

Abstract Hong Kong gay men have always been subordinated under heterosexism and the disciplinary notion of hegemonic masculinity in the straight world and hegemonic cult gay masculinity in the gay world. Dominance, however, is not securely held, but must constantly be won. Under the post-colonial administration, Hong Kong gay men are not enthusiastic about the political sphere of life; rather, they have tended to shift from institutional politics to cultural politics. Cultural space has become the primary location for the production of texts that disrupt the norm of hegemonic heterosexuality under the commodity logic of capitalism. Moreover, using their own forms of embodied cultural capital, Hong Kong gay men tend to take the path of micro-resistance in combating societal domination. This can be seen from their engagement in public sex and in their involvement in the commercial gay scene. Based on the 'voices' of 34 Hong Kong gay men, this article argues that Hong Kong gay men negotiate a gay identity that is sensitive and flexible to different institutional arenas; this allows them to strive for sexual freedom and create their own space for social interaction and sexual desire.

Keywords gay politics, Hong Kong gay male bodies, social exclusion, space, visibility

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Queer at Your Own Risk: Marginality, Community and Hong Kong Gay Male Bodies

Introduction

In this article I will argue that society at large limits the emergence of gay space; even inside the gay world, certain gay bodies are marginalized. I will propose that the notion of social exclusion should be understood in the light of a pluralist conception of power and a post-structural idea of subject

formation. Power not only manifests itself in structural control – of law, sovereignty and prohibition, but also circulates around many finer capillary sites. Gay identity is not a unified subject but is stratified along the lines of class, age, physical fitness, gender, and so forth. These ‘identity-components’ greatly affect one’s position within both straight and gay social space. It is within this paradigm that the sexual politics of Hong Kong gay men is played out and can best be understood.

I will contend that there has always been a gap between personal identity and community politics. Under the post-colonial administration, gay politics in Hong Kong has tended to take a non-institutional and non-confrontational approach. The lack of interest Hong Kong gay men have shown in politics is offset by their interest in cultural representation. Thus, it is cultural space that has become the primary location for the production of texts that disrupt the norm of hegemonic heterosexuality under the commodity logic of capitalism. Moreover, Hong Kong gay identity tends to take the form of micro-resistance against societal domination. This can be seen from their engagement in public sex and their involvement in the commercial gay scene. It is this ‘politics of the weak’ that seems to be largely employed by Hong Kong gay men.

By presenting the ‘voices’ of 34 Hong Kong gay men,¹ I will argue that Hong Kong gay men have devised tactics with which to react against the disciplinary notion of hegemonic masculinity in the straight world and hegemonic cult gay masculinity in the gay world. Hong Kong gay men are negotiating a gay identity that is sensitive and flexible to different institutional arenas; this allows them to strive for sexual freedom and create their own space for social interaction and sexual desire.

Power, resistance and the practice of the self

As argued by Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity refers to a cultural strategy that some people (mainly men) are required to use in order to inhabit positions of power and wealth and to legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance. This successful strategy not only guarantees the subordination of women in a society, but also defines other masculine styles as ‘subordinate variants’. Since homosexuals, by the traditional definition, ‘lack’ masculinity altogether, hegemonic masculinity structures gay masculinity at the bottom of the male gender hierarchy.

Hegemonic masculinity is closely related to heterosexism (sometimes called ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980), ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1990), or generally ‘heteronormativity’). While homophobia is a deep antipathy, disgust or dislike of homosexuals, heterosexism is

'a diverse set of social practices – from the linguistic to the physical, in the public sphere and the private sphere, covert and overt – in an array of social arenas (e.g. work, home, school, media, church, courts, streets, etc.), in which the homo/hetero binary distinction is at work whereby heterosexuality is privileged.' (Plummer, 1992: 19, italics in original)

Lesbians and gay men identify homophobia and heterosexism as the main forms of oppression from a masculine and heterosexual society. There is wide evidence of the domination by heterosexual men of lesbians and gay men; for instance, in political and cultural exclusion; legal and street violence; economic discrimination and personal boycotts. Oppressive structures not only abuse lesbians and gay men on a personal level but also define a boundary around 'real' sexuality by the negation of homosexuality (see Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1993).

Masculinized and heterosexist practices are thus accompanied by a whole conglomerate of connected institutions. Gay masculinity is subordinated under the construct of hegemonic masculinity, while gay identity is also subordinated under the regime of heterosexism. Thus, the Hong Kong gay male identity is doubly subordinated under these gendered and sexed institutions.

The traditional social reproduction model of power and politics assumes that power is repressive and that the subject is unified with predictable positions of power. It thus emphasizes either the efforts of individuals to resist societal domination, or the effects of external systems of social structure on individuals. Power manifests itself through visible and overt forms of domination, such as the criminalization of homosexuality, the mandating of an age of consent, and various social and structural constraints.

In contrast with this one-dimensional notion of power and politics, Foucault (1980) viewed power not merely as a coercive negative force that is manifested in structural control and exercised through laws and legal institutions, but as 'an all pervasive, normative and positive presence, internalized by, and thus creating, the subject' (Evans, 1993: 11). Power is realized through much finer capillary scales that constitute individuals as subjects through the regime of knowledge and power. It is through these fine capillary micro-sites that operate via local social institutions (e.g. family, school, religion and workplace), and through disciplinary surveillant gazes operating under the binaries of masculine/feminine or hetero/homo, that Hong Kong gay men are constituted as straight Chinese men.²

However, no matter how explicit political leanings, sexuality or agendas might be, the social construction of sexuality has never become fully established. Foucault (1980) is right to point out that 'power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism' (Foucault, 1980:

86). Ideology is the winning and securing of hegemony over time. As suggested by Hall (1977), 'it is crucial to the concept that hegemony is not a "given" and permanent state of affairs, but it has to be actively won and secured; it can also be lost' (Hall, 1977: 333).

Resistance can take many forms: it can be overt and directly confront dominant cultural values. Resistance to this form of 'macrophysics of power' usually takes the form of visible political action. This is where the whole gay and lesbian movement challenges heterosexism and emphasizes the notion of community building, personal identity and lifestyle (Weeks, 1985; Seidman, 1993; Jagose, 1996). Mainstream gay and lesbian politics in most European and American countries seem to manifest the 'visibility' of the modern gay consciousness: 'a struggle for identity, a development of sexual communities and the growth of political movements' (Weeks, 1985: 195). Using action strategies such as mass demonstrations, consciousness-raising groups, sit-ins or lobbying, the aim of gay and lesbian identity politics is to build up a cohesive and visible politicized and sexualized community. The achievements of gay and lesbian movements in European and American countries are exemplified by at least four developments: The development of various political and social groups, the massive growth of venues for gay consumption, the affirmative elaboration of queer culture in the mass media, and the growing production of knowledge in academia about alternate sexualities (Plummer, 1999).

This model of identity politics has been severely criticized in the 1990s with arguments that schisms have always existed within the gay and lesbian communities and that the limited victory of a visible sexualized community is usually limited to bourgeois gay white men and lesbians, while members of marginalized segments (e.g. bisexuals, transvestites, pre-and post-op transsexuals and other people who are 'outcasts' because of race, ethnicity or class) have always been underrepresented. Nevertheless, it is still a dominant model in the sexual rights movement (Seidman, 1993; Hennessy, 1995; Gamson, 1996; Plummer, 1999).

Resistance, however, can also be covert and indirect. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1984) articulates the importance of 'tactics' in his discussion of the micro-politics of everyday life, in terms of resistance to the norm. Tactics are ways of making use of the 'already-made' cultural system to achieve one's own desires by introducing alternative meanings to the dominant cultural system. Tactics are an art of the weak or, in Foucault's (1977) terminology, 'a technology of the self', or Scott's (1985) idea of 'infrapolitics'. These tactical 'ways of operating', relying on 'ambivalence', 'camouflage', 'clever tricks', and 'knowing how to get away with things', are what seem to characterize the response of most gay men in Hong Kong to sexual norms.

Nevertheless, the possibility and the forms of resistance taken by a 'diverted' subject depend very much on the subject's position. Every identity has a history, and one's identity cannot be separated from one's racial, sexual, national or class positions, age, and even physical fitness (Seidman, 1996; see also Mouffe, 1995). Extending Bourdieu's (1986, 1989) notion of class, I use the term 'embodied cultural capital' to refer to gay men's possession of cultural capital such as a 'fit' body, a 'respectable' standard of living, a 'standard' English command and so on. The extent to which they acquire this capital greatly affects their position within the overall straight and gay social space. Sexual identity should therefore be understood in terms of this 'politics of difference'; and our identities embody, through various forms and meanings, a vast and rambling multiple positioning and re-positioning of the self.

In the following, I will spell out the structural controls and discriminations against gay people in Hong Kong. I will then argue that at a collective level, gay politics, under the (post-) colonial administration, has adopted a comparatively non-confrontational approach in dealing with societal domination. Gay people have shifted their attention to cultural representations of their identity, and this shift can be seen in representations from popular culture. At the micro-level, through a discussion of their public sex practices, I will argue that Hong Kong gay men 'queer' public space for their own use. Inside the gay world, where they can find love and support, I will contend that certain bodies such as the hyper-feminine, the ageing, the disabled, the poor and other kinds of bodies come to be seen as subordinate variants or 'failing' bodies. Using their embodied cultural capital, I will discuss how Hong Kong gay men react against hegemonic ideals from both the straight and the gay worlds in order to form intimate relationships.

A methodological note

Between 1997 and 1998 34 Hong Kong men who identified themselves as gay were interviewed using a life history approach. Quantitative research shows the general profile of aggregate data necessary establish the overall social pattern of researched individuals; however, the complexity of life experiences (e.g. the flux, ambiguities, contradictions and diversity) of an individual seem to be best captured by qualitative methods. I found most of my interviewees through personal contacts, a kind of snowball method of sampling. However, I am aware that it is impossible to obtain a 'representative' sample of a stigmatized population. I would not claim that my interviewees are representative of the Hong Kong gay population.

The interview times ranged from one-and-a-half to three hours. My interviewees ranged in age from 16 to 48, and in education from

secondary to university level. Some of them are actively involved with gay organizations. In order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms have been used throughout the article, and some biographical data have been altered or withheld to ensure the privacy of the individuals. All biographical data cited refer to the time of the interview.

The interviews, which were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated (from Chinese to English), were free-flowing in style but focused on these men's sexuality. Guided by my theoretical framework, I used the grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1997) to examine my data. Themes that occurred repeatedly in most interviews were identified and further analysed.

The Hong Kong city/sexed body

Hong Kong society can be seen as a complex web of domination whose various structural constraints limit the emergence of 'queer space'. Because Britain enforced its laws on Hong Kong since 1842, Hong Kong had no legal 'queer space' until 1990, when male homosexual conduct was decriminalized. Even after the decriminalization of homosexuality, however, legal 'queer space' still remains limited. For example, decriminalization does not mean legalization. Same-sex partners are not entitled to the right to marry or the right to adopt children, the right to inherit if a partner dies intestate, and so on. The age of consent also reflects a double standard: for heterosexuals it is 16 while for homosexuals it is 21. Since there is no legislation, even the Equal Opportunities Commission (set up in 1996) is not authorized to handle cases against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. There are no 'out' gay governmental officials or politicians trying to promote constitutional change.³

In the sphere of employment, gay men and lesbians risk being dismissed or passed over for promotion once their sexual orientation is revealed (Hong Kong Government, 1996). The government has been recommending the 'Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation' (1996–1997) to employers. This is, however, an instructive guideline; any discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation cannot be made a legal case.

In churches of different denominations, gay Christians repeatedly receive messages invalidating homosexuality. Some are even forced to receive aversive therapy, conversion counselling, asked to temporarily stop coming to the church, and are even excommunicated from regular Sunday services. The Hong Kong Red Cross states in its 'Guidelines for Prospective Donors' that 'You should NEVER give blood if you are a man who has had sex with another man.' It seems that the organization has drawn up the rather simple formula that gay men = anal intercourse = unprotected

sex (Chen, 2001). Although different sexual orientations have been included in the Guidelines for Sex Education in schools, whether this topic is chosen to be taught depends on individual schools and teachers. Schools can be a place of severe and brutal abuse and bullying (Kong, 2000).

The scarcity of physical space, which is translated into an extraordinarily high price for land use, confines most Hong Kong people (especially those who are young and single) to their family home. This shared residence creates more pressure for them to come out to their families, and has a significant effect on their lifestyles (Kong, 2002). Gay couples normally fail to comply with different requirements if they would like to rent a public flat or buy a subsidized flat under various home ownership schemes. In renting a private flat, same-sex couples are often rejected if potential landlords know that they are gay. Gay organizations also have difficulty securing premises for their political activities (Hong Kong Government, 1996).

How have Hong Kong gay people reacted to these various structural constraints? This is the question that I am going to discuss.

Sexed body/the Hong Kong city

1. Non-confrontational gay politics

As Adam et al. (1999) have argued, national political and cultural characteristics play a crucial role in the development of national lesbian and gay movements. During the colonial period, the Hong Kong government always used the notion of ‘respect for the local culture’ to de-politicize Hong Kong society through a minimally integrated socio-political regime (Lau, 1982). Similarly, the new Hong Kong government (i.e. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government), under the regulation of the PRC, has been emphasizing the notion of Chinese values such as ‘harmony’ and ‘moderation’ to maintain the wish that Hong Kong should ‘remain the same for fifty years’. Hong Kong people have tended to accept political impotence as their fate, and the views that democratic change should be given a lower priority than the economy, and political stability and human rights should be subsumed under the notion of social harmony. With the collective wish that Hong Kong should remain the same for 50 years, the argument is that consensus (rather than confrontation) and gradual change (rather than radical transformation) seem to be the paramount concerns in formulating or even judging any kind of political movement (see Chow, 1998b; Law, 1998).⁴

My respondents, like most members of society, are not interested in, or may even be alienated from politics. Half of them have never voted. They have very little knowledge of the government or of the political structure of Hong Kong society. Most have no experience of participating in any

social or political organizations. When they were asked about (gay) politics, they argued that a non-radical and non-confrontational approach should be used even for those who participate in gay organizations. They justify their arguments using what seems to be the same language as the two governments, arguing on the basis of economic primacy and the need to discourage any rapid democratic changes in Hong Kong.

Charles is 23 and has just graduated from Melbourne. He is quite open with his family and his colleagues about his sexuality. But when he was asked about his ideas about gay politics, he made a fairly conservative comment.

I do think that Hong Kong has already had some sort of gay movement although it did not become very visible. Sometimes I think that visibility may not be a good thing. The gay movement has already started. . . . I think that any movement should not be too radical, for example, a democratic movement. You can't expect us to have a gay Mardi Gras next week!

Their political conservatism seems to reinforce the comments of one of my other interviewees,

Hong Kong people are not so political. If it is difficult to mobilize people to support homosexuality, and it is equally difficult to mobilize people to reject homosexuality. (Adam, 46, publisher)

What they are really concerned about seems to be individualistic enjoyment. Alan is now 36 and a professional dancer and has been 'out' in the gay scene for about 20. As he says,

I have never felt any kind of oppression from the government or from any political groups so far . . . Before the decriminalization of homosexuality [in 1990], people hung around. After the law, people still hang around . . . Hong Kong gay men are quite discreet.

The site of their struggle is not the political arena nor state oppression, but local social institutions. The family seems to be the main obstacle against participation in any visible form of protest. Charles is fairly open about his sexuality in his personal world. When he talks about his reluctance to participate in a more visible form of gay politics, he emphasizes his family-oriented culture.

If there were a gay parade, I would go to see it, but I wouldn't join in. I am sorry. It is mainly because of my family, I am not just talking about my parents, and I am talking about the whole family network.

The non-institutional attitude of Hong Kong gay men seems to be a result of the centrality of the family institution under the colonial administration, and of spatial constraints. The main issues are the family and culture, rather than sexuality and politics. These men struggle to find a partner and live

together without offending their families; rather than expressing pride in their homosexuality they want to avoid being labelled a 'sissy'; and they seek family acceptance and behave discreetly in order to avoid the shame that they may bring on their families. They seek to find a 'suitable' gay identity that can be reconciled with the institution of the neo-Confucian family (Kong, 2002; Chou, 2001).

After 1990 (the year homosexuality was decriminalized in Hong Kong), gay organizations began to flourish. However, Hong Kong has hardly witnessed any territory-wide confrontational gay politics. Gay organizations in Hong Kong are mainly self-help, service-oriented and community-based in nature. For example, the *Ten Percent Club* and *Horizons* both offer regular social gatherings, recreational activities and tea dances. *Horizons* and *Satsanga* primarily provide counselling services. *The Hong Kong Blessed Minority Christian Fellowship* and *Isvara* both encourage the spiritual development of gay people. *The 1997 Tongzhi Forum*, *XX Group* and *Queer Sisters* tend to focus on issues of culture and the media. *Freeman* and *the Joint University Queer Union* even claim to organize only non-political activities. The inward-oriented style of identity-building seems to be a major concern of gay organizations in Hong Kong, and non-confrontational gay politics seem to be their main strategy.

As Seidman (1996) pointed out, 'social movements seem strong when they pivot around a unitary (racial, gender or sexual) identity but this same heightened solidarity is purchased at the cost of increased internal repression as well as potential social and political isolation.' (1996: 22) Contrarily, Hong Kong's gay movement seems weak in terms of being centred on a unified gay consciousness, which may be due to the fact that the visibility of gay consciousness has always been underemphasized.

Hong Kong gay politics has recently tended to become more aggressive. Some gay groups have started to become actively involved with gay rights (equal opportunities). In response to the Legco Home Affairs Panel's Paper on 'Discrimination on the Ground of Sexual Orientation' in 2000, gay organizations such as the Ten Percent Club, Horizons, Satsanga, Rainbow Action, Rainbow of Hong Kong, Civil Rights for Sexual Diversities and the Chi Heng Foundation all presented papers and called for legal and social reform to outlaw sexual discrimination. Moreover, many gay-friendly groups joined in, including the Association for the Advancement of Feminism, the Movement Against Discrimination, the Hong Kong Women's Christian Council and the Hong Kong Christian Institute. Similar to Mouffe's (1995) radical democratic politics, Hong Kong gay politics is not so much a politics organized exclusively around separate identities (in this case, sexual identity) but rather, a politics organized around specific issues, struggles, goals and broadly demarcated principles (e.g. equal opportunity) that bring together interested parties.

What kind of gay politics is most appropriate for Hong Kong seems to be a major issue for Hong Kong gay activists. As I have said before, under the political culture of Hong Kong, few Hong Kong people participate in any political organization. Hong Kong gay men show little interest in participating in gay organizations. Nearly half of my interviewees had never participated in any gay organizations. Apart from the Ten Percent Club and Horizons, my interviewees had not heard of most of the gay groups in Hong Kong. While my interviewees all seemed to accuse gay organizations of not being political enough in a visible and confrontational sense, the radical actions of some gay activists have not been appreciated either. For example, members from Rainbow Action and their friends protested against the Hong Kong Red Cross's blood-donation guidelines for discriminating against male homosexuals. They scuffled with security guards and police at a 2001 World Red Cross Day ceremony held in Telford Plaza in Kowloon. Some waived a large banner from the first floor and threw anti-discrimination leaflets down to the public gallery. Just recently (August 2003), the same group condemned Hong Kong's Roman Catholic Bishop, Joseph Zen, for publishing two articles in a church newsletter arguing against same-sex marriage. They struggled with church officials and shouted slogans at worshippers during a Mass at the Hong Kong Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The action has been widely condemned by the straight population as well by as most gay organizations. Recent conversations with my interviewees and gay friends reveal that most of them found these actions too 'radical' and blame those activists of being too 'outrageous'. But when they were asked about their own engagement with gay politics, the following comment by George (24, a fresh graduate) is typical:

I am not that type of person, but I will use my own way of talking about homosexuality.

The 'type of person' he refers to are those who are more radical and confrontational in pursuing their political aims. George's 'own way of talking about homosexuality' is through videos and video installations. His videos tended to shift from constitutional politics to cultural politics, which seems to be the way Hong Kong gay men commonly practise politics.

The shift from an institutional politics to cultural politics may be accounted for by two factors. One is that the colonial administration provides almost no outlets for political idealism, and thus the energy of the people is directed towards the economic sphere (Chow, 1993). The other is the reluctance of gay men to come out publicly, as this might bring shame upon their families (Kong, 2002). Popular culture, governed largely by the logic of consumption, dominates the private lives of Hong Kong gay men.

2. Cultural queer space

Cultural space has become a major site for the production of texts that challenge the supremacy of heterosexuality. Gay and lesbian academic studies are common in European and American societies but are rare in Hong Kong.⁵ Since studying or teaching gay-related subjects can easily reflect on one's own sexual identity and coming out is not a common practice for most Hong Kong people, it is not surprising that there are very few courses on sexuality or on gay/lesbian studies in most universities in Hong Kong. The university campus is therefore neither the place to nurture a gay movement nor the place to wage an ideological battle. As a result, the gay and lesbian movement in Hong Kong has not much been supported by intellectuals within academic institutions and very few gay and lesbian programmes have been created in the curricula.

Popular culture has created a discourse about homosexuality that presents biased images of gay men. Gay people are usually portrayed as having come from dysfunctional or abusive families. They are often represented as 'hysterical men' (the logic of 'a woman trapped in a man's body'), alleged to be 'fashion victims', almost always over-dressed and expected to hang around in highly westernized places such as Lan Kwai Fong.⁶ Furthermore, popular culture enjoys this violent voyeurism and administers a heteronormative form of discipline in the framing of its homophobic reports and stories. Gay sex is the focal point of 'examination' under this voyeurism. Anal sex, group sex or public sex in the gay lifestyle is always exaggerated, and gay men are alleged to be promiscuous and thus responsible for the spread of AIDS. By positioning heterosexuals and homosexuals in two antagonistic and oppositional positions, popular culture successfully stigmatizes the latter as a deviant type (see Chou and Chiu, 1995; see also Kong, 2000).

Parallel to this disciplinary surveillance, however, is a new trend of queer development. The clearest example can be seen in the film industry. In particular, three forms of queer visibility can be seen: (a) ambiguous gender blending where homosexual love is hidden under the tradition of transgenderism and the *wen* ideal of Chinese masculinity – e.g. *Swordsman II* [Xiao'ao jianghu II zhi dongfang bubai] (dir. Ching Siu-Tung, 1992); *He's a Woman, She's a Man* [Jin zhi yue] (dir. Peter Chan, 1994). (b) The implication of a homosexual subtext under a 'homosocial overcoat' – e.g. *The Killer* [Diexue Shuangxiong] (dir. John Woo, 1989); *Cheap Killers* [Yue duoluo yue yingxiong] (dir. Clarence Fok, 1998). (c) The direct addressing of homosexual love – e.g. *Oh! My Three Guys* [Sange xiang'ai de shaonian] (dir. Derek Chiu, 1994); *Boy's?* [Jianan jianü] (dir. Hau Wing-Choi, 1996); *A Queer Story* [Jilao sishi] (dir. Shu Kei, 1997); *Happy Together* [Chunguang zhaxie] (dir. Wong Kar-Wai, 1997); *Bishonen . . .* [Mei shaonian zhi lian] (dir. Yonfan, 1998); *The Map of Sex and Love*

[Qingse ditu] (dir. Evans Chan, 2001). They feature gay men as suffering heroically in or resisting the oppressive straight world. Issues such as gay identity, coming out, AIDS and so on are usually the focal point. Moreover, these films also exhibit a more diverse representation of gay lifestyles and gay characters (Kong, 2004). However, in contrast to the new queer cinema of the West in the early 1990s (e.g. *Poison*, *Swoon*, *The Living End*, *Desert Heart*, *Go Fish*, *Mala Noche*, *The Attendant*, *Edward II*), which was primarily the product of self-identified gay or lesbian independent filmmakers consciously committed to radical politics, Hong Kong films that touch on the issue of homosexuality can hardly be considered 'independent'. Rather, these films are made for and consumed by mainstream audiences (Leung, 2001). Although the increasing proliferation of gay images and those of the far less threatening homosexuals are largely normalized within a heterosexist matrix, these films at least serve one crucial function: that of bringing the issue of homosexuality back before the public and partially circulating discourses to counter heterosexism.

Nevertheless, a substantial number of gays and lesbians and their sympathizers, who are gradually coming to occupy strategic positions in the mass media, are offering subversive critiques of heterosexual culture and may even suggest the celebration of queer culture. Using their own expertise and strategic positions in society, some cultural artists occupy a place in popular culture but at the same time, and in the same place, maintain a queer perspective by negotiating, subverting, exposing and opposing homophobic and heterosexist definitions, images and terms of analysis that mark them off from the dominant culture of heterosexuality.

For example, movie star Leslie Cheung's 'delicate sensitivity' (Kwan, 1995) fashioned a new sensibility of masculinity that was expressed through his cross-dressing and his manifestation of homosexual love to his long-time partner in public events. Pop-music star Anthony Wong's socially and politically charged songs, together with his sometimes outrageous and provocative looks, provides a very image of a queer icon. As a publicly out gay director, Stanley Kwan's *Yang ± Yin: Gender in Chinese Cinema* (Kwan, 1995) shows clips of some 45 Chinese films from the past that have touched on issues of gender and sexuality, intertwining these clips with his personal interpretations of these films from a gay perspective and even recording a conversation with his mother about his own homosexuality at the end of the film.

First held in 1989, the *Gay and Lesbian Film Festival* (also known as the *Tongzhi Film Festival*) not only shows many gay and lesbian films that most Hong Kong gays and lesbians would not be able to watch in any other way, but also provides a chance for these people to get together socially, which has a significant symbolic meaning for the development of 'queer space' in Hong Kong. In addition, a series of radio phone-in programmes

was launched in 1994 and lasted for 13 weeks, focusing solely on homosexuality. A TV programme with 10 episodes was made by RTHK in 1994, which talked seriously and more positively about issues related to homosexuality such as gay relationships, coming out, gay writers, religious conflicts, AIDS and even gay cruising cultures (Chou and Chiu, 1995).

Using theatre and writings as his major weapon, Edward Lam confronts the straight world by using bold expressions in his speech and writing (e.g. his plays such as *How to Love a Man Who Doesn't Love Me*, 1989; *Scenes from a Man's Changing Room*, 1991; and his books *Too Many Men Too Little Time*, 1996; *27.01.97-30.09.97*, 1997). Likewise, using mainly photography, and later books (e.g. *The Map of Burning Desire*, 2001) and films (e.g. *The Accident*, 1999; *The Night Corridor*, 2003), as his medium of expression, Julian Lee normalizes the ideas of homosexuality, S & M, meat joy, dragging, and so on under the umbrella of 'radical' and 'liberal' sexual and gender practices. Michael Lam has established his own unique style of gay writing through his highly camp but brilliant analysis of gay films, as well as by his witty but subversive 'queer reading' and 'twisting' of straight films (e.g. *Photocopies*, 1993; *Fake Sexual Politics*, 1993; *The Male Boundary*, 1994; and *Sex Text*, 2000). Meanwhile, Yau Ching has produced a large amount of feminist and queer writing in both literary and video formats. As the most acclaimed video artist in Hong Kong, Ellen Pau's video *Songs of the Goddess* has been screened in many festivals overseas as a major lesbian representative of independent videos in Hong Kong.

As a gay publisher, my interviewee Adam's overall mission is to create a space in Chinese culture by and for gay Chinese people.

I know a lot of friends who cannot read English. I think they are not so lucky. If I can be encouraged by English gay novels, why couldn't they? That's why I want to publish some very localized Chinese gay novels for them.

Collections of soft local gay stories by Adam and other publishers are surfacing (e.g. *Coming Out Stories of Hong Kong Tongzhi*, Chou et al., 1995; *Stories of Hong Kong Tongzhi*, Chou, 1996; *Beijing Tongzhi Stories*, Chou, 1996; *We Are Still Alive*, Chou and Ng, 1996; *Suddenly Single*, Yip Chi Wai, 2003). Even gay soft pornographic books can be bought in many newspaper kiosks. Due to electronic advancement, a new virtual space has been created in the 1990s and has become extremely popular in the tiny landscape of Hong Kong. Gay web sites (and chat lines) are numerous (www.gystation.com.hk, www.radiorepublic.com, www.gayhk.com). An electronic forum was set up following the *1998 Chinese Tongzhi Conference*.

The recent debates on sexual values and morality in the mass media have been drawing public attention to a lot of issues such as pornography,

prostitution, homosexuality, teenage sex, and so forth. A more visible and structured group of 'moral crusaders' is allied under the umbrella of Society for Truth and Light Ltd., and a loosely structured alliance of 'sex radicals' has been formed, consisting of a pool of academics, journalists, liberals and people working in cultural industries. All of them have made an effort to draw a line between 'good' and 'bad' sex (Rubin, 1993). They define, in their own terms, the meanings of sexuality, and have made an attempt to liberalize or defend the laws governing sexuality. This ideological battle is a clear example of the circulation of power from many forces; no one holds total power. Dominance is never securely held by one single agent, but must always be won. Moreover, it is through these cultural and intellectual movements homosexuality has been back into the public eye and has contributed to the meaning of sexual politics in its broadest sense as

... a struggle over the present and future of sexual difference and sexual divisions. But this in turn feeds a growing crisis over the meaning of sexuality in our culture, about the place we give to sex in our lives and relationships, about identity and pleasure, obligation and power, choice and consent. (Weeks, 1986: 90)

To sum up, I have argued that the gay and lesbian politics of a country should be considered in the context of its specific historical situation and the society's national, political and cultural characteristics. Most Hong Kong people tend to exhibit a diffuse and non-institutional character with respect to their endeavours to organize all sorts of large-scale confrontational social movements. This character may be the result of both the impact of colonialism and post-colonialism. Hong Kong gay men tend to argue that gay identity should be reconciled within the family-oriented culture and that gay rights should be subsumed under the notion of social harmony. Coming out is therefore not a common way of asserting one's gayness, and desires do not seem to be framed in terms of political interests. There has always been a division between personal identity and community politics. There was a mushrooming of gay organizations after homosexuality was decriminalized in 1990, but Hong Kong has had hardly any large-scale confrontational lesbian and gay movements. The development of lesbian and gay movements in Hong Kong has tended to resemble those in Southeast Asia (e.g. Jackson, 1995), Latin America (e.g. Murray, 1992) and East Europe (e.g. Long, 1999).

However, this is not to say that Hong Kong gay politics is not political at all. Recent moves by gay organizations suggest that they are becoming more aggressive and confrontational in fighting for sexual rights. Moreover, cultural resistance is indeed political resistance (Duncombe, 2002). Hong Kong gay people have tended to shift from constitutional

politics to cultural politics. Cultural space has thus become a major site of resistance from which to subvert hegemonic heterosexist norms. A visible queer cultural space has gradually emerged over the 1990s in Hong Kong, led not by gay academics or gay organizations in the main, but rather by interested parties within the media industry and in arts circles. Hong Kong's popular culture is saturated with homophobic ideology and homosexuals are stigmatized as deviants; however, a homophile trend has been operating at the same time to resist these hegemonic heteronormative practices. The proliferation of gay visibility in popular culture can hardly be treated as overturning the ideological tenets of heterosexuality, as it always works along the parameters of the logic of hegemonic masculinity and the commodity logic of capitalism. However, gay visibility at least prepares the ground to protect the civil rights of gay people, to resist the cultural abjection and civic eradication of homosexuals and provide more affirmative images of lesbians and gays in the mainstream media.

3. *Commercial gay scenes: life inside*

As argued by Plummer (1999), communities that have evolved around bars, discos, gay 'ghettos' and other 'scenes' constitute an important cultural force for the lesbian and gay movement, since participants can identify with one another through sexuality, language and values. However, any community has a dual nature that entails the articulation of commonality and consensus, but also implies a notion of exclusion and difference. That is, a community is based on the notion of collective inclusion as well as an implicit understanding of *who is and who is not to be admitted* (Chow, 1998a). The 'admission ticket' in the commercial gay world seems to depend on how much capital a gay man possesses, whether this is economic, cultural, social or symbolic in form (see Bourdieu, 1986, 1989).

The commercial gay scene in Hong Kong, like post-colonial society at large, is stratified along the lines of gender, class, race, age and body. Generally speaking, the commercial gay scene is largely male-dominated, highly class-specific, youth-oriented, camp-phobic, fashion conscious, and coloured by substantial western input. This cluster of prerequisites seems to govern the commercial gay scene and demands that gay men conform to its style. Like the compulsory heterosexuality that operates in straight society, it apparently operates through a 'compulsory cult of homosexuality' within the commercial gay world.

Most of my respondents preferred a man who is smart, bright, well-built, manly, straight-acting, macho, career-minded and emotionally in control. These attributes are all very typical cultural definitions of being a man. That is why nearly all of my respondents have all had the experience of being in love with a straight man.

The idea of physical perfection through the masculine and muscular look seems to dominate the gay scene in European and American countries (e.g. Segal, 1990; Forrest, 1994). As Connell (1995) argued, 'the choice of a man as sexual object is not just the choice of a body-with-penis, it is the choice of embodied masculinity. The cultural meanings of masculinity are, generally, part of the package' (1995: 156). My respondents seemed to confirm his argument, as they rejected both hyper-masculinity and hyper-femininity. On the one hand, some of the respondents disliked people who were too muscular. As Alex (33, slim, a computer analyst) said, 'Don't be too hunky . . . a bit of muscle but not those who train at a gym.' Or Adam (46, medium-built, publisher) who said, 'I am definitely turned off by those muscle Marys.' Although some of them rejected the hyper-masculine look, most of them seem to accept this physical build as the aesthetic ideal. Aron (33, medium-built, medical officer) said, 'I find gweilos (a.k.a. white or Caucasian men) very attractive, you know, those facial features, perfect tits and butt, bulbous biceps, but I never fancy going out with any one of them.'

However, on the other hand, most of my respondents were very hostile to gay men who exhibited hyper-femininity. As David (43, large-framed, boss of a restaurant) said, 'If I met a boy who is very camp, very dependent, I would definitely be turned off.' Robert (20, well-built, student) said, 'If you are a man, you should behave like a man. If you are a woman, you should behave like a woman. Please behave like a human being!'

Most of my respondents seemed not to consider anything beyond the existing gender and sexual orders. They were not only hostile to hyper-feminine men, but also disliked people who were bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and sadomasochist practitioners as they found them 'weird, perverted, and abnormal'. What they were obliged to perform were manly mannerisms together with homosexual desires, that is, acting straight like a straight man but desiring one's own gender. It is worth noting that respondents like Bobby (23, student), George (24, fresh graduate) and Ivan (22, fresh graduate) were all very feminine, and they had always received verbal abuse in both the straight and gay worlds. While Ivan decided to use his 'femininity' as a weapon to challenge the disciplinary gender order (e.g. through dragging), George decided to act 'manly' by working out and shaving off his hair to look 'butch'.

The young body versus ageing body Nearly all of my respondents realized that youthfulness and beauty were the most important forms of 'embodied cultural capital' that one could possess. Those who were in their twenties, especially, dressed very well and presented a very healthy and attractive image. They were all fashion-conscious and chose their clothes carefully, as well as choosing accessories and hairstyles to represent themselves in a

particular way (Aron, Robert, George, Ivan, Charles). However, these attributes should not be considered 'fixed'. Alan (36, well-built, professional dancer), Matthew (38, tall and slim, fashion designer), Frank (35, medium-built, unemployed) and Russell (36, well-built, artist) were all over 35, but they dressed very well and their 'body look' did not reflect their actual age. Being young or acting young seems to be a major feature of the gay world in Hong Kong.

As age seems to be a major defining principle of the gay world, the opinions of Eric (48, a medical doctor and an artist), for example, seem to reflect the other side of the glamorous gay nightlife,

If you have youthfulness, you have the world . . . But if you pass your youthfulness, you will find out that the world is not so interesting, and is less fun . . . I am now 48, not 38, or you are now 28, not 18. The gay scene is so youth-oriented that you can't get into it. If you can't get into it, what space is left for you?

His new photographic project focuses on older gay men, who, for him, are the '1 per cent of the 10 per cent'. By documenting their passions and desires, Eric reveals the character of their lives – an altogether different culture that is 'more part of a fast-fading heritage that has run out of its own prosperity'. Eric seldom goes out, and immerses himself in his profession and his artwork.

The able body versus the disabled body Tony is 21, is dumb and deaf, and has difficulty walking. He has had extreme difficulty in finding a boyfriend. He met one of my other respondents, Edward (25, tall, fresh graduate from Australia), at Middle Bay. Their relationship only lasted for two months. His difficulty in finding a boyfriend is described by Edward:

I met Tony in Middle Bay . . . Then I discovered that he was deaf and dumb, and he also had a problem with walking. We sort of went out together for two months. We 'talked' through writing. Then I thought it wasn't so nice anymore . . . One day, I called him and he said that he didn't have as much confidence as me, as I could talk. I then said that I couldn't help it. It is not my problem, is it?

Tony usually goes to beaches or cottages to find sexual partners; he seldom goes to bars or clubs. He is very keen to find a boyfriend but his physical vulnerability prevents him from finding one. He constantly thinks about suicide.

Gweilo body versus tongzhi body I have argued elsewhere that racism and colonialism replicates within structures of desire. Using the notion of 'golden boy' to signify a young Chinese virgin boy who is innocent, infantile, feminized or even androgynous, I delineated how some gay Chinese

men, make use of their body to fit the expectations of the western gay male and to win entry into the western world (Kong, 2002).

Moreover, the spatial constraints, patterns of family residence and economic affluence of Hong Kong have all spurred tourism to neighbouring countries. Due to the close proximity of Hong Kong and China (especially after 1997), gay tourism in mainland China is a new way for gay Hong Kong men to channel their sexual gratification. For example, Stuart is now 35 and comes from a working-class background. Fed up with the high level of consumption in the Hong Kong gay scene, he goes to mainland China (e.g. Shenzhen) to find cheaper gay entertainment, although he knows that he is running the risk of being robbed by thugs or being caught by the police. He went out with a straight boy for a few years and the relationship was mainly economic. Others who are better-off, such as Alan, David and Eric, go to other Asian countries (e.g. Thailand) for their enjoyment. These relationships not only reflect the political economy of the complicated interactions between Hong Kong and China, but also imply the vulnerability of young (gay) men in mainland China and even in many developing countries in Southeast Asia.

4 'Queering' the city: public sex

There has been an increasing level of concern about the relationships between erotic experiences, gay subjectivities and the construction of sexual spaces (see Bell and Valentine, 1995; Ingram et al., 1997; Leap, 1999). For example, Chauncey (1996) challenges the myth that before the 1960s, gay people remained isolated from one another, invisible to straight people and hidden from urban space. By analysing New York City's homosexual underground from 1890 to 1940, he argues that gay men appropriated urban space (bars, streets, beaches, parks) for social interaction and the fulfilling of sexual desires.

As Woodhead (1995) argued, male public toilets serve as a very good example of how gay men make use of public space in an alternative and even oppositional way that confounds its creators. When gay men use a public male toilet for cruising, it becomes a cottage. However, the male public toilet does not really change, and it

still remains a public toilet and is used as such. It is still a male-only space, a world reserved for the masculine gaze . . . men using the toilet as a cottage may actually use it as a toilet as well. The 'new' space is . . . contextualized into the original frame of meaning. (Woodhead, 1995: 238)

Once this space becomes a place for sexual excitement, it inevitably entails the risk of criminality: the space of surveillance = space of desire = space for manoeuvre. The moment of resistance is actually the very moment of government.

Instead of creating a ‘visible’ queer space, most of my interviewees just ‘queer’ public spaces such as streets and bus stops (e.g. Lan Kwai Fong as a miniature gay ghetto), parks (e.g. Victoria Park, the swimming pool in Kowloon Park), beaches (e.g. Middle Bay, South Bay, Changsha in Lantau Island), gyms (e.g. California Fitness), and shopping malls (e.g. Pacific Place, Times Square, Ocean Terminal Shopping Centre); for the purposes of social interaction and the expression of sexual desire.

When asked about his ‘art of cruising men’, Alan said,

It’s simple . . . After I finish work, I would go to that bus stop. You just pretend that you are waiting for a bus. If a target appears, just stare at him and if he is (gay and interested), he would (respond) . . . This is quite nice – quite discreet and not so open. You know, if you go to a gay bar, everyone knows that you are gay!

Apart from cruising in public spaces like Alan (Edward and Ivan frequently went cottaging), some of my interviewees had their first sexual encounters in public spaces (Charles in a swimming pool, Robert in a toilet, Edward in a park, Stuart on a street). They knew how to invent tactics (clothing, grooming, mannerisms or eye-to-eye contact) that remained invisible to the public at large while at the same time, and in the same place, were visible and readily identifiable to other gay men.

My respondents knew how to appropriate the current fashionable look that is mainly derived from the Hollywood ‘muscle cult’ or the Japanese obsession with an adolescent male look. By consciously choosing their hairstyles, clothes and other accessories in this way, many respondents (Matthew, Alan, Robert, Aron, Bobby, Charles, David, Frank, George, Ivan, Russell, Stuart) successfully projected a physical image that was both socially acceptable within the consumer-based/heterosexist society, and sexually appealing to other gay men. Public space is thus a contested site, where the subversion of gay men’s sexuality becomes possible in the midst of the heterosexual mainstream’s fascination with sexual irregularity and provocative displays.

At the micro level, living under the dominant ideal of heterosexual intimacy implies that Hong Kong gay men engage with a hegemonic embodied masculinity in which the ‘ideal’ man is one who is physically fit, straight-acting, macho, non-feminine and economically secure. Meanwhile, the popular ‘ideal’ gay man, a derivative of western gay masculinity, is one who acts straight, is young and physically fit. Therefore, both hegemonic masculinity in the straight world and hegemonic gay masculinity in the gay world determine the objects of desire of Hong Kong gay men and the possibility of their forming a relationship.

Gay men who can fulfil the criteria of these ideals know how to maximize their embodied cultural capital. Conversely, the hyper-feminine

body, the elderly body, the disabled body, the poor body and many others are all regarded as subordinate gay variants or as 'failing bodies'. However, these attributes should not be treated as fixed. For example, those who are older (Alan, Matthew, Frank and Russell) could 'act' young by putting on trendy and fashionable clothes and make-up. Those who are camp (e.g. George) could appropriate 'manly' habits, and those who are not economically stable (e.g. Stuart) could still realize their sexuality through gay tourism to other economically deprived countries. However, reacting against this hegemonic ideal does not only mean accommodating oneself to it; some react through resistance. For example, some 'camp' respondents (e.g. Ivan) used their 'femininity' as a weapon to challenge the rigid gender order and upset the very notion of masculinity (e.g. through dragging). The older respondents (e.g. Eric) tended to immerse themselves in work rather than conforming to this ideal, in order to find a more secure way of life.

Well-developed, commercial and westernized gay venues offer substantial cultural space where gay men can identify with one another through sexuality, language and values. Other 'scenes' such as public sex radically disrupts the distinction between public and private, and thus becomes a contested site of sexual visibility. However, these 'sites of desire' are not easy to live with.

Conclusion

In this article, the dynamic relationship between the post-colonial landscape of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong gay male body has been examined. Social exclusion should be understood from the view of a pluralist conception of power and a post-structural idea of subject formation. Power takes the form of structural control, as well as circulates around various micro-sites. Gay identity is not a unified subject, and one's possession of 'embodied cultural capital' affects greatly one's position within straight and gay social space. It is under this conception that the sexual politics of Hong Kong gay men can best be understood.

Hong Kong gay male identities do not openly challenge the gendered and sexual order of society, as we can see from the gendered eroticism of these men, the masculine styles that most of them adopt, and their focus on the relationship of the private couple. However, Hong Kong gay male identities should also be read as a form of subversion – of the notion of normative heterosexuality, of the Chinese values of marriage and bearing sons, and of the fight for greater sexual freedom.

By presenting the 'voices' of 34 Hong Kong gay men, I have concluded that, using their own embodied cultural capital, they have devised tactics

to react against the ideals of both the straight and the gay worlds in order to form intimate relationships.

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Notes

1. Between 1997 and 1998, 34 Hong Kong men who identified themselves as gay were interviewed using a life history approach. Through these interviews, I tried to understand how some individuals, who share a marginalized sexual identity as homosexuals (being 'gay' or 'tongzhi') construct their identities and make sense of their lives. Although these interviews had been conducted a few years ago, in this article I update them by including recent conversations with some gay friends and activists and my own observations of the Hong Kong gay scene since my return to Hong Kong from England in 1999. I realize that the experiences of Hong Kong gay men regarding their identity might be very different from those of Hong Kong lesbians and other sexual minorities such as bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, sadomasochists, and so on. Due to the constraints of time and to the fact that there have been very few studies conducted on Hong Kong lesbians and other sexual minorities, I have limited myself mainly to a discussion of the former. In addition, I will sometimes contrast heterosexual and homosexual spaces in order to highlight the sexual politics of Hong Kong gay men in both worlds, so that the phrase 'straight and gay space' might suggest a dichotomy. However, I by no means suggest that gay space is unified, nor would I privilege it over lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and closeted space.
2. Due to the limitations of space, I cannot explain how Hong Kong gay men conform to, as well as resist, these masculine and heterosexual ideals in local social institutions such as the family, school, religion and work. These institutions are the micro-sites where hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are constantly being installed, but these are also the sites of potentiality within which gender and sexuality can be negotiated (Kong, 2000).
3. In the 1994–1995 legislative session a straight ex-Legislative Council (LegCo) member, Anna Wu, put forward a bill (the Equal Opportunity Bill) containing provisions outlawing discrimination on the ground of sexuality, but debate on the bill was strategically postponed by the government. The bill was later spilt into different parts and proposed by another LegCo member, Lau Chin-shek, but was defeated. The government eventually passed three ordinances of outlawing discrimination against sex, family status and disability. Nevertheless, there are a number of politicians who are sympathetic to the cause of banning discrimination against sexual minorities under the ideals of human rights and equal opportunity. To name only a few, they are Christian Loh (ex-LegCo member), Emily Lau, Lau Chin-shek, Chan Wai-yip and, recently, Cyd Ho.

4. The political climate of Hong Kong changed abruptly in 2003. Frustrated by the administration of the HKSAR government (especially with its management of the present financial crisis, its handling of the epidemic of the SARS virus and its decision to legislate the National Security Bill, known as Article 23), 500,000 Hong Kong people participated in a mass demonstration on 1 July, to protest and call for Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa to step down. The government tends to treat mass demonstrations that signify confrontation and potential social antagonism among different sectors of the society as a 'bad thing'. They again emphasized the importance of political stability and social harmony for any advancement of political protest.
5. There are hardly any serious studies of this kind apart from the work of one gay writer (Xiaomingxiong) who wrote a few books about homosexuality (e.g. *Twenty-five Questions about Homosexuality*, 1981; *History of Homosexuality in China*, 1997 (1984); and *Thirty Questions about Homosexuality*, 1989). There is also a self-identified straight writer, Chou Wah Shan, who has written a number of books on gay issues (e.g. *Tongzhi Theology*, 1994; *Tongzhi Theory*, 1995; and *History of the Closet*, 1995). And there are some articles that occasionally appear in academic journals (e.g. the *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin*, but this has ceased publication).
6. Lan Kwai Fong is the name of a small street in Central, the business district of Hong Kong, but Hong Kong people use it to refer to the surrounding area as well. The area is characterized by new, bright and trendy western-style bars, restaurants, cafés, saloons and other entertainment venues. It thus signifies an 'up-town' atmosphere and the glorification of the western-values of hedonism and consumption. It is also alleged to be a 'gay ghetto'.

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Appendix

Profile of interviewees mentioned in the text

Adam	46	medium-built, single, graduated in the US, a publisher of gay books
Alan	36	well-built, well-dressed, single, a dancer, only fancies Caucasian men
Alex	33	slim, single and a virgin; works as a computer analyst in a bank
Aron	33	medium-built, single, worked in a hospital but has migrated to Canada
Bobby	23	very feminine, single, fashion design student
Charles	23	well-built, has a boyfriend, graduated in Australia, a flight attendant
David	43	large-framed, single, runs a Chinese restaurant, a gay theatre director
Edward	25	tall and slim, has a boyfriend, graduated from Australia
Eric	48	medium-built, single, a medical doctor, an artist, and a very spiritual man
Frank	35	medium-built, single, worked as a manager's assistant in hotels for 10 years, currently unemployed
George	24	medium-built, single, graduated in fine arts, working as a director
Ivan	22	slim, single, graduated in comparative literature, working in a gay theatre
Matthew	38	tall, medium-built, Chinese-American, runs a fashion company with his boyfriend
Robert	20	well-built, well-dressed, single, migrated to Australia in 1993
Russell	36	well-built, married, a comic artist
Stuart	35	masculine, single, a manual worker and amateur dancer
Tony	21	medium-built, single, deaf and dumb with difficulties walking, a typist who lives with his family

In order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms have been used throughout the text and some biographical data have been altered or withheld to ensure the privacy of the interviews. Since the interviews were conducted during 1997–8, the biographical data cited in the text such as age and occupation refer to the information that was correct at the time of interview.