THE “OTHERED” GENDER:
REPRESENTATIONS OF ASIAN AMERICAN MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN RECENT

By

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To my parents and grandma, the eternal support for my study and life
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By

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This study is designed to examine the media representations of Asian American men and masculinities in recent American television programs within the 2014-2015 television season. With an example of seven television programs, which include heterosexual Asian American adult male characters in their ensemble casts totaling 24 characters (nine Asian Americans and 16 non-Asian Americans), I propose four hypotheses: 1) The representations of Asian American male characters’ masculinities will differ from those of non-Asian American male characters; 2) Asian American male characters will have more negative portrayals regarding stereotypical traits of masculinities than non-Asian American characters; 3) Asian American male characters will have less sexual behavior in the plots than non-Asian American male characters; 4) Sexual talk directed towards Asian American male characters will be more demeaning than sexual talk directed towards non-Asian American male characters. Through a comparative frequencies coding for categories of traits of masculinity, sexual behaviors, and sexual talk, the statistical results suggest a significant differentiation between the representations of Asian American and non-Asian American masculinities. Asian American male characters are portrayed to be more unemotional and more rational while less wild, less rough, less sexual, and less likely to show
leadership compared to non-Asian American male characters. Sexual talk towards Asian American male characters is shown to be more demeaning than those towards non-Asian American male characters. However, the results also indicate that Asian American male characters are engaged in more sexual behaviors than their non-Asian American counterparts.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The 2014-2015 television season has been a contradictory one for Asian American characters. Despite a decrease in the percentage of Asian Americans as series regular characters (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), 2014 & 2013), there has been an increase in the proportion of Asian American leading characters; *Selfie* is one of them. *Selfie* is considered “revolutionary” (Wang, 2014) since it is one of the few shows where the romantic male leading character is an Asian American and his counterpart is not Asian but a white woman. However, even with this heterosexual setting, the main character, Henry, constantly is associated with same-sex intimacy or gay sexuality. For example, in the pilot episode, Henry’s boss, a black man, says, “You know, I read an article that said Asian men are more comfortable kissing on the lips as a sign of friendship”. Later, the boss sends Henry an article from a website titled “Kissing Korean: Greenlight” with a picture of two Asian men hugging and kissing on the lips (Kapanek, 2014). The statement, which later is symbolically rationalized through the article, makes an attempt at humor at Henry’s expense, suggesting that heterosexual Asian men practice acts considered expressions of homosexuality in the United States.

*Selfie* isn’t the only television program present such a “cultural misconception.” Asian American male characters are often presumed to be gay in recent American TV shows, even when most of them are heterosexual (and other characters are aware of that). Most of Asian American male characters are desexualized and their “femininity” has been used as jokes for other characters in the shows. Only a few of them have families, children, or stable long-term relationships with women. Similar assumptions of Asian American male characters associating them with gay sexuality have been circulating on American television for generations since the notorious characters of Fu ManChu and Charlie Chan creating a homogeneous gender
representation. As cultural critic Chong-suk Han has pointed out, “Asian men took on a decidedly feminine aura in the Western imagination” (2008) from the beginning of Asian immigration in the middle of nineteenth century. These early racialized imaginaries became part of contemporary media production conventions, perpetuating the stereotypical representations of desexualized and/or queer and effeminate Asian American male characters in television.

Some scholars have characterized media productions as trying to capture contemporary society as ‘race neutral’ or ‘post-racist’” (Ono & Pham, 2009, p. 25), but many more scholars maintain that racism still exists. It simply has been transformed and manufactured into a more covert practice and put on a new outfit tailored by media organizations and other social institutions. Such transformations have generated new conventions for media organizations, professions, and productions both consciously and unconsciously creating, or at least trying to create, the false fantasy of “race neutrality” or “post-racism”.

Though many researchers have focused on the Asian American experience, little research has covered the media representations or portrayals of Asian American masculinity in television, especially after 2000. Espiritu Yen points out that Asian American men and women are excluded from hegemonic gender ideology, which is based on the experiences of middle-class white heterosexual men and women (2000, p.110). This issue leads to a seemingly strict distinction between Asian American masculinity and the more hegemonic understanding of masculinity in the American society. The divergent cognitions of different masculinities, corresponding with the desexualized representations of Asian American male characters, were constantly constructing their gender otherness and constraining them from alternate representations in American television. The production and reproduction of the othered gender stereotypes of Asian American male characters indicate the hegemonic tendency of American television to create a
sexually unthreatening representation. The symbolic centrality of the othered gender dismisses and disables Asian American male characters from alternative readings of their gender and sexualities. Therefore, examining these representations is both significant and critical considering how media organizations, corporations, and products function as a social institution that participates in the construction and perpetuation of certain gender ideology on a broader structural level maintaining a hegemonic racialized gender hierarchy.

This study examines all seven American television shows with Asian American male characters in their ensemble casts during the 2014 to 2015 television season, primarily using quantitative content analysis to compare different gender representations among Asian American male characters and those of other race/ethnicity groups. In this study, “masculinity” primarily refers to heterosexual male masculinity, and the arguments in general are framed by scholarly works on hegemonic heterosexual masculinity; therefore, other configurations of masculinities are not included in the discussion. To code for representations of masculinity, researcher categorized hegemonic masculinity into seven variables of social practice and traits based on former studies; sexual content also will be coded using categories from previous studies with some modifications. Qualitative analyses are also applied to articulate more nuanced details within the narratives. The key research questions of this study include:

1) Are Asian American masculinities portrayed differently in television of the United States?

2) What are the stereotypical gender and masculinity representations of Asian American men and masculinity on American television?

3) How has Asian American masculinity been constructed socially and historically in contemporary media?
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The “Masculinity/Masculinities”

Although studies over the essentials of being men or what it means to be “a man” (in a specific cultural and historical context) have long existed, the conceptualization of masculinity originated in the 1970s anchored by scholarship that focused on the male experiences in the US society (Farrell, 1974; Fasteau, 1974; Goldberg, 1976). Although many of these works are critiqued as speculative or abstract (Kahn, 1978; Pleck, 1977), they explore the limitation and dynamics within the “male role” as well as the possibility of multiple masculinities, which go “beyond … power, privilege, and machoism” (Franklin, 1984, p. 4). Since the 70s, the field of men’s studies has flourished with a proliferation of scholarships that not only explore and examine male experiences in the society but also portray the social structure and institutions in terms of gender and beyond. This study draws on the notion of multiple masculinities where the concepts of hegemonic masculinity, compulsive masculinity, and the dynamics within a multi-masculinity structure will be enunciated.

The formulation of the theoretical hegemonic masculinity, which has been considered as one of the most influential within this field of inquiries (Wedgwood, 2009) is generated in the early 1980s. First synthesized in the article in “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity” (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 1985), scholars trained in sociology point out the existence of particular groups of men holding and maintaining an institutional dominant power not only over women but also over other groups of men in the society (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 1985). In another article, Raewyn Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity as a “culturally exalted” form of masculinity that is established through the collective correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power. Hegemonic masculinity reveals the power dynamics behind
gender, which go beyond the individual experience but cognitions generated from the social ideological structure and collectively practiced most visibly through cultural figures, such as film actors and other fictional characters from media. Shortly after, Michael Kimmel reconceptualizes his own notion of compulsive masculinity from its original bearing of violence and delinquency to a continuous demonstration of masculinity associated with power and defensiveness (Kimmel, 1996). Compulsive masculinity is significantly discussed through the studies of men’s social actions, wherein it is concluded that to be masculine is to detach or distant oneself from femininity (Charlebois, 2009) or homosexuality (Jay, 2007; Kimmel, 2006) in order to reaffirm and embody an masculinity aligning their social identities with heterosexuality. The performative nature and defensiveness that preoccupies compulsive masculinity illustrates that the hierarchies of masculinity are not only canonized on an ideological and institutional level, but also are embodied and practiced through social interactions.

Based on the theoretical notions of hegemonic masculinity and compulsive masculinity, scholars can examine and deconstruct structures of multiple masculinities from a social power level. Connell and Messerschmidt highlight the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities as a fundamental feature of the concepts where hegemonic masculinity is conceptualized (2005). Masculinity is a unitary subject with multilayers (Collier, 1998) where multiple masculinities are positioned in certain hierarchies while maintaining hegemonic gender ideologies; the internal structure of these multiple layers is far from settled or motionless. The field of masculinities has always been in flux with several major movements occurring simultaneously interacting both internally and externally with each other and with other social factors or intersections. Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner articulated how social class, race/ethnicity, age, and others social intersections would shape the male experiences within a society (2001). Connell &
Messerschmidt recognized that masculinities are constructed under the drifting social context and, therefore, reconfigured through time. Hegemonic masculinity, while stabilizing existing gender tensions, would be constantly being challenged by multiple social factors (i.e., social movements, immigrant communities, and entertainment industries) (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Building on the theory of hegemonic masculinity, Tony Coles argues that the assertion and challenge between hegemonic masculinity orthodoxy and heterodoxies of masculinities that in the subordinate position constantly reconcile and shape the field of masculinity, pushing forward social changes (Coles, 2009). Later, Eric Anderson in his book, Inclusive Masculinity, articulates the incapability of the theoretical frame work of hegemonic masculinity for the current study of masculinity in certain fields (sports, in Anderson’s case) and generates the notion of inclusive masculinity, which is set in a juxtaposition as well as opposition with hegemonic masculinity. He suggests that due to the decline of “cultural homohysteria” (Anderson, 2009, p.96), a softer and more inclusive masculinity arises co-existing with hegemonic masculinity while devaluing “some of the attitudes once esteemed by orthodox masculinity”, including “homophobia, misogyny, stoicism, and perhaps excessive risk taking.” (Anderson, 2009, p. 97) The conceptualization of inclusive masculinity further elaborates the negation among different masculinities under different historical and cultural contexts.

**The “Asian American”**

Started in the 1960s, with the purpose of building a political coalition among the diverse Asian diasporas in the United States, the term “Asian American” is manufactured under specific social and political contexts. Scholars have pointed out racial formations in three interactional and simultaneous ways: institutional apparatuses, discursive practices, and political mobilization (Omi & Winant, 2014). Even now, “Asian American” is an umbrella term that covers more than 50 different ethnic groups (Hune, 2002). The Asian population was/is enormously diverse in
immigration history, socioeconomic status, language, faith/religion, and others (Yoshihama et al., 2014). Through the immigration process into the United States, Asian immigrants and their descendants have come from different countries with distinct social, cultural, and religious backgrounds and have generated one of the most intricate population group in the United States. Nguyen and Tu pointed out that Asian American is an “unwieldy term(s), overflowing with significance and import and yet empty of indexical certainty” (Nguyen & Tu, 2007, p. 4). However, my study employs what some scholars have called a “subjectless approach” when addressing “Asian American” as a totality, contextualizing and articulating the Asian Americanness within specific texts.

The difficulty of addressing “Asian American” as an entity lies in the contradiction between the collective identity of this population and both of the density and the diversity within it, which has made it difficult for scholars to adopt a suitable scope while avoiding an essentialist approach. Recognizing the range of racial/ethnic differentiation within the category of “Asian American” by attending to specific historical contexts is critical because the term “Asian American” “should not be fixed lest dangerous essentialisms about Asian American subjects be reproduced” (Nguyen & Tu, 2007, p. 5). In her book, Immigrant Acts, Lisa Lowe discusses the conceptualization of “Asian American” by Asian Americans. She notes, “Asian American discussions of ethnic culture and racial group formation are far from uniform or consistent” (Lowe, 1996, p.64). The attempt to delineate the Asian American experience in society constantly ran into essentialism or holism the moment one tried to substantialize the configurations of this group. Therefore, instead of subjectivizing the un-unified “Asian American”, many scholars chose a subjectless approach (Chuh, 2003; Ho, 2011; Nguyen & Tu, 2007). The subjectlessness of addressing “Asian American” does not suggest the absence of the
subject nor a nihilist tendency to dispose the subject; on the contrary, it is rooted profoundly in the historical contexts of Asian American immigration with full recognition of the discursive dynamics constantly shaping the landscape of this constructed racial category. Given this fundamental argument, as Kandice Chuh suggests, “subjectlessness, as a conceptual tool, points to the need to manufacture ‘Asian American’ situationally” (2003, p.4).

While the historical context attributing the subjectlessness to Asian American populations becomes visible, the consistent social construction of stereotypical images of Asian Americans is traceable and well documented (Keith, 2013). Through a brief historical review, this study situates different representations over time within historical and social contexts to elaborate the recurring stereotypes and persistent discourses about the Asian American population. Since the middle of the 19th century, the image of Asian American men is constantly changing, along with specific waves of Asian immigration to the United States. Some examples include: Chinese American men are stereotyped as wily, undesirable “coolies” with long queues who are unwilling to adopt the social norms expected for American citizenship from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century (Lee, 2003), then as greedy, loathsome “chinks” who operate laundries or restaurants in China Towns from the early to middle twentieth century (Espiritu, 2000), and later as nerdy, timid “twinkies” with a “decidedly feminine aura” from middle late twentieth century (Han, 2008). Yet, some aspects of these controlling images of Asian Americans have faded from the United States collective imagination, while others have had enduring visibility and impact. For example, the representations which informed the discourse on the “Yellow Peril”, which is developed primarily in response to Chinese immigration of the 19th century, and the discourse of “Model Minority”, which is constructed originally for Japanese immigration in
the 20th century, are two of the most long-standing imaginings about Asian (American) that have continuously circulated in the media.

The representation/discourse of the “Yellow Peril” is constructed during the late 19th century and is reinforced during and after World War II, representing “Asians and Asian Americans as threatening to take over” (Ono & Pham, 2009, p. 25). Some scholars argue that this discourse is generated from an economic perspective. US citizens imagine that they would be at a disadvantage in the labor market because of the increasing number of Asian immigrants who are willing to work for less pay while have little interest in contributing to the marketplace. And this leads to a series of Exclusion Acts (1881, 1923) based on race and gender (Devgan, 2014). In this sense, the hostile political context and immigrant policy directed at peoples originating from Asia remains consistent; there are few significant changes, until 1943 when the earlier racialized Exclusion Acts are replaced (Hing, 1993). In contrast to the economics argument, Gina Marchetti articulates the “Yellow Peril” as the “racist terror of alien cultures, sexual anxieties, and the belief that the West will be overpowered and enveloped by the irresistible, dark, occult forces of the East” (1993, p. 2). This argument explores more dimensions within the “Yellow Peril” discourse and unpacks more intricate power dynamics of race and gender through its construction. More than a political or economic concept, the “Yellow Peril” discourse is manufactured on a multi-institutional level integrated with multiple social capitals conveying larger structural insecurities within the hierarchies of race and gender.

Unlike “Yellow Peril”, a term that connotes a more overt hostility, the discourse of “Model Minority” is considered an “enigma” (Hartlep, 2014) and restrained Asian American populations in a more subversive way. The term “Model Minority” is first used by the media in the mid-1960s addressing Japanese Americans, which later applies to a broader range of Asian
Americans populations as “well-educated, familial, submissive minorities who are economically competitive” (Ono & Pham, 2009, p. 90). The origination of this representation can be traced to World War II or even the beginning of Asian immigration to the United States where the first generation of Asians serve as indispensable yet cheap labor in the American West and in Hawaii on minefields, railways, and plantations (Espiritu, 2000, p.16). Asian Americans have proven themselves to be subordinate, unthreatening, safe, and persistently contributing to the economic well-being of the United States. However, the notions of a “Model Minority” becomes a double-edged sword where such a homogeneous representation of Asian Americans created the legitimized stereotypical racial identity that compulsively malpositions them from “who they are” to “who they should be”, which denies the internal diversity within Asian American communities and “further emasculated Asian American men as passive and malleable” (Espiritu, 2000, p.90-91). The conceptualization of the term “Model Minority” reveals a racial dethreatening and desexualizing agenda promoting through different social institutions and massive media production.

The “Othered”

Scholars argue that the racial politics in the United States were “determined and shaped by black experiences, on the one hand, and white experiences, on the other” (Takagi, 1992, p. x). Also, Espiritu points out that, not necessarily only American, but societies in general “tended to organize themselves around sets of mutually exclusive binaries: white or black, man or women, professional or laborer, citizen or alien” (2002, p. 108). Racial hierarchies and the binary social structure further marginalized those who cannot be categorized into the bipolar system. The experiences of Asian Americans have long been marginalized and muted in American television. Limited images of Asian Americans have been constructed and reproduced the stereotypical representations in terms of culture, gender, and labor. Through such marginalization and
misrepresenting, Asian American communities constantly felt like the “outsider” of American society (Lee, 2015).

Michael Pickering argues, “the imprecise representation … creates the illusion of precision, of order, of the ways things should be” (2001, p. 4). The construction of the Other originate in “a fear of what cannot be admitted into an ordered identity” (Pickering, 2001, p.49). The essence of stereotyping as a boundary-maintaining move inward and the correlation of stereotypes and myths illustrated its integration of the repression of politics and history that “serve as a way of rationalizing bigotry, hostility and aggression” (2001, p.48). Furthermore, the construction of such representations reflected how “the Other becomes the source of a threatening power to groups with relatively low social status” and “various Asian people have been scapegoated and demonised in this way” (Pickering, 2001, p. 76). From demonizing to de-threatening, the U.S. media created the Other of Asian Americans, which becomes a legitimized and authorized inferior social position that needed to be fulfilled obligatorily.

Asian American men are not only the racialized other but also the gendered other. Espiritu observes, “like other men of color, Asian American men have been excluded from white-based cultural notions of the masculinity” (2000, p.90). Put it into historical context, some of the legal acts mentioned before are gendered in the way that they specifically restrict the number of female immigrants from Asia, including the Page Law in 1875, which has systematically bars Chinese women from entering the United States for 70 year since its enactment and creates an unusually gender-unbalanced society for Chinese American communities (Hing, 1993, p.36). In 1910, for example, the gender ratio is 14 to 1 between men and women for Chinese Americans (Hing, 1991, p.54). In her book, Espiritu argues that "the exclusion of Asian women from the United States and the subsequent establishment of bachelor
societies eventually reversed the construction of Asian masculinity ... to ‘asexual’ and even ‘homosexual” (2000, p.90). The notion of “sexual anxieties” (Marchetti, 1993, p.2) reveals the inner dynamics of certain gendered stereotypical representations and leads to the othered gender of Asian American men presented by the U.S. media that reinforces a safe, unthreatening images of the gender and sexuality of Asian American men. Through the construction of these representations, “Asian males yield to the sexual superiority of the white males” (Espiritu, 2000, p.92). Given that othering, as a discursive practice, assures the dominant racial position of white men and denies the legitimacy of alternative representations, the othered gender of Asian American men excludes individual identities from symbolic centrality, which not only exhausts the space for alternative gender representations but also profoundly dispels the initiative of human agency for those who are labeled as “the Other”.

**Hypotheses**

Based on research discussed above, the following hypotheses are posited in relation to the 2014-2015 U.S. television program season:

**H1:** The representations of Asian American male characters’ masculinities will differ from those of non-Asian American male characters.

**H2:** Asian American male characters will have more negative portrayals regarding stereotypical traits of masculinities than non-Asian American characters.

**H3:** Asian American male characters will have less sexual behavior in the plots than non-Asian American male characters.

**H4:** Sexual talk directed towards Asian American male characters, where Asian American male characters are the objects of the talk, will be more demeaning than sexual talk directed towards non-Asian American male characters.

More specific definitions of sexual behavior, traits of masculinities, and demeaning sexual talk are given in the following method section.
CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Programs Sampling

The purpose of this study is to quantify the representations of Asian American men’s masculinities and sexualities on recent American television hypothesizing that American television constructed the gendered others of Asian American men and masculinities differentiating their masculinities and desexualizing them with negative sexual instances on television. The following considerations are taken during the process of sampling.

This study takes on a subjectless approach to address Asian Americans, where “Asian Americans” refers to descendants of multiple nations in the Pan-Asian area and are clearly identified by their racial identities as narrated through the plots. Given the fact of the socially constructs distinctions among different masculinities (hegemonic masculinity, Asian American masculinities, and homosexual masculinities), the limited human and time resources of this study, and the ability to address multiple issues among different subjects within one paper, this research exclusively samples heterosexual Asian American adult male characters.

Considering the specific interest of this study, the fact that Asian American male characters consisted of only a relatively small part of the characters circulating on American television (GLAAD, 2014), a purposive and exhaustive sampling is employed for this study. Following models from the previous studies on representations of racial minorities on television (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Nama, 2003), this study only focuses on Asian American male characters in scripted fictional entertainment programming under two major genres: drama (crime/action/horror) and comedy (situation/romantic) where animation, sports, news, and public affairs programs are excluded.
Based on provided rationales, my sample draws from all seven television programs with heterosexual Asian American adult male characters within the ensemble casts, by which means the characters share roughly the same proportion of the content, during 2014-2015 television season are included in the sample of this study (see Appendix A), which contributes to a sample 126 episodes totaling 3340 minutes’ of television content. In addition to Asian American adult male characters, all adult heterosexual male characters in the ensemble casts of the sampled programs are coded, which totals 24 characters, including seven Asian American characters and 17 non-Asian American characters.

Underage male characters (roughly under 18 years old) are not included in this sampling. Considering that most programs will not state the exact age of characters directly, the determination of age is made through the narratives of the programs. For example, if a character is a student in senior high school or under, the character is considered underage. When the narrative of a show is unable to provide specific social indication for the age, for example, *The Walking Dead* where most conventional social institutions have been eliminated during an apocalyptical disaster, I determine the age criterion through physical appearance and language used by other characters.

**Units of Analyses**

This study adapts and modifies two different levels of analyses from existing research studies that have examined the racial representations of Latinos on primetime television: (1) program level, which refers to different television genres (drama and comedy), and (2) interaction level (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005), which refers to “verbal, sequential communication utterances” (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000) of specific characters.

In addition, I also add two other levels: a narrative level and a behavior level. Qualitative analyses on the narrative level articulated the representations of characters’ masculinities, which
are not necessarily conveyed through social interactions but through different narratives within
the program’s contents. For example, in *Selfie*, a parallel narrative takes place when both of the
male and female protagonists get involved in romantic relationships; a comprehensive
quantitative coding may overlook the drastic tensions within the parallel narrative. Behavior
level refers to specific behaviors from the characters, besides the verbal interactions, which will
be discussed when defining “sexual behavior” as one of the variables of this study.

Three of the four levels: narrative level, behavior level, and interaction level are coded
for frequencies in this study where observations are counted whenever qualified scenes,
(inter)actions occurred; counting continued whenever the type, nature, or scene changed and
other qualified contents are shown.

**Variable Definitions**

The content categories applied in this study significantly are built on existing research,
which also is modified to be more compatible with the objectives of this study. All contents from
the sample are coded with categories explicated in detail below.

**Traits of Masculinities**

Some scholars have examined the hegemonic traits of masculinities for about four
decades (McCreary et al., 2005; Nesbitt & Penn, 2000; Rosenkrantz et al., 1968). On the other
hand, many scholars often oppose the essentialist attempt of characterizing different
configurations of masculinity into traits, considering “masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded
in the body or personality traits of individuals” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) but an
ideological structure situated in multiple yet particular social settings. To examine the
differentiation of representations of masculinities of different racial groups in empirical research,
especially for a quantitative content analysis, however, I need to quantify the representations of
masculinities in order to gather data with statistical significance and to delineate the potential
phenomenological trend within the media contents. My study collaborates with existing scholarship and creates even categories to examine the representations of, not only Asian American masculinities, but also the hegemonic masculinities on recent American television.

Both positive and negative traits of the following categories are coded in this study: leadership (dominant, skilled in business, knowing the way of the world, acting like a leader, self-confident, ambitious, worldly, and active), unemotional (hiding emotions and not excitable in a minor crisis), independent (not needing assistance from others and acting on one’s own), wild (aggressive, not uncomfortable about being aggressive, adventurous, and competitive), rough (direct and not conceited about appearance), rational (objective, logical, like math and science, and able to separate feelings from ideas), and sexual (talking freely about sex with men and easily influenced by women).

**Sexual Instances**

The *Sex on TV* studies (Kunkel et al., 1999; 2001; 2003; 2005) have presented an operational quantifying formula to examine sexual content on television; many scholars have applied or modified the existing categories of their studies (Bond, 2015; Fisher et al., 2007; Jensen & Jensen, 2007). In this study, I further develop and modify the current categories adding more dimensions and categories to the sexual talk, which aims to expand the scope of the existing model and to examine the differentiations of TV sexual representations among different racial groups.

**Sexual behavior**: Sexual behaviors refer to all actions that convey certain physical intimacy, which should take a substantial part of the scenes where these behaviors are shown as the major object of the camera and not in the background (Kunkel et al, 2005). For coding sexual behaviors, my study employs the same categories used in the Sex on TV study of 2005.
and following categories of sexual behaviors are coded in this study: physical flirting, romantic kissing, intimate touching, intercourse (implied), and intercourse (depicted).

**Sexual Talk:** All statements made by or about targeted characters towards topics of sex/romantic relationship are coded as sexual talk. Based on the Sex on TV studies (Kunkel et al., 2005), Bond modifies the sexual talk categories in the study of sexual contents in gay- and lesbian- oriented media, creating two new categories of relationship talk and LGBTQ talk (Bond, 2015). My study employs the model from Bond’s research and the sexual talk categories of sexual interests, relationship, past experiences, towards sex, and LGBTQ talk.

Additional to previous categories of sexual talk, I also add another category of “Body Talk”. This category refers to any verbal interaction or comments directed towards the sampled characters’ physical bodies, practically or wholly.

In this study, both demeaning and validating contents of sexual talk categories are coded to examine the differentiation of sexual representations among different populations where “validating” refers to the subjects of the talk as healthy and normal through the narratives and “demeaning” refers to the subjects of the talk as unhealthy and deviant through the narratives.

**Others**

Besides the categories above, race of the characters (1 = Asian, 2 = Non-Asian) and genres of the programs (1 = Comedy, 2 = Drama) are also coded yet predetermined before the coding for traits of masculinities and sexual instances.

The preliminary coding of genre is based on Internet resources, including Wikipedia (https://www.wikipedia.org) and IMDb (http://www.imdb.com). The determination of race is based on previous/current programming content and actors’ interviews about the characters where the characters’ racial identities are discussed. In this sample, no character is programmed as mixed racial from background research.
Coding

Two independent coders are employed and trained for this study (See Appendix B). During coding process, two coders are required to follow the coding protocol (See Appendix C), which includes counting observations whenever a qualified content shown up and pausing to review the coding results every minute. A total of 6,696 observations were counted through the entire coding process. Pilot coding is conducted before the coding of full contents in order to achieve acceptable intercoder reliability. A subsample of 15% of all content is used to assess intercoder reliability. Reliability coefficients (Cohen’s Kappa) are calculated on each content category: race, traits of masculinities, sexual behaviors, and sexual talk, and reliabilities of all categories of this study appears to be acceptable yet undesirable (κ > .50). Details are presented when I discuss the limitations and defects of the study in the “Discussion” section.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

In this section, I will explain and discuss the statistical coding results from all seven television programs. Also, all four hypotheses are tested and verified with the statistical results.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicts that the representations of Asian American male characters’ masculinities will differ from non-Asian American male characters’ masculinities. The results suggest that in five of the seven categories of the traits of the hegemonic masculinities, there are significant statistical differences ($p < .001$) between the representations of Asian American male characters and non-Asian American male characters (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Frequencies of Asian and non-Asian characters' masculinities traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits of Masculinities</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Non-Race</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Asian (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemotional</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>67.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>45.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1289</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>54.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>42.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1216</td>
<td>4566</td>
<td>184.951</td>
<td>$p &lt; .001$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no strategic significance shown between the two groups in the category of “independent” ($p > .05$). It is noticeable that the score of Chi square test for indicates potential differences between Asian and non-Asian American male characters. From the Chi square test
results, significant statistical differences are shown in the category of “leadership”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 1349) = 25.22$, $p < .001$, “unemotional”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 769) = 69.21$, $p < .001$, “wild”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 892) = 45.387$, $p < .001$, “rough”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 1624) = 54.376$, $p < .001$, “rational”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 932) = 18.63$, $p < .001$, and “sexual”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 169) = 42.558$, $p < .001$. Six of the seven categories of masculinity traits suggest difference between the representation of masculinities from Asian and non-Asian American characters strategically. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is generally supported; Asian American male characters and masculinities are portrayed with significant differences compared to non-Asian American male characters.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicts that Asian American male characters will have more negative portrayals of stereotypical traits of masculinities than non-Asian American characters. A total of 5,782 traits of masculinities are coded in this sample from both racial groups. The frequency of Asian American characters’ traits of masculinities ($n = 1216$) is significantly fewer than non-Asian American characters’ ($n = 4566$) in general ($p < .001$), and the Chi square test indicates significant differences if Asian American male characters are presented more negatively than non-Asian ones, $\chi^2 (1, N = 5782) = 55.3464$, $p < .001$, from the comprehensive data. The results from individual categories show that among the six categories that considered with strategic differences, Asian American male characters have higher percentage of negative observations than the non-Asian American counterparts in four of them: “leadership” (42% vs. 27%), “wild” (21% vs. 5%), “rough” (16% vs. 4%) and “sexual” (44% vs. 4%).

Therefore, hypothesis 2 is generally supported: in some categories of the traits of masculinities, Asian American male characters are more likely to be portrayed negatively than non-Asian American characters.
Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicts that Asian American male characters will have fewer sexual behaviors in the programs than non-Asian American male characters. The result of Chi square test over the comprehensive data of sexual behavior suggests no significant difference, $\chi^2 (1, N = 71) = 2.152, p > .05$.

Table 4-2. Frequencies of Asian and non-Asian characters' Sexual Instances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Behaviors</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Non-Asian</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Flirt</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>$p &gt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Kiss</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.439</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Touch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.083</td>
<td>$p &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse (implied)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse (depicted)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.152</td>
<td>$p &gt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Validating</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.3633</td>
<td>$p &gt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Interest Validating</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Experience Validating</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.5296</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Sex Validating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT Talk Validating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Talk Validating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Validating</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeaning</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within both of the two categories where Chi square tests suggest certain statistical differences, “romantic kiss”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 17) = 6.439, p < .05$ and “intimate touch”, $\chi^2 (1, N = 19) =$
11.083, \( p < .001 \), Asian American male characters have more observations (65%, 74%) than non-Asian American male characters (35%, 26%).

Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported: Asian American male characters engage in analogous amount of sexual behaviors with their non-Asian American counterparts in the programs in general; for certain behaviors, Asian American male characters even have engaged in more sexual behaviors than non-Asian American ones.

**Hypothesis 4**

The fourth hypothesis predicts that sexual talk directed towards Asian American male characters, where Asian American male characters are the object of the talk, will be more demeaning than talk directed towards non-Asian American male characters. The Chi square test result of the comprehensive data of sexual talk suggests strategically significant difference between Asian American and non-Asian American male characters, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 490) = 28.493, p < .001 \).

From the comprehensive data, Asian American male characters receive higher percentage of demeaning sexual talk (\( n = 177, 87\% \)) than non-Asian American ones (\( n = 187, 65\% \)). Due to defects of the data, Chi square tests are not applicable to most of the category. However, in the category of “past experience”, which is indicated with statistical significance through Chi square test (\( p < .05 \)), Asian American male characters receive higher percentage of negative sexual talk (\( n = 34, 83\% \)) than non-Asian American male characters did (\( n = 36, 61\% \)).

Therefore, hypothesis 4 is partially supported: more negativity is portrayed in the sexual talk towards Asian American male protagonists than their non-Asian American counterparts.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSIONS

In this section, I will discuss the statistical results in further details elaborating with qualitative analysis of individual programs to unpack the interpretative meanings behind the numbers. Then I will point out the limitation of the current study, including sampling, coding categories, and method in general. Directions for further studies also will be discussed at the end.

Analysis

This study is designed to examine the media representations of Asian American men and masculinities in recent American television programs within the 2014-2015 television season. The statistical results from the seven programs with Asian American male heterosexual adult characters in their ensemble casts suggest a significant differentiation between the representations of Asian American and non-Asian American masculinities. Asian American male characters are portrayed to be more unemotional and more rational while less wild, less rough, less sexual, and less likely to show leadership when compared to non-Asian American male characters. Sexual talk towards Asian American male characters is shown to be more demeaning than those towards non-Asian American male characters. However, the results also indicated that Asian American male characters are engaged in more sexual behaviors than their non-Asian American counterparts, which was opposed to what I hypothesized based on previous research. My analysis will be provided in the following discussion.

Through traits of masculinities, this study depicted a variety of aspects of gender and sexuality of Asian American male in American television. These representations significantly resonated with the predominant racial discourses of the “Yellow Peril” and the “Model Minority”. The “Yellow Peril” and “Model Minority” stereotypes and discourses are profoundly intertwined with each other, and together they served the purpose of maintaining and
internalizing the racial structure and hierarchy in American society through either demonization ("Yellow Peril") or emasculation ("Model Minority"). Firstly, the result suggested that Asian American male characters were more likely to be portrayed negatively in the “wild” and “rough” category, which means the characters are less aggressive, competitive, adventurous, or direct. Also, the results suggest that Asian American male characters pay more attention to their appearances than their non-Asian counterpart. In the show *Selfie*, main character Henry is always seen as a conservative who lacks adventurism. In the show, KinderKare Pharmaceuticals, the company Henry works for, organizes a 10K charity run every year. When Freddy, Henry’s co-worker, suggests replacing the 10K-run with a mud-run, which is more competitive and messy, not only does Henry refuse to participate at first, but he also spreads rumors and conspiracies to try to sabotage the event (Harawitz, Rubenstein, & Leiner, 2014). Another episode of the show reveals that Henry pretends to participate in skateboarding when he is actually afraid of doing it, because he considers it dangerous and is afraid of injury (Gillette, Chamberlayne & Appel, 2014). These parts of the show underscore Henry’s unwillingness to take things outside his comfortable zone and his lack of adventurism, especially when the show contrasts it with non-Asian characters, for example, Freddy, who is a white American and initiates the idea of mud-run.

Consider the program *Fresh off the Boat*. The main character Louis is a first-generation Taiwanese immigrant to the United States and a restaurant owner. When Louis needs to fire one of his employees from the restaurant, he becomes evasive and unwilling to talk to the one he needs to fire. Therefore, Louis asks another of his employee to do the job (Chiang, Ziobrowski, & Traill, 2015). This part of the show portrays Louis being afraid of the potential harshness from talking directly to assert his leadership. In the show, Louis is also presented with extra attention
to his personal grooming. He is often shown wearing a hairnet to blow-dry his hair. When the business at the restaurant gets better, the first thing he buys is “a sit-down, salon-style hair dryer.” He considers that “it’s beautiful, and now he [I] can finally reach his [my] maximum hair potential” (Blackett & Statman, 2015). The show pictures him sitting on the hair dryer, drying his hair while reading magazine, which instantly associates him with the stereotypical images of women sitting in salons. This image significantly effeminates Louis and differentiates him from the traditional hegemonic masculinity. In another episode, when Jessica, Louis’s wife, argues that they shouldn’t join the country club for business deals because it will make them lose their Chinese heritage and become too “American”, Louis comes up with the reason that “the country club has complimentary ice blue Aqua Velva aftershave” (Shah & Koch, 2015). The show feminizes Louis through emphasizing his interests in the skin care product in the country club, instead of potential business opportunities, when he defends his motive for joining the club. These representations of Asian American male characters construct a less aggressive, adventurous, or direct image of Asian American men who pay more attention to their appearances than their non-Asian counterpart.

The result also suggests that Asian American male characters are more likely to be portrayed as lacking of leadership. In the show 2 Broke Girls, the employees from Williamsburg Diner always challenge Han Lee, a Korean man and the owner of Williamsburg Diner, in terms of his leadership. When Han suggests adding a new item to the menu, all the waitresses and chef oppose with strong attitudes. Oleg, a white man and chef of the diner, says directly, without even hearing what the item is, “No way. No new menu additions” (King & Scardino, 2014). In The Big Bang Theory, when Raj, an Indian male university researcher, makes comments on the topic the group is talking about after only everyone else has made theirs. Sheldon, a white man, stops
him in the middle of his talk and ends the topic. In another episode, during an argument between Leonard and Howard, both white men, when Leonard says that Raj has been pushed around by Howard, Raj tries to speak out. But Howard cuts him off and tells him to “stay out of this.” Raj simply follows what Howard says and stays quiet until Leonard lets him speak (Kaplan et al., 2014). These moments emphasize Raj’s lack of agency and leadership when he is interacting with his friends and situate him at the bottom of the hierarchy of the group. In Community, The Walking Dead and Hawaii-Five O, the stories are set in a social environment with hierarchical natures, such as school, troop, and police station, while none of the Asian American male characters are cast in the leader’s position. Therefore, rarely did they assert their leadership but mostly following orders.

The results suggest that Asian American male characters are portrayed as less sexual while receiving more demeaning sex talk than their non-Asian American counterparts. In a few episodes of Selfie, Eliza, a white female and Henry’s primary romantic interest, and Henry are both involved in romantic relationships, which create an intensive comparative narrative. The relationship between Eliza and Freddy is presented as passionate and overly sexual and the relationship between Henry and Julia is portrayed as impassive, sexless and overly rational. Henry thinks his relationship with Julia is “healthy and functional and smooth” (Tapscott & Hegarty, 2014); however, Eliza thinks that it sounds like a bowel movement and says “I think you're hiding behind your safe, boring, crappy relationship with Julia, hoping no one notices that you're not in love with her” (Tapscott & Hegarty, 2014). On moment in the show Fresh off the Boat, Vanessa, a white waitress who works at Louis’ restaurant, says to Louis with her hand on his arm, “I think that the sexist part about a man is his funny bone. I bet you have a big bone.” “Funny you should say that. I do have unusually large bones. It runs in my family. You should've
seen my grandfather, bones like cinder blocks. Went swimming one time. Sunk like a stone. Died,” answers Louis (Smithyman & Scanlon, 2015). The conversation between Louis and Vanessa where Vanessa clearly is sexually flirting with Louis represents the insensitivity of Louis to sexual overtures, perpetuating the impassive sexual nature and desexualized representations of Asian American men.

In the show 2 Broke Girls, Han Lee’s body is always the target of other characters’ acrid sexual insults. They always consider Han’s body little suggesting that Han has little penis and associating it with sexual negativity. In one episode, when Han brings a CPR doll to the diner and wants to teach the employee how to resuscitate, they call it Han’s sex doll. And when Han exemplifies CPR for them, one character shouts out that they are “witnessing his first kiss” (Nader, Astrof, & Scardino, 2015). In this moment, not only do the characters presume Han’s lack of past experience, but also Han’s sexuality is presented as perverse and being associated with paraphilia by the other characters, since Han’s mouth is actually on a resuscitation doll.

Consider the show The Big Bang Theory, where Raj is in a romantic relationship with Emily, a white woman; nevertheless, his friends make fun of his lack of past experience. In one episode, Howard takes Raj home and asks his mother to dress decently, because he thinks that Raj “just start[s] seeing naked women again and he [doesn’t] want [him] to be confused about where the boobs should be” (Molaro at al., 2014). This moment completely devalues Raj’s previous experience and assumes that Raj is sexually ignorant. In another episode, other characters in the show create and play a game called “Emily or Cinnamon” where players of the game will be given intimate phrases made by Raj, for example: “You're so lucky. You have the shiniest hair” (Reynolds et al., 2015). And they are supposed to guess to whom Raj is talking to, Emily or Cinnamon, Raj’s dog. The television channel even creates an online version of this game.
(Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), n.d.). This game, compared to Han’s representation with the resuscitation doll, is made as an attempt of humor at the expense of Raj’s sexuality. These moments significantly devalue Asian American male characters’ sexual experiences and sexualities in general, reinforcing the desexualized or even demonized gender representations of them.

The results also suggest Asian Americans to be more rational and less emotional compared to non-Asian characters. In the show *Selfie*, although he is considered as sophisticated at social life and a master of mannerism, Henry is also presented as having a robotic natural that detaches or denies him from his emotional feelings. When Eliza expresses her romantic interests to him, Henry admits that “it's hard for [him] to access [his] own feeling sometimes” (Tapscott & Hegarty, 2014). When she is rejected by Henry, Eliza confronts him, asking if he is being afraid to feel anything or to be in a relationship (Tapscott & Hegarty, 2014). The emotionless robotic feature again reflects the desexualization during the construction of Asian American men’s “othered” gender representations.

The circulation of these images resonate with the effeminate and desexualizing aspects of the discourses of “Yellow Peril” and “Model Minority” constructing the “othered” gender representations of Asian American men and differentiating Asian American masculinity from others. Scholars have identified and discussed the sexual anxiety within discourses of masculinity, and such anxiety can be represented explicitly in television. In *Selfie*, Henry’s friend Freddy constantly feels threatened by him. Before Freddy gets involved into a relationship with Eliza, he feels excited about the company cutting off the product Henry made a success out of and says to Henry that “sometimes you got to cut down the old trees to let the new ones grow” (Kapnek & Hardcastle, 2014). Later when Freddy finds about all the “assignments” that Henry
gives to Eliza to change her lifestyle, while she is having a romantic relationship with Freddy, to change her lifestyle, he becomes upset. During the training for the company’s charity mud-run, when helping Henry is getting ready, Freddy asks Henry to go down on his knees and repeat after him:

“Freddy, help me.
Help me, please.
Without you, I'm nothing.
I'm down on my knees.
Freddy, you're strong, and I'm so weak.
My spirit is old, but yours is at its peak.”

(Harawitz, Rubenstein, & Leiner, 2014)

Though later Freddy explains the chanting as a joke, during the mud-run, the conflict between Freddy and Henry goes physical. During the fight, Henry asks, “What is your problem?” Freddy replies, “You're my problem! With you're talking down to me, you're trying to make me feel stupid. [You are] forcing Eliza to question our relationship. It's like you live to undermine me! Make me feel inferior! Who's inferior now! You tell me!” Then Henry says, “… For the record, you're the one who's undermining. You challenge everything I say! You're constantly making cracks about my age, and you often besmirch my neckties! Uhh! Admit it.” (Harawitz, Rubenstein, & Leiner, 2014) This conversation further reveals the sexual anxiety between Freddy and Henry, yet subtly undercuts Henry by having him be upset that Freddy “besmirches” his neckties. Such interchanges signify the ongoing construction of desexualized and effeminate Asian American male characters as the gendered other in American television.
Interestingly, it is noticeable that from the results of sexual behavior, though there was no statistical significance suggested from the comprehensive data, Asian American male characters had more observations in “romantic kiss” and “intimate touch” than non-Asian American characters. Consider the show *The Walking Dead*, where Glenn, a Korean man, is the only character with a stable long-term romantic relationship in the fifth season of the show. Therefore, it is reasonable to observe more physical intimacies between him and his wife. The same reason may also be applied to *Fresh off the Boat*, where Louis is married to his wife Jessica. In the show *Selfie*, the non-Asian American counterpart is Sam, Henry’s boss who is married, though has significantly less representations than Henry in the show. Henry’s adversarial counterpart, Freddy, is cast for the recurring characters and, therefore, is not coded for this study. However, while Asian American male characters are observed with more “romantic kiss” and “intimate touch”, non-Asian American characters are observed with more “physical flirt” and “Intercourse (implied/depicted)”. The differences between the categories are critical. “Physical flirt” is usually based on intimate verbal interactions, which requires more social and cultural engagement and familiarity. All of the Asian American male characters are portrayed as socially awkward and culturally alienated, which impede them from having valid sex talk towards physical intimacies. Sexual intercourse can be considered as the most explicit sexual instances in television and with no observation from the Asian American male characters and nine from non-Asian characters, I suggest that American television is still withholding a more progressive or realistic representation of Asian American men’s sexualities and masculinities while also differentiating Asian American men from non-Asian ones.
Limitations

Although this study offers some insightful depictions of gender and sexuality representations of both Asian and non-Asian American male characters in recent American television programs, this study is not without limitations or defects.

The first limitation of this study sets in its scope of sampling, both vertically and horizontally. As I have clarified in the method section, due to limited human and time resources, this study only samples American television programs with heterosexual Asian American adult male characters in their ensemble casts during the 2014 to 2015 television season. These sampling criteria significantly limit the programs and the characters that are available to this research. Vertically, including non-heterosexual male characters or male characters from general casts from all age group will provide a more comprehensive depiction of representations of Asian American men and masculinities in American television in this specific television season. Horizontally, expending the project by enlarge the sampling scope to previous television seasons will contextualize the representations of masculinities and help the researchers to identify the potential phenomenological trend within the television contents.

This study is also deficient when generalizing non-Asian American male characters into one racial group. With the purpose of examine the differentiation between representations of Asian American masculinity and those of non-Asian American ones, this study intentionally created two generic racial groups: “Asian” and “non-Asian”. All heterosexual adult male characters in the ensemble casts of sampled television programs are coded into these two generic groups. Therefore, within the group of “non-Asian”, representations of male masculinity characters amongst multiple racial groups are compressed without differentiation. Such racial generalization potentially overlooks the inner dynamics within the field of masculinity and the intersections within the hierarchies of race and masculinities. However, such coding scheme
doesn’t necessarily compromise the research purpose and the coding results show strategic significance regarding to the hypotheses I propose.

Another difficulty that I encounter through the research is the undesirable innercoder reliability test results. When coding for traits of masculinities, the descriptive nature of these categories significantly undermine the precision of coding. Although the categories of traits of masculinities were heavily built on and modified from previous research, these research originally are not designed for quantitative content analysis. Both coders find the traits of masculinities too negotiable for quantitative coding where many observations can be counted for multiple categories. When such situations occur, coder may miss/over code the content. Also, when coding programs with intensively fast-paced conversations or actions, the topics of the conversations and the natures of the actions may alter drastically, which significantly influence the coding of descriptive categories. With several modification of the categories during preliminary coding process and multiple times of retaining and retraining of the coders, the innercoder reliability test remained acceptable yet undesirable.

**Further Studies**

Having the limitations and defects of this study under consideration, there were several possible directions to further this study and expend it into a larger project. To fully capture and understand the gender representation of Asian American men in American television, as I have mentioned, researchers can enlarge the sampling scope either vertically or horizontally to include more samples of Asian American characters and situate the representations of masculinity into historical context. A more detailed racial category good for the coding process can significantly benefit more nuanced studies of racial differentiations within multiple masculinities in television. And the categories of traits of masculinities shall be functioned as a prototype for future studies on quantifying masculinities and possibly be modified for specific research interest.
In summary, even with certain defects and limitations, this study encapsulates a specific moment of American television (2014-2015), a snapshot, in which I am able to identify and generalize the representations of Asian American men and masculinity in compare with the representations of their non-Asian American counterparts. Results from the study decipher the representations of Asian American men’s masculinities and sexualities in recent American television. The result suggest that Asian American are presented to be more rational and pay more attention to their looks and grooming while being less emotional, aggressive, adventurous, competitive, direct, and sexual. Also, they are less likely to be presented with leadership. Although Asian American men are observed with more sexual behaviors, they also receive more demeaning sex talks compared to non-Asian American characters. The representations of Asian American men and masculinities significantly resonate with the predominant stereotypical racial discourses of “Yellow Peril” and “Model Minority.” These are the “controlling images” which black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins has discussed in her work. These representations explicitly unfold and exemplify the sexual anxiety within the racial discourses, illustrating the circulation of stereotypical gender representations for Asian American men and masculinities and the devaluation of Asian American men’s sexualities. This study shall be continued as a larger project to understand the historical drifts for Asian American men and masculinities in television while seeking more realistic and progressive images for this population.
## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF PROGRAMS AND CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Number of Episodes</th>
<th>Release Time</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Han Lee</td>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vanko Oleg Golishevsky</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Yahoo!</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3/17/2015 - 7/2/2015</td>
<td>Abed Nadir</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ben Chang</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Craig Pelton</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeff Winger</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh off the Boat</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2/4/2015 - 4/21/2015</td>
<td>Louis Huang</td>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chin Ho Kelly</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Williams</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Ortega</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lou Grover</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Max Bergman</td>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Steven J. McGarrett</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Higgs</td>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sam Saperstein</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Howard Wolowitz</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leonard Hofstadter</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raj Koothrappalli</td>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sheldon Cooper</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abraham Ford</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Darly Dixon</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenn Rhee</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rick Grimes</td>
<td>Non-Asian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Daniel Williams    | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Jerry Ortega       | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Lou Grover         | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Max Bergman        | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Steven J. McGarrett | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Henry Higgs        | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Sam Saperstein     | Non-Asian   |

| Selfie                | ABC/Hulu    | Comedy  | 1      | 13                 | 9/30/2014 - 12/30/2014  | Howard Wolowitz    | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Leonard Hofstadter | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Raj Koothrappali   | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Sheldon Cooper     | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Abraham Ford       | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Darly Dixon        | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Glenn Rhee         | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Rick Grimes        | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Leonard Hofstadter | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Raj Koothrappali   | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Sheldon Cooper     | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Abraham Ford       | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Darly Dixon        | Non-Asian   |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Glenn Rhee         | Asian        |
|                       |             |         |        |                    |                         | Rick Grimes        | Non-Asian   |
APPENDIX B
LIST OF CODERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coder (Author of this thesis)</th>
<th>Gender*</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity*</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian/Chinese</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The categories were self-identified by individual coders.
APPENDIX C
CODEBOOK

Introduction

This television programs protocol is built to examine the representations of masculinities and sexualities of Asian American male characters during the 2014-2015 American TV season. Sampling and analyzing of the contents are significantly based on following concepts and terminologies.

TV Series

Television programs are intended to be broadcast on television, which includes a variety of genres. For this study, the sampling will be conducted within the scripted dramas and comedies that include one or more heterosexual Asian American adult male characters in their ensemble casts.

Asian American Male Characters

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “Asian American” is an umbrella term that includes population who identify themselves as "Indian", "Chinese", "Filipino", "Korean", "Japanese", "Vietnamese", and "Other Asian". Also, characters without the indication of country of citizenship but come from Asian countries that are included in the definition of “Asian American” are also the subjects of this study.

Procedure

Following steps should always be taken in the content analysis coding (v stands for variables): (a) all targeted subjects within one single episode are identified before coding, (b) pause every two minutes during coding, and (c) each targeted subjects within every two-minute unit should be analyzed and coded of frequencies for characteristics described below.

Traits of Masculinities

All actions, talks and characteristics observed from the samples, which are relevant to targeted subjects and match variables described below, should be coded for frequencies.

v1. Leadership
   v1.1. Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: dominant, skilled in business, knowing the way of the world, acting like a leader, self-confident, ambitious, worldly, and active
   v1.2. Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v1.1.

v2. Unemotional
   v2.1. Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: unemotional, hiding emotions, and not excitable in a minor crisis
   v2.2. Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v2.1.

v3. Independent
   v3.1. Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: independent and not dependent
   v3.2. Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v3.1.
v4. Wild
v4.1 Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: aggressive, not uncomfortable about being aggressive, adventurous, and competitive
v4.2 Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v4.1.

v5. Rough
v5.1 Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: direct and not conceited about appearance
v5.2 Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v5.1.

v6. Rational
v6.1 Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: objective, logical, like math and science, and able to separate feelings from ideas
v6.2 Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v6.1.

v7. Sexual
v7.1 Positive - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: talking freely about sex with men, easily influences by women
v7.2 Negative - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented not to be or to be the opposite of what listed in v7.1.

**Sexual Instances**

All actions and talks observed from the samples, which are relevant to targeted subjects and match variables described below, should be coded separately for frequencies.

**Sexual Behavior**

Actions as a substantial part of the scene (e.g., two people kissing in the background did not qualify) conveying a sense of potential, likely, or actual physical intimacy (e.g., a kiss between friends did not qualify)

V8. Physical flirting
Behavior meant to arouse or promote sexual interest
V9. Romantic kissing
Kissing that conveys a sense of sexual intimacy
V10. Intimate touching
Touching of another's body in a way that is meant to be sexually arousing
V11. Intercourse (implied)
Behaviors are not shown overtly on the screen; occur when a program portrays one or more scenes immediately adjacent (considering both place and time) to an act of sexual intercourse that is clearly inferred by narrative device; for example, a couple kissing, grooping, and undressing one another as they stumble into a darkened bedroom, with the scene dissolving before the actual act of intercourse ensues; or a couple shown awakening in bed together with their conversation centering on the lovemaking they had performed before falling asleep.

V12. Intercourse (depicted)
Behaviors occur when a direct view is shown of any person who is engaged in the act of intercourse, regardless of the degree of nudity or explicitness presented; discreet portrayals may show a couple only from the shoulders up when they are engaged in intercourse.

v13. Others - Actions made by or towards targeted subjects that are relevant to sexualities but can’t be categorized into v8 – 12. (e.g., self- gratification).

Sexual Talk

All statements made by or about characters about the topic of sex that include a wide range of types of conversations that may involve first-hand discussion of sexual interests and topics with potential partners, as well as second-hand exchanges with others that convey information about targeted subjects’ prior, anticipated, or even desired future sexual activities and others that are related to sex and sexualities (e.g., sexually-transmitted diseases)

v14. Romantic interests
   v14.1. Validating – talks encompassing verbal exchanges about relations that people wish they were having now, may want to have in the future, and so on void of any reference to sexual behavior; considered to be healthy and normal
   v14.2. Demeaning – talks of the same topic as v14.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v17. Sexual interests
   v15.1. Validating – talks encompassing verbal exchanges about sexual relations that people wish they were having now, may want to have in the future, and so on; considered to be healthy and normal
   v15.2. Demeaning - talks of the same topic as v15.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v16. Relationship
   v16.1. Validating - talks about romantic intimacy between two people void of any reference to sexual behavior; considered healthy and normal
   v16.2. Demeaning - talk of the same topic as v16.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v17. Past experiences
   v17.1. Validating - Whenever the targeted subjects are shown and/or commented to be any of the following: thinking men are superior to women
   v17.2. Demeaning - talks of the same topic as v17.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v18. Towards sex
   v18.1. Validating – talks meant to promote sexual activity that are conveyed directly to the desired sexual partner; considered to be unhealthy and normal
   v18.2. Demeaning - talks of the same topic as v18.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v19. LGBTQ sexual talk
   v19.1. Validating – talks encompassing sexual orientations, sexual desires/behaviors, jokes, cultural references, and stereotypes related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer population; considered to be healthy and normal
   v19.2. Demeaning - talks of the same topic as v19.1., while shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal
v20. Others
Other talks made by or about targeted subjects that are relevant to sexualities but can’t be categorized into v14 – 19.2. (e.g., sexual health, STD, sex related crime etc.)

v20.1 Validating – talks considered to be unhealthy and normal
v20.2 Demeaning – talks shown as teasing, condemning or insulting; considered to be unhealthy or abnormal

Further Notes for Coders

- All episodes are divided into two-minute units for coding, despite the openings and closures that were repeated in all the episodes of one TV program. The unit before the openings and closures will stand alone as one single unit regardless of the time range. To code contents after the opening and closure, coders should start a new unit.
- When coding for v1-7.2., if the same characteristics of targeted subjects are continuous between two neighboring units, coders should code the frequencies of the characteristic as 1 in the first unit and 0 for the second one. Unless, the same characteristic is shown under a different circumstance (time and space); in this case, if there’s a continuous change of time or space in the contents showing the same characteristics, for every change, coders should count 1 observation; same procedure applies when multiple characteristics are observed.
- When coding for v8-13., if the same behaviors of targeted subjects are continuous between two neighboring units, coders should code the frequencies of the behavior as 1 in the first unit and 0 for the second one. Unless, the same characteristic is shown under a different circumstance (time and space); in this case, if there’s a continuous change of time or space in the contents showing the same characteristics, for every change, coders should count 1 observation; same procedure applies when multiple behaviors are observed. And if there’s a sequence of behaviors in/between units, coders should categorize observations of each behavior. For example, when coding the observation of sexual intercourse, there might be physical flirting, intimate touching, and romantic kissing, which lead to sexual intercourse (implied(depicted). Coders, however, should not code repeated behavior in the same scene (time and space). For example, when coding the observation of depicted sexual intercourse, coder might code for the depicted sexual intercourse alone with other sexual behaviors where some of them might be repetitive and should only be code as 1 for each category.
- When coding for v14-20.2., if the same talks of/about targeted subjects are continuous between two neighboring units, coders should code the frequencies of the behavior as 1 in the first unit and 0 for the second one. Unless, the same talk is shown under a different circumstance (time and space); in this case, if there’s a continuous change of time or space in the contents showing the same talk, for every change, coders should count 1 observation; same procedure applies when multiple talks are observed. If there’s more than one character involved in the same talk and the talk is relevant to targeted subjects, coders should code observations of all characters.
- When coding for positive/negative and validating/demeaning, coders should only code the observations from the talker and the subjects themselves, instead of taking the spectator positions. If both positive/negative or validating/demeaning are observed, coders should code 1 for both of categories.
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Yukai Chen is a candidate for Master of Arts in the Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research at the University of Florida. As an International student, he received his undergraduate degree in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language at Shaanxi Normal University in spring of 2014 in China. During his study at the University of Florida, he has been working as a graduate assistant at the Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research. He will continue his academic career in media studies.