandatory rite of passage for all Taiwanese boys, required for their transformation into adult men. Second, to implement military masculinity, the National Government celebrated "obedience-style masculinity, patriarchal male bonding, and rational control," building the three pillars of the relationship between official knowledge and the male body: disciplinary power, seniority, and military-orientated medicine (Chen 2004). Third, Taiwanese military masculinity is constituted by phallocentric metaphors, male identification, misogyny, and brotherhood, which reinforce combat morale, honor, discipline, strict stratification, and the integration of "wen" and "wu" (or civilized characteristics and physical strength, central to traditional Chinese masculinity, described in Louie 2002). In addition, although gender-mainstreaming policies have been bureaucratically trickled down to every military department, formal documentation and lectures have left the historic homophobia and heteronormativity of military life unchanged, with its humiliation, discrimination, double standards, verbal violence, and even physical attacks against lesbian, gay, and bisexual soldiers.

However, these structural analyses of the Taiwanese military cannot fully explain masculinity and underlying sexuality on the interactional-behavioral levels (c.f. Miller 1997). Structural examination emphasizes constraint and hierarchy but leaves little room for individual social actors to convey non-cooperation, disagreement, or challenges against these authoritarian figures. In other words, how might Taiwanese conscripts use their sexuality to resist the military system and a hegemonic masculinity that promotes obedience, endurance, and patriotism?

Previous studies of the Taiwanese military provide fragmented, contradictory, and thus limited answers to this question. Qin (1997) suggested that female personnel could use their personal characteristics, encourage conscripts to be deserters, and ally with LesBiGay and feminine men to fight against military patriarchy. However, her proposed alliance among gender and sexual minorities is too imaginary. Pei (2001), for example, noted that since gay and sissy soldiers are direct victims of heteronormativity, they are not strong enough to ally with feminists. Moreover, women and gay soldiers are not programmed to be "natural" allies just because they are oppressed. Women can be homophobic while gays, lesbians, or bisexuals can be sexists. In fact, although they share some experiences, heterosexual women and homosexual male soldiers might face altogether different sources of oppression: misogyny, a male-dominated culture, and gendered division of labor for women; compulsory heterosexuality and the feminization of male bodies for gay men.

Previous studies also disproportionally focus on how deserters "adjust" their bodies to escape conscription (Chen 2004; Qin 1997; Pei 2001), paying little attention to how on-duty personnel use "weapons of the weak" to deconstruct the system of military masculinity from the inside. Exceptionally, Pei (2001) indicates that gay soldiers developed strategies like "acting straight," "avoidance," and "not speaking out" in response to unfriendly environments. With the development of a military career and increased interactions with higher-ranking personnel, disadvantaged soldiers may gradually learn these skills to access more resources in the context of the military's patriarchal structures.

Weapons of the Weak Soldiers

To fill up these gaps, this research uses Scott's (1985) framework of "weapons of the weak" to explore and examine Taiwanese male conscripts' daily small-scale struggles against the intertwined institutions of militarism and hegemonic masculinity. Being aware that they had no strong firepower to initiate a radical rebellion within the military, many conscripts performed tacit, informal resistances that revealed the power operation of gendered and sexualized military institution. Their actions

also unconsciously exposed the fragility and inconsistency of hegemonic masculinity that is inherently embedded within the military rank, cultural consent, and sex hierarchy system. Based on my data of interview and fieldwork, I classify the weapons of these structurally weak soldiers as four types: *fracture*, *implosion*, *blasé*, and *blasphemy*.

Fracture

A number of conscripts used *fracture* to keep a distance from the hegemonic masculinity that the state and militarism conspiratorially promote. An extreme case in this category is that of the deserter who modified his body to disqualify it for the military.

Interviewee Grassie Empress[2] (*supplementary soldier, no gender identity*), for example, reported that she (the preferred pronoun of this male interviewee) was conscious of her gender characteristics and sensed that her feminized gender performance would be incompatible with a traditional military environment. Therefore, she systematically sought a way to shorten her military service: She researched medical standards and military regulations, consciously selected one of her body's weaknesses, and modified it to fulfill the standard.

> I have asthma and heart disease. But, generally, they do not bother me in daily life since I have lived long with the two diseases, since my childhood. I have had no incidence of asthma since junior high school. But, in order to get a certificate [of military service exemption], I had to choose one out of the two diseases [and perform its symptoms for the doctor].

Considering that heart disease cannot be completely cured but asthma has effective treatments, Grassie Empress chose asthma for her conscription screening. To prepare her embodied performance, she made an appointment at the most reputable hospital in Taiwan, drank a huge amount of iced water, and intentionally breathed cold air to induce respiratory contractions, the key symptom of asthma. She successfully displayed an asthma-like episode to the physician and got a medical certificate,

[2] All names of interviewees in this chapter are pseudonyms chosen by the interviewees themselves.

followed by another from a different hospital using the same procedure, before applying for posture commutation and earning her supplementary service status, in which service only lasts twelve days.

The efforts that Grassie Empress invested in staying away from the military protected her from anticipated gender harassment and sexual attacks. As an overtly feminine person with a male body, she had experienced bullying since childhood. In the sixth grade, she was splashed with water and trapped in a men's room by male classmates due to her femininity. In her eighth grade, Grassie Empress's femininity brought maltreatment and discrimination. These terrible experiences made her determined to work on posture commutation and completely break with the military regime.

Notably, deserters have tolls to pay when trying to get their "unqualified bodies" certificated, sacrificing their masculinity and re-experiencing disease processes that they may not have gone through for a long time. They also have little idea how much this certificate might threaten their competitiveness in future job and marriage markets. It is, therefore, invalid to frame deserters as weak, incompetent, and uncourageous. Instead, to fracture from the military as a deserter is a process full of rational calculations, delicate physical modifications, and tensions between one's body and one's self-awareness. Flesh is not an object that can be easily manipulated, like paperclay. Instead, it manifests as a resilient subject, actively shaping the conscript's self and resonating with that self when it suffers the difficulties and distresses that military conscription and service produce.

Other conscripts used different fracture strategies than deserters to maintain their distance from military domination and hegemonic masculinity. These strategies included queering daily masculine interactions and building tongzhi/queer alliances with domestic troops. Steve (*Coast Guard, gay man*), for example, deliberately maintained his civilian cosmetic habits in the military, using a facial mask for skin care daily. He also asked a heterosexual senior to do this pastime with him to avoid complaints from other seniors. He was proud of himself for earning the respect of powerful executives by serving as a handy man. Carrying an overweight body, Steve was not a popular candidate in the mainstream gay community, but he knew how to use his body to play quasi-violent

"run-and-chase" games with executives in a male-only environment. Consciously controlling rhythms of this game, Steve sometimes happily waved his fat body to pretend that he was a victim captured by his bosses. In other situations, he pushed the executives away, teasing them to keep the game going—even though the executives were very fat and not attractive to him at all. In these ways, Steve successfully shielded his soft masculinity with support from the executives and prevented insults of other masculine seniors.

Developing this kind of individual campness into group action means looking for other "tongzhi" (comrades of sexual politics, in Chinese) and formulating a "tongzhi/queer alliance."[3] Since the Taiwanese military never implemented policies similar to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," tongzhi soldiers' experiences vary mainly by the composition of specific troops in which they served and the chief commander's attitudes toward LGBT people. To build up a "tongzhi/queer alliance" could be as easy as two tongzhi soldiers secretly coming out to each other and switching their military etiquette to their civilian interaction style, forming an imaginary queer bond, and an equally imaginary queer space, that fractures them off from the military masculine regime.

For example, interviewees Lei-Ke and Mama Xiao-Xun (*Army, both gay men*) met in the same unit and came out to each other, queering their masculine troop by desiring their colleagues, especially rookies. As they used to do in gay bars or parks, they evaluated the appearance of each new serviceman. During naptime, they cruised through the barracks to check for new handsome men or to see whether someone had exposed his erection by wearing boxers and kicking away his blanket. Similarly, Xiao-Tien and his schoolmate (*Marine Corps*) would sit on the stairs to watch the Marine Marching Band and Honor Guard Company doing exercises on the assembly field, discussing favored bodies in lewd language.

Occasionally, tongzhi/queer alliances would grow into a tongzhi/queer family whose existence sex-politically challenged the hetero-normative military system. Yu-Lun (*Department of Defense*) reported that approximately

[3] It is not only queers that could form alliances: heterosexual males could also form small groups to break with the masculine hierarchy. For example, enrollees who do not smoke or pay for sex could form other circles, breaking up the circles formed by the enrollees who offer cigarettes to each other and boast of their sexual experiences with prostitutes.

one-fourth of his team were gay but that they had a tacit agreement not to talk about their sexuality in public. In a celebratory tone, Yu-Lun told me in our interview that he just admitted the ninth "brother" into their team. One day, quite simply, he privately told the guy, "Hey bro, I sense that you seem to be 'gay'". This newcomer came to Yu-Lun the next day, recognizing that he was correct. Yu-Lun was happy to serve as the "sworn older brother" of this new blood in his self-built tongzhi/queer family. Practically speaking, this "family-like" tongzhi/queer network built up a precious support system for Yu-Lun, producing a virtually gay-friendly space existing within a patriarchal and heteronormative troop.

Deliberately queering the military's masculine interactions or building up tongzhi/queer alliances means disrupting its ubiquitous culture of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. These sexual actors use fissures in institutional surveillance to create a space for gender and sexual micro-transgressions. Although these queer moments produce valuable comfort, they are, however, occasional, unstable, discrete, borderless, and guerrilla-like. Masculine and heteronormative oppressors can easily reclaim queered space once "the queers" are gone or their discreditable sexualities are exposed. In addition, queer soldiers are not homogeneous; a tongzhi/queer alliance may be disunited when conflicts of interest deriving from disparities of rank, duty, and seniority occur. Many of my gay interviewees reported a fear of being blackmailed when they came out to other queers. Based on my data, tongzhi/queer alliances in the Taiwanese military are usually informal, individual, contingent, and affective; they have never (yet) evolved into collective action or an institutional reform.

Implosion

In drastic contrast to fracture, which implies resistance through *distance*, implosion means taking an oppositional approach: resistance through *persistence*. Conscripts who use the strategy of implosion are generally those who reinforce oppressive systems as embracers of hegemonic masculinity and military domination. But, ironically, their "abuse" of these systems unintentionally exposes many inconsistencies and contradictions within the military, igniting an implosion inside the system that foretells its decline.

Joseph (*Army platoon leader, second lieutenant, gay man*), for example, was a pious believer in military masculinity: its honor and discipline, its strict rules based on rank, its muscular bodies, and its fighting skills were his lexicon. In contrast to deserters, Joseph desired to serve in the military because it was his first chance to live with men intimately. As a platoon leader, he was firmly convinced of the importance of the military disciplinary creed and imposed these rules strictly. When he took over, he rigorously asked soldiers to behave properly. In marching, he asked his troop to show morale by singing and number rolling loudly and repeatedly. He earned respect from his superiors, but his "brothers"—the soldiers, corporals, and sergeants he led—opposed his leadership secretly. Privates executed his orders carelessly and "professional" cadres (who make their careers in the armed forces) refused to cooperate with him. His deep belief in the warrior ideal made Joseph a weirdo in the eyes of his unit.

I also visited Platoon Sergeant Mountain (*army, straight man*) at an offshore island more than an hour's flight from Taiwan's main island. Having few men in his original family and with his wife in Taiwan, Mountain deeply loved his "brothers" in camouflage. As we walked along the beach and looked into the distance at night, Mountain told me in detail how well he took care of his team as his family. He took on any work that benefited them: radio, water supply, electricity, personnel, business, and car repair, to name a few. His strong male bond with low-ranking privates and corporals came at the price of his promotion. "They (the superiors) asked me to join them but I refused," Mountain said and blew smoke in the air. "Compared with playing politics at the top and betraying my people, I'd rather stay with my brothers." Embracing the grassroots brotherhood prohibited Mountain from stepping on the elevator to reach higher levels of power.

Overacting is another way to produce the implosion of military hegemonic masculinity. For example, cursing and using abusive language deploys the characteristics of aggression, violence, and authoritarianism that are not deemed civilized in a feminized democracy. The fiercer and crazier the curses, the more masculine the leaders who use this language are regarded. When BWU (*army corporal, bisexual, and BDSMer* [4]) was

[4] BDSMers are those who participate in the subculture of BDSM and who produce and receive pleasure by B/D (bondage and discipline), D/S (dominance and submission), S/M (sadism and masochism), or other types of erotic power play.

promoted from private to sergeant, he cursed excessively and fiercely at his subordinates to establish his authority and demonstrate his prestige. In assembly, he shouted in the faces of his company without reservation: "I take my reputation seriously. I don't care how you play with me in private. You DON'T let me lose face in public. Then everybody is good. How we get along in private is one thing, how we behave in the assembly field is the other. DO NOT EMBARRASS ME!" BWU's straightforward anger and temper attracted a friendly reminder from his company leader (*a captain or major*), who asked BWU's colleague to pass along the message, "No need to curse at the soldiers too fiercely."

The implosion cases of Joseph and Mountain show the limits of hegemonic masculinity in ways opposite but complementary to fracture episodes. They are both passionate believers in and practitioners of the hegemonic masculinity sponsored by the military. But, when being a model soldier threatens their connections with either the low-ranking soldiers, in Joseph's case, or superiors, in Mountain's case, they upset normative expectations. When military personnel who truly buy the myth of hegemonic masculinity put it into practice, they can find, paradoxically, that the ideology sabotages their social connections. Similarly, the leadership's response to BWU's masculine overacting suggests a feminized, persuasive flexibility aimed at controlling the hearts of the subordinated by winning them over. These followers used hegemonic masculinity to navigate their positionality in the military, but this same ideology cracks itself, and potentially, when applied in the extreme, could subvert its own hegemony.

Blasé

Classical sociologist Georg Simmel (1971[1903]) used *blasé* to explain the indifference with which people living at the beginning of modernization and urbanization responded to the social disturbances and emotional burdens produced by intensive urban inter-personal interactions. The Taiwanese conscripts I interviewed, instead, used their blasé attitudes to shun the overwhelming persistence of military life.

Xiezhi [5] (*military police sergeant, straight man*), who served in an offshore archipelago, 50 minutes flying time from Taipei, explained how he used his "khám-chām" to maintain a long-distance intimacy. "Khám-chām" is a local term, borrowed from "threshold" or "doorsill" in Taiwanese, referring to status in the military conferred by seniority, profession, and sociality. In a self-confident tone during our phone interview, Xiezhi reported that his "khám-chām" allowed him to make regular hotline calls to his girlfriend in Taiwan, which attracted his colleagues' admiration.

As a leader of soldiers serving on an island from which it takes a day by ship to reach Taiwan, Striker (*air force guidance counselor, gay man*) was responsible for sending and receiving mail and had a private bedroom separated from the privates' barracks. His bedroom became his military Shangri-la, a veritable sexual dessert. He used his independent space and privilege to order and watch "love action movies" on a regular basis, calling for his Taiwanese boyfriend to accompany him occasionally.

Visiting sexual service venues in a group, meanwhile, is one common way for Taiwanese soldiers to show off their male potency, maturity, and solidarity. After a visit, when returning to camp, a group of soldiers discussed (and boasted about) their sexual experiences with the "ladies" in public, recruiting rookies to join their next group visit. When Private A (*army private, straight man*) and He Tang (*ensign, straight man*) were confronted with this kind of sexual invitation by senior and junior fellows who invited them to visit "tāu-kuann tshù" (a bottom-tier red-light house providing sex services of women for working-class men), Private A was trapped in an awkward situation where rejection would infuriate his fellows and acceptance would besmirch his dignity. To avoid being offensive, he self-identified as a "tha̍k-tsheh-lâng", a highly educated and sometimes nerdy person who knew little about how to follow the subculture of soldiers who had only a high school degree or less. Facing a similar sexual induction, He Tang reported that while he did want to get closer to girls, his Christianity shaped him as a decent gentleman who can only express his desire with a trusted partner. During his military life,

[5] Xiezhi is the symbol of the military police, based on a legendary righteous creature in Chinese and Korean mythology that rams the guilty and bites the wronged party.

He Tang acted gently and politely, observed quietly all the hidden rules and informal regulations, and stayed indifferent to the ubiquitous and excessive talk about whoredom and eroticism.

Blasphemy[6]

Although the military dares not to talk in public about the sexualities occurring internally and presents itself as an asexual institution, it has historically been a highly sexualized institution. Soldiers' rifles and the metaphor "flesh guns" (phalluses), for example, have been used interchangeably, as expressed in a parody of the military song "I Have a Gun" into "I Have Two Guns," transformed by Taiwanese military conscripts into:

> I have two guns / Not the same length / This is my weapon / This is my gun
> The longer is to shoot bandits / The shorter is to shoot girls
> One is for killing / One is for fun … (see Hong 2003 for further analysis)

I witnessed how this metaphorical relation has been collectively provoked when personally serving in 2007. After experiencing a series of intensive and stressful shooting trainings, we rookies were allowed to use the men's room. A group of fellow soldiers enthusiastically shouted out the firing guidelines for the Type 65K2 assault rifle against a row of fellows who were pulling out their "flesh guns" and urinating. Both "shooters" and observers burst into laughter. Their compassionate ecstasy was more than dirty fun. It represented how the reciprocal metaphors of rifle/flesh gun and shooting artillery/shooting sperm have been reinforced into conscripts' collective intra-psychic mindset, public interpersonal scripts, and cultural scenarios as common knowledge (Chew 2013[2001]; Simon and Gagnon 1987).

Built on this tradition of sexualization, *blasphemy* refers to a strategy that some conscripts use to sexualize and queer sacred military rituals

[6] WARNING: This section includes graphic description of sexual behaviors. Before reading, please receive this warning and make sure that you have a mature enough mind to understand erotic materials. If you opt out, you are welcome to skip this section and move to the Conclusion.

and symbolically profane and disrupt the moral order of the otherwise sacrosanct organization. In practice, servicemen employed blasphemy by using orgasm in tabooed places to seize back the authority of their bodies or by having intercourse with their superiors.

Serving on an island 75 minutes by air from Taipei, interviewee Tank Madman (*army private, gay man*) reported that he felt that the army took his authority over his body from him whenever he landed on the island. "Although the feet remain on your body, you can't control them. The body is not yours anymore." He vividly described how deeply military governance dominated the sub-consciousness of well-trained conscripts:

> Even when strolling in the streets during off days, one involuntarily aligns his footsteps with the stranger in front of him. On taking up a broom at home, one uncontrollably wants to repeat the bayonet drill. When you are called by counter staff [clerks and cashiers in shops], you reflectively want to raise your hand with a fist and answer, 'Yes, Sir!'

To resist this embodied inscription of military order, Tank Madman used a basic, instinctive strategy to reclaim authority over his flesh: masturbation.

Profaning pervasive military sacredness, he shot his meat gun everywhere: in his bedroom, the kitchen, at the gatepost, and in the tent when he drove the tank overnight. During intermissions in military exercises, he would take out his genitals, masturbate, and spray his semen into the tank as skillfully as he controlled the tank's gear. While the big cannons rumbled outside, his small cannon shot bullets. The room storing the company flag, which he believed had gathered righteous spirits and had the power to pacify enemies, was the only place where Tank Madman dared not masturbate. With that singular exception, his sexual behaviors show how a conscript symbolically uses sexuality to insult the military space.[7]

[7] Notably, this symbolic resistance was derived from the interviewee's own intention, not my interpretation. Tank Madman fully sensed how provocative his behaviors were; thus, he developed his rebellion map aggressively. After our interview, he eagerly asked me in an online chat: "How many people have you interviewed? Does anyone beat me?" I had not yet interviewed BWU, so I replied: "Nope, congratulations! You are still the fiercest one." He was very proud that his masturbation allowed him to symbolically destroy what the military had done to his body and that he sexually stood out in the military crowd.

While working at a military radio station, to consider a related example, BWU (*army telegraph corporal, bisexual, BDSMer*) developed a friendship with a military intelligence officer (*army captain, straight*). They shared experiences of intimacy with each other, from holding hands, hugging, mutual girlfriends, exploring each other's bodies, and trying oral sex. As their relationship progressed, they met one Sunday at noon. Sitting together in the Situation Room watching TV, "Stick" (named after the rank symbol of captain) rose and locked the doors. He released BWU's belt and pants, pulled out his "little stick", and massaged it. "Stick" pressed BWU's head over his phallus, asking: "I know you are not gay. Can you blow my 'stick'?" BWU had never had any fellatio so he first hesitated. Determined, BWU gave Stick his "virgin 6" (insertee) and received his "virgin 9" (inserter) from his superior.

This was not just contingent casual sex between two lonely men. BWU was reportedly also aware of the pleasure of "rank jumping". He clearly sensed that he was a corporal and Stick was a captain. With desire flowing, he stared at the "three sticks" (the collar badge of Captain) on Stick's uniform and used sex to gain equal status with a senior officer he should otherwise salute and obey. Another day, BWU penetrated his captain with his corporal fingers covered in Vaseline, exploring Stick's anus. Nothing further was done.[8] Much as Tank Madman used masturbation to profane the sacred military space, BWU profaned the military rank system by penetrating his senior's body.

According to BWU, what made the sex pleasurable was not just the orgasm but the military's own rank system. The Situation Room was the power nexus of his troop, where brigade superiors called directly and orders were delivered to inferior units. In that very room, a corporal had fun with a captain. The blasphemy against place and rank implicit in such sexual encounters challenge the institution's heteronormative order. The sacredness that the military constructed upon these physical settings, materials, and symbols, meanwhile, merely enhanced the pleasure of those who dared to sexually profane them.

[8] This example may be rare, but is not a single case. Another interviewee Yu-Lun reported similar scenes and the BDSM author Tiejun Huang (2006.3.25) echoed my findings with his story in a forum.

Conclusion: Toward a Framework of Resistance Against Hegemonic Masculinity

Experiencing Japanese and Western colonization, WWII, the cold war, and neo-liberal policies, East Asian society has been constituted by what I call the "triangular complex": militarism, masculinity, and sexuality. This complex has affected many people's lives, from Korean and Taiwanese comfort women to Kamikaze crews. In the current literature, however, few studies of military masculinity address East Asian experiences. Some research articulates the relationship between sexuality and military masculinity over women's bodies, but it fails to explore how uncomfortably many military male personnel survive within this masculine regime and how they use guerrilla-like strategies to hinder or resist the military operation and expansion.

Based on Scott's "weapons of the weak" concept, my data, collected from fieldwork among Taiwanese troops and in-depth interviews with 35 Taiwanese conscripts serving between 2000 and 2006, show the interpersonal, sexualized rebellions of young recruited men. In contrast to structural analyses of hegemonic masculinity and military control that assume that men are homogenous oppressors, my study indicates that many conscripts, gay or straight, are the "weaker actors" under this dually oppressive system. They reject the masculine subculture of the military and have developed four types of "weapons of the weak" to resist it: *fracture*, *implosion*, *blasé*, and *blasphemy*.

The "weapons" of *fracture* and *implosion* are located at two extremes in Collinson's (1994) model of organizational resistance: the former is "resistance through distance" and the latter is "resistance through persistence". Some conscripts act as deserters or build up tongzhi/queer alliances or families. Others fervently perform military masculinity in ways that ironically reveal the inconsistencies and limitations of this ideological hegemony. My study adds to Collinson's model another dimension of the practical and symbolic continuum of resistance (see Fig. 12.1). Conscripts performing *blasé* appropriated their material and behavioral resources to reduce their involvement in the military, maintain their civilian intimacies, or de-sexualize themselves to avoid engaging in sex

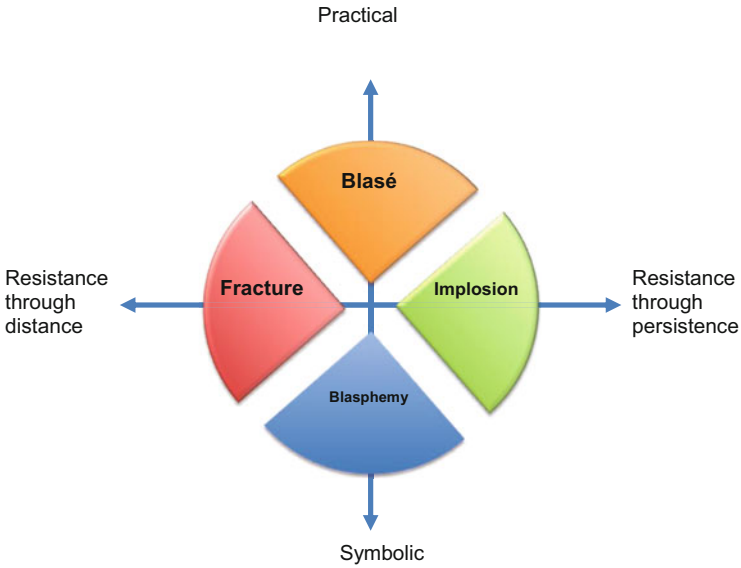

Fig. 12.1 Framework of weapons of the weak soldiers

adventures. Men adopting *blasphemy* intentionally queered sacred military symbols and spaces to recapture authority over their docile bodies from the state, re-defining their own manhood through public sex and cross-rank sexual intercourse.

Predictably, the militarism, masculinity, and sexuality complex will enormously influence the future of East Asians, as foreseen in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's appeal to amend Japan's pacifist Constitution, China's use of military parades to rewrite its history, including its relations with Taiwan, and the sex industry and sexual attack/harassment incidents that have grown from the deployment of US forces in Japan and Korea. This research, therefore, is calling for more studies to understand why men feel suffering in a gender regime where they, structurally, appear to have gender privileges and vested interests, and to ascertain how men use sexuality to interact with military institutions. Without East Asian men's involvement, the operation and effects of the triangular complex cannot be fully understood.

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13

Beyond the Celebration of Losers: The Construction of *diaosi* Masculinity in Contemporary Chinese Youth Culture

Siyang Cao

Introduction

Young people born after the mid-1980s have been labelled the "Internet Generation" or the "Digital Generation", and they are viewed as being equipped with the digital power that may transform the world. The Internet, by offering opportunities for more creative political contestation and cultural participation, has produced new means of self-expression and identity construction for the young generation. Despite the comparatively late development of the Internet in China, young Chinese today are expertly utilizing cyberspace as a new site for negotiating and experimenting with new forms of gendered identities. Indeed, new categories of masculinities and femininities are being articulated and proliferating at an unprecedented speed.

Ranking first among the ten most popular Chinese Internet phrases in 2012, *diaosi* has continued to be a catchphrase until now. While it originally designated the working-class figure who is "short, poor and ugly",

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now the label of *diaosi* seems to be receiving much wider acceptance, even among middle-class young men. In this chapter, I will explore the meaning of *diaosi* masculinity in Chinese youth culture by looking into the strategies of constructing *diaosi* men in cyberspace. Through a close reading of two web-series, I try to look beyond the simplistic reading of *diaosi* as a celebration of losers; instead I seek to problematize the discursive production of *diaosi* masculinity in media representations. I argue that *diaosi* masculinity appears to be an ambiguous concept of identity, in that it challenges hegemonic values by distancing itself from them, while at the same time such a strategy adds power to the ruling discourse that it is trying to resist and escape.

While the meaning of the "Internet Generation" has been critiqued as an "adult construct" by both the media and academics (Herring 2008: 78), I seek to move beyond this generational gap by exploring the emerging *diaosi* masculinity as an "insider" within the young generation. As a young researcher, I hope to offer some new perspectives on future scholarship related to youth culture and identities both within China and at a global level. In light of the increasing fragmentation and diversification of youth culture and identity, I suggest that a traditional "sub-cultural" perspective that focuses on trouble-making groups and youth rebellions is not enough. Researchers need to be wary of the complexities of youth culture and its concomitant gendered identities, which can be both subversive and reproductive. Furthermore, research on young people in cyberspace needs to take account of their embeddedness in the social structures that frame online activities. Ultimately, youth agency and the political potential of Internet-constructed identities are closely related to the everyday realities of young people and the broader landscape of historical, social, cultural and institutional transformation.

Between Hyper-Entertainment and Political Implications: Chinese Internet Politics

Combining strict censorship, a hyper-entertaining function and the possibility of promoting democracy, the Chinese Internet has been a contentious topic in both academia and public discussions. The intricacy

of Chinese cyberspace lies in its idiosyncrasy, whereby radical Internet power is always restrained by stringent state control (Liu 2011). While Western scholars have been interrogating the governmental crackdown on the Internet for a long time, recent studies tend to problematize such over-simplistic interpretations of the digital world in China (Damn 2007; Kluver and Yang 2005). Indeed, the mundane use of the Internet among ordinary Chinese people may present a rather different picture, especially with the younger generation continuously adding new elements to cyberspace. The politics of Chinese cyberspace is better viewed as an ongoing construction that comprises competing discourses. Embedded in a transformational era, the Internet is changing Chinese society, albeit under the influence of new social conditions as well (Herold 2011). In this sense, online space serves as a prism that reflects the changing structural actualities of today's China.

Presented as "having overthrown traditional power structures" (Li 2011: 74), the Internet has significantly altered the ways in which young Chinese people think and communicate. In the decentralized and relatively free online world, people are endowed with temporary power to subvert the authorities and ruling values, which are characterized by a hyper-entertaining feature. This is typically embodied in the online parody culture among young netizens, who are obsessed with mocking unequal and hierarchical reality through videos, spoofs and creating new Internet memes (Gong and Yang 2010). Accordingly, Chinese cyberspace seems to have simply become an entertaining site for the relief of frustration and dissatisfaction resulting from the disappointing offline world. However, it would be equally problematic to draw the conclusion that Chinese netizens are "apolitical"; neither are they powerless victims under the censorship policies. As Carpini and Williams point out, "politics is built on deep-seated cultural values and beliefs that are embedded in the seemingly non-political aspects of public and private life" (2001: 161). Meng Bingchun, in her study of online spoofs, argues that they exemplify the "conjunction between the cultural and the political through a discursive mode that integrates elements of entertainment, politics and popular culture" (2011: 40). Despite the sophisticated government censorship and seemingly amusing online environment, the individual agency of Chinese netizens and the political implications of cyberspace should not be easily overlooked.

For young Chinese people, cyberspace offers a flexible site for experimenting and configuring new forms of identities. In the chapter "Masculinity in cyberspace" of their book, Song and Hird (2013) present a mini, but rather comprehensive, dictionary of Internet phrases related to the new identities of young men. While new identities and gender roles emerge at an enormous speed on the Internet, Song and Hird point out that these online terms reveal the conflicting, sometimes even contradictory, (re)constructions of Chinese masculinities in cyberspace:

> On the one hand, traditional gender roles and values and even the ideology of heteronormativity have been significantly challenged by such images as the caring and understanding partner/father or the highly feminized metrosexual male; on the other hand, however, (new) elite men's privileged position has been reinforced by a group of images and discourses that define masculinity in terms of economic and/or cultural capital. (2014: 119)

In this regard, the virtual world of the Chinese Internet, while deeply interwoven with offline structures, has given rise to the emergence of new masculine identities that may be hard to achieve in reality. Meanwhile, the contradictory nature of cyberspace more or less leads to a vacillating and ambiguous order of online politics. It is within this framework that *diaosi* seems to have gained unprecedented popularity overnight.

Genealogy of *diaosi*

In 2013, *diaosi* ranked first among the 10 most popular Chinese Internet phrases (Qian 2013), and has remained as a buzzword among young Chinese people since then. "*Diao*" is a rather vulgar word in Chinese to describe male genitals, while "*si*" means hair. Although *diaosi* is usually translated as "loser" in English, such an interpretation misses the negative and insulting connotations of its literal sense. In fact, even "*diaosi*" themselves tend to forget the literal meaning of the term.

The genealogy of *diaosi* is rather complicated, and the origin of the term also has different versions. According to scholarly descriptions (Dong and Huang 2013; Szablewica 2014), the meaning of *diaosi* has

experienced great changes since it first appeared on the *Baidu Li Yi* bulletin board system (BBS) in October 2011. Since football player *Li Yi* was complimented as "*Liyi dadi*" (Emperor *Li Yi*, 李毅大帝), the BBS was then called "*di ba*" (帝吧) "D *ba*" (D吧) and its members were "*di si*" (帝丝) or "D *si*" (D丝). *Diaosi* arose out of the subsequent "trash talking" between members of *Li Yi* BBS and the *Leiting Sanjutou* (雷霆三巨头) BBS, during which *Li Yi* fans were derisively called *diaosi* because of its similar pronunciation to "D *si*" in Chinese. Surprisingly, members of *Li Yi* BBS took up this name with pride, and soon the term had proliferated throughout the Internet. It then spread further to traditional newspapers and magazines, and was even adopted by the *People's Daily* (2012). This is praised as the "counterattack" of *diaosi* (Cai 2013).

When tracing youth culture on the Chinese Internet a few years back, it was interesting to see that *diaosi* was not the first label created by netizens to mock their lower social class. Early in the year 2005, grassroots (*caogen*, 草根) culture reached an unprecedented popularity in cyberspace, which, for the first time, empowered ordinary Chinese netizens with opportunities to challenge the elite culture (Liu 2008). In opposition to the elite and the mainstream, grassroots denotes those at the bottom of the social stratification, who have almost no chance of having their own voice (Hu 2013). It was a form of subculture for the most ordinary masses. From grassroots superstars on talent shows to the wide celebration of online parodies that subverted the authorities, grassroots became an identity label that was adopted with pride by numerous young Chinese born between the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Under the increasing class stratification and injustice in distributing social resources, the younger generation (mostly those born in the late 1980s and 1990s) of lower social class is no longer satisfied with the rather modest and humble vocabulary of grassroots. In this regard, I suggest that the newly emerging *diaosi* identity is actually synonymous with the previous grassroots in terms of their class position. However, *diaosi* is also distinct in terms of its self-derogating attitude, explicit admiration of both dominant-class masculinity and femininity and, essentially, the vulgarity of the term. The disillusionment with upward mobility has led to a large group of young men resorting to a pejorative attitude to their bleak future. In this sense, the change from grassroots to *diaosi* demonstrates a generational

difference in their resistive strategies. Apparently, younger Chinese hold a more playful and cynical standpoint regarding social inequalities, in line with their more pessimistic view about their ability to make change.

The Construction of *diaosi* Masculinity in Web-Series

Looking back to the genealogy of *diaosi* enables us to recognize that the Internet serves as a crucial site for accommodating and distributing new forms of youth identities. Through offering young people new arenas for communication beyond the domestic level, online interactions become a potential resource from which new meanings of masculinity (and femininity) are likely to be produced. Soon after the emergence of this new generation of grassroots, the figure of *diaosi* man became highly celebrated in a number of TV series and films, exemplified by the two most popular web-series: *Diors Man* (屌丝男士, *Mr. Diaosi*) and *Wanwan meixiangdao* (万万没想到, *Never Expect*), produced by two online video websites, Sohu and Youku, respectively. Both series portray the ludicrous lives of *diaosi* men and have received an enthusiastic welcome among young people. Whilst the main character, Wang Dachui, in *Wanwan meixiangdao* (abbreviated to *Wan* in the following) is portrayed as a different person in each episode, there is no fixed main character in *Diors Man* (abbreviated to *Diors* in the following), but only anonymous and analogous *diaosi* figures. In addition, compared to *Wan*, in which each episode contains only one or two stories, *Diors* tends to be more fragmented, usually including more than fifteen short stories in a single episode.

By 3 June 2015, the three series of *Diors* had been watched around 2,495 million times on Souhu, while the two series and special episodes of *Wan* had been watched around 1,858 million times on Youku. These huge numbers of clicks seem to announce the end of *diaosi* as a minority masculine identity, and demonstrate that it is instead becoming accepted by legitimate mainstream culture. However, a close reading of the way in which these two web-series represent *diaosi* men seems to challenge such assumptions. Acknowledging that cultural representations play a

key constitutive role in the forging of new attributes for masculinities, I find the investigation of mediated *diaosi* men to be crucial in understanding the connection between Internet-forged male identities and social reality. In the following sections, I try to unpack the meaning of *diaosi* in these two web-series through encoding and analyzing the main character types, the interrelationships of characters, different endings and narrative strategies. By looking beyond the simplistic reading of *diaosi* as the celebration of losers, I intend to problematize and interrogate the discursive construction of *diaosi* masculinity in media representations (Table 13.1 and Table 13.2).

While *diaosi* can be read as a new generation of grassroots, the figure of *diaosi* as represented in both series also proves to be so. As can be seen from the tables, working-class characters constitute the majority of *diaosi* figures, accounting for 69% in *Wan* and 70.6% in *Diors*. More often than not, they are masseurs, waiters, assistants in hair salons, or alternatively depicted as powerless gods from Chinese mythology in *Wan*. These types of characters are *diaosi* in the real sense—grassroots struggling at the bottom of society. However, it is noteworthy that white-collar workers, who are regarded as representing the middle class, are also frequently constructed as *diaosi* in both series. Attaching the *diaosi* label to white-collar workers seems to be a strategy to subvert the firm class order; however, it also underpins the assumption that the middle classes have far more choices in what they can be. As Skeggs warns us, it is much easier for the middle class to "play at passing", since "'the ones who can judge their failure to pass have little impact and little social power" (1997: 91). While subordinate-class *diaosi* gain pleasure and pride from mocking the middle class, it does not add cultural or symbolic capital to this label. It is only after middle-class young men joined such a self-denigrating game that *diaosi* began to receive wide recognition in the whole of society. Another notable feature in terms of the type of main character is that *diaosi* is sometimes represented to be the leader of a gang in *Diors*. In this regard, *diaosi* also designates those with sufficient wealth but lacking cultural capital, or *suzhi* (quality) in Chinese. The idealized masculinity that is set against *diaosi* should demonstrate both the capability to make money and a good sense of taste and knowledge.

Table 13.1 *Diors Man*

	Character types			Endings			Relation with other characters		
	Working class	Middle class	Gang member	Successful counterattack	Nothing changes	Cracked down	Superior masculinity	Desiring femininity/ goddess	Both
S01 (6 episodes 115 stories)	79	28	7	38	30	47	24	35	59
Percentage (%)	68.7	24.3	6	33	26	40.9	20.9	30.4	51.3
S02 (6 episodes 102 stories)	67	34	1	30	28	45	9	29	38
Percentage (%)	65.7	33.3	0.8	29.4	27.5	44.1	9	28.4	37.3
S03 (8 episodes 92 stories)	72	20	0	23	33	36	20	24	44
Percentage (%)	78.3	21.7	0	25	35.9	39.1	21.7	26.9	47.8
In total (309 stories)	218	82	8	91	91	128	53	88	141
Percentage (%)	70.6	26.5	2.6	29.4	29.4	41.4	17.1	28.5	45.6

In spite of their different class positions, the main characters in both series often end up tragically, as "cracked-down" results appear 31 times in *Wan* (73.8%) and 128 times in *Diors* (41.4%). Counterattack (*nixi*, 逆袭), a term that is usually associated with the subversive potential of *diaosi*, proves to be only a mirage. Such a disparity is particularly highlighted in the stories in *Wan*, whose endings usually appear to be successful counterattacks, but turn out to be a tragedy if given a second thought. For instance, in S01E03, Wang Dachui, an old single man, finally manages to marry and becomes a father. Ironically, it is indicated that his wife cheated on him and the baby is not his biological child due to the difference in skin colour. Even when Wang is depicted as a superman in S02E15, he ends up voluntarily working for the man whom he is eager to defeat, without self-awareness.

So where does the pleasure of constructing *diaosi* masculinity come from? Back in the era of grassroots, *e gao*, or parody, was commonly

adopted by ordinary netizens to challenge authoritative power. In cyberspace, where power is more decentralized and fragmented, online parody "provides an alternative locus of power, permitting the transgressing of existing social and cultural hierarchies" (Gong and Yang 2010: 4). It allows a temporary suspension of institutional inequalities by presenting political issues in a non-political way. Some researchers have used the concept of "carnival" to conceptualize online parody in China, arguing that the Internet constitutes "a second world that is different from the pretentious, hypocritical and serious official culture", celebrating the overthrow of traditional power relations (Li 2011: 84; see also Herold 2011). While the carnival permits transient ignorance of normalizing rules and civility, grassroots netizens creatively produce images, videos or slang to mock the hierarchical and unequal reality.

In this regard, the pleasure of calling oneself "*diaosi*" is acquired in a similar way by challenging hegemonic power and overturning normality. As can be seen from Table 13.2, the strategy of deconstruction accounts for nearly half of all the narrative modes in *Wan*. Such reproductions of classical stories or famous male figures include a spoof of *Journey to the West*—one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature (S01E05; S02E01), a re-write of *The Little Match Girl* (S02E07), a miserable parody of Apollo (S01E14) and suchlike. Alternatively, representing controversial issues in Chinese society in an exaggerated way is another selling point of *Wan*. In S02E08, Wang Dachui is portrayed as an ordinary *diaosi* who wants to be a singer. Ironically, when he explains that he grew up in a happy family, he is immediately mocked by the manager, who asserts that "anyone lacking a miserable past will not even pass the first round in a talent show." As a result, Wang's mother signs an official profile to disown him, his girlfriend cheats on him, and his father commits suicide—all in order to support him becoming a singer. These ridiculous plots point directly to stereotyped talent show singers, who usually tell their tragic life stories on-stage in order to gain compassion and support. By deconstructing these alleged "touching" moments and inverting them into an ironic story, *Wan* depicts Wang Dachui's pathetic life, yet offers the potential *diaosi* audience a sense of sympathy and empowerment.

Table 13.2 *Wanwan meixiangdao*

	Character types			Endings			Relation with other characters			Narrative strategy
	Working class	Middle class	Upper class	Successful counter-attack	Nothing changes	Cracked down	Superior masculinity	Desiring femininity/ goddess	Both	Deconstru-ction
S01 (15 episodes 20 stories)	11	4	5	4	0	16	10	4	14	11
Percentage (%)	55	20	25	20	0	80	50	20	70	73
S02 (16 episodes 16 stories)	12	3	1	2	1	13	7	6	13	7
Percentage (%)	75	18.75	5	12.5	3.8	81.25	43.75	37.5	81.25	43.75
Special (6 episodes 6 stories)	6	0	0	2	2	2	2	1	3	2
Percentage (%)	100	0	0	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	16.7	50	33.3
In total (42 stories)	29	7	6	8	3	31	19	11	30	20
Percentage (%)	69	16.3	14.3	19	7	73.8	45.2	26.2	71.4	47.6

Although *diaosi* men tend to be at the bottom of the class stratification, with rather limited opportunities, deconstructing and making fun of the bitter reality allows them to temporarily escape from the disillusionment of a bleak future.

At the same time, *Dior* creates the pleasure of constructing *diaosi* through inviting celebrities and devaluing their social status. In S01E01, famous actress Sun Li plays herself in one of the stories, in which she is asked to pay for the photo after a *diaosi* fan takes a picture with her. Although the ordinary star-fan power relation is completely subverted in this clip, it simultaneously indicates that *diaosi* men are usually unreasonable and mean. Such a metaphorical depiction of the indecorous *diaosi* men appears repeatedly in *Dior*. Through breaking apart existing stereotyped figures—untrustworthy fortune-teller on the street (S03E05), selfish passengers on a bus (S01E02), migrant workers (S02E06)—and piecing together these identity fragments, *Dior* produces a variety of undifferentiated, anonymous *diaosi* men with whom

the audience can easily identify (Shen 2014). In this sense, *diaosi* identity construction involves "improvising, experimenting, and blending genres, patching together contrasting or even contradictory elements, creating and modifying meanings to suit the context and in response to the requirements, affordances, and meanings of the situation" (Weber and Mitchell 2008: 43–4). Located in the virtual world of cyberspace, which provides more opportunities for identity negotiation, the web-series thus becomes an ideal medium for the reconfiguration of new forms of masculinities.

By encoding the characters and plots, both series demonstrate another common feature: the figure of the *diaosi* is usually portrayed in relation to other characters, either men in superior social positions or a desirable "goddess". Among the 42 stories in *Wan*, such a relational construction of *diaosi* masculinity occurs 30 times (71.4%), while the number reaches 141 in the 309 stories of *Diors* (45.6%). A notable difference lies in the fact that the point of focus in *Wan* is obviously *diaosi* men's subordination to dominant masculinity (45.2% compared to 26.2%), whereas *Diors* tends to position *diaosi* men in heterosexual relations with women (28.5% compared to 17.1%).

In *Exhibiting Masculinity,* Nixon (1997) reminds us that contemporary masculinity should always be considered relationally with regard to both femininity and alternative versions of masculinity. Such a perspective enables us to notice the power dynamics that underpin these relationships, and meanwhile avoids reproducing the binary system of dominant masculinity—subordinate femininity. In particular, *diaosi* masculinity was invented in contrast to the so-called male ideal of the "tall-rich-handsome" at the very beginning (Lin 2013; Szablewica 2014). In other words, *diaosi* has always relied on the predominant form of masculinity to gain its significance. In S01E08, Wang Dachui is a hard-working white-collar worker who has not received his salary for more than five years. As a result, he decides to kidnap his boss and ask for the money that he deserves. However, the boss copes with the situation calmly and manages to convince Wang that he should keep working for him. The story ends with Wang's monologue: "I'm Wang Dachui, and I never expected to finally solve my salary problem." Ironically, it turns out

that Wang loses all his salary while gambling with his boss, and even goes into debt. As the boss does not require him to pay off the debt, Wang decides to keep working for his "generous" boss. In this story, *diaosi* man is portrayed as being repressed by superior masculinity and even being fooled without self-awareness. It is through the depiction of the interaction between Wang and his boss that *diaosi* man's spinelessness and indecency become exposed to a large extent.

Equally crucial to the construction of *diaosi* men is their fetishization of the "goddess", namely the idealized woman whom they always desire but have no chance of developing a relationship with. The subordinate class identity of *diaosi* men is significantly represented in connection with the contribution of women, mostly in terms of their hopeless chase after the "goddess". Even when *diaosi* men manage to build a romantic relationship, they usually tend to be fooled by their female partners. Typically, in S01E01 of *Diors*, there are several short stories about a *diaosi*'s date with a goddess that he met online. Although the man demonstrates symbolic elements of the "tall-rich-handsome"—a suit, fine dinner and a date with the goddess—he acts in an indecent manner throughout the date. After describing himself as a musician and a dancer, he suddenly starts to dance in the restaurant when the goddess's phone rings; later when he is asked by the waiter to stop smoking, he decides to put a plastic bag over his head in order to block the smoke; at the end, when it is time to pay for the dinner, he faints at the moment when the bill arrives in order to avoid spending any money. Through the representation of *diaosi* man in a sequence of such scenes, the stereotyped *diaosi* is implicitly reinforced in the imagination of the audience: a vulgar grassroots person who dreams of a date with his goddess, but only ends up by humiliating himself. By displaying the interaction between *diaosi* masculinity and desirable femininity, the symbolic power relations become reaffirmed and strengthened. As Stuart Hall notes:

> Stereotyping, in other words, is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the "normal" and the "deviant", the "normal" and the "pathological", the "acceptable" and the "unacceptable", what "belongs" and what does not or is "Other", between "insiders" and "outsiders", Us and Them. (1997: 258)

In this sense, rather than being a celebration of losers, *diaosi* connotes the "deviant", the "pathological" and the "unacceptable". *Diaosi* masculinity is constructed as a stigmatized label, an undesirable form of male identity that men should try to escape from, an actual loser in the ranking system of masculinities.

Conclusion

By decentralizing power and attracting the enthusiastic young generation, the Internet has acted as a catalyst for the emergence of new forms of male identities. The case of *diaosi* masculinity is emblematic of the manifold identity labels constructed by young netizens to capture their changing everyday lives. Through a detailed reading of two web-series, it has been revealed that *diaosi* is a floating signifier that contains complicated feelings and implications. While *diaosi* has been explored as the psychological uneasiness of contemporary Chinese youth, or as symbolizing the political potential of young netizens, I argue that the connotations of *diaosi* require a more critical reading by locating it within a broader sociocultural landscape. Just like other conflicting discourses around new forms of identities in cyberspace, *diaosi* appears to be both subversive and reproductive. On the one hand, the proliferation *of diaosi* masculinity marks its radical transformation from a stigma for disadvantaged men to an identity label that is widely extolled in society. In this sense, *diaosi* discourse contributes to challenging the ruling values, as well as dominant masculinity, in a self-belittling way. It certainly encourages an alternative articulation of political contestations around social injustice and the meaning of being a man. On the other hand, while the enlargement of the *diaosi* group reflects an increasingly visible social stratification, it also reproduces this hierarchy by demarcating *diaosi* from the dominant class. After all, *diaosi* men's pejorative attitude towards the "tall-rich-handsome" in no sense implies that they are satisfied with their situation as losers. This can be read from Wang Dachui's ultimate dream—"increasing salary, getting promotion to manager, becoming CEO, marrying white-rich-pretty, and reaching the peak of life" (S01E02; S01E08). This picture of *diaosi* Wang's dream future is exactly the epitome of the tall-rich-handsome.

In terms of the discursive construction of masculinity, Song and Hird argue that representation is not a passive reflection of "reality" but actually forms "reality" *per se* (2013: 14). While the two web-series discussed in this chapter may be conducive to raising awareness about social inequality and political possibilities, they in turn reinforce the subordination of *diaosi* masculinity in offline reality.

The lack of radical potential in *diaosi* masculinity is also demonstrated in its glorification of the "goddess", which inevitably reaffirms the existing institution of heterosexuality. Actually, the thread of heteronormativity runs throughout the discourse of *diaosi*, from the criterion that they are not attractive to their "goddess" to their mingled disdain and admiration for the heterosexual masculine ideal. Although *diaosi* was initially created to resist heterosexual norms, the accentuation of this particular male identity in turn underpins the standard of measuring contemporary Chinese masculinity in terms of the capacity to gain material wealth and attract women. In opposition to *diaosi* men, the privileged position of elite men and their symbolic identity elements are further maintained with regard to cultural representations that "define masculinity in terms of economic and/or cultural capital" (Song and Hird 2013: 119).

The young generation of Chinese, who are sometimes labelled as the "Me Generation", are frequently criticized for their selfishness and lack of responsibility (Liu 2011). Along with their Western counterparts, Chinese youth are increasingly defined within the framework of late modernity and individualization that highlight autobiography and detraditionalization (Yan 2009). However, the case of *diaosi* in Chinese youth culture seems to present a more ambiguous and complicated picture. From examining the relationality of *diaosi* men with both superior masculinity and femininity, I suggest that this new form of male identity potentially challenges the assumptions of late modernity and individualization. For the young generation, although they have gained more individual agency than ever before, traditional and collective values are still crucial resources in constructing self-identity. The anxiety and fear of falling outside dominant gender discourses motivate individuals to reflexively look back on themselves and adjust accordingly. Recognizing that China is witnessing the rise of individuals, in the sense that Chinese society is increasingly characterized by "hybrid forms, contradictions,

ambivalences" and "do-it-yourself biography", as in the West (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 5), we should not lose sight of the interactional rituals through which young people identify themselves. Exemplified by the "chameleon-like nature" of *diaosi* (Szablewica 2014), the complexity and subtlety of youth identities may bring more challenges to scholars writing in the Chinese context.

In contemporary China, conventional notions of being a man or a woman have been creatively interrogated by the digital generation, who are seeking new ways of being themselves in the online (and offline) world. Nonetheless, the agency of youth is unavoidably restricted within social realities and more or less affected by the dominant discourse, as can be seen in the case of *diaosi*. Ultimately, the emergence of *diaosi* in cyberspace resulted from a certain group of young men being deprived of material comfort and male superiority, which point to flourishing consumerism and traditional gender norms respectively. In this regard, scholars need to be especially cautious of the extent to which Internet-generated identities can be viewed as subversive or rebellious, and should avoid over-romanticizing the political dimension of youth cultures. What also needs to be noted is that by examining the emergence of *diaosi* masculinity within the web series, this chapter mainly addresses the online construction of this new form of male identity. However, the potential disjuncture between discourse and practice of this masculine position should not be neglected. Whilst the ambiguities of *diaosi* discussed in this chapter mirror the heterogeneity and intricacy of the new masculinities emerging in contemporary China, debates around this notion can be extended through further exploration of their acceptance in the everyday experience of young Chinese men.

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14

Pathways Toward Progressive Gender Consciousness for Young Men in Taiwan

Herng-Dar Bih

Introduction

The 1960s saw burgeoning women's movements in the global North, but Taiwanese society was not quite affected by feminism at that time. The more influential women's movement started in the 1980s with the repeal of martial law, which was followed by the establishment of many women's organizations (such as the Awakening Foundation, the Modern Women's Foundation, and the Garden of Hope Foundation, etc.) to serve various needs specific to women. In addition, most activities promoting gender equality (e.g., courses, speeches and demonstrations) were organized by women for women, with men rarely playing a prominent role. However, boys' and men's participation must play a key role in the establishment of gender equity (Levtov et al. 2014). Schacht and Ewing (1997: 169) believed that a true male feminist could educate and mobilize other men. Such a man could also spread feminist concepts in fields that women find

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hard to enter, promote feminist reform within these fields, bring feminist issues into the existing male power structure, and serve as a communication bridge between female feminists and men. This paper aims to understand how some young men have come to care about gender issues in a patriarchal society, form a progressive gender consciousness, negotiate different reactions from fellow males, and evaluate political/relational/personal interests to take further actions.

Literature Review

The second wave women's movement in the 1960s had a great impact on many social spheres in the global North. Many men felt threatened by it and responded by constructing discourses and taking actions (Brod 2013: 50). However, men's gender consciousness was not necessarily pro-gender equity. Messner (1997) undertook a sociological analysis of ten men's movements (e.g., the Mythopoetic Men's Movement, Socialist Feminist Men, the Gay Liberation Movement) in the US. He produced a less either-or and less of a continuum analysis (Egeberg Holmgren and Hearn 2009: 405), and positioned these movements in a triangular-shaped diagram called "the terrain of the politics of masculinities" in which the three apexes were represented as men's institutionalized privileges, costs of masculinity, and differences and inequalities among men. Through his lens we can learn of American men's reactions to feminism, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, and negotiations among these movements.

In addition to the concerns with men's movements, the construction of multiple masculinities in daily lives constituted another significant research area in Men's Studies. Connell (1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and her colleagues departed from the sex role approach and proposed a model of multiple masculinities and power relations. They assumed that masculinities came to existence in specific social and historical circumstances, and were relational, hierarchical and subject to change. The above literature is helpful in looking at men's responses to feminism; however, they focus more on the social and political than the personal (Levtov et al. 2014). In addition, the literature focused on how

traditional constructions of masculinity have been problematic rather than inform new, healthier alternatives for being male (Cornish 1999).

Most literature on the personal experiences of being anti-sexist or pro-feminist men is from self-reflective narratives. Starting out from her own personal experience, Connell (1987: xii) summed up five reasons why heterosexual men would not defend patriarchy: (1) they can still notice the oppressiveness of patriarchy; (2) they have special relationships with women and wish that they had better lives; (3) hierarchy exists among men, so that some men might suffer more than others; (4) gender relations are constantly evolving, and men largely change with them; and (5) they still have a conscience and empathy, which means that they are waiting to be awakened.

Answering the question of "How did you become a feminist?", Digby (1998) admitted that it was difficult to answer. He referred to the following factors: exposure to feminist discourse, a caring and empathetic mother, being an outsider in athletic activities and the breakup of his first marriage. Brod (2013: 50) mentioned two important factors: (1) As a child of Holocaust survivors, "the importance of social justice issues is bred in the bone". (2) As a child of the 1960s, he felt threatened by the empowerment of women and had to do something to react. On the other hand, Schacht (Schacht and Ewing 1997: 161) developed an interest in feminism through learning of difficulties experienced by most women. As he continued to adopt a pro-feminist stance, he felt betrayed and rejected by other men. Only the company and support of feminist women, he insisted, "can be midwives in the birth of any sort of feminist consciousness". Johnson II (2010) added another dimension on race. He grew up with traditional gender values, and only ceased to react defensively to feminism after taking a course on domestic violence and reading more feminist literature. Then he became willing to admit that he could be the sexist subject and the victim of racism at the same time. To sum up, these feminist men propose the following personal experiences that aid the formation of gender consciousness: as a child of Holocaust survivors, as the victim of racism, being an outsider of a male peer group, exposure to feminism, and emotional support from other women or men.

Christian (1994) and Cornish (1999) are among a handful of scholars who have studied the process of the formation of male gender

consciousness. Based on in-depth interviews, Christian (1994) researched the life histories of 30 anti-sexist men, the majority of whom had been influenced by two mutually reinforcing factors. The first was early life experiences that departed from conventional gender expectations, including identification with nurturing fathers, parents who did not replicate the traditional gender division of housework, sibling influence, good relations with girls, and living in a situation that did not particularly emphasize gender. The second factor was exposure to feminist influences in adulthood, which reinforced their early non-traditional gender experiences.

Cornish (1999) used unstructured interviews to study eight pro-feminist men and one father's rights activist in order to understand how they became involved in gender issue discussions and activities. He found that the participants shared similar underlying factors in their family of origin and challenges from feminism. When facing challenges from feminism, men born into families with a rigid hegemonic male role need to learn how to deal with this type of conflict. If without sufficient support (e.g., psychological consulting and therapy, support from men's groups), such men might turn into anti-feminist activists. If receiving sufficient support, however, they will be better able to handle interpersonal relations and emotional autonomy, and will be able to establish a new non-patriarchal community. In other words, men born into alternative, democratic, highly tolerant families that encourage critical thinking would keep learning during the life process to better handle tension and conflict in a non-defensive, constructive manner.

To sum up, both Christian and Cornish indicated the critical role of feminist influences. However, Christian emphasized the importance of unconventional gender experiences early in life. In contrast, Cornish proposed that gender consciousness could be developed with enough psychological and community support, even for men who grew up in non-traditional gender roles. These two studies provide a useful initial theoretical framework, but they needs to be adapted in order to understand young Taiwanese men in a different gender structural context. Taiwan's women's movement became active after the repeal of martial law and has not been so prominent as to force a reaction from men. Thus, Taiwan does not have men's groups which support feminism, nor are there any organized anti-feminist groups (e.g., fathers' rights groups, New

Men). Thus, it would be interesting to know the trajectory of how the individual man develops a concern for gender equity in a non-Western social context.

Research Methods

Egeberg Holmgren and Hearn (2009) indicated that "men's gender-consciousness certainly is not necessarily pro-gender equality……[W]e can recognize a form of continuum from those men actively supportive of gender equality…onto those actively hostile" (p. 405). This study planned to include only radical young men who engage with feminism and actively pursue gender equity. In other words, I focus on men's positions at the top of Messner's (1997) triangular framework, which emphasizes the recognition and opposition of men's privileges. One reason is that because of constraints resulting from the short history of the women's movement, it is difficult to find older men who are committed to feminism. The other is that I like to show more positive role models for other young men to emulate.

Seventeen young men in the age of 19–28 were interviewed. The group included six gay men and eleven heterosexuals, all of whom had university education. Since I had been teaching and writing newspaper columns on gender issues for many years, I had much opportunity to know men who were interested in gender issues. Most of the interviewees were not strangers to me. I had known and interacted with them in gender-related courses or activities. Two men were introduced by other feminist co-workers. As mentioned by Egeberg Holmgren (2008), it is not unusual that Swedish men describe themselves as feminist. In contrast, there are hardly any men who identify themselves as a male feminist in Taiwan. Men usually say that they are not qualified to be so but are heading to become a feminist. The claim of being a feminist would bring about much pressure. People would examine their every daily behavior through a feminist lens. When I contacted the potential interviewees, I did not mention the words pro-feminist or male feminist. Instead, I expressed to them that I was interested in men who participated in gender-related activities. No one refused to be interviewed. Most of the interviews took

place in my office at the university. The interviews included questions regarding childhood experiences and critical incidents related to gender, education, friends and intimate relations, the impacts of feminist discourse on daily life, self identity and social relations. Most interviews lasted around two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Although women's movements started to grow in the 1980s in Taiwan, there were hardly any pro-feminist men's groups or male role models. Those men who were concerned with gender equity often felt lonely for lack of support. In university, male students who sat in on a course of Women's Studies would be ridiculed as having some problem of gender characteristics. This background explained that these young men were willing to participate in this research and were expected to talk about their experiences with a relatively older and more established male researcher. In addition to their growing process on the issues of family, gender and education, they had much to say about their confusion on gender issues. For instance, for a man to talk about gender was considered a problem. When a man reflected on existing gender relations (e.g., the unequal power relation between husband and wife, the bondage of romantic love or marriage), traditional men and women would both challenge and criticize him. Because some women might enjoy their marriage and family life, they wondered why a man would do harm to their happiness (in a marriage). When a man admitted his privileged position, other men would question why he was standing on the women's side. On the other hand, if a man spoke as a victim (in a gender structure), women would question him: "to gain a favor and yet call it a disfavor." How to find a comfortable position for a man to speak about gender equity was constantly an issue in the interviewing process.

There was one more thing worth mentioning. Since being gay was still a stigma, gay men would come out only to the person whom they trusted. Among the interviewees, two were only known to me as gay men at the interviewing process. I met Kid in a course on gender. In the interview, he talked about the fact that he might not get married, he intended to go back to his parents' home less frequently, he wore a red ribbon on World AIDS Day; however, he never mentioned that he was gay. Although I had a hunch, I did not ask him if he was gay. I thought that putting him in a

difficult position was unethical. When the interview was almost finished, we had the following conversation:

Bih: According to my former interviews, young men who are interested in gender issues can be classified into several types. You may tell me which one you belong to if there is one. The first kind: Go trendy.
Kid: No.
Bih: The second: For finding a girlfriend?
Kid: No. That's not important for me. You know! Please continue.
Bih: The third: Whose girlfriend is a feminist.
Kid: No.
……
Bih: The last kind is gay. These are all the types I know so far.
(He paused for a few seconds.)
Kid: I belong to the seventh. (Then, he gave me a "ha, ha" facial expression as if, "now you know the real answer.")

Tim was another story. I met Tim in the Gender Studies Center in the University. In the interview, I first introduced the concern and purpose of my research. He responded to me that "I had two versions of a story; one was a public version, and the other was a gay version. Which one would you like to hear?" I said: "You can tell me your experiences the way you feel most comfortable." Actually, I was shocked by his naturalness in revealing his sexual orientation. Comparatively, Eric talked a lot about his negative experiences as being an effeminate man during the interview. He revealed that he was gay long after, when we got closer.

Research Findings and Discussion

The research found that having a subjective experience of gender discrimination in society or seeing women suffering gender oppression does not necessarily lead a man to develop progressive gender consciousness. He might only view gender phenomena in society as natural occurrences or think that men and women are simply born this way, instead of analyzing them from the perspective of socio-cultural construction or seeing the possibility of changing these phenomena. Through the help of feminist

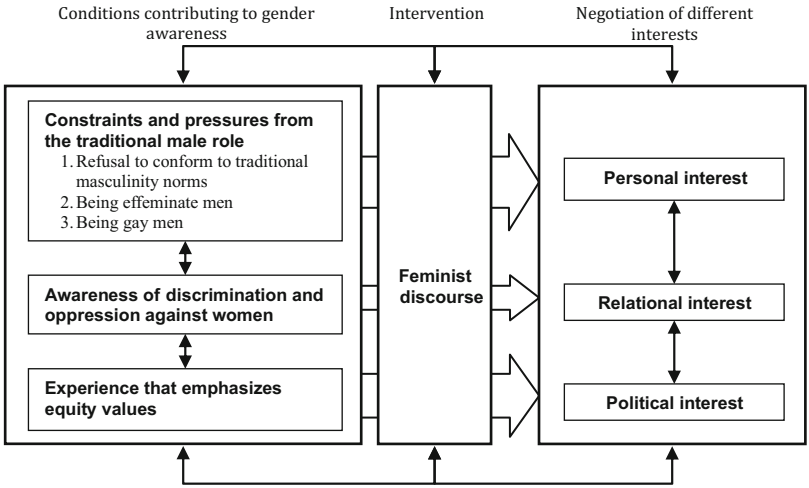

Fig. 14.1 A framework of the formation of progressive gender consciousness

discourse, a person develops an awareness of the existence of sexism and patriarchy. However, gender consciousness is an ongoing process; how they make choices to support or resist gender equity depends on the negotiation of personal, relational and political interests (Fig. 14.1).

Interview data revealed three kinds of conditions that contribute to young men being willing to study feminism and reflect on their own gender experiences from a feminist perspective: (1) constraints and pressures from the traditional male role; (2) awareness of experiences of women suffering discrimination and oppression; (3) life experiences that attach importance to the values of equity and justice.

Constraints and Pressures from the Traditional Male Role

As many women are victims of gender discrimination in society, they very easily develop gender consciousness after being enlightened by consciousness-raising groups or discourse. Couldn't the same reasoning be used to infer that men are also conscious of being restricted by their

gender? Based on the interviewees' narratives, three kinds of intertwined constraints and pressures from the traditional male role were identified: refusal to conform to traditional masculinity norms, being effeminate men or sissies, and being gay men.

Refusal to Conform to Traditional Masculinity Norms

Masculinity refers to "the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine…given what it means to be a man…in society" (Stets and Burke 2000: 997). In contemporary Taiwan, hegemonic masculinity refers to physical strength, enthusiasm for sports, being resolute, suppressing vulnerable emotions, being rich, being exclusively heterosexual, having a son to carry on the family name, and having authority over women and other men (Wang 1998). However, most men have great difficulty fulfilling the culturally "idealized" form of masculine character, leaving them the option of conforming to, admiring, resenting, or challenging hegemonic masculinity.

In a patriarchal society, families still subscribe to the view that boys are more important than girls, and fewer expectations are made about a girl's future. Paradoxically, the excessive expectations parents have towards their sons put them under great pressure, with men having to shoulder the heavy burden of providing for the family, producing a son to continue the family line, as well as bring glory and honor to the family. Such expectations from his parents and/or extended family might make it impossible for a man to live the life that he truly wants to live. He cannot consider his own preferences when deciding whether to marry and have children, or choosing a profession. Interviewee Michael, the eldest son in his family, said: "My family put a lot of expectations on me, which gave me heavy pressure when I was little. During my fresh year in senior high school, I decided to take the social sciences track. As a result, my father was mad at me for a month."

In addition to being subject to constraints on career development, a man can be ridiculed by his peers for not participating in popular male activities such as sports, social drinking after work, or commenting on women's bodies. Steve worked in an industrial company and complained

that his male co-workers frequently got together to "'light cigarettes for one another, and exchange men's talk or information about their work." He felt his career advancement would suffer if he were not a part of this social group. Moreover, one time, when he refused the offer of an alcohol drink by his elder, he was subsequently ridiculed by the elder as being not like a man. The elder said: "You are such a fussy and rubbish guy. I once wanted to introduce my daughter to you, now I give up." Many interviewees also mentioned that they were often advised "to act like a man," specifically to be tough and aggressive and hide their vulnerabilities, such as being told: "You should be good at basketball since you are a tall guy"or "It's a shame for a guy to be indecisive." From career development to daily activities, they personally experienced constraints on expressing themselves and started to question what constituted a real man.

Being Effeminate Men or Sissies

Society tends to value masculinity more than femininity and a man who behaves like a "sissy" betrays the male role. A sissy here means a boy or man who does not meet the standard male role or displays effeminate behavior, such as a lack of strength or courage, or crying a lot. Society detests sissies because they resemble "women" too much and not because of their temperament as such. In a male-dominated society men are above women, and a man who is perceived as having relinquished his superior position of birth is seen as a legitimate target for discrimination. Discrimination against sissies is a manifestation of disdain for women, and societal attitudes towards sissies can only be meaningfully discussed in conjunction with misogyny (Bergling 2001).

Interviewee Eric said: "I'm too tender or too sissy, which is why some people would taunt me, call me names or attack me." He recalled how one time his Chinese teacher told him to stand up and read out loud from the textbook. After he finished reading, the teacher did not say that he made a mistake, but that his voice was "not right", since his voice was too delicate. "While he said that in front of my classmates, the whole class laughed. It was really unbearable." In his first year at university, he participated in a debate competition, but was replaced by the team

leader in the finals, because his voice lacked aggressiveness. A consistent pattern of such incidents indicated to Eric that his abilities were being questioned because he had a female temperament. Reflecting on his differences with others and their treatment of him made him sympathetic to women's experiences. "This was one reason why I easily accepted feminism; it made me empathize with various predicaments women found themselves in."

Being Gay Men

In our heterosexually-dominated society, gay men suffer explicit discrimination and unequal treatment, which manifests itself in various spheres of life, including law, work, education and space. Alex said, "I think that this feeling of being oppressed contributed to my sympathizing with the feelings that women had due to inequality." Tim said, "Because I myself came from a gay perspective, I would pay more attention to things that were unfair and oppressive. After coming into contact with feminism, I better understood where these things came from."

The gay men interviewed found it somewhat easier to establish equal friendships with women, who did not need to worry that their gay male friends would sexually harass them, thus leaving them more open to sharing their experiences. For instance, a female friend of Edward's not only shared her experience of menstruation, but asked him to accompany her to see a gynaecologist.

In fact, the traditional gender role boundaries that feminism criticizes are precisely the same sources of oppression for gay men. Furthermore, for gay men unwilling or unable to come out, both women's groups and the women's movement provide a safe environment that allows them to express themselves. Therefore, their alliance with feminists might be stronger than their ties with other gay groups. Tim also mentioned that the experiences of Taiwanese women, struggling to develop a strong voice from a marginalized and disadvantaged social position, could be a good model for gay men.

In general, men are in a privileged position. However, the power or resources are not distributed equally across different male groups. Sissies

and gay men are vested interest groups because of their biological sex; in the meantime, they are discriminated against due to their marginal masculinity or sexual orientation. For other men, precisely because of higher anticipation from their family members, they can't choose their career from free will. These personal uncomfortable experiences may not directly promise the gender consciousness to support gender equity, but may lead them to think about gender differences and how gender ideology permeates our daily lives.

Awareness of Discrimination and Oppression Against Women

The second condition for contributing to the young men's engagement with feminist issues that the research identified was the awareness of discrimination and oppression against women. Although men are the privileged gender group in Taiwanese society, they have much opportunity to witness the victimization of women in both public and domestic spheres and begin to reflect on it.

While working as a radio journalist, the interviewee Michael was shocked by a famous trial. A woman, Ju-Wen Teng, who was married to a man who once raped her, could not endure the violence from her abusive husband and finally killed him. She was sentenced to five years imprisonment. Michael could not understand why a woman would stay in such an abusive situation to the point where killing seemed the only and reasonable option. He started to read feminist literature and "began to look at domestic violence from within the entire social structure instead of simply thinking that it was an isolated incident. I think that was the beginning!"

Interviewee Kevin became concerned with gender issues in his sophomore year of university. At the time, nude photos of a female undergraduate were circulated on the internet by her ex-boyfriend, and Kevin was surprised at why many commentators blamed the woman and suggested that she deserved the humiliation. Being raised with the belief of social justice, he felt disgusted by the chauvinistic public opinions but was unsure of how to respond, even though he had studied sociology for

more than one year. He began to read feminist literature and immerse himself in the gender domain.

Despite the passage of some gender equity legislation, Taiwan is still highly patriarchal in the domains of religion, folk customs and sex. Interviewee Ted touched on the death of his maternal grandmother as a critical incident that enhanced his belief in feminism. According to Taiwanese folklore, "a married daughter is like spilled water," in that she can't be taken back and no longer belongs to her parents. Ted said: "Grandma was closer to my mom, but she could not live with a daughter. After my grandma died, my mother did not have a say on where to keep my grandma's name tablet and do the worship." Ted not only observed the negation of his mother's opinions, but also, as the son of a daughter, found himself marginalized at his grandmother's funeral. Although he had been very close to his grandmother, he was assigned a role equivalent to that of a son-in-law in the ceremony. Edward also observed that all the tasks and responsibilities in connection with worshipping the family's ancestors on his father's side fell on his mother's shoulders. Seeing a woman prevented from adequately expressing her grief for her own mother, while held responsible for rituals for her husband's parents, struck Ted as deeply unfair.

Some other interviewees had witnessed domestic violence. Faced with this violence against one's mother, a man, as he developed his gender identity, might hope to protect the mother while rejecting his father as a role model. Thus, witnessing oppression or violence against women in the private or public domain is more likely to encourage men to question social gender norms.

Experience that Emphasizes Equity Values

Fairness and justice, as well as ethical appeals, were also mentioned as reasons why they participated in gender movements. Feminist bell hooks (1992) once pointed out that a person does not necessarily have to experience suffering to rebel against structures of dominance, but that ethical and political understandings might also cause people to reject dominance. A man who has adopted ethical principles not only cares about his female partner, but also about women in general.

From childhood, Jahan "attached a lot of importance to fairness. I feel that this was a beginning. I cannot tolerate the existence of unjustness and sometimes I get quite a bit cynical. Frankly speaking, when I studied feminism in the past, it had an air of tragic heroism: I wanted to speak for the weak and defend them against injustice." For his part, Howard thought that the equity values that he believed in made it impossible for him to skirt gender problems: "'My concern with gender issues is something that evolved slowly from my experience with the student movement. Deep inside, I cherish the value of equity." Due to their advantaged status, men have more difficulty in being conscious of gender inequality. However, some young men who started out in the labor, environmental, or student movements later came to realize that gender is also an important sphere of dealing with social justice and equity. A man who truly believes in equity should be reflexive about men's privileges too.

The three abovementioned conditions (refusal to embrace traditional masculinity norms, being effeminate men or gay men, emphasizing equity values) are not mutually exclusive, and an individual's experience may reflect more than one. As a result, a sissy gay man, who has witnessed domestic violence and believes in justice, may possibly have strong motivation to learn and engage with feminism.

The Impacts of Feminist Discourse

As mentioned earlier, introspection alone does not lead to awareness of sexism or patriarchy. Kahane (1998) pointed out that "from the standpoint of the powerful and absent a structured critical analysis, the status quo tends to appear natural and just" (p. 222). All interviewees mentioned being enlightened or influenced by feminist discourses, such as exposure to feminist books, lectures or movies, or direct interaction with feminists.

According to my interview data, feminist discourse can play an important role in solving doubts, opening one's eyes or giving a new perspective. While learning painting, interviewee Ian was particularly curious about the sketches that his teacher collected. The different ways that male and female models were presented in the sketches left a deep impression on

him. Women in the paintings would often be naked and looking toward a contemplator outside the frame, while male models for their part would be neatly dressed or looking into the distance. At the time he did not understand the difference, but was later introduced to the concept of the "male gaze" through engagement with feminist thought.

Interviewees continually discovered new connections between social phenomena and gender, including language conventions (e.g., the use of the male in "chairman", "*X-men*"), the misinterpretation of the role of the male lion in the movie "*Lion King*", different sitting postures for men and women, the near exclusive use of male voices used for movie trailers, and the different design of shavers for women and men. Reading feminism opened their eyes to the ubiquitous manifestation of gender. Feminist discourse is a sort of interpretational framework that redefines the unethical plight of women that in earlier times had been thought of as a type of misfortune or an injustice to be endured. It shows that the problem is political and not personal, situational and not individual.

Personal Politics

The formation of gender consciousness is not a single event, nor is it a linear process with an ending point. Rather, it is a never-ending, reciprocal process (Griffin 1989; Stanley and Wise 1993). Then, what kind of forces can lead men to continue to care about gender equity issues and apply gender consciousness in their everyday lives? This involves men's interests, whether from doing something to make one feel better, or that not doing it may diminish one's integrity as an ethical being (Pease 2002). In addition, one has to distinguish different interests and assess their relative importance to different men (Pease 2002). According to the interviews, a man's ability and propensity to reflect on and practice gender equity is determined by his balancing of personal, relational, and political interest relations. Each man will weigh his own interest relations differently and they will be either mutually reinforcing or conflicting. Flood (2011: 360) provided a similar observation, arguing that men could be motivated to play an important role in stopping violence against women through appealing to the following interests:

personal well-being (freedom from the costs of dominant masculinity), relational interests, collective and community interests and principles (ethical or political commitments).

Personal Interest

Learning feminism leads to a new understanding of life experiences related to gender. It can liberate a man from traditional roles and also cause constraints on daily actions. Exposure to feminism allows men to see the causes behind the creation of gender role stereotypes and thus possibly ease one's own burden as a traditional man. It is therefore possible for a man to apply his own experiences to sympathetically understand the oppressions that gender structures impose on women, while simultaneously liberating him from stereotype roles. A few interviewees mentioned that they no longer felt obliged to be tough, get married, make a lot of money, drive a car or raise children. They felt freer and happier. Another interesting instance is that the interviewee Michael had previously depended on and enjoyed letting his girlfriend cook and clean for him, but he later began to see this as a sign of disability.

Engaging with feminist thought also raised some dilemmas for these interviewees. As Kahane (1998) noted, men "have little practically to gain from feminist practice…. [However, t]here are immediate costs to challenging sexism"(p. 224). For instance, how much privilege should a man give up if he adopts feminism? How much should he sacrifice to meet his partner's needs? Does not directly challenging the discriminatory or violent behavior of his peers make him an accomplice to their behavior? To what extent does he need to challenge them? Several interviewees indicated that they are wrestling with these issues.

Although some interviewees could gain academic status by displaying knowledge of feminism, I was more interested in those who regarded feminism less as objective knowledge and more as a means of reflecting on their own practice. As mentioned before, Ted complained that his mother did not have a say in his grandmother's funeral. He also expected that he and his sister should equally share any future inheritance and would also share the responsibility to care for their parents. But in fact,

his mother expected him to take sole responsibility to care for her, and he was concerned that his career development would be limited by assuming this responsibility. This had been a continuing issue for him to deal with.

Studying and practicing feminist ideas do not necessarily lead to a happy life. A young man told me that after he studied feminism, his male peers began to dislike him and accused him of not being aggressive or tough enough, i.e., not man enough. Even his girlfriend complained that she needed a strong shoulder to lean on, not a sissy man. He was left feeling lonely and longing to find a feminist men's group to support him. In short, a cost-benefit calculation would influence a man's next steps in feminist practice, and it's uncertain how long this interviewee could persist in feminist practice without outside support.

Relational Interest

In their everyday life situations, men are bound to have close relationships with many women, such as their female relatives, friends and colleagues. A man might wish that his mother need not devote herself to housework, that his wife not suffer gender-related discrimination at the workplace and that his daughter is not sexually assaulted. These concerns contribute to a man developing an opposition to sexism.

Many interviewees admitted that without studying feminism they would have had considerably fewer opportunities to learn about women's life experiences. In addition to sharing experiences in feminism classes, female friends or family members were also more willing to reveal their feelings and experiences to a man who was more empathetic to women. Tim's younger sister's plan to study natural sciences was rejected by their parents, because of the belief that natural sciences are for boys and social sciences are for girls. Tim used his knowledge of feminism to support his sister and persuade his parents. Peter supported his sister in conflicts with her highly-controlling husband. However, these kinds of actions also raised some conflicts among different personal relations. When Alex realized the problem between his own brother and his brother's girlfriend, he assumed that breaking up would be a better solution for their relationship. His feminist knowledge suggested that he should stand by his

brother's girlfriend's side, but it was unfair to his own brother. This was a very difficult choice for Alex.

Feminist knowledge also raised other dilemmas for the interviewees. Jahan was still troubled when his girlfriend would go out alone late at night. Protecting women is unquestionably an important traditional value for men, but feminism led him to question whether his insistence on accompanying his girlfriend at night indicated a lack of trust in her ability to take care of herself. On the other hand, if he didn't accompany her, she might think he was indifferent about her safety. He dealt with the dilemma by explaining his thoughts to his girlfriend and let her decide.

Relational interest in most existing literature refers to men's concerns with their female partners or friends. In this research, one interviewee, Jason, told a different story. He studied feminism out of the concern for his male classmates' well-being. He majored in engineering in university. Most of his classmates were male students who graduated from single sex high schools, and thus had little experience of interacting with girls. Outside of school, they occupied themselves with sports, computer games, online pornography and parties. They judged girls by their looks and defined the ideal girlfriend as being pretty, obedient, and able to play the piano. When his classmates broke up with a girlfriend, they did not learn or grow out of this relationship. Rather, they would talk to him, not for his advice, but through the expectation of him introducing a new girl to date with. Jason considered his male classmates to be clever, but wondered why they had such a poor life quality and poor relations with women. He studied feminism out of the hope that he could help his male classmates improve their life quality.

Political Interest

Most interviewees stressed that feminism was not just about women—rather it dealt with resistance to all kinds of domination and oppression, a kind of irresistible political correctness. Given his longtime involvement with the student movement and various social movements, the interviewee Howard felt compelled to become involved with gender equity issues. When Jahan began to read feminism, he was filled with a sense of

heroism and a desire to defend the weak against injustice. Max believed feminism was nothing but "a fight for fairness and justice. Any normal person should be able to perceive this patriarchal system and criticize it."

Ironically, respect and humanity were also raised as reasons to make a person get away with feminism. Regarding sexual violence, Vincent revealed that the saying of "This is not a gender issue; it is a humane issue," actually did not deal with the real problem of gender inequality. A problem can only be solved by clearly naming and identifying the cause.

Conclusion

This research proposes a framework for the formation of progressive gender consciousness for Taiwanese young men. I emphasize the importance of formative experiences that contribute to their encounter with feminism, the impacts of feminist thought, as well as negotiation between personal, relational, and political interests to help these men continue to participate in gender transformation. For instance, some men participate in the women's movement, but were questioned and ridiculed by female activists for their real intentions. One man rejected the traditional male role and refused to be a doctor. However, this was just for the reason that his girlfriend's parents refused their marriage proposal. On the other hand, one man could say loudly and proudly: "I am gay" for the first time in his life when he joined the anti-sexual harassment parade organized by women. Another man cultivated his gay identity from feminism, but later was angry and depressed because of some women's organizations' refusal to stand with the gay movement. As Griffin (1989) and Stanley and Wise (1993) indicated, gender consciousness is not a linear process, rather it is cyclic and spiral without a specific ending point. It is a continuous and never-ending process.

While this paper is inspired by Christian's (1994) and Cornish's (1999) work on anti-sexist and pro-feminist men, the findings indicate that the experiences of Taiwanese young men are colored by their different cultural and historical context. Christian (1994) discovered the importance of the role model provided by a nurturing father for the formation of

anti-sexist values. However, some of the interviewees in my research saw their fathers as negative role models, and the behavior and attitude of these fathers was a key motivator to initially become involved in feminism. The interviewees not only empathize with women's experiences of patriarchal oppression, but are frequently deeply harmed by patriarchy themselves. Feminist discourse provides an explanation of their unfortunate experiences and promises a different future. Feelings of alienation or bitterness between father and son give them a strong incentive to participate in the women's movement and to jointly attack patriarchy.

Christian (1994) also emphasized the importance of unconventional gender experiences in early life. However, my interviewees focused more on reflection on and reacting against the constraints and pressures of the traditional male role. As indicated in Christian (1994), most of the anti-sexist men had previously participated in a men's group. However, Taiwan lacked pro-feminist men's groups or prominent male feminists, so the interviewees focused on the inspiration derived from feminist theory, without mentioning men's groups or male role models.

Compared to the existing literature, the framework proposed in this research is more comprehensive and focused on the dynamic process. When one man makes a change in the attitude and practice on gender issues, his surrounding others and social policies do not necessarily move at the same speed. This discrepancy may bring him some challenges. To make a decision for the next step, he might weigh and negotiate the different levels of interests. The personal, relational, and political interests sometimes support one another; sometimes they create a dilemma for the person. Thus, he is always making a choice. At the same time, the process of engaging with feminism is never-ending.

In Taiwan, according to Bih (2003, 2004), breaking down the myths of male superiority and "the good wife and good mother" is critical to the acquisition of gender awareness for women. However, men can only become feminists by facing "the rapist within" (Pease 2000: 43) and their "unearned privilege" (Johnson 2005). Men should always remind themselves of not wanting to be a hunter to rescue Little Red Riding Hood (neglecting awareness of being the accomplice of the patriarchy) on the one hand, and not recommitting the same error of Western men's rights groups (only caring for men's trauma, but neglecting women's suffering)

on the other hand. If men felt discriminated against because of their gender, they should target their enemy—the patriarchal system—instead of feminism. Moreover, gender problems involve not only people's attitudes or beliefs but also a material and structural system. In addition to the abolishment of gender stereotypes, we need to propose more actions in the public domain in order to promote gender equity.

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