

## COMPLETION REPORT

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From Rigidity to Fluidity: The Transitional Male Gender Role in Today's Japan/ Keyword: Japanese Salaryman Masculinity, Displacement of Contemporary Singlehood, Masculinity, Young Adult, Japan

This project examines a clear and relevant case to interrogate changes in masculine subjectivities: salarymen in Japan. While previous studies have focussed primarily on the experience of 'subordinate' groups in a Western context, this project explores the experience of masculinity among 'dominant' men in a non-Western country. The project is structured around four robust research questions: (RQ1) What do the men regard as 'ideal masculinity'? (RQ2) How is this masculinity experienced and lived out in the men's lives? (RQ3) How have the men negotiated reported difficulties in identification? (RQ4) How and where do the men experience (unresolved) conflict in processes of identification?

The research is grounded in a thorough literature review of men and masculinities and critically compares arguments for both traditional and 'new' types of masculinities in Japan. It has successfully revealed an expanded and hybridized model of masculinity under which the interviewees had to identify and negotiate in both work and intimate relationship settings. The project adds to existing literatures on masculinities in Japan and critical studies on men and masculinity. The study collected data using the qualitative research method of in-depth interview. Interviews with a total of 35 participants were conducted between May 2021 and Dec 2021 using virtual meeting technology as the global pandemic prevented in-person meetings. The research team was able to fully capitalize personal and professional networks. The 35 interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using the grounded theory approach and the NVivo software package. The transcripts were analysed using a thematic analytic process to identify the main themes like changes in masculinity and gender in Japanese society.

The major finding of this project is that masculinities, as an object of knowledge, are always masculinity-in-relation. That is, masculinities are not just about men and what men do. In order to understand masculinities, we have to understand the social character of gender using a relational approach, which addresses connections, differences, and gender changes among men and their influence on subsequent relations between men and women. The project also explicitly states the contributions of masculinity and gender changes to the literature on masculinity studies, particularly to Japanese society, with possible applications to South-East Asia. This work would be of interest to scholars with global perspectives of gender and social change.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

<p>Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)</p> <p>Date: March 18, 2022 Venue: Cornell University Name of Conference: invited talk Title of Presentation: The Postmodern Salaryman: An Ethnography of Changing Masculine Subjectivities for Elite Men in Japan</p> <p>Presenter: Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang</p> <p>Date: May 20, 2022 Venue: University of South Carolina Name of Conference: invited talk Title of Presentation: The Postmodern Salaryman: An Ethnography of Changing Masculine Subjectivities for Elite Men in Japan</p> <p>Presenter: Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang</p>
<p>Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)</p> <p>Name of journal: Sociological Research Online [under review] Title: The Postmodern Salaryman: An Ethnography of Changing Masculine Subjectivities for Elite Men in Japan Author: Eileen Yuk-ha TSANG</p>
<p>Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)</p> <p>Nil</p>