

**Female space on public transport: Case study of  
women's metro carriages in Guangdong  
Province, China**

**Huawen Cui**

**PhD**

**University of York**

**Women's Studies**

**January 2023**

## **Abstract**

My research focuses on women's carriages on the metro systems of Guangzhou and Shenzhen. In particular, I focus on why women's carriages were set up in China; I explore young women's and men's perspectives on and experiences of travelling on the metro and in women's carriages; and consider the extent to which there are gendered differences in their responses and why. My research draws on 44 interviews as well as my own participant observations of using the metro system, all of which took place in 2019. According to the policymaker in China behind the introduction of women's carriages, the main aims were to protect female passengers from sexual harassment on the metro, to create a comfortable and safe travelling environment, and to advocate as part of the pursuit of the socialist spiritual civilisation in which men should be chivalrous towards women. My thesis demonstrates that, despite the introduction of the women's metro carriages, little has changed, the principle of having women's carriages is not reinforced, and women continue to experience harassment and discomfort on the metros. Because the focus is on separating women from men, no attempt is made to deal with men's perpetration of sexual harassment. My interviews demonstrate that many men are unaware of what is acceptable behaviour towards women on public transport and what constitutes sexual harassment. Women live in a climate of fear of sexual harassment and deepens the male dominance and gender inequality on public transport. My analysis also reveals broader attitudes towards gender, demonstrating some rethinking of gender roles and expectations amongst young Chinese men and women alongside the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and practices. I have also extended our understanding of the factors influencing the participants' changing attitudes towards gender discourse and discuss the increasing gender antagonism among young people in China.

# Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>AUTHOR’S DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
THE INTRODUCTION OF WOMEN-ONLY CARRIAGES IN CHINA.....	12
WOMEN’S CARRIAGES FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.....	16
WHY GENDER SEGREGATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT?.....	17
YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW: ADDRESSING WOMEN’S METRO CARRIAGES, SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT, AND CHINA’S CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	26
EXPLORING WHAT IT MEANS FOR WOMEN TO CREATE A SEX-SEGREGATED SPACE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT .....	29
<i>What are women-only spaces?</i> .....	29
<i>Women moving around in the public sphere</i> .....	30
<i>Women-only space on public transport</i> .....	35
<i>Research on women’s metro carriages in China</i> .....	41
<i>Socialist civilisation construction in China</i> .....	43
SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT .....	50
<i>The origins of the term ‘sexual harassment’</i> .....	51
<i>Considering sexual harassment as a gendered issue</i> .....	54
<i>Sexual harassment in various contexts</i> .....	55
<i>The impact of sexual harassment in public space</i> .....	59
<i>Japanese pornography and ‘Chikan’ sexual harassment on public transport</i> .....	61
<i>Sexual harassment in China</i> .....	63
EXPLORING CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS IN CHINA’S SOCIAL CONTEXT .....	71
<i>The background of existing gendered contradictions</i> .....	72
<i>The danwei system</i> .....	73
<i>One-child policy and adjustment</i> .....	74
<i>The development process of Chinese feminism</i> .....	77
CONCLUSION.....	83

<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>RESEARCHING WOMEN’S METRO CARRIAGES IN CHINA: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES</b> .....	<b>85</b>
RESEARCH DESIGN .....	86
<i>Designing research methods</i> .....	86
<i>Designing the questions</i> .....	90
ETHICAL REVIEW .....	94
RECRUITMENT .....	96
PILOT STUDY .....	107
MAKING APPOINTMENTS.....	108
CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS .....	111
<i>Creating rapport</i> .....	112
<i>Power balance in the interview interactions</i> .....	114
<i>My identity as ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in the fieldwork</i> .....	117
<i>Ethical issues during the interviews</i> .....	120
<i>Unexpected things happened</i> .....	124
TRANSCRIBING, TRANSLATING, AND ANALYSIS .....	126
<b>CHAPTER 4</b> .....	<b>130</b>
<b>RESEARCH ON WOMEN’S METRO CARRIAGES IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE: .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>SEX SEGREGATION IN THE NAME OF LOVE .....</b>	<b>130</b>
BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE WOMEN’S CARRIAGES IN GUANGZHOU AND SHENZHEN.....	131
CURRENT OPERATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN’S CARRIAGES .....	137
PASSENGERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN’S METRO CARRIAGES .....	141
<i>Men’s viewpoints on the setting up of women’s carriages</i> .....	141
<i>Women’s viewpoints on the setting up of women’s carriages</i> .....	144
<i>Men’s various perceptions of using women’s carriages</i> .....	147
<i>Women’s various perceptions of using women’s carriages</i> .....	149
REALISTIC CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS RELATING TO WOMEN’S CARRIAGES .....	151
CONCLUSION.....	161
<b>CHAPTER 5</b> .....	<b>164</b>
<b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON GUANGZHOU AND SHENZHEN’S PUBLIC TRANSPORT</b> 164	
‘WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?’ A SENSE OF FEAR THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED ACCURATELY ..	165
DIFFERENT GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF DEFINING SEXUAL HARASSMENT .....	169
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT .....	172
VARIOUS FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT .....	173
WOMEN ARE STILL THE MAIN VICTIM GROUP.....	175
MEN CAN ALSO BE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	178
THE IMPACT OF THE FEAR OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT .....	181
SAFETY STRATEGIES .....	185

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT .....	188
PUBLIC TRANSPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PORNOGRAPHY .....	190
WHO CAN REALLY HELP VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT? .....	195
<i>The protective effect of the women’s carriages</i> .....	195
<i>Women are more able to sympathise with women</i> .....	197
<i>Men’s self-preservation psychology</i> .....	199
CONCLUSION.....	202
<b>CHAPTER 6: CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS IN CHINA .....</b>	<b>204</b>
STIGMATISED CHINESE FEMINISM.....	205
THE MOTIVATIONS FOR CHANGING OPINIONS ON GENDER RELATIONS.....	210
<i>TV film work as motivation</i> .....	210
<i>Family education as motivation</i> .....	215
<i>School education as a motivation for changing</i> .....	220
<i>Social environmental factors as motivation</i> .....	224
MALE MISOGYNY GROWS.....	227
FEMALE MISANDRY GROWS .....	231
CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS AMONG URBAN WOMEN.....	234
CHANGING GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK AND FAMILY AMONG URBAN YOUNG MEN .	240
CONCLUSION.....	245
<b>CHAPTER 7 .....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>248</b>
FUTURE RESEARCH.....	263
<i>Policy Recommendations</i> .....	264
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>267</b>
APPENDIX A RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET FOR PASSENGERS TAKING GUANGZHOU/SHENZHEN SUBWAY .....	267
APPENDIX B RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET FOR PLATFORM STAFF IN SUBWAY.....	274
APPENDIX C CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	281
APPENDIX D SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION .....	283
APPENDIX E GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND PHRASES .....	285
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>287</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Geographical location of Guangzhou and Shenzhen .....	66
Figure 2: The distribution diagram for the number of cases of sexual harassment .....	67
Figure 3 : Snowballing process in Shenzhen All names use pseudonyms .....	103
Figure 4 : Snowballing process in Guangzhou All names use pseudonyms.....	104
Figure 5 : The door of the courtesy waiting area .....	132
Figure 6 : The door of the women’s carriages .....	132
Figure 7 : Decoration of women’s carriages in Guangzhou .....	134
Figure 8 : Decoration of priority carriages for women in Shenzhen .....	134

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 : What behaviours can be called sexual harassment? .....	68
Table 2 : Interview questions with metro passengers .....	91
Table 3 : Interview questions with Metro Staff .....	92
Table 4 : Personal basic data of the 44 interviewees .....	105

## Acknowledgments

As I write here, it is a normal sleepless night as usual. I have fantasised many times about summarising all of my emotions and memories in these acknowledgments after finishing my doctoral dissertation. Now, I am typing these words to say thank you to everyone who has helped me during the past five years, 2018–2022, and also myself.

First of all, I would like to thank each supervisor, Prof. Stevi Jackson, Prof. Vicki Robinson, and Dr. Rachel Alsop. They are all very professional and patient supervisors. Prof. Jackson and Prof. Robinson have retired, but they carefully supervised my dissertation before retiring. Whether it is Prof. Jackson's great contribution to gender studies in China or Prof. Robinson's research on masculinity, I have learned a lot. During my work with Dr. Rachel Alsop over the past year, she has not only been a professional scholar but also a good friend to me. Whenever I needed help, she would reply patiently and tell me: 'Huawen, I'm always here if you need help, you won't be alone'. I am very grateful to them.

Secondly, my thanks go to all the people who participated in the interviews for my research, as well as my friends who helped me connect with these participants. Many young women among my interviewees expressed their great interest in gender studies in China and described their expectations for the development of Chinese feminism. They are Chinese women born under the one-child policy. They are confident, beautiful, and bravely pursue their dreams. I hope this dissertation can address some of their confusion. I will also walk side by side with them.

I would also like to thank my boyfriend, Nan, a PhD student in computer science and a pragmatic person who regards academia as a career for his life's work. His attitude towards academic research has subtly influenced me during the later period of my



PhD, and I am grateful for his love and company.

I would like to thank my parents in particular. Both of them have been Chinese teachers for decades and taught me that I should not seek fame and fortune, but a clear conscience. Don't be too ambitious in doing things, just be down-to-earth. They are my best models. They have given me the greatest support and encouragement whenever I've doubted myself during my more than 20 years of studying. When I was a young child, they often joked: 'Wherever you read, we'll support you to study. If you go to do a PhD, we'll support you to do that PhD.' Without their material and spiritual support, I would not be what I am today would be following a different life. At the age of 28, I understand that in China it is a traditional concept that women should marry and have children, be filial to the elderly, and raise their children. But my parents insisted on telling me: 'Do what you want to do. Live your own life, not for others.' It was also their affirmation that made me choose my subject 'women's studies' so firmly. There is an old Chinese saying, '父母呼，应勿缓；父母命，行勿懒'， which means 'parents call, do not slow down; parents order, do not be lazy'. However, my parents abandoned their idea of wanting me to be with them. It will be engraved upon my heart and become the spiritual motivation for my life to keep moving forward. I also want to thank the family members who have accompanied me while growing up and taught me to be an upright and loving person, but have already left me: my grandpa, grandma, maternal grandma, and maternal grandpa. Their love will always be with me. Also, my lovely and respectable family and friends, whose spiritual support got me through the toughest of times during the pandemic. My friend Lele has always encouraged me, saying: 'For those Chinese women who are still troubled by gender inequality, your research will be of great significance to them.'

Thank you!

Finally, I would like to thank all the scholars in human geography, women's studies,

and China's gender studies whom I have cited and studied. It is precise because of their lifelong dedication to academia that future generations can forge ahead. Their academic research and achievements are like lighthouses on the ocean, guiding me and other young scholars to continue the academic journey. I will move forward with gratitude to everyone etched in my heart.

## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. An article 'Chinese Feminist Comedy? An exploration of the opportunities and challenges faced by female stand-up comedians in China' published on *Cultivate*, draws on some of the material from this thesis. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

My research focuses on women's carriages in the metro systems of Guangzhou and Shenzhen. In particular, I focus on why women's metro carriages were set up; I explore young women's and men's perspectives on and experiences of travelling on the metro and in women's carriages in particular; and consider the extent to which there are gendered differences in their responses and why. My research draws on 44 interviews (40 with women and men who use the metros and four with metro staff) as well as my own participant observations of using the metro system, all of which took place in 2019. From my interviews, it was evident that the sexual harassment of young women on public transport is a key problem, but also that sexual violence against women is not limited to public transport but is part of a broader landscape of gendered inequalities in China.

### **The introduction of women-only carriages in China**

At the Guangdong Provincial Political Consultative Conference in January 2017, Su Zhongyang, a member of the Provincial Political Consultative Conference, proposed setting up 'women's carriages' on Guangzhou Metro. The idea was put into trial operation during the peak hours of Guangzhou Metro Line 1 on 28 June of the same year. For a time, women's carriages attracted a great deal of attention from both citizens and the media. Official media such as the *People's Daily* (人民日报) rushed to report that the setting up of women's carriages reflected humanistic care (Hu, 2017). As women's carriages entered the perception of the public, some dissenting voices were also heard on social media. On China's social media platform 'Sina Weibo' (a social media site similar to Twitter; 新浪微博), topics relating to women's carriages are extremely popular. By 27 October 2022, the topic of #women's

*carriages#* had attracted 6.941 million views, *#Is it necessary to set up women's carriages on the metro#* had 180 million views, and *#is it necessary to set up women's carriages during peak hours#* had 70.58 million views. Moreover, an article entitled 'Guangzhou Subway: Women's carriages full of men' was published in the *New York Times* on 6 March 2018, which gives an in-depth description of the situation of women's carriages in Guangzhou at that time (*New York Times*, 2018). Although it is not unique across the world (women-only carriages also exist in Japan, Mexico, Indonesia, Egypt, and other regions), it was the first time that women's metro carriages had been set up in China. As there is recent news that these carriages will also be introduced in other big cities in China, more people are considering the question: Do women need female-only carriages in China?

In 2017, when I was about to finish my master's graduate thesis, I found that the subject of women's carriages was a popular topic of discussion amongst Chinese young people on social media. It is not only the establishment of the women's carriage in China that intrigues me, but also why it is so hotly debated. In the Guangdong Women and Children's Development Planning Information Network (广东省妇女儿童发展规划信息网), officials explained that Su's proposal was intended to provide a relatively comfortable travel environment for women, pregnant women, and children below primary school age (*pwccw.gd.gov*, 2017). Su Zhongyang, who made the suggestion, is not only a male CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; 中国人民政治协商会议) member in Guangzhou, but also the general manager of a trading company, and thus a prominent figure in local commerce. As Giddens points out, in many aspects of modern society, men have more wealth, social status, and influence than women (Giddens, 2013: 376), as well as greater power in decision-making. Su stated:

Due to the geographical factors of Guangdong Province, the summer is relatively long and hot, women's clothing is generally 'cool', and problems caused by body contact arise. The establishment of female carriages is to protect women and children from physical molestation through isolation, reducing risks, and improving the riding environment for women and children. Moreover, respecting women, and caring for women, not only reflects personal accomplishment but also demonstrates the civilisation of a city. The values of caring for and protecting women should be conveyed to the whole society. (*gdszx.gov.cn*, 2017, my translation)

This passage was reported on the government's state website, which indicates that women's carriages are respected and promoted by the government. Sparks and Reading (1994) argued that a country's political and social system can usually be inferred from its communication infrastructure. In an authoritarian political system, such as China, the mainstream media with the government as its back is the voice of the government, and the information it transmits is used by the government as one of the main channels for propaganda. The highly centralised media content also reflects the authoritarianism of the Chinese government (Zheng, L., 2013).

However, while the government and the media advocated for women's metro carriages, their introduction has encountered difficulties in actual operation as well as much critique. Many young netizens expressed their opposition to the use of women's metro carriages, believing that this is another form of gender discrimination (Zhao, W., 2019). Su's explanation of the purpose of setting up women's carriages has triggered much discussion amongst Chinese young people on social media on topics related to women's carriages, such as sexual harassment on public transport, women's travelling experiences on public transport, women's mobility in public spaces, and other gendered topics of discussion (*Sina*, 2019).

One critique of the implementation of women's metro carriages is that they are in fact priority carriages for women, and that in practice this does not equate to the effect of

women-only carriages. There are no clear rules or penalties to regulate the use of these carriages, and only vague advocacy that appeals to men to use mixed carriages and encourages women to use women's carriages. Such ambiguous measures have caused passengers to encounter many difficulties in the actual use of women's carriages. For example, male passengers were told by metro staff that they could not use women's carriages and this meant that they could not physically get onto the metro during the morning and evening rush hours. Or sometimes, when female passengers enter the women's carriage, they find that all the seats are taken by male passengers, and they are crowded together with male passengers here as well. These have exacerbated gender conflicts and dissatisfaction. Some female passengers felt uncomfortable with those 'unconscious' male passengers who using the women's carriages (Huang, 2018). Despite these problems, the women's carriages have not been cancelled so far. Although Shenzhen has made different temperature adjustments for women's carriages and other mixed carriages because the metro companies claims that women feel cooler than men, so raising the air conditioning temperature in women's carriages would make women feel more comfortable and men can use the mixed carriages (*The Paper News*, 2019). The temperature adjustments are used to distinguish women's carriages from other, ordinary carriages, while the policy has still not changed women's carriages to women-only carriages.

Despite the flurry of criticism that the carriages have generated, they still exist because a key impetus for their introduction was their supposed alignment with the ethos of building a civilised society, as promoted by the Chinese government. As Su claims, the Guangdong government hopes to advocate for a 'socialist spiritual civilization'<sup>1</sup> (社会主义精神文明建设); that is, by advocating the concept of 'respecting and protecting women', to highlight the high civilisation levels of

---

<sup>1</sup> Spiritual Civilisation, (Jingshen Wenming; 精神文明), is a political commission of CCP. (Shambaugh, D., 2007). According to CCP principles, it has been assigned with educating people in order to create a spiritual civilisation based on Chinese socialism with the intention of creating a socialist society with harmony (Shambaugh, D., 2007).

individuals and the city. Hence, the prevention of sexual harassment and the provision of a comfortable transportation environment for women are not the first priorities.

The project of building a harmonious socialist society under the framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics was initiated during China's 1979 reform and opening-up period (Xie, Z., 2020). After Xi Jinping became China's president, the socialist spiritual civilisation was elevated to an unprecedented level (Brown and Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018). Confucianism is the core of this socialist spiritual civilisation, and the patriarchal theory behind it has generated a certain degree of oppression of women, because it regards men as the dominant group, and women as holding a secondary position subordinate to men in society (Wang, Z., 2017). Also, as philosophical thought, Confucianism has been used by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) as an ideological force, using soft power to generate certain norms for women's behaviour and actions (Louie, K., 2014; Hubbert, 2019).

### **Women's carriages from an international perspective**

There have been many women's carriages across the world, most of them set up in Asian countries (Lee, 2017; Shah, 2018; Hsu, 2010). For example, Japan opened women's carriages to address the issue of sexual harassment experienced by women on public transport in 1912 (Horii and Burgess, 2012; Shibata, 2020; Freedman, 2002), and India also set up special carriages for women on its metro trains in 2009 (Narayanan, 2020; RGT Policy, 2020; Graham-Harrison, 2015). Likewise, Mexico (Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022a; Abenoza et al., 2019; Dunkel-Graglia, 2013a; 2013b), Brazil (Snyder and Wolff, 2019), Egypt (Tillous, 2020), Indonesia (Prabowo et al., 2020; Ginting et al., 2022), Iran (Arjmand, 2016), Malaysia (Bachok et al., 2014), and other regions all have special carriages for women on public transport (Gekoski et al., 2017; Gardner, N., et al., 2017).



There are also many areas that have proposed introducing women-only carriages, but where their introduction has been questioned and opposed. The UK was the first country to introduce 'ladies only' carriages on trains, in the 1840s, but abolished them in 1977 (Kelly, 2015). In 2015, Labour Party leadership contender Jeremy Corbyn proposed the creation of women-only carriages on public transport to reduce sexual harassment but this suggestion was strongly opposed by feminists (Zoido, 2015; Proudman, 2018). The feminist writer Libby Purves believes that the concept of 'lady carriages' in the UK exudes defeatism which ignores the root of the issues-men's bad behaviour such as sexual harassment (Purves, 2019). In 2016, Germany was criticised for setting up women-only carriages on the Leipzig to Chemnitz regional train, with critics arguing that separating the genders was 'something from past' and a backward step (Worley, 2016). In 1909, the US Hudson and Manhattan Railroad offered women-only carriages, but stopped at a later stage because of significant opposition (Hood, 1996). The feminist writer Ida Husted Harper believes that the women-only carriages would create a space where men would assume that women can only use women's carriages (King, R.E., 2023).

### **Why gender segregation on public transport?**

One of the key objectives of those advocating for and introducing gender segregation on public transport is to provide a safe environment for women and, specifically, to prevent the sexual harassment of women by men as they travel in public spaces (Vera-Gray and Kelly, 2020; Gekoski et al., 2015).

Where gender segregation is used on public transport, it is usually done to distinguish between male and female passengers by their biological sex, and to isolate the spatial area of female passengers from that of male passengers. This is based on the assumption that people can easily be segregated into either male or female sexes.

Sex/gender segregation in transport exposes essentialism, using subtle social rules to regulate the behaviour of men and women. Sex/gender-segregated spaces also contribute to the creation and perpetuation of idealised masculinity by increasing their domination over and harm of women and non-hegemonically masculine men, thereby achieving subordination to the dominance of hegemonic masculinity (Cohen, 2010). Thus, men and women are seen as different from each other but also positioned within a hierarchy, with women regarded as weaker and more vulnerable. In Asia, especially East Asia, or in regions that are heavily influenced by patriarchal culture, sex/gender-segregated spaces are more common on public transport. On the one hand, due to the influence of the 'Confucian cultural circle' in East Asia, where Confucianism is the foundation of the patriarchal state, it is believed that patriarchy has the highest ruling power in both the family and the state, and that men hold a dominant position in society (Ma et al., 2021). On the other hand, in Confucian culture, 'rituals' (禮; *Li*), as one of the five basic Confucian concepts, are regarded as the basis of the social order (Liu and Stening, 2016). It means that people should display a certain etiquette of communication with others in daily life, for example, men need to pay attention to their manners with women and show chivalrous to women in public spaces, which strengthens the male-dominant social order by restricting individual behaviour (Leung, 2003; Littlejohn, 2017).

Starting from the experiences of female victims, some feminist scholars have conducted in-depth research on the process, reactions, and trauma of victims of sexual harassment (Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022a; 2022b). The busy and crowded public transport in megacities appears to give male offenders an opportunity to avoid surveillance, also the proximity and anonymity they need to perpetrate sexual harassment, with low penalties and little risk for the men. These all contribute to the high frequency of sexual harassment on public transport (Neupane and Chesney-Lind, 2014). Sexual harassment in public spaces has a serious impact on women. For

example, the public opinion that victims might be partially culpable for their sexual harassment causes women to adjust their own itineraries, dress, travel times, and travel range. They try to avoid travelling alone at night, or they take detours, or wear long sleeves and trousers (Vera-Gray, 2018; Kaygan et al., 2022; Basile et al., 2014).

In response to the current situation of frequent sexual harassment on public transport, scholars are trying to solve the problem by discovering new solutions, rather than simply setting up sex/gender segregation (Shah, 2018). Clearly, sexual harassment is an assault on women that is common in everyday life and occurs in many specific environments. The forms of sexual harassment in different environments have different characteristics, and different effects on the victims. The promotion of women's spatial mobility is seen as an act of resistance by women to patriarchal society (Roestone Collective, 2014). However, sexual harassment on public transport seriously affects women's mobility and range of activities.

During the second wave of feminism in the West, feminists advocated for women-only spaces to protect women's rights and needs, and to provide safe spaces for women. This was a bottom-up movement advocated by the grassroots, which is different from the top-down approach of establishing women's metro carriages proposed by Su Zhongyang, a male Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference member. The women's metro carriages in China ignore the actual needs of women, and only default to women as the main target of sexual harassment on public transport. However, this does not mean that sexual harassment on public transport is not an issue that affects many female passengers.

The newspaper *China Youth Daily* conducted a survey of 1899 Chinese netizens through an online questionnaire in 2015. The study showed that 53.4% of the respondents said they had encountered sexual harassment on public transport, and

51.7% of these said they had not received help when they encountered this sexual harassment (*CYOL.com*, 2015). According to a 2017 survey report on sexual harassment on public transport in Shenzhen, consisting of 433 questionnaires, 33.9% of the victims of sexual harassment said they had encountered it on public transport, while 42% of female respondents had experienced sexual harassment in public transportation, of which 47.2% of the victims chose to put up with it silently. For 73% of the victims, the experience had a severe and lasting negative impact (*Zhihu.com*, 2017).

There is also a great deal of controversy over the concept of sexual harassment, both generally and on public transport in particular, especially in terms of what is understood as constituting sexual harassment (O'Donohue et al., 1998; Fitzgerald, 1990; Ceccato, 2017). During my interviews, a male interviewee recalled an experience in which he did not consider staring at a woman's breasts to be a form of sexual harassment. In Shenzhen's research report (*Zhihu.com*, 2017), it was found that men's awareness of sexual harassment is weak. In contrast, women's awareness is high, and women are more sensitive and more concerned about sexual harassment issues. Even women who have never experienced it themselves have a deeper understanding of the issue of sexual harassment and try to avoid the possibility of it happening to them, due to the media reports on sexual harassment and their families' reminders about women's safety.

## **Young people in contemporary China**

In the neo-Confucian era, under the Chinese patriarchal society dominated by Confucianism, young women have developed greater critical thinking about gendered inequalities (Basu et al., 2017; Ji et al., 2017). The persistence of gender norms among the younger generation is a major shift in contemporary China. In addition to

the country's reform and opening up, the development of the market economy has driven the transformation of the social economy and social culture. At the same time, due to the rapid development of the Internet, people can quickly spread information about popular social events and discuss them on social media (Li, J. and Li, X., 2017). It is also due to the development of Chinese feminist movements, such as the progress of the #MeToo movement in China, that knowledge and ideas about feminism have been disseminated (Zheng and Zhang, 2010; Lin and Yang, 2019). Although there are many disputes about what Chinese feminism is, the new gendered power structure since China's post-socialist transition has given Chinese feminism a deeper meaning (Wu and Dong, 2018).

The main target group for this shift is the young Chinese generation born under the one-child policy, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, because their birth was accompanied by important changes in the political, economic, and cultural contexts in China. Therefore, the gendered experiences and gender attitudes of this generation of young Chinese have attracted the attention of many scholars (Xie, 2021; Song and Hird, 2014).

In particular, parents who were registered as urban citizens had to follow the one-child policy more strictly than those registered as rural citizens; otherwise, they risked losing their jobs in public institutions and the corresponding welfare benefits due to extra births. Even though women still have a disadvantaged status in China under the son-preference culture, they have experienced access to unprecedented educational opportunities, very different from those of previous generations of women, because they are the single children (Hu and Shi, 2020). The one-child policy gave urban single daughters more equal opportunities than ever before to enter higher education.

Because young Chinese women born in cities are valued and nurtured by their

families, their social status has improved. This has also changed their attitudes towards gender relations and marriage practices (Evans, 2008, 2011). Even though the younger generation in China, especially urban women, have gained access to more social resources than before (Sudbeck, 2012), they still experience entangled and contradictory influences between the traditional concept of family under the control of Confucianism and the gendered identity advocated by the patriarchal and authoritarian government (Hu, 2018; Yang, 2022; Leung, 2003). For example, some young women grow up with a sense of gender equality between men and women gained from their families, but they are faced with unfair treatment due to hidden rules in the workplace (Liu, Y., 2021; Xie, 2021). Additionally, young Chinese men have to be responsible for the traditional filial piety that needs to be performed as a son, and the important responsibility they need to take for the family finances in a close relationship while pursuing personal success (Song and Hird, 2014). These current circumstances leave Chinese young people confused about their gender identity in their stressful work life and cause them to pay more attention to their gendered experiences than previous generations have done (Zhang and Goza, 2006; Wang and Zhang, 2022). My research on women's metro carriages indicates that young people's attitudes towards sex segregation on public transport are inextricably bound up with their perspectives on and experiences of sexual harassment in particular, and also to their opinions and lived experience of gender relations more generally.

My thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following on from this introductory chapter, my next chapter explores the literature that discusses sex-segregated spaces for women on public transport, and gender-based violence on public transport, as well as providing a depiction of the broader landscape of gender inequalities and changing gender relations in China. I introduce the implementation of women-only carriages on public transport in various regions of the world, and provide a basic background to the introduction of women's metro carriages in China. I also discuss the significant

concept of China's socialist spiritual civilisation and how it controls women and gender relations as a political approach. In particular, I consider how it has become one of the main reasons why China set up women's metro carriages in Guangdong Province, to promote the so-called social civilisation for protecting women in society. I discuss a range of issues related to sexual harassment on public transport, such as the difficulty of defining the term sexual harassment, the fact that women live in a climate of fear about sexual harassment, and the different gendered judgments made by men and women about sexual harassment. Moreover, I discuss the changing gender relations in China since 1949. In particular, I introduce the impact of some major policies on changing gender relations, especially the post-Mao generation born under the one-child policy.

In chapter three, I introduce my research approach to examining the implementation of women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, reflecting upon the gendered differences among the young generation in their attitudes towards these carriages. I took these into account when practising qualitative research by conducting interviews with 20 male passengers, 20 female passengers, and four metro staff. I also combined these with my participant observation. Due to the absence of any references to gender nonconformity among the interviewees, the discussion in my thesis regarding women's carriages lacks an examination of the connections with LGBTQ+, trans, and genderfluid passengers. Consequently, in chapter three, I acknowledge the limitation and deficiency within the thesis of addressing this aspect.

There are three analysis chapters following the methodology chapter, which mainly focus on issues around the gender inequality in implementing women's metro carriages and current contexts of Chinese society. In chapter four, I explore the introduction of women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. By comparing the operation of women's carriages in the two cities, I highlight that the carriages in

Guangzhou are women's priority carriages rather than women-only carriages, which has caused some contradictions, and I aim to uncover the reason for the conflict. I focus on young women's and men's perceptions of taking the metro and women's carriages and the extent and reasons for the gender differences in their responses to reveal the impact of women's carriages in Guangdong Province.

In chapter five, I discuss the sexual harassment on public transport that my participants have experienced or witnessed, in order to emphasise that sexual harassment on public transport is a serious but neglected form of gender-based violence in China. I highlight that young women are often regarded as the main targets of sexual harassment, but that men also face the risk of being sexually harassed on public transport. I discuss how men and women treat the behaviours of sexual harassment differently, and how women live in a climate of fear, but still normalise the issue. The fear of sexual harassment affects women everywhere, causing them to change their clothing, make-up, travel times, travel routines, and the way in which they take public transport due to the victim-blaming culture. I also discuss the connection between pornography, in the form of Japanese adult video, and sexual harassment on public transport.

In chapter six, I investigate the phenomenon of the young generation of Chinese being very interested in gender discourses and topics. I focus on some gender topics of interest to my young participants, such as the development of feminism in China. By examining the different attitudes of young men and young women towards gender relations, I reveal the factors that affect the views of the single children born in the post-Mao era on gender, and ask: what kind of impact did the changes in multiple environmental factors have on their perceptions of gender? Then I uncover the relation between emotions of gender antagonism and young people's changing gender relations through the great attention they pay to the buzzwords about gender



antagonism in the context of China's Internet. In addition, I discuss the contradictions and confusions displayed by young male and female participants regarding work/family conflicts, intimacy, the pursuit of personal success, and the requirements of traditional gender roles within neoliberal discourse. This discussion is connected to my participants' opinions and experiences of women's carriages, which need to be considered within the context of their broader experiences of gendered relations and inequality in China.

In chapter seven, the conclusion, in pulling all of my analysis together, I aim to cast light on the gender inequalities behind the setting up of women's carriages on public transport, the inequalities in gender-based violence on public transport, and changing gender relations as reflected in the perspectives on gender inequality that I found among the young Chinese generation. My aim is to illustrate the changing attitudes of the young generation born under the one-child policy towards the gender inequalities in patriarchal Chinese society, as they hope to find a way to break free of the shackles of the unequal status quo.

## Chapter 2

### **Literature Review: Addressing women's metro carriages, sexual harassment on public transport, and China's changing gender relations**

#### **Introduction**

In 2019, just after I finished my three-month fieldwork on women's carriages in Guangdong Province and was about to fly back to my hometown from Shenzhen, I saw a security check channel especially designed for women at Shenzhen Airport. On the right side of this security channel was a pink noticeboard with a flower icon. On the noticeboard were the Chinese characters: '女性安检通道' (Female security check channel) and also an English sign: 'Female-only'. Before going through the security check, I said goodbye to my friend. I looked at the female channel from a distance and saw that women of different ages were waiting in line. In contrast, there were many male passengers at the other channels waiting in line alongside a small number of female passengers.

I noticed that the queue at the female security check channel was much longer than for the mixed channels. Despite this, there were still female passengers going to the female-only one. The female channel was supposed to be a service especially designed for women, but the waiting time for women was longer than for others. This scene caused me to reflect upon the three-month fieldwork I had just undertaken investigating women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen and the wider issue of female spaces on public transport. Not only I, but also my female participants, were relatively unfamiliar with the notion of female space within the public transportation system, while at the boarding gate I was observing another form of women-only space.

The provision of services and spaces for women in public arenas creates a subtle distinction between sex and gender when people go out, which also hinders the process of breaking down the sex/gender binary. However, 'women-only' space within public transportation systems is not solely a product of 'Chinese characteristics'. Women's carriages have also been implemented in other countries and regions. When analysing women's carriages in different countries, scholars usually conduct their research from local socio-cultural perspectives and explore the unique situated reasons for establishing local women's carriages.

In the existing scholarship about women's carriages on public transport, it is argued that the main purpose for setting up women's carriages around the world is to try to resolve or prevent gender-based violence against women and other feminised and gender-diverse subjects on public transport in a given local area. This is also the main purpose of local regional authorities announcing the establishment of women's carriages (Gekoski et al., 2015; Hsu, 2010; Shah, 2018; Gardner et al., 2017; Chowdhury and McFarlane, 2022). Academic research on sexual harassment on public transport involves multiple research fields, including criminology, transport studies, psychology, geography, sociology, social policy, law, women's studies, and other academic fields. Among these, human geography plays an important role in the study of sexual harassment on public transport (Boyer, 2022).

Some feminist scholars have explored the role of women's carriages by analysing female passengers' travelling experiences and attitudes towards these carriages (Horri and Burgess, 2012; Wang, 2018). Alternatively, when seeking to understand the connection between the establishment of women's carriages and the issue of local sexual harassment on public transport, some researchers analyse it by using an intersectional approach, and exploring class, race, gender (and transgender), and other

factors lying behind the issue (Horri and Burgess, 2012; Tillous, 2020; Lawford-Smith, 2021; Shah, 2018; Ginting et al. 2022).

Overall, although the academic achievements on gender-based violence in public spaces are relatively rich, the results have not been collected to enable a discussion of the major findings (Boyer, 2022). In addition, academic research on the ‘women-only’ spaces and facilities on public transport remains limited.

I begin my review of the literature with three main sections that are relevant to my analysis of women’s metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, before opening up my analysis to examine the implementation of women’s carriages across China. I start with the practice of women’s carriages as sex/gender-segregated spaces within the public transportation system, discussing the development of women’s carriages around the world and in China. In particular, I emphasise that the implementation of women’s carriages in China is an embodiment of the construction of spiritual civilisation with Chinese characteristics. Thus, I focus on the discussion of Chinese spiritual civilisation as a soft power of the state and government that is used to control individuals’ behaviour, so as to achieve the political goal of China’s authoritarianism.

Following this, I discuss the serious issue of sexual harassment in public spaces, especially on public transport, its impact on victims, and the limitations it imposes on them, both worldwide and in China. I also consider the impact of Japanese pornography as a cultural factor influencing sexual harassment on public transport in East Asia. Finally, based on China’s social contexts, I examine Chinese citizens’ changing attitudes towards gender discourse and gender relations. This includes the promulgation of some key policies and their impact upon the young Chinese generation. I also introduce the increasing gender antagonism among the young Chinese generation during the development of Chinese feminism.

## **Exploring what it means for women to create a sex-segregated space on public transport**

### **What are women-only spaces?**

Before discussing women-only carriages on public transport, there are some important questions that need to be clarified. These are: What is a ‘women-only’ space? Why do women need ‘women-only’ spaces and facilities? As the name suggests, ‘women-only’ space refers to a specific space that can only be accessed and used by women, as a major site for sex and gender-segregated space (Shahrokni, 2014). The establishment of women-only spaces predates the second-wave feminist movement, and the existing literature discusses many women-only services that were established during the 1960s to 1980s (Thompson, 2002). Mackay (2015) points out that radical feminism in the second-wave movement used and promoted women-only space as an organising method. Radical feminists advocated spatial claims for creating feminist spaces and women-only organisations to raise feminist consciousness. And claiming liberated women’s spaces was also treated as the focus of the work of radical feminism (Nachescu, 2009).

Some feminist geographers have paid attention to women’s geographical space. McDowell (1996) advocated using ‘spatializing feminist theories’ to analyse space and social relations. And Massey (1992: 81) argued that: ‘space is by its nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination...a kind of “power-geometry”’ (Jonas, 1994).

Hence, when considering women’s subordinated social status, ‘second-wave’ feminists faced a challenging dilemma between separatism and women’s needs, and they chose to support the setting up of women-only spaces such as bookshops, railway carriages, and car parks for solidarity, comfort, and safety (McDowell, 1996). During

the 1960s and 1970s, women-only spaces were created in a bottom-up manner by grassroots second-wave feminists, stemming from their specific needs, and these gave women more opportunities to access safer places (Spain, 2016; Jeffreys, 2018).

In contrast, in today's globalisation of feminism, the idea of creating a women-only space as a safe space for women has been opposed and resisted by some feminists. In the wave of gender anti-essentialism in the progression of feminism, the establishment of women-only spaces is deemed to reflect an essentialism that separates men and women by sex dualism (Cohen, 2010), which has produced varying degrees of controversy (Roestone Collective, 2014). As Phipps suggests on mainstream feminism, privileged white women have sacrificed some marginalised groups, and the discourse on sexual violence should pay more attention to the needs of these marginalised groups (Phipps, 2020). For example, whether trans women have the right to use female-only spaces has become a new topic of debate (Browne 2009; Westbrook and Schilt, 2014). However, in contemporary China, there are still certain limitations in researching trans issues. Consequently, my research has certain shortcomings in examine the rights of the trans group to utilise women's spaces, and their experiences within women's spaces. Therefore, 'women-only space' is a complex topic that can lead to different debates and discussions over time and place. However, women-only spaces still exist and have been discussed by scholars because some women still need them, whether for safety or comfort, and safety is the major factor when discussing women-only space and facilities.

### **Women moving around in the public sphere**

'Safe' and 'dangerous'. These two adjectives sound like antonyms, but they are the most frequently used in describing how women feel in a space: safe or fearful.

Research on the gendered nature of space and harassment reveals women's struggles

with safety and their fears of sexual violence. Scholars from a variety of fields have disputed the gendered nature of safety as awareness of the numerous threats to women's safety has increased (Lewis et al., 2015). The broader criminology literature highlights the importance of neighbourhood and psychological characteristics for feelings of safety (Pantazis, 2000). Through comparison, it has been found in the criminological literature that there are three different factors affecting criminal violence: individual, situational, and community-level sources of criminal violence will affect people's safety to varying degrees, and different situations will trigger different reactions (Schultz et al., 1995). When incorporating safety considerations into the traffic environment, in the literature of transport studies, researchers consider safety factors by designing the traffic environment to make passengers feel safer (Cozens et al., 2003; Delbosc and Currie, 2012). Next, I discuss the literature on the factors that have an impact on women's fear and safety in public spaces from the perspectives of human geography and women's studies.

Since the 1980s, women's fear of violent crime (FOVC) has received a lot of attention. The FOVC in public spaces influences their choices of destination, travelling mode, and travelling time. As Valentine (1989a) points out, women's use of space necessitates an awareness of their geography of fear. Because of these feelings of fear, Valentine also found that women engage some predominant strategies to avoid going out in 'dangerous places' at 'dangerous times' like at night, and not travelling alone. These contribute to a 'spatial expression of patriarchy', reproducing women's traditional gender identity and gendered roles, and delimiting the places deemed appropriate and suitable for women (Valentine, 1989b), which also reflects women's disadvantaged position within gendered geospatial locations (Valentine, 1990).

In fact, women's fears of private and public spaces are not proportional to the actual risks. According to research, women are more likely to encounter sexual harassment and violence from familiar people in private places than in public spaces (Stanko, 1985; Heise et al., 1994). However, just as women's awareness of dangers in private spaces, such as domestic violence, are increasing, so their fear of men will also be reflected in public spaces (Pain, 1997). Studies have shown that women who have experienced domestic sexual violence or sexual harassment from familiar people are more cautious outside and have a lower sense of security in the outside space (Valentine, 1992). Women's sense of security also impacts upon their mobility; for example, if women feel less safe due to their fear of crime in public places, they will go out less frequently (Osmond and Woodcock, 2015). Moreover, many citizens have been influenced by the fear of crime rather than the crime itself (Bannister and Fyfe, 2001), which means that women's fear of crime in some spaces is constructed from their mental images of places where they feel fear. The main causes of women's fear are related to their individual experiences, such as when, in childhood, they saw their parents' varying responses to different situations, as well as how their parents regulated the range of spaces in relation to peer-boys (Hart, 1979). In addition, women have lingering fears of places where they were previously frightened by strangers (Wise and Stanley, 1987). Moreover, some scholars have noticed that other people's experiences also affect women's geography of fear; for example, hearing other people's experiences of harassment or learning other people's stories about harassment through news reports or social media, which could deepen women's fear (Valentine, 1989a; Vera-Gray, 2018).

Although each person's own experiences play a big role in determining their fear level, there are still certain common characteristics to women's fear of public space. Researchers have attempted to examine the relationship between fear perceptions from the viewpoints of gender, age, social class, and other factors. Pain (1997)



believes that gender is still the main factor influencing women's FOVC. Women in all social classes fear being attacked by strangers in public places, according to research by Pain, while women from higher classes are more confident about defusing the effects of sexual aggression when they encounter it. Also, younger women and middle-class women lack accuracy in identifying risky situations. Therefore, the factor of social class will only affect how women respond to FOVC, but how much fear they feel is mostly due to their gender. In order to overcome women's fear in terms of geography, how to improve their sense of safety in space has also become a key research direction (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021; Whitzman, 2013). However, Delbosc and Currie (2012) noted an unexpected finding in their investigation of public transport in which neither gender nor age had a direct impact on people's feelings of safety. And feelings of safety had a small but significant positive influence on how frequently people used public transport.

Scholars in various fields have also conducted research on people's sense of spatial safety. According to research on spatial safety in the field of criminology, people's spatial security needs to be constructed from situational, demographic, socioeconomic/neighbourhood, and psychological factors (Van Ham and Clark, 2009), which means there are different but intricate components that construct a person's sense of spatial safety. For instance, research has shown that living in a better neighbourhood can directly affect residents' lower sense of safety when taking public transport (Delbosc and Currie, 2012). As for age, not all research has found a significant association between personal safety and age due to its intricacy (Ross and Jang, 2000). Hence, people's spatial safety stems from a combination of complex social and individual factors.

Public transport is one of the places where women feel significant worry when they go outside, due to its crowding and anonymity. Paying attention to the experiences

and feelings of female passengers on public transport proves that people are beginning to realise its gender inequality. In 2014, the 'Bridging the Gap' theme of the 5th Conference on Women's Issues in Transportation, held in Paris, served as a stark reminder that, while the gap between women's and men's mobility patterns and practices has narrowed since the 1970s, significant differences still exist, including the fact that women travel shorter daily distances and have less access to the household car than men (Turnbull, 2014). Women are more likely to take public transport than men, which is a far from gender-neutral environment. And the research shows that lower-income women use public transport more frequently than wealthy women (Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022a; Tillous, 2020).

Although passengers' perception of safety on public transport is often cited when discussing the topic of safety in public space, it is rarely studied as a major research topic in its own right. As discussed above, women feel uncertainty and geographical fear in public, and this has become a vulnerability that reflects the gender inequality of public transport. And vulnerability is significantly related to fear of crime (Killias and Clerici, 2000). In research by Coppola and Silvestri (2021), they found that women felt less secure in railway stations than men, which in turn had a negative impact on the mobility of female passengers. Apparently, addressing and understanding the potential dangers that women face on public transport has also become a new research topic (Smith, 2008). The key issue here is sexual assault by men on women, which is becoming the biggest safety concern for women. One attempt to make public transport safer has been to provide women-only spaces. In order to boost women's feelings of safety and decrease their fears, setting up women-only spaces within the public transportation system adopts a direct approach to sex/gender segregation in order to eliminate any potential physical touch between male and female passengers, and minimise the potential risks. For example, Lawford-Smith (2021: 5) discusses the main reasons for establishing women-only spaces as she

examines the significance of establishing women's spaces in different public places, and states that safety is the first important factor to consider (Lawford-Smith, 2021).

The concept of 'safe space' has been much debated in feminist politics (Roestone Collective, 2014) from a range of disciplines as awareness has grown of the pervasive challenges posed to women's safety. For instance, the women-only spaces on public transport exclude men in order to improve women's safety; this includes screening them from the sexual harassment against women that frequently occurs on public transport in Japan (Chu, 2022). Hence, establishing women's carriages in Japan is intended to protect women from being sexually assaulted, thereby giving, or improving, women's sense of safety. Therefore, women-only carriages have been adopted as a policy in many countries. Obviously, the 'female-only space' seeks to solve the problem of women's safety when going out, although it has also caused some controversy (van Geel, 2016; Lawford-Smith, 2021; Siebritz, 2008). Stanko stated that, compared with the segregation of women to reduce contact with unfamiliar men in order to alleviate women's fears, society needs to address women's needs from various perspectives, thereby addressing their fear of crime (Stanko, 1995). Hence, discussing the establishment of women-only carriages on public transport needs to be analysed from multiple perspectives.

### **Women-only space on public transport**

According to the research on women's need for transportation, gender-oriented violence, and fear of violence, will have an impact on their choices of mode of transport. Citizenship is viewed as including a fundamental right to mobility in public (Cresswell, 2010). Gender-based violence on public transport will also cause physical and mental harm and trauma to victims (Neupane and Chesney-Lind, 2014). Hence, as women are the main targets of sexual harassment while travelling, how to ensure women's safety

in public and improve their mobility when going out has received more attention from scholars (Hsu, H., 2010; Shah, S., 2018).

Congested public transport is seen as a breeding ground for crime. Some discussions have focused on overcrowding and the lack of adequate staff to manage vehicles and facilities. Maintaining order is seen as an effective public transport regulatory strategy (Smith and Clarke, 2000). However, in a mega city with a huge population (such as Guangzhou or Shenzhen), especially during the morning and evening rush hours, it is almost impossible for metro staff to control every corner. Therefore, to provide women with the opportunity to go out and ensure their safety as far as possible, women-only carriages create sex-segregated spaces and produce an immediate effect in a simple way.

There are many countries and regions that have a history of operating women-only carriages on public transport. The first country to set up women's carriages was the United Kingdom, where the carriages were introduced on London's first rail network in 1863, to deal with numerous cases of sexual assault against women on the railway (Jackson, 1986: 128). Due to the lack of a legal requirement for emergency cords on British trains before 1868, women faced a high risk of harassment with little help, such as the case of Colonel Valentine Baker, who sexually assaulted a young woman called Rebecca Dickinson in a train carriage in 1875 (Abernethy, 2015). According to reports by the BBC, the women-only carriages in trains were not as popular as imagined, and many women chose smoking cars instead (Harvey, 2015). The UK abolished female-only train carriages in 1977, after the introduction of new types of carriages and equality legislation which prevented gender-specific rules. Labour Party leadership candidate Jeremy Corbyn revived the idea of women-only carriages in 2015, but it was seen as a 'backstep step for women' or 'another form of victim blaming' because the suggestion to provide such carriages showed an alarming lack of understanding of the true cause of sexual harassment (Zoido-Oses, 2015). However,

this proposal raised controversial discussions, such as Newton's argument that sexual harassment on public transport is different from that in other public spaces, and that crime prevention generally does not work well as a one-size-fits-all solution (Newton, 2016).

Meanwhile, women's carriages were also introduced in the Americas during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1909, when the women-only metro carriages in New York were first introduced on the Hudson tube trains that transported passengers from Manhattan to Hoboken, they were known as 'suffragette cars' (Hood, 1996). However, the idea was opposed by some women because they considered that gentlemen are the best protection in a crowded carriage (*Ephemeral New York*, 2010). After a few months of controversial debates, the women's carriages were abandoned.

The notion of women-only public transport has spread across many countries, and one of the main purposes is preventing sexual harassment. For instance, in Japan, Tokyo networks were provided with women-only carriages in 1912 (Freedman, 2002). In 2005, women-only carriages were again used on some Tokyo metro lines to prevent the sexual harassment of women (Joyce, 2005). Similarly, in Mexico in 2008, women-only buses were used to address the frequent sexual harassment of women (Rodriguez, 2008; Dunckel-Garglia, 2013a; 2013b). On 1 October 2012, Indonesia introduced the Special Train for Women, provided by PT Kereta Api Indonesia, to eliminate gender discrimination against women on public transport by reducing the cases of sexual harassment. However, the train has been criticised by feminist activists due to female passengers' disapproving attitudes; they feel uncomfortable in female-only carriages because of the crowded environment (Ginting et al., 2022). In addition, Dubai (Elsheshtawy, 2012), Cairo (Tillous, 2020), Bangladesh (Rahman, 2010), Egypt, India (Dhillon and Bakaya, 2014), Brazil, and other regions have a history of opening female carriages, but the research on women-only public transport

remains limited compared to the number of regions where it is operated (Hsu, H., 2010; Shah, S., 2018).

Besides sexual harassment, some scholars have explored the social impact of women-only carriages. For example, Horri and Burgess (2012) discussed the relationship between women-only carriages and Japanese male authority. They examined Japanese women's attitudes toward the carriages and found that women support them due to their fear of *chikan*,<sup>2</sup> and also their disapproval of a certain kind of masculinity in Japan which targets the middle-aged salaryman. When researching Cairo and Sao Paulo, Tillous (2020) concluded that the design of women's carriages is not only related to sexual harassment issues. Judging from the women's carriages opened in New York and Tokyo, they mainly serve working-class women, so he argued that women's carriages are also associated with social class. For example, he pointed out that: 'Four fields of power are at play in the controversies surrounding the introduction of women-only metro carriages: added to that of sexual relations are that of production/class relations, the operational field, and that of the state' (Tillous, 2020: 1171). When comparing the countries operating women-only carriages, I found that Asia has the largest number. Lee (2017) analysed the relationship between gender and mobility by combining the socioeconomic and sociocultural context of Asia, and pointed out that women-only carriages can improve women's mobility in public, but it can also cause a certain shift in gender roles, especially considering the patriarchal society in Asia.

In addition to exploring the issue of sexual harassment on public transport, scholars believe that establishing a women-only existence on the metro could improve crowd evacuation efficiency. Liu (2018:319) argued that the existing women-only scheme

---

<sup>2</sup> *Chikan*, 痴漢, is a Japanese term referring to sexual harassment or other obscene acts conducted against the victim's will. This word is frequently used to describe men who take advantage of the crowded conditions on the public transport system to grope people. *Chikan* also features in Japanese pornography.

can bring a win-win situation for both male and female pedestrians in crowd evacuation after she used simulations to find that ‘women experience shorter average security check times at women-only entrances than they did at ordinary exits’.

Moreover, the opening of women’s carriages on public transport also provides a valuable reference to some other areas that have been planned. For example, in some parts of the world, proposals to introduce female-only carriages on public transport have generated controversy and public anger. The Australian transport union and NSW Rape Crisis Centre first proposed the idea for ‘pink carriages’ in 2013 but encountered intense debates and uproar between passengers and train operators (Reynolds, 2016). When thinking about the issue of sexual assault on public transport, women-only carriages are seen as a solution; however, women-only transportation has been proven to have little to no effect in reducing women’s fear of public transport (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013a).

More geographical and transport studies researchers have tried to find an effective way to resolve women’s geography of fear on public transport, such as raising awareness of uncivilised behaviour and strengthening measures such as public transport supervision and improved lighting during specific periods (Vanier and Jubainville, 2017; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008), instead of a simple sex/gender segregation. Infante-Vargas and Boyer (2022b) investigated the gender-based violence against women occurring on public transport in Saltillo, Mexico, and advanced to considering the role of the local state (such as the local transport authority, the police, and the Centre for Justice and Empowerment for Women) in preventing sexual violence and re-victimisation on public transport.

The phenomenon of women-only carriages has also been questioned and opposed by feminists because research has found that women’s fear while travelling stems from

gendered social and power relations (Bondi, 2005). Compared with the women-only spaces during the second wave of feminism, more recent women's spaces have been proposed and advocated by grassroots feminists to ensure women's safety and mobility rights. However, nowadays feminists question whether women need sex/gender segregation, which represents an improving development in the feminist movement and a new research direction (Lewis et al., 2015).

In addition, whether trans people have the right to use women-only carriages has attracted some scholars' attention. Holly Lawford-Smith (2021) discusses this topic in her paper addressing the impact of such a change on single-sex space when individuals in countries such as Australia can modify their birth sex. She argues that most women-only spaces are justified on the sex binary rather than gender identity. In the realm of women-only spaces, the question of which women can access such spaces has emerged as a subject of discussion. Specifically, the issue revolves around whether trans women should be granted the right to utilise women-only spaces. Lawford-Smith highlights the prevailing controversies and inherent contradictions inherent in this topic. While some women have voiced apprehensions about the inclusion of trans women in women-only spaces, research indicates that, for example, on public transport trans women experience considerable harassment (Lubitow et al 2017). There has been a growing body of research within Western academia examining the rights of transgender women in women-only spaces (Outten et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2015; McConnel, et al., 2016; Bettcher, 2013). However, there is a notable absence of research on women-only spaces in China from the perspective of transgender rights. In a broader context, studies indicate the pervasive presence of trans prejudice in China, with limited awareness and understanding of transgender issues among Chinese individuals (Chen and Anderson, 2016).



Hence, there is no research on women-only space in China from the perspective of transgender rights. Although the discussion of women's carriages is not extensive, the deeper exploration of the debate on women-only carriages opens up the possibility of future research on how trans voices and experiences are included in discussions of gender-segregated space.

### **Research on women's metro carriages in China**

As discussed above, women-only carriages have been introduced in many countries, although some have already abolished them again due to the exposed patriarchal concepts. However, in China, women-only carriages on public transport have become popular during the last decade. A member of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) proposed the setting-up of women-only carriages on the Beijing metro to prevent women from being sexually harassed during peak hours. However, this proposal was not implemented after the difficulties of practical implementation were taken into consideration (*China.com*, 2015). Hence, the first time that women-only metro carriages were explicitly introduced in China is the women's carriage scheme opened in Guangdong Province, in 2017. Su Zhongyang, a male politician and CPPCC member in Guangdong Province, proposed the setting-up of women's metro carriages to protect women, who are considered to be a 'vulnerable group' in society, to protect them from being sexually harassed. Additionally, implementing this proposal is believed to convey the concept of civilisation to citizens, in terms of respecting and caring for women, allowing every woman to take the metro with 'dignity' (*The Paper News*, 2017).

However, most of the discussion about opening women-only metro carriages in China comes from media reports. The academic literature on the subject is limited. In the rare academic literature that does exist, a graduate thesis from Hong Kong

Polytechnic University discusses passengers' attitudes towards women's carriages in Guangzhou (Wang, 2018). This is the same research topic as mine, but our research methods are different, because I adopted a qualitative research method combined with observations, while Wang used a quantitative research method with observation. Wang's thesis was written in 2018 and was completed in traditional Chinese characters. It discussed the status of the establishment and operation of women's carriages on the Guangzhou Metro and obtained research data using a combination of online questionnaires and observations. The author believes that solving the issue of sexual harassment is not the only purpose of setting up women's metro carriages in Guangzhou; in addition, advocating the idea of 'respecting and caring for women' means the government and metro companies realise and believe in women's biological weakness. However, the women's carriages in Guangzhou are 'priority carriages for women', rather than women-only, which means that there are no strict rules to regulate them. Considering the current insufficient operating schedules in Guangzhou during peak hours, with the demand from passengers being greater than the actual capacity of the shuttles, setting up women-only carriages is unrealistic. Wang used online surveys to investigate male and female passengers' attitudes towards women's carriages and the sexual harassment occurring on public transport. She found that most female victims who had experienced sexual harassment were afraid to accuse the offenders directly, and were unwilling to call the police, which means that the current data on sexual harassment cases is not entirely accurate. Also, setting up women's carriages is suspected of discriminating against men because it deepens women's misunderstanding of men as all being potential sexual offenders. Wang argues that, in the process of establishing gender equality and gender mainstreaming in China, the emergence of women's carriages is inevitable, but combined with Chinese sociocultural contexts, the rationality of providing them has been challenged and the management of them by metro staff has been deficient.

Moreover, by using methodologies like open-ended and in-depth interviews, participants are able to express their views on women's carriages and in their discussions on topics related to women's carriages. These explorations were not reflected in Wang's thesis. In addition, compared with women-only carriages in other countries, understanding the establishment of women's carriages in China needs researching within the particular political context of China. As Su said, the establishment of women's carriages is conducive to the building of Guangdong's socialist civilisation (*gdszx.gov.cn*, 2017). In this sense, Wang did not research this topic from a political perspective. However, as a political tool, the connection between women's carriages and the construction of socialist civilisation is essential. Also, in other research on women's carriages in Guangdong, the different gendered attitudes and the controversial debates on the carriages are the focal points. Through analysing netizens' comments about women's carriages on *Sina Weibo*, Luo and He found that women are expected to pay more attention to the carriages, but that most women regard women-only carriages as ineffectual 'facial projects' because the women's carriages are crowded with male passengers (Luo and He, 2021). Nonetheless, scholars have ignored the political factors involved in establishing women's carriages in China.

### **Socialist civilisation construction in China**

When I interviewed the Shenzhen Metro staff in 2019, Yiwen, a staff member, gave me two *Shenzhen Metro 2017 annual reports* (年度报告) and a 2017 *social responsibility report* (社会责任报告). From these two reports, I learned some basic information about Shenzhen Metro Company; for example, Shenzhen Metro served 3.9593 million passengers daily, accounting for 41% of the city's public transport passengers. This means that taking the metro is one of the major methods of transportation in Shenzhen. In the high-quality service section of the annual report, it

was mentioned that, ‘in 2017, the Shenzhen Metro opened a pilot project for women’s carriages to help the construction of urban civilisation. At the same time, station broadcasts, guide signs, station notices, and other methods helped to guide passengers and advocate more civilised travelling behaviours’ (*Shenzhen Metro Social Responsibility Report, 2017: 22*, my translation). It was pointed out that, in 2017, Shenzhen took the lead in piloting women’s priority carriages, positioning them as the first and last carriages of the No. 1, 3, and 5 metro lines. It was evident from the analysis of the Shenzhen Metro annual report that one of the primary purposes for designing women’s carriages in Guangdong Province was to link them with both personal civilisation<sup>3</sup> and urban civilisation.

As a civilisation tool<sup>4</sup>, the initial reason for establishing women’s carriages was to protect women as a vulnerable group in society, with the hope of conveying an advanced civilised concept to the public through caring for women. When analysing the concept that the behaviour of protecting women is treated as an embodiment of civilisation, it is necessary to explore China’s particular ‘socialist spiritual civilisation’ and how social norms and gender are connected in the construction of this civilisation.

Civilisation (文明) is a word that every Chinese person will be familiar with because the government propaganda about such a civilisation is distributed all around the streets, from rural to urban, and from books to the media. Civilisation has been deeply integrated into the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s state and government propaganda (Dynon, 2008). From educating individuals to cultivating moral and

---

<sup>3</sup> In China, the notion that morality is a prerequisite for an individual’s engagement in public life has been deeply ingrained. Consequently, personal civilisation entails the regulation of individual behaviours, such as men adhering to specific civilised manners when interacting with women in public spaces. As a result, personal civilisation is seen as playing a crucial role in fostering urban civilisation.

<sup>4</sup> The term “civilisation tool” here signifies that the implementation of women’s carriages in China carries certain political significance, as the Chinese government seeks to utilise it as a political instrument to demonstrate personal and urban civilisation.

civilised behaviours as small as propaganda, every city in China competes to be selected as a civilised city, which is considered a supreme honour.

In China, civilisation accompanies the development context of the party-state, constantly updating its definition and meaning, and also playing different roles during different periods (Brady, 2009). To a certain extent, since the era of reform, socialist spiritual civilisation has represented the political goals and policies of the CCP state and government. At the beginning of the reform and opening up, the CCP creatively proposed the national strategic task of building a socialist spiritual civilisation and determined the method of ‘grasping with both hands, both hands must be strong’ (两手抓, 两手都要硬; to develop both material and spiritual civilisation).

In 1979, Ye Jianying first proposed the aim to ‘construct a socialist spiritual civilization’, which Deng Xiaoping re-proposed the following year. Although the government emphasises that building both civilisations (material and spiritual) is equally important, the methods of building a spiritual civilisation are varied and complex (Clark, 2015). Each new state leader and their government gives new meaning to civilisation while in office, and changes the form of control (Thogersen, 2000). From various propaganda slogans or civilised activities, we can find that the CCP and government have placed different requirements on the authority of spiritual civilisation since the reform, most of which are relatively strict (Brady and Juntao, 2009). From top to bottom, it has asked groups of individuals to develop ethical behaviours. For example, in 1980, it began to promote the ‘five emphases and four beauties’ activity (五讲四美; referring to civilisation, politeness, hygiene, order, and morality); in each year, March was designated National Civilisation Politeness Month (全民文明礼貌月). The 1982 Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China differentiated the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation into two areas: ‘cultural construction and ideological construction’ (文化建设和思想建设), and in

1983, the campaign ‘eliminating spiritual pollution’ (消除精神污染) was launched nationwide. This latter was opposed to spiritual civilisation, with the aim of maintaining the socialist material civilisation and spiritual civilisation, and also ensuring the purity of spiritual civilisation, while eliminating spiritual pollution. In 1986, the Sixth Plenary Session of the Twelfth Central Committee clearly defined the strategic position of spiritual civilisation construction: regarding the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation as a significant issue related to the rise and fall of socialism, its fundamental task was to cultivate socialist citizens with ‘Four have’s’ (四有青年; to have ideals, morals, culture, and discipline; to improve the ideological and moral qualities of the entire Chinese nation; and to develop scientific and cultural quality in citizens) (Dydon, 2008). At the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of 2006, for the first time the propositions and tasks of the ‘Core Value System of Socialism’ were defined. At the Sixth Plenary Session of the Seventeenth Central Committee of the People’s Republic of China, for the first time in the history of the CCP, the social goal of ‘building a socialist cultural power’ was clearly defined.

This demonstrates that, in China, the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation is interrelated with political control by the Party and the state. Carrico (2017) argues that the campaign to eliminate spiritual pollution was regarded as one of the techniques of politics and that the battle against spiritual pollution was not only a tool for elite politics but also provided the public with a recognition of the original identity of the Party and government during the era of reform (Carrico, 2017: 101). In other words, socialist spiritual control is similar to the establishment and management of the ideology of a socialist society, and the ideological guidance is ultimately intended to consolidate and stabilise the image and power of the CCP and the state (Li, 2011).

When the horn of reform and opening up resounded across China in 1978, the entire Chinese society became committed to rapid economic development. This continued throughout the 1980s, learning western science and technology, and taking a relatively loose and open control over politics and culture, when compared with the stricter politics of Mao. However, once developing individual economics has prevailed and was prosperous, ensuring that the socialist spiritual purity would not be polluted by ‘western forces’ became the government’s new focus. During the 1980s, China realised that the construction of a stable spiritual civilisation could lay a solid foundation for the building of material civilisation. Hence, the CCP put forward the concepts of spiritual civilisation and spiritual pollution and also clearly differentiated the boundaries between them to let the Chinese public learn about technology from the West and implement a liberalised market economy. However, the individual spirit must still follow the leadership of the Party, and the state must not be shaken. The CCP were firmly opposed to the idea that ‘alienation can exist in a socialist society’ proposed by Zhou Yang (Keane, 1998; Mitra, 1996).

While the guidance of socialist spiritual civilisation has made constant demands on Chinese society, it has also resulted in new requirements and standards for women (Howell, 1996). The ‘Have four things’ (四有) proposed at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Twelfth Central Committee of the People’s Republic of China in 1986 became the fundamental task of building a socialist spiritual civilisation. That is, cultivating socialist citizens requires ‘four things’ and ‘five loves’ (四有五爱; love the nation, love the people, love labour, love science, love socialism). On this basis, at the Fifth National Congress of Chinese Women, it was mentioned that Chinese women should also have the ‘four self-spirits’ (自尊, 自信, 自立, 自强; self-esteem, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-improvement). The education of ‘four self-spirits’ has also become the slogan and goal of women’s work during the reform period. Women’s federations have been established as administrative districts at the state,

provincial, city, and district levels, and women's congresses have been established (Kaufman, 2012). In order to enhance women's utility within the CCP's political system, it is essential that women's federations adhere to the CCP's and government's unifying leadership (Judd, 2002). The cause's objectives continue to develop gender-based advice for Chinese women, implement stability and harmony from an individual to a family level, and accomplish the political responsibilities of the Party and the state from the perspective of women (Guo, 2010).

In addition, gendered practices have become a standard requirement for measuring individual moral standards and socialist spiritual civilisation in China (Ebrey, 2009). In 2006, Hu Jintao put forward the 'Eight Honours and Eight Disgraces' (八荣八耻) concept of socialist honour and shame. The fifth proposition: 'Pride in solidarity and mutual assistance, and shame in self-interest', emphasises the promotion of the socialist humanitarian spirit, which is a socialist ethical requirement (Dotson, 2011). Humanitarianism mainly reflects the essential characteristics of socialist social relations (Prazniak, 2016). As a keystone of social morality, it requires: 'protecting children, respecting women, respecting the elderly, etc.' (*cpcnews*, 2014), and respecting and protecting women was regarded as one of the criteria for measuring social morality. In other words, while demanding social and ethical standards, societies are expected to treat women as a vulnerable group who need to be cared for, especially together, like children, older people, etc. It emphasises caring for women as a kind of social morality and citizens are required to care for women as a moral requirement prescribed by the government to reflect the state's advanced spiritual civilisation (Law, 2006). This practice is a measure that is employed to control the public's everyday gendered practices through political means. At the Nineteenth National Congress in 2018, Xi advocated that women need to establish 'four consciousnesses' (四个意识), strengthen 'four self-confidences' (四个自信), and play good roles in the family to support promising social morality (社会风气) with



good family-style (家风). Hence, they can become modern women in the New Age, who contribute to the family and are responsible to society. By controlling socialist spiritual civilisation, China is ideologically but subtly guiding gender identity and gender relations (Weber, I., 2002).

Judging by the ten-year development plan of the Women's Federation in China, from the state to the provinces and cities, the emphasis on the development of women's employment requires women to dedicate themselves to the construction of the family and society. This is in line with the state's concept of controlling socialist material civilisation and spiritual civilisation at the same time (*nwccw.gov.cn.*, 2021). China's socialist political construction profoundly influences gender identity and gendered practices (Leung, 2003). Therefore, when highlighting the gendered subjects of women, they are also emphasising the development of spiritual civilisation. For example, taking the act of protecting women as a symbol of advanced spiritual civilisation, thereby ignoring women's transformation within gender relations, is an incomplete and unconsidered approach.

Treating women as a 'vulnerable group' and trying to 'protect and care for women' is a propagandised way to promote spiritual civilisation based on the performance of elite politics under a patriarchal political system (Tomba, 2009). There is no doubt that, due to the policy of gender equality, one of China's basic national policies, the country has witnessed specific results in popularising women's basic and higher education and increasing their employment rate (Jin, 2014). However, the social goals of promoting gender equality and China's hegemonic political practices lead to certain contradictions (Elias and Beasley, 2008; Zhang, 2014). Hence, establishing women's metro carriages may deepen male awareness of 'protecting women' from top to bottom and deepen the stereotype that women have become recognised as a 'vulnerable group' in society. Hence, the meaning of civilisation in China has been

added to a specific implication and has become a form of political propaganda and political stability for the Party and state. Although the argument that women's carriages can embody civilisation is still controversial, judging by its current operating effect, there is no denying that these carriages are a political product of the socialist spiritual civilisation, designed to maintain the male-dominated structure of patriarchal social power and gender discourse.

After briefly introducing women's carriages worldwide and in China, I have particularly emphasised the political context in which they were introduced in China: it was to align with the goals of spiritual civilisation and women's spirits. Next, I focus on the issue of sexual harassment on public transport, worldwide and in China in particular.

### **Sexual harassment on public transport**

As already discussed, in many regions one of the main purposes of setting up women-only carriages on public transport is to solve the issue of sexual harassment. In areas where sexual harassment on public transport is common, such as Mexico, the research proves that women's carriages have a positive impact on reducing women's fear of sexual assault in public, but deepen the stereotype of gender inequality (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013a; 2013b). However, sexual harassment as a common crime affects women and feminised subjects' rights and practices in a variety of environments (Boyer, 2022). Research about sexual harassment is generally targeted, such as sexual harassment in the workplace (Coster et al., 1999; Schneider et al., 1997; Maypole and Skaine, 1983), in schools (Till, 1980; Stein, 1995; Hill and Kearl, 2011; Lee, V., et al, 1996), in the military (Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Murdoch and Nichol, 1995), in nursing (Bronner et al., 2003; Grieco, 1987; Robbins et al., 1997), in healthcare (Gardner and Johnson, 2001; Kabat-Farr and Crumley, 2019), in universities (Reilly et al., 1986;

Adams et al., 1983; Ekore, 2012), in sports (Lackey, 1990; Fasting et al., 2002), on the Internet (Barak, 2005), and in public spaces (Madan and Nalla, 2016; Thompson, 1994; Mellgren et al., 2018; Crouch, 2009). No matter what kind of research is conducted on sexual harassment, there is a series of related issues that have become the main directions to demonstrate that sexual harassment is a serious issue that affects people's mental and physical health.

### **The origins of the term 'sexual harassment'**

Before the mid-1970s, sexual harassment was a common but unnamed behaviour. The term was first coined during a session involving three feminist activists at Cornell University in 1975 (Brownmiller and Alexander, 1992). Targeting women's inferior status in the workplace and their experiences of sexual harassment, the earliest organised opposition to it emerged from the women's movement at the confluence of feminist opposition to violence against women and activity against employment discrimination in the mid-1970s (Baker, 2007). Sexual harassment was recognised as sex discrimination based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, rather than personal bad behaviour (Clarke, 2007). In the United States, it has been said that this was 'Feminism's great victory' in the legal battle against sexual harassment (Gallop, 1997). Similarly, sex discrimination law served as the foundation for sexual harassment legislation in the UK (Clarke, 2007). In Japan's 1997 amendment, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law includes a provision on sexual harassment (Larsen, 2000). And in China, there are just two national laws that use the phrase 'sexual harassment' (性骚扰). One, introduced in 2005, is the revised version of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women* (中华人民共和国妇女权益保障法), which emphasises that 'women survivors have the right to report and make a complaint to the work unit and related departments' (Article 40). The other is the *Regulations Concerning the Labour*

*Protection of Female Staff and Workers* (女职工劳动保护特别规定) issued in 2012, Article 11 of which states that ‘the employer has the responsibility to prevent and prohibit sexual harassment of female employees and workers in the workplace’ (cited in Wang et al., 2022: NP11937). These regulations marked the first time that the state had regulated the obligations of working units and employers in terms of preventing sexual harassment on a nationwide scale. However, these two regulations were considered to lack a precise definition of sexual harassment, playing the role of advocacy tools that cannot help women to stand up for their rights, or to make harassers accountable (Wang et al., 2022). Therefore, from a legal perspective, sexual harassment is defined as gender discrimination, but the definition of the concept is far more than a legal interpretation. For instance, it can be difficult to obtain evidence for sexual harassment such as groping or non-contact harassment, so it is often difficult to successfully prosecute (O’Donohue and Bowers, 2006). There was a famous case in China in 2018 in which Zhou Xiaoxuan accused prominent state TV presenter Zhu Jun of grabbing her while she was an intern in 2014. Zhou accused Zhu of conducting a series of sexual harassments, but Zhu Jun was acquitted on 10 August 2022, after an eight-year lawsuit, due to a lack of credible evidence (*NBC News*, 2022). Therefore, it can be seen that the law on sexual harassment is still difficult to apply in practice.

Scholars have tried to explain sexual harassment from different perspectives. For example, according to Fitzgerald, Swan, and Magley (1997), there should be a separation between the psychological and legal definitions of sexual harassment. This is because legal regulation makes the definition narrower and the psychological definition emphasises victims’ experiences. Scholars have pointed out that ‘the assessment of the victim is influenced by stimulus factors, which are related to the conduct itself, contextual elements, which are related to the organizational context in which the behaviour occurs, and individual variables’ (Fitzgerald et al., 1997:8). The individual determination of sexual harassment is important. Powell (1986) found that

sex-role identity is the cause of gender variations in definitions of sexual harassment; not only can women see more sexual harassment than men, but sex-role identity can influence how people define it. For example, people who define themselves in terms of traditional sex roles may define sexual harassment more restrictively than people using less traditional terms (Powell, 1986). Therefore, it is difficult to form a unified concept for the definition of sexual harassment, and there is also considerable controversy over various aspects, such as changing environments, and interpersonal relationships between victims and offenders. Aiming to clarify the difficulties of defining sexual harassment, O'Donohue et al. concluded that there are six points of controversy over the definition of sexual harassment:

- (a) whether a power differential is necessary for sexual harassment to occur;
- (b) whether a location needs to be specific; (c) the importance placed on whether the victim perceives the behavior as problematic; (d) whether only women can be sexually harassed; (e) whether an act can be defined as harassing in and of itself or whether further negative consequences are necessary for the act to be a legitimate case of sexual harassment; and (f) whether sexist (e.g., 'gender harassment' as opposed to sexual) behavior is a type of sexual harassment. (O'Donohue et al., 1998: 112)

Although sexual harassment is difficult to define, the distinction between it and ordinary harassment is that sexual harassment is inappropriate behaviour with a sexual component. Betts and Newman defined sexual harassment by describing the acts it involves, and they listed several behaviours:

- sexual harassment includes the behaviours like 1. Verbal harassment or abuse; 2. Subtle pressure for sexual activity; 3. Unnecessary patting or pinching; 4. Constant brushing against another person's body; 5. Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment status; 6. Demanding sexual favors accompanied by the implied or overt promise of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment status. (Betts and Newman, 1982: 48)

This definition emphasises offenders' desire for sex and the fact that they act on various sexual behaviours to meet their sexual needs. In addition, Mackinnon (1979) defined the term from the social context in which sexual harassment occurs, and stated that: 'sexual harassment refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Central to the concept is the use of power derived from one social sphere to lever benefits or impose deprivations in another' (Mackinnon, quoted in Fitzgerald, 1990: 23). Based upon the complexity and limitations of sexual harassment in public space, Vera-Gray conceptualised it as 'intrusions' (Vera-Gray, 2018). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, intrusion refers to an occasion when someone goes into a place or situation where they are not wanted or expected to be (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Hence, using 'intrusion' means that the study focuses on the deliberateness of individual practices, in combination with women's experience of their bodily selves. This not only fills the gaps in existing research on female victims, but also applies a feminist phenomenological approach to violence against women. Through the interpretation of the concept of sexual harassment within legal and academic dimensions, even though it is difficult to define, viewing it as an unwelcome sexual behaviour has attracted more attention from scholars in different fields.

### **Considering sexual harassment as a gendered issue**

In the process of raising awareness of sexual harassment in everyday life, feminists have made huge efforts, such as trying to pass legislation to stop the abuse of power, so sexual harassment is also being regarded as a feminist issue (Gallop, 1997). One crucial point is that feminists view sexual harassment as a gendered behaviour and examine this grave issue from the victims' standpoint (Dougherty, 2001). For example, some behaviours, such as flirting in a work environment, are treated by

some people as a sign of a relaxed relationship (Williams et al., 1999), and behaviours like sexually suggestive banter, or staring and whistling, are considered natural and acceptable aspects of sexual relations (Roiphe, 1993). However, feminists criticise these phenomena, believing them to be due to the imbalance of gendered power exposed in the working context (Samuels, 2003). Hence, exploring the issue of sexual harassment from a gender perspective means that the research starts from the perspective that sexual harassment is a manifestation of gender discrimination. One key argument is that sexual harassment is viewed as gender discrimination because the act of sexually harassing feminises women and masculinises men, making women into potential sexual objects and men into potential sexual subjects (Franke, 1996). Pina et al. (2009) also raised the question of whether sexism is one of the various ways in which people might engage in sexual harassment. Hence, the phenomenon that women are more likely to be harassed in public and men are more likely to be regarded as the harasser by women, is not as simple as a sole act of sexual harassment, but a structural and systemic gendered issue.

### **Sexual harassment in various contexts**

With the development of research in this area, researchers have begun to focus on sexual harassment in different contexts in people's daily lives. One way to differentiate between forms of sexual harassment is in a virtual environment and in real life. Recent academic literature has found that online sexual harassment has become a new threat to victims in virtual spaces. Sexual harassment that occurs on the Internet is similar in nature to sexual harassment offline, humiliating others in virtual space. However, due to the anonymity of the Internet, some people can more easily access unethical or illegal means to conduct sexual harassment. Similarly, the attitudes and tolerance of different groups towards sexual harassment on the Internet

will have an impact on other Internet users; thus, preventing sexual harassment in an Internet environment faces unique difficulties (Barak, 2005).

Sexual harassment is also common in face-to-face social interactions (Gutek and Done, 2001). Therefore, research on sexual harassment mainly focused on workplaces (Richman et al., 1999; McDonald, P., 2012; Fitzgerald, 1993; Willness et al., 2007), or the sexual harassment of students on campus (Dziech and Weiner, 1990; Till, 1980; Hill and Silva, 2005; Klein and Martin, 2021), or the structural inequality between victims and offenders that makes victims more vulnerable (Armstrong et al., 2018).

In addition, sexual harassment in public spaces often occurs in real life and has a severe impact on victims (Mellgren et al., 2018). Many women, as the primary potential targets of street harassment, have experienced such harassment or have worried that they will become targets when they go out (Gardner, 1995).

Nevertheless, research on women's experience of harassment in public spaces is still limited (Vera-Gray, 2016).

It has been challenging to name the issue of sexual harassment in public spaces, and the term street harassment had been described as 'the harm that has no name' (Davis, 1993). But the literature does not consistently utilise a name to describe the variety of women's encounters with men's stranger intrusions in public spaces. This underlines the need for an explicit discussion of naming (Vera-Gray, 2016a; 2016b). In Vera-Gray's (2016) discussion of sexual harassment in public spaces, she noted the variations in terminology and lack of a unified term. Quoting from Vera-Gray (2016b:10), some scholars have concentrated on the location of public spaces where the harassment occurred; for instance, sexual harassment in public spaces has been defined as: 'public harassment' (Gardner, 1995; Kearn, 2010), 'public sexual harassment' (Thompson, D., 1994), 'sexual harassment in public places' (Kelly, A.,



2014), and the term ‘gender-based public harassment’ is used by Lord (2009), ‘street hassling’ by West (1987), and ‘street remarks’ by Gardner (1980). Alternatively, when other scholars name sexual harassment in public places, they focus on its frequency and exclude the factor of location, such as using ‘commonplace intrusion’ (Kelly, L., 1988), ‘everyday unwanted sexual attention’ (Esacove, 1998), and ‘everyday stranger harassment’ (Fairchild, 2007; Fairchild and Rudman, 2008). Wesselmann and Kelly (2010) and Macmillan et al. (2000) adopted the degendered term ‘stranger harassment’, and the most common terminology is that of ‘street harassment’ (Fileborn, 2013; Macmillan et al., 2000; Nielsen, 2000). About the terminology, the claim was made by Elizabeth Arveda Kissling (1991) that there is no agreed term for ‘street harassment’, and this claim has also been remade by Holly Kearn (2010), who concedes that some researchers refuse to use the phrase ‘street harassment’. In the research, the terms ‘sexual harassment in public places’, ‘street harassment’, and ‘public harassment of women’ can be used interchangeably. This also exposes a particular defect that, when referring to sexual harassment in public, the default is public sexual harassment of women, but gender-diverse subjects can also become the victims of harassment in public places (quoted in Vera-Gray, 2016b: 10).

Nevertheless, these phenomena often assume that the victims of street harassment are women, and the harassers are men. This tacitly acknowledges the heterosexual sexual harassment of women by men, reflects the rigidity of gender stereotypes, and ignores the situation of same-sex harassment, or the harassment of men by women. Bendixen and Kennair (2017) brought up this situation in their research, and designed regression models to divide the behaviour of sexual harassment into two groups of tactics: sexual solicitation and competitor derogation. They found that, while women were more frequently the targets of solicitation from opposite-sex peers, men were more vulnerable to offensive behaviours from other men and subject to becoming a

derogatory target (Bendixen and Kennair, 2017). This can also help us to explain and understand same-sex sexual harassment: that sexual harassment includes both competitor derogation and mate solicitation.

In addition, research on the sexual harassment of men shows that men are much less threatened by harassment from women than female victims are by men, and male victims might encounter sexual harassment from women or men. (Berdahl and Magley, 1996). And also, male victims are less likely to consider behaviour to be sexual harassment and report it (Bartling and Eisenman, 1993). Research illustrates that male victimhood is generally in conflict with dominant masculine stereotypes, and male victims feel shame, embarrassment, and disempowerment after being sexually harassed (Hlavka, 2017). Nevertheless, the research on male victims of sexual violence remains limited.

Sexual harassment in public spaces is different from that which occurs in other contexts. Sexual harassment in private spaces usually occurs between familiar people and within a gendered power structure (Duncan, 1996). Sexual harassment in public spaces is influenced by gendered power relations in society (Powell and Henry, 2017). As Crouch points out when discussing sexual harassment in public spaces, such as transport or the street: ‘sexual harassment is a means of maintaining women’s status as subordinate in society; it is also a means of keeping women in certain physical spaces and out of others, or at least, of controlling women’s behaviour in those spaces’ (Crouch, 2009: 137), and she believes that these types of harassment restrict women’s freedom of movement, preventing them from exploiting opportunities in politics, the workplace, and educational settings. Also, sexual harassment in public spaces is closely related to local crime rates and the safety of community environments (Moser, 2004).

## **The impact of sexual harassment in public space**

Sexual harassment is a common occurrence in everyday life but has a serious impact on victims, especially female victims. As Laura Bates (2016) explained in *Everyday Sexism*, women expressed their fear of being sexually harassed in public and described traumatic experiences and the ignorance of some male offenders about sexual harassment, which creates a climate of fear about sexual harassment in public space. Living in such a climate, women's confidence might be affected by their fear of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment often occurs in everyday public transportation, causing negative impacts on female passengers and restricting their daily activities. For instance, Dhillon and Bakaya (2014) point out in their discussion of street harassment experienced by women in Delhi that street harassment frequently takes place in crowded environments such as public transportation, and is commonly referred to as "eve-teasing." It refers to the situation where female victims are subjected to unwanted sexual attention from strangers. Sexual harassment in public transportation exhibits distinct characteristics, in that women are frequently subjected to sexual harassment by strangers in crowded environments, and often face challenges in legally penalizing their harassers. Moreover, the rapid escape of offenders following acts of sexual harassment presents additional challenges for women. As Dhillon and Bakaya suggest that the establishment of women-only carriages by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation in 2010 addressed the issue of women facing sexual harassment, but did not tackle the underlying root causes of such harassment. Similarly, Infante-Vargas and Boyer (2022a) have also highlighted the issue of sexual harassment faced by women in public transportation in Saltillo. For instance, female passengers have experienced instances of sexual harassment not just from fellow passengers but also from bus drivers during their bus rides (Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022b). Moreover,

victims encountered further harm during the complaint process, facing additional mistreatment from the local transport authority, local police, and the Centre for Justice and Empowerment for Women in Coahuila. Sexual harassment in public transportation is not limited to urban transportation but can also occur on airplanes. Adiv (2017), in her discourse on the sexual harassment of women by former US President Donald Trump on airplanes, recalls three instances of sexual harassment she personally experienced during her flights. These instances encompassed both physical and non-physical forms of sexual harassment. The unique circumstances of being confined in a closed space without the ability to move around, combined with the absence of mobile phone signals contribute to the psychological pressure and harm inflicted upon women due to sexual harassment in airplanes.

Sexual harassment is different from sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence, mainly in the form of verbal and nonverbal behaviours; as described by Davis, street harassment is a kind of 'spirit murder' (Davis, D., 1993). Sexual harassment in public begins with verbal comments from strangers (Bates, 2016: 160), such as strangers using sexual appraisals to judge or joke about women's bodies. This kind of behaviour frightens women into changing their daily routines or taking various precautions, but male offenders think their behaviour is just a joke, or a compliment to women who are full of sexual temptation. Using a feminist perspective to describe the geography of women's experiences of fear in public places, such as being followed, wolf-whistled, stared at by strangers, or hearing filthy remarks when they go out, has become the main research direction of feminist scholars (Crouch, 2009; Rosewarne, 2007; Pain, 1991; Vera-Gray, 2018). Scholars have emphasised women's feelings of fear in public and the premade strategies they adopt to prevent sexual harassment. For example, women avoid going out alone at night, detour to walk on a safer street, or talk to family and friends by telephone in order to protect themselves (Vera-Gray, 2018). In addition, due to the victim-blaming culture, women will adjust their

appearance, for example, their clothing and makeup, to reduce the possibility of appearing sexually attractive to strangers (Gardner, 1995). This fear of sexual harassment does not only arise after personally encountering it; some girls are told when they are teenagers that they need to be very careful when hanging out, or after hearing reports of sexual harassment by strangers, which can have a subtle impact on women (Bates, 2016). Living in a such climate of fear even leads some women to think that this is just something women have to put up with. Valentine argued that women's fear of sexual violence in public spaces, and their corresponding avoidance of certain spaces, fundamentally constructs the 'spatial expression of patriarchy' (Valentine, 1989a: 389). Even though it is clear that sexual harassment restricts women's mobility and freedom to go out, state failure to intervene in sexual harassment as a threat of sexual violence is seen as complicit in maintaining the gender order in patriarchal societies (Valentine, 1992; Pain, 1991). Boyer emphasised that sexual harassment and patriarchy are a reciprocal relationship in that sexual harassment is caused by gendered power systems and is also conducive to maintaining these unequal power systems (Boyer, 2022). Women are still the primary victims of sexual harassment in public transportation, and even in public spaces. However, research has revealed that gender minorities also frequently experience sexual harassment when using public transportation systems. Unfortunately, the sexual harassment faced by gender minorities is often normalized, resulting in their inability to use public transportation on an equal and equitable basis, similar to many female victims. Consequently, this restriction on their freedom to travel has a significant impact on their ability to move freely (Lubitow et al., 2017).

### **Japanese pornography and 'Chikan' sexual harassment on public transport**

Public transport is considered one of the main places where sexual harassment often occurs, because strangers crowd into a small space. The behaviours of sexual

harassment on public transport have diverse characteristics, such as groping and non-physical contact, which cause a certain degree of fear in women and feminised subjects. Boyer (2022: 400) proposed a research agenda for this field, suggesting that the effort to drive cultural change could be considered to deepen the understanding of sexual harassment (on public transport).

Japanese adult video (AV) culture has a great influence on East Asian countries, including China (Kazue, 2016; Wong and Yau, 2017). Many boys born after 1980 grew up watching Japanese AV. When sex education lags behind and ‘sex’ is seen as an obscure and obscene topic, AV has become the first sex education class for most young people (Hambleton, 2016). Although shooting AV in Japan is a legal job, in China AV is defined as pornography, which encourages many young people to ‘secretly’ browse it in order to satisfy their sexual needs. The term ‘chikan culture’ (痴汉文化) comes from Japanese AV and refers to sexual harassment or other obscene behaviour by people who violate the wishes of the victims or commit such behaviours. This term is often used to refer to men who take advantage of crowded public transport to touch the bodies of strangers (Horri and Burgess, 2012). In Japan, the sex culture industry has incorporated the sexual behaviour of the chikan (痴汉; referring to a pervert) into pornography and filmed it into a variety of ‘tram chikan’ themed AV films. In such AV, one or more unfamiliar men touch an unfamiliar woman or even rape her on public transport. In an article published by Wudunn in 1995, she described women who were sexually harassed in Japanese metro carriages and the male passengers who harassed them. The images of morons presented in AV are similar, men who have strong sexual desires for their favourite women in crowded spaces and feel a need to touch them, but women feel too scared to speak up (Wudunn, 1995).

Japanese pornography is very popular in China, but research on the influence of pornography on China is still limited (Jacobs, K., 2014). In China, AV is regarded as an illegal form of film and television works, and it is also illegal to search for and download AV online. Therefore, China prohibits AV to everyone, rather than creating an 18-year-old legal boundary for pornography, like Japan or western countries. Such a one-size-fits-all approach makes it challenging to access AV products, but this may simply increase people's curiosity about pornography, especially during adolescence, when teenagers are eager to be exposed to Japanese or western pornography. It is quite common for men to watch AV, and it often depicts situations in which women are sexually harassed on public transport, where they are depicted as enjoying it after some initial resistance. However, in countries where the AV industry is legal, they have also developed sex education for minors. In China, people are appalled at the idea of discussing sex publicly; meanwhile, sex education is weak (Steinhauer, 2016). Therefore, there is a lack of public discourse around sex, and because AV is illegal, it limits the spaces for a broader public discussion on pornography, which causes a further issue.

### **Sexual harassment in China**

Sexual violence is typically described as predominantly a power-based abuse of victims who are less privileged or less powerful (Dynon, 2008). The majority of research about sexual violence in China focuses on domestic violence, such as sexual violence in dating relationships; sexual violence in the workplace (Wu et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2022) or schools (Tang et al., 1996); against nurses in hospitals (Zeng et al., 2019); child sexual abuse in the family (Li et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2004); and violence against sex workers (Pirkle et al., 2007; Fang et al., 2007). However, the literature on sexual harassment in public spaces is very limited (Parish et al., 2006). In addition, research on sexual harassment in China mostly focuses on legislation and

methods of law enforcement (Srivastava and Gu, 2009), and the experiences of victims are mostly based on the development of the #MeToo movement in China (Zeng, 2020; Xu and Tan, 2020). Therefore, based on multifaceted considerations, I have chosen to discuss sexual harassment on public transport in China from the perspective of feminist geography in order to fill this gap.

Under Chinese law, sexual harassment was initially regulated as a particular protection measure for women, and the promulgation of the Civil Code completed the de-genderisation of the concept. When Hubei Province implemented the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests in 1994, the concept of 'sexual harassment' was clearly defined in local regulations for the first time. The national legal text relating to the term 'sexual harassment', the Civil Code passed in May 2020, included sexual harassment as a fundamental civil law. However, in actual law enforcement and judicial practice, identifying sexual harassment is a complex problem because the words of legal texts are not equivalent to legal concepts (Xie, S., 2021). According to the first paragraph of Article 1010 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China, where sexual harassment is carried out against others through words, texts, images, or physical behaviours, the victim has the right to require the perpetrator to accept civil liability in accordance with the law. In addition, the second paragraph of Article 1010 stipulates that organs, enterprises, schools, and other units should take reasonable measures to prevent sexual harassment, accept complaints, investigate and deal with them, and prevent the use of power and affiliation to carry out sexual harassment. This provision clarifies the manner of sexual harassment and the civil legal consequences that sexual harassment should attract. There are several primary types of sexual harassment in the Chinese definition, including verbal means (teasing someone by using profane language), physical acts (intentionally touching, bumping, and/or kissing someone's cheeks, breasts, buttocks, genitals, or other sexually sensitive parts), and environmental



means (placing pornographic images or advertisements around the workplace) (*Zhihu*, 2021).

There is a limited amount of published research on sexual harassment in China's public spaces/on public transport. However, the research by Pan and Huang (2013), and Fudan University (*The Paper News*, 2020b) are two important pieces of work in this area that explain how to identify sexual harassment. Data from Fudan University illustrates that male perpetrators inflict a higher proportion of sexual assaults. And the proportion of sexual harassment between the same sex is least common. In the statistics of the age distribution of offenders, it is found that sexual harassers' rates are highest among young people (aged 18–39) at 46.17%, and second is the proportion of middle-aged people who engage in sexual harassment, at 23.73%. Moreover, Fudan University selected 1118 incidents of sexual harassment and found that 95.78% victims were women, while men accounted for only 4.22%. In conclusion, Chan (2009) found that “the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Chinese offenders have been found to correlate with unemployment, low socioeconomic status, or young age” (Chan, 2009:76).

The Chinese are a diversified population spread across many different regions and these regions differ in terms of their socio-political and economic structures (Dynon, 2008). Therefore, when exploring sexual harassment in Guangdong, any interpretation of culturally specific risk factors should be undertaken cautiously. The Department of Journalism at Fudan University conducted an analysis of the geographical distribution of sexual harassment on public transport in China and received the data that the top five cities are Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen (*The Paper News*, 2020b). Guangzhou is a southern city of nearly 19 million people, and Shenzhen, an early opening-up city, is geographically close (as Figure 1 shows), with 12.59 million people.

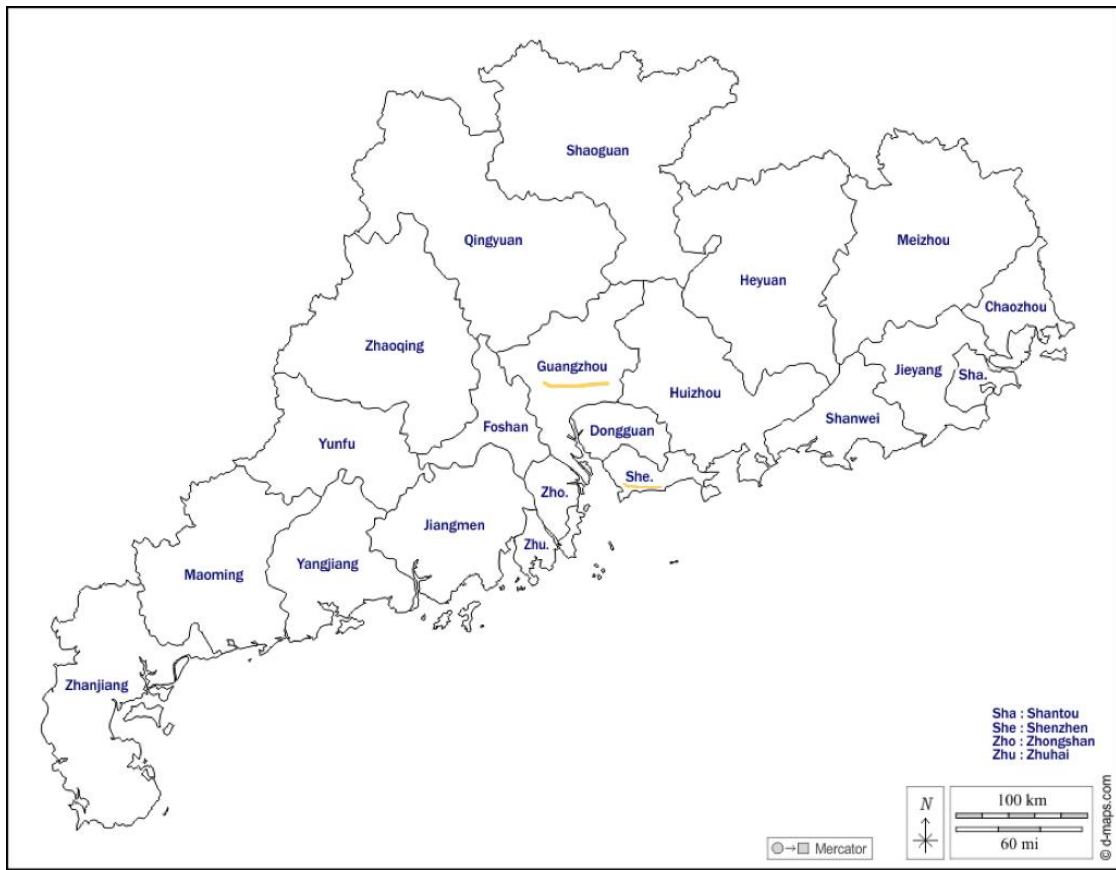


Figure 1: Geographical location of Guangzhou and Shenzhen  
(D-maps.com, n.d.)

For this reason, exploring sexual harassment in Guangdong provides us with significant results. Su's suggestion (*Jiemian.News*, 2017) was that sexual harassment cases severely increase due to the all-year-round hot weather in Guangdong. The analysis of sexual harassment by Fudan University shows that summer is the season in which sexual harassment occurs most often, as Figure 2 shows:

## 骚扰次数月份分布

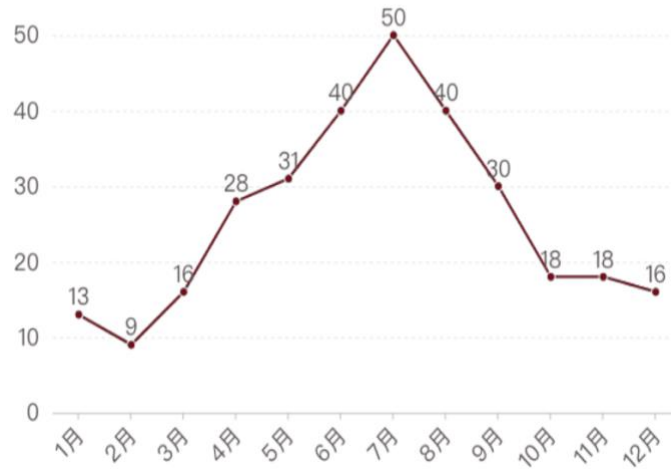


Figure 2: The distribution diagram for the number of cases of sexual harassment. (The Paper News, 2020b. Source: Data analysis and visualised information course, Department of Journalism, University of Fudan).

Besides the distribution of seasons, Fudan University also found that during the day, the possibility of occurrence of sexual harassment on public transport is during the morning peak (07:30–09:30) and the evening peak (17:00–19:30). According to the data gathered by Fudan University (2020), the proportion of sexual harassment happening during the morning peak is 44.77%, with 25.52% during the evening peak. Other periods account for 25.27%, with 5.44% late at night. Hence, in hot-weather areas or during the summer season, the crowded metro carriages provide an opportunity for perpetrators to engage in sexual harassment.

In Pan and Huang's survey data (2013), they summarise seven types of sexual harassment and the corresponding self-identity response, as shown in Table 1, below. They entitled this table: 'What behaviours can be called sexual harassment?' However, their research focuses on a broad definition of sexual harassment, and is not aimed at sexual harassment in public spaces only.

Table 1 : What behaviours can be called sexual harassment?  
(Pan, S. and Huang, Y., 2013, my translation)

The instances of sexual harassment	Women think yes	Men think yes	This type of sexual harassment occurs between opposite sex	This type of sexual harassment occurs between same sex
Touch my body on purpose	44.3	49.0	47.8	41.6
Tell me something about sex	21.0	17.6	20.9	16.9
Ask me to do something I don't want	8.0	9.8	6.0	15.6
Entanglement, forced women, or following women	6.3	2.9	5.5	3.9
Make me feel upset	4.0	2.9	3.0	5.2
Abuse, humiliate, belittle, taunt	2.8	2.0	1.5	5.2
None of the above, other situation	13.7	15.7	15.4	11.7

As the findings about sexual harassment on public transport by Fudan University suggest, the most common behaviour is to touch or rub the victim's body with the hands, which accounts for 43.2%. This is followed by genital rubbing which makes up 24.9%; rubbing victims with the lower body occupies 8.5%; self-exposure 5.1%; masturbation in public space 3.6%; a hidden camera accounts for 3.3%; offensive public speech 3.3%, and so forth (*The Paper News*, 2020b).

Nevertheless, China continues to pay little attention to sexual harassment, and this is exacerbated by the victim-blaming culture, which restricts Chinese women, especially young women, in many facets of everyday life. On 24 September 2020, Sina Weibo user @我是落生 published the ‘factors for preventing sexual assault’ in the ‘Freshman Safety Knowledge Handbook’ (新生安全手册) provided by the University of Central Academy of Fine Arts in China. The manual aims to reduce the risk of sexual assault among university students, but it claims that women easily become sexual victims due to lack of vigilance, such as the way they dress, blindly pursuing material enjoyment, caring too much about a beautiful appearance, frivolous behaviour, being timid and weak, and defencelessness. This safety guidebook concludes that women who encounter sexual harassment can attribute it to their own personalities and daily dress. These factors all remind women to pay attention to their behaviour, but there is no mention of sexual harassers. The Weibo user also posted a blog post: ‘The only reason for sexual assault is because there is a sexual assailant’ (*qq news, 2020*).

When this safety manual was exposed on the Internet, it aroused heated discussion, and netizens discovered that many Chinese colleges and universities also issued ‘safety strategies for female students’ in their safety manuals, giving advice such as ‘Do not show your waist or back to prevent the sexual temptation to ensure women’s safety’; ‘Wear less makeup during travel’, ‘Do not drink with men’, and other regulations. This kind of ‘freshman safety manual’ has existed for many years as a form of safety education for first-year students. The topic of ‘How to ensure women’s safety’ has become a much-discussed social topic. Netizens have criticised universities for incorporating ‘victim-blaming’ into the knowledge about safety protection (*Soho News, 2020*). After these heated debates, the Zhejiang Higher Education Association stated: ‘The safety education textbook compiled by it for

general colleges and universities, during the review, found that some of the statements were not rigorous enough, and will be re-written when it is revised next year' (*The Paper News*, 2020c).

However, such voices do not only appear in college textbooks. In 2020, the Women's Federation of Liaoning Province, China, broadcast a 'Women's Safety Education Public Welfare Video' on radio and television stations, which reminded women that they should handle their relationships with the opposite sex properly, behave with self-respect when they talk to the opposite sex, and keep a physical distance to ensure their own safety (*The Paper News*, 2020a). The victim-blaming concepts reflected in this safety propaganda and education is based on the solidified thinking model of Chinese patriarchal society.

There is a certain lack of research on sexual harassment in public spaces or on public transport in China. However, with the development of the #MeToo Movement in China, more women have paid attention to and reflected upon the sexual harassment around them (Li, P., et al., 2021). The courageous voices of women have made many other women, who have never knowingly experienced sexual harassment, begin to pay attention to this serious issue. This improvement in women's awareness has also promoted the feminist movement. For example, to a certain extent, the #MeToo Movement has changed women's awareness of sexual harassment and made them re-evaluate the gender-unequal environment in which they live, thus influencing the concepts of gender and gender relations (Ling and Liao, 2020). Next, I explore the social context of changing gender relations in China.

## Exploring changing gender relations in China's social context

Guangzhou and Shenzhen are two major economic centres that have good prospects for development, so millions of migrants choose to work and settle there. The two cities have young populations; for example, the median age of the population in Shenzhen was 31.95 in 2017,<sup>5</sup> and in Guangzhou it was 35.46 in 2007.<sup>6</sup> China's economy has been transformed from socialist centralisation to capitalist modernity, and then transformed again through globalisation. Gender and gender relations have also undergone a process of detraditionalisation and retraditionalisation. As the consumer-oriented economy has gradually come to play a more central role in the market economy in China, and a series of new policies have been promulgated, young people's viewpoints on gender, sexuality, and gender relations have changed (Liu, F., 2019). In the context of the activities of Chinese feminism and its backlash against patriarchal society in recent years, an academic discussion of the current gendered antagonism (Wu and Dong, 2019; Liu, F., 2014), especially on social media, is important in order to understand gender relations in China. These changing gender relations are receiving increasing attention from the Chinese public and are also becoming popular topics, both online and offline, and hot topics in some TV productions, such as comedy shows (Cui, 2021). This section focuses on those most involved in the heated discussions on gender issues: young Chinese people who belong to the 'post-80s' (八零后) and the 'post-90s' (九零后) generations, the first post-Mao generations. Their upbringing has been affected by various policy and historical changes, and their views on gender and gender relations are distinct from those of previous generations.

---

<sup>5</sup> 2017 Shenzhen Social Gender Statistics Report. <http://www.sz.gov.cn/attachment/0/62/62974/1333646.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Brief Introduction to Guangzhou's population development in 2007. [http://tjj.gz.gov.cn/tjfx/gztjfx/content/post\\_2787274.html](http://tjj.gz.gov.cn/tjfx/gztjfx/content/post_2787274.html)

## **The background of existing gendered contradictions**

After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the country entered a period of national economic recovery and began its socialist transformation in 1953. After experiencing two wars (the Japanese War and the Civil War), China's first task during that period was to develop its economy. The socialist transformation proposed by Mao was encapsulated in the three great remould movements (三大改造运动), covering agriculture, capitalist industry and commerce, and the handicrafts industry. Mao combined this massive transformation of the agricultural sector with a call for the 'socialist transformation' of industry and commerce, in which the government would become, in effect, the major partner, while the private ownership of the mode of production was abolished in favour of socialist public ownership (Wang, M., 2021).

In the face of the huge productive tasks and work pressures, gender relations during that era were reorganised, breaking away from the family structure of 'men rule the outside and women rule the inside' (男主外，女主内). An essential factor in post-1949 mobilisation was encouraging women to participate in socialist construction (Hershatter, 2007). During that period, there were diverse models for women provided by state propaganda and cultural production. Whether they were outstanding female workers, female laborers, or female peasants, they were not only expected to give their lives to work but also to maintain a harmonious family (Sheridan, 1976; Hershatter, 2000).

In 1955, the Guizhou women's democratic federation published an article, 'Implementing equal payment for men and women in cooperatives'. After reading this, Mao put forward the familiar slogan: 'women hold up half the sky' (妇女能顶半边天), calling upon women to participate in collective economic production. In



addition, in 1950, China promulgated the first Marriage Law, and abolished the traditional marriage system characterised by arbitrarily arranged marriage, concubinage, and child betrothal, to establish a new socialist marriage system grounded on the ‘free choices of partners, monogamy and equal rights for both sexes’ (Evans, H., 1992: 151). Women were encouraged into production work for socialist construction that led to an improvement in women’s status within society (Zhong, 2010). However, there are still some scholars who question the gendered equalities during this period. There is no doubt that women can do the work that men do, and to some extent men and women were equals but, as explained, women mobilised into the production field were bearing a dual burden, because the household duties they were still expected to perform led them to become second-class labour in production, and this led to women’s disadvantaged status in the later market and society (Mrozik, 2019)

### **The danwei system**

During the early reform era, China still followed a predominantly collective economic model, where the urban population worked under the *danwei* (work unit; 单位) system and obtained social welfare from it. For example, the *danwei* framework offered the availability of pensions and some benefits to employees, and also accounted for the way it regulated people’s lives. For instance, public facilities such as national kindergartens, hospitals, schools, trade unions, etc. were provided to *danwei* system members (Bray, 2005; Zhang and Ding, 2018). Despite the socialist propaganda of gender equality, women were perceived as being more closely monitored than men under the *danwei* system, and its specialised work environment and culture reinforced gender inequality (Liu, J., 2007). Additionally, in urban China, the *danwei* system, in which most citizens were employed, meant that the state and government had stricter control over an individual’s personal life, such as pressing

them to comply with the one-child policy during the early stages of the reform (Croll, et al., 1985). When the one-child policy was implemented in 1979, if employees working in the state-owned system had children outside the state plan, they were severely punished.

However, during the restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s, with the liberalisation that came with economic reform, the *danwei* system collapsed, thousands of employees were laid off, and female employees in particular experienced massive layoffs. As Evans described her interviewees, after many female workers experienced being laid off or forced into early retirement, they felt angry and depressed because they did not want to leave the work unit where they had worked for several decades (Evans, 2008: 106). However, even though male workers also suffered the negative influence of the waves of layoffs, middle-level and senior male workers felt the impact less, and the number of laid-off female employees was far greater than male. Also, many of these women had faced the harshest consequences of the one-child policy and then were subsequently laid off (Liu, J., 2007). Meanwhile, the responsibility and job of raising children that fell upon women made matters worse because they could no longer receive certain state welfare benefits, such as the *danwei* nursery school. Whether financially or in terms of energy and care work, women needed to pay more for their families, and this paved the way for women playing a secondary role in the labour market and increased gender inequality.

### **One-child policy and adjustment**

From the mid-1950s onwards, party-state leaders considered control over the national population to be a crucial means of policymaking to achieve good national health and welfare, and also assist in the development of the country (Kane, 1985; T. White, 1994; Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005). By the middle of the 1950s, the CCP leaders

had recognised the rapid population growth and the following issues of the food crisis and medical crisis. They then approved of birth control, which developed into a state-led policy (Banister, 1987). In the early 1970s, China put into effect the family planning policy of ‘later, longer, fewer’ (LLF), a campaign that encouraged later marriage, longer intervals between children, and fewer children (Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005: 85). In 1979, the Chinese government altered this policy to the target of one child per Han family (Davin, 1985; Zhang, J., 2017). With the support of the state president, Deng Xiaoping, the policy developed into a national vision, ‘achieving wealth, modernity, and global power through selective absorption of Western science and technology’ (Greenhalgh, 2003: 164), and in these circumstances, the population sciences became associated with politics (Hershatter, 2007). One of the primary effects of the policy was an aggravated gender imbalance. Since boys were generally preferred, many families took desperate measures to enable them to have a son, such as infanticide, abortion, and the abandonment of female offspring. Tens of thousands of female infants were abandoned, simultaneously with a high mortality rate (Johnson, et al., 1998).

Nevertheless, the one-child policy has also brought positive effects for girls, especially urban girls. Well-educated professional urban families, whose socio-economic position benefited greatly from the reform, had more and better resources to look after their single child (Evans, 2008). Therefore, the vast majority of urban girls born under the policy enjoyed unprecedented educational investment from their family due to lack of competition from brothers (Veeck, et al., 2003; Tsui and Rich, 2002; Fong, 2002). During the late 1990s, Chinese higher education expanded, and more opportunities were provided for young people (Liu, Y., 2016). Hence, birth planning policy played a political role in changing the fertility rate, and has also changed Chinese private choice, family structures, and gender relations, particularly

among the post-Mao generation, which has been most strongly impacted by the one-child policy.

However, although young Chinese women could access higher education and had more job opportunities than previous generations, they faced new challenges due to the conflicts between tradition and modernity, such as the traditional requirements of women in families and gendered discrimination in the workplace. In addition, population policy adjustments meant there was still pressure on young women from the government. Due to the acceleration of China's population aging, the proportion of elderly in the country's population is gradually increasing, and China is facing multiple crises, such as population, the economy, pensions, medical care, etc. Thus, in December 2013, China implemented a new, two-child policy, allowing spouses to have a second child if one of them was a single child, to ease the effects of an ageing population (Tu, et al., 2022). In 2016, the policy was changed again to allow any couple to have two children in a Chinese family (Zeng and Hesketh, 2016). Then, on 31 May 2021, China announced a new family planning policy, which is the three-child policy (Zhu et al., 2022; Taturm, 2021). These new population planning policies mean the end of the one-child policy.

With the promulgation of the three-child policy, a series of incentives has also been introduced, such as adjustments in maternity leave, insurance, education, housing, etc. The most significant of these is that, prior to the implementation of the three-child policy, the Chinese government corrected and standardised the traditional education and training institutions in order to lessen the educational burden on families with many children, leading to the bankruptcy of numerous educational institutions. Still, the multi-child policy places considerable strain on women, particularly young women who were born under the one-child policy. Early exposure to stringent fertility limitations enhances female empowerment (Huang, et al., 2021). However, facing the

government's and their family's fertilities requirements, young Chinese women now face new difficulties.

### **The development process of Chinese feminism**

China has a long history of feminism over the last 100 years, with the May Fourth Movement in 1919 as a starting point.<sup>7</sup> However, the various initiatives were driven by distinct groups for different purposes. Here, I analyse Chinese feminism after the CCP became the ruling party. In March 1949, the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) was founded. It conducted its work within the CCP regime, with the purpose of mobilising women to participate in state-led production activities. The ACWF accelerated 'women-work' during the early 1950s from urban cities to rural areas. For example, as of 1953, there were over 40,000 officials of the Women's Federation system nationwide (cited in Wang, 2005: 521).<sup>8</sup> During the collective period, the Women's Federation did a great deal for rural women; for instance, they came to villages and trained local women as leaders (Hershatter, 2000). The training task for local women's production continued up to the 1970s, serving as one of the crucial tasks of the Women's Federation during the Mao era (Yue, M., 1999; Zheng, W., 2003). Moreover, the establishment of the ACWF also signified that women were involved in official politics. Although the ACWF emphasised women's rights and interests during the Mao era, the measures it implemented were top down, making women into an aspect of the goals of socialist construction (Hershatter, 2007). According to Wang's analysis, the 'women-work' was second to the Party's central work and never a top priority (Wang, 2005: 521). In short, during the collectivist

---

<sup>7</sup> The May Fourth Movement in 1919 was basically about modernisation promoted by male intellectuals, although there were also prominent women involved.

<sup>8</sup> The figure of 40,000 officials appears in Deng Yingchao's report to the second Women's Federation National Congress in 1953. See 'A summary of the Chinese women's movement in the past four years and future task', in 'An anthology of source material on the Chinese women's movement'. Chinese Women Cadres School. Beijing: Chinese Women's Press, 1988, 2:171. Wang mentioned that this two-volume anthology is classified as an internal document, which is not for public circulation.

period, the ACWF encouraged women to engage in work and offered training, becoming an important turning point in Chinese feminism's progress. However, the 'women-work' was still aimed at socialist goals within the patriarchal society, so women lacked autonomy to launch the women's movement, and male leaders played a decisive political role in women's affairs. The changing gender relations at that time were rooted in the organisational channels of the ACWF.

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government abolished the Women's Federation during the period 1966–1972 (Johnson, 1983). When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, 'class-antagonism' was its primary cause and main basis (Chen, 2000). From June 1966, the Red Guards, who were defending Chairman Mao Zedong, began to use violence to smash the 'four olds' (the destruction of old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits; 破除旧思想, 旧文化, 旧风俗, 旧习惯). Meanwhile, women became as much a force in the Red Guards as men. This is important in terms of feminism, because gender differences were largely minimised, and women tried to dress like men and do the same jobs. They wore quasi-male attire to blur gender distinctions, which was also seen as rejecting bourgeois ways. As Rae Yang recalls: 'when we went out, we always put on the complete outfit of a Red Guard: army uniforms with long sleeves and long pants, caps on our heads, belts around our waists, armbands, army sneakers, canvas bag, and little red books' (Yang, 1997: 135–136). Many young women like Rae refused to wear feminine clothes or accessories. They always reminded themselves that they were Red Guards, no different from male Red Guards. They wore loose and plain-coloured army uniforms and used the leather belts on their trousers to physically punish the people they wanted to beat (Honig, 2002). Along with state propaganda, like Mao's slogan: 'The times have changed, men and women are the same. Whatever men can do, women can do, too' (时代不同了, 男女都一样) (Yang and Yan, 2017: 63), women chose to forget or ignore their female identity, attempting to get rid of gender differences.

These ‘iron girls’ were the embodiment of gender neutrality, subverting the gentle and virtuous female stereotypes in traditional Chinese culture. This de-gendering practice also became an important change in the process of Chinese feminism. However, some issues of gender inequality were also exposed during the Cultural Revolution, such as the rising cases of sexual harassment and sexual assaults against women in both urban and rural areas, which aroused international scholars’ concern.

After nearly a decade, the Cultural Revolution ended and, in 1978, China began to implement a series of economically oriented reform measures, which can be summarised as ‘Internal reform and opening to the outside world’, which was also called ‘Reform and Opening-up’. Improving gender equality in education was another task undertaken during the reform era. At the beginning of the 1990s, 70% of Chinese women were illiterate, and women accounted for one-third of vocational and technical students, one-third of university undergraduates and only a quarter of university graduates (Croll, 1995: 134–135). Although the data revealed dramatic gender inequality in education, some scholars have also suggested that the proportion of educated women was rising at the beginning of the reform era (Tang and Parish, 2000). On the other hand, the one-child policy implemented in 1979 was almost simultaneous with the policy of reform and opening up. And the one-child policy did bring some positive effects to women’s education, although gender inequalities in education in rural areas were still severe.

Gender inequality in education has influenced gender inequality in the labour market. Although women were encouraged to engage in production activities, most worked on collective affairs, and agricultural work was women’s main occupation. The proportion of women working in the areas of knowledge and technology was much lower than that of men. By the mid-1990s, the number of women who worked in the tertiary industry was increasing (Parish and Busse, 2000). However, the government

advocated that women needed to take on the responsibilities of a good wife and mother in the family, and also with the lay-offs in the 1990s, in which 60% of the laid-off employees were middle-aged female workers with a low level of education, a proportion of women chose to remain at home to engage in family duties. Another manifestation of gender inequality in the labour market is the gender pay gap. According to Hershatter's research, the gender gap during the reform period was related to the gendered job distribution – typically, women held lower-paid jobs, and the overall widening of the pay gap during China's economic transition exacerbated this gendered wage gap (Hershatter, 2007: 66–67).

The 1990s was the golden age of Chinese women's NGOs. The Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) was held in Beijing in 1995, and allowed NGOs to enter Chinese society. All walks of life became committed to mainstreaming gender into decision-making and promoted the establishment of multiple organisations. The women's organisations and groups have achieved a certain degree of autonomy and independence. However, since the implementation of The Regulation for Registration and Management of Social Organisation in 1998, social organisations must first be approved by the authorised department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs before they can be established, and their organisational activities need to be monitored (Han, 2018).

Usually, these civic associations are small-scale and self-funded, and they faced several practical problems, such as insufficient funds and not enough staff. In addition, because collective organisations publicly participate in contestation, demonstrations, and other actions that question government decision-making, they are considered dangerous. In 2017, the NGO law<sup>9</sup> in China weakened these not-for-profit

---

<sup>9</sup> The Law of the People's Republic of China on Administration of Activities of Overseas Non-Governmental Organisations in the Mainland of China, adopted at the twentieth meeting of the Twelfth Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on 28 April 2016, came into force on 1 January 2017.



organisations further and it was explained that this measure was to standardise and guide the activities of NGOs in China to promote the development of China's socialist society (Feng, 2017). On 8 March 2015, five Chinese feminist activists were planning to hand out leaflets against sexual harassment in public space, to celebrate International Women's Day. However, they were detained for more than a month because of their alleged offence against the social order (Fincher, 2018). Therefore, with the rapid rise of the Internet industry, some female groups have chosen a broader, low-cost, and easier-to-operate strategy, and hope to use the Internet to promote the women's movement (Liu, T., 2008; Yang, 2009). Digital technology has indeed helped to promote Chinese feminist actions. For example, in the Global Anti-Sexual Violence and Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement (#MeToo) in 2018, women from colleges to workplaces shared their experiences of sexual harassment through the power of the Internet, using the hashtag #MeToo, to encourage more women with similar experiences to speak up (Zeng, 2020).

Not only is the Internet treated as a male-dominated technology (van Zoonen, 2002), but in the digital era, Chinese feminist groups are also facing the country's unique censorship system. The Chinese government rarely tolerates any form of collective action, regardless of its political nature (Fu, 2017). This is because 'state critique' and 'collective activities' are the key targets of China's severe Internet censorship system (King, et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the work done by the Chinese women's civil associations<sup>10</sup> is usually related to these two aspects (Han, 2018: 736). Therefore, in the eyes of government authorities, they have taken collective action, which may imply 'a threat to domestic social stability, national security, and the credibility of law enforcement authorities' (Yang, G., 2014: 115). Since 'feminism' became a sensitive word, subject to online censorship, feminism has used an emoji to replace the feminist

---

<sup>10</sup> Refers to nongovernmental women's organisations. The regulation for the Registration and Management of Social Organisations 1998, stipulates that, to be established, social organisations (official terminology for civic associations) must be approved by the authorised department within the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

words on the Internet to avoid censorship. For instance, feminists use the emoji of ‘rice + bunny’ to represent the #MeToo movement (because they have the same pronunciation in Chinese), or they use the emoji of ‘girl + fist’ to represent feminism. The situation has become serious; in April 2021, dozens of Chinese feminist sites on social media were suddenly shut down, which aroused feminists’ anger and concern that women’s rights activists would be systematically denied online access (Ye, S., 2021). The Chinese feminist movement online has thus faced rigorous censorship and political stigmatisation.

Especially on Chinese social media in recent years, derogatory gendered language has gradually become the daily language of young people. The gender hierarchy in post-reform China is mutually constitutive, with misogynistic language playing a significant role in a broader gender ideology (Jing-Schmidt and Peng, 2018). This misogyny has been resisted by Chinese feminists on social media, and particularly by radical feminists. Gender misogyny has developed into a hostile relationship. Although digital feminism in China has an impact on the structure of the traditional gender discourse, scholars worry that these hostile gender relations will exacerbate misogyny online (Han, 2018).

As the generation born under the one-child policy, Chinese young people are faced with an ambivalence between the pursuit of individual success and the traditional gendered requirements of family and society to accomplish filial piety (Xie, K., 2021; Cao, S., 2021). The young generation’s changing attitudes toward gender relations have shifted in a new research direction of Chinese gender studies (Hu and Shi, 2020; Hu and Scott, 2016).

## Conclusion

Focusing on the implementation of women's metro carriages in China, I have discussed female space (especially on public transport), and sexual harassment (especially on public transport) from the perspective of both global and Chinese research. I have also addressed the changing gender relations within China's evolving social contexts. There are numerous locations around the globe that have opened women-only carriages on public transport, yet related academic research remains limited.

Preventing sexual harassment on public transport is the primary reason given for setting up women-only carriages. However, the establishment of women-only transportation has been questioned by many feminists because it is considered to deepen the stereotyped perception of women as potential victims in public space, and the patriarchal social structure that is dominated by men in public spaces. Moreover, sexual harassment against women in public spaces seriously affects their mobility, health, freedom, and basic human rights, leading women to live in a geography of fear. Considering that women live in such a fearful climate, the authorities set up sex-segregated spaces in the hope of alleviating women's fear and improving their safety. This fundamentally reflects the fact that the authorities have limited the scope of women's mobility, and have not played an essential role in resolving the deep-rooted issue of sexual harassment on public transport. Instead, the women-only carriages and sexual harassment on public transport expose the authorities' spatial expression of patriarchy. In particular, I have emphasised that the implementation of women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen is intended to aid the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation. As a political method, it puts forward moral requirements for individual behaviours, such as advocating that men should be chivalrous to women in

public. Women's carriages in China aim to achieve hegemony by regulating gender practices, rather than resolving gender inequalities on public transport.

I have also looked into the literature exploring the changing gender relations in China's social context, and outlined the important policies promulgated by the CCP and the Chinese government which have influenced gendered processes in China. In order to explain the socio-political factors behind the public's changing attitudes towards gender discourse, in particular, this chapter has emphasised that, after China's economic reform and opening up, with the promulgation of the one-child policy, the young generation has changed their gender attitudes, and even turned to gender antagonism. These changing attitudes towards gender relations and gender roles of the young generation are a challenge to the gender discourse structure of Chinese patriarchy and are also closely related to the development of feminism in China.

## Chapter 3

### **Researching Women's Metro Carriages in China: Methodological**

#### **Issues**

Women's metro carriages first appeared in China in June 2017, operating in Shenzhen and Guangzhou. My research fieldwork was conducted from March to May 2019 and this was my first visit to Guangdong province. The place where I carried out my research was 1700 miles from my hometown, and it took four hours to fly there. In addition, most people in Guangdong speak Cantonese, rather than the Putonghua that I use. Therefore, undoubtedly, facing this faraway and unfamiliar area was a challenge and test for my fieldwork, and for me. But this was not a completely bad thing for me because, from my perspective, I could find different and unnoticed angles to reflect upon and rethink, such as why women's carriages first appeared in Guangdong instead of other provinces in China. My research participants have a privileged identity: they are the residents who often use the metro in this city, both male and female passengers of different ages. The metro staff have different working positions and educational backgrounds. Therefore, their various statuses and experiences are crucial for revealing the gendered reality of living in a gendered space in Guangdong, China.

I tried to reveal the participants' attitudes and experiences in relation to the establishment of women's metro carriages in Shenzhen and Guangzhou. Whether they were passengers of different ages and genders or the metro staff, their conflicting attitudes are essential to the whole research process. Furthermore, I would like to explore how they responded to gendered spaces, which are intended to protect and respect women during their daily travel experiences. Are they agreeing, supporting or

resisting these carriages? I set out to explore passengers' travel experiences on the metro, considering such topics as sexual harassment, public order and other related issues, to discover whether passengers can understand and be satisfied with the establishment of women's metro carriages and how they impact upon male and female passengers' daily lives. When facing contradictory opinions between the genders, how did metro staff look upon the initial intention of establishing women's carriages and how did they manage the carriages in their daily work so as to achieve their management goals? Although the women's metro carriages do not involve guidance about gender relations directly, the daily ride experience may still convey an imperceptible ideology to the public. For this reason, researching various concepts brought up by participants could help us to understand gender relations and gender inequality.

In this chapter, I discuss and reflect upon the research methods I used. I chose a qualitative feminist research approach in order to investigate these issues, which involved observation and semi-structured interviews with 20 female metro passengers, 20 male metro passengers and four metro staff. First, I will discuss the rationale for the use of feminist and qualitative methods, followed by a detailed account of my research design, including the ethical considerations that applied throughout my research practice. Finally, I will reflect upon the data analysis process that I undertook after my fieldwork.

## **Research Design**

### **Designing research methods**

As Letherby (2013) stated, feminist ways of knowing challenge orthodox, male-defined epistemologies whereby knowledge is produced for women by men from a

male perspective. Feminist epistemological methodologies validate knowledge produced through learning about women's own experiences and emphasises the experiential and the private as a way of confronting the male-authorised knowledge that is abstract and public (Letherby, 2013). With the aim of challenging the traditional orthodox way of seeking objective truth, a new consideration of various perspectives, employing different research methods and methodologies, and paying attention to individual women's experiences, was allowed (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007).

Feminists use qualitative methods because they allow them to access women's experiences and emotions more directly, and qualitative methods seem more subjective with their focus on women's individual lives and the promotion of an understanding of a particular subject (Oakley, 2000; Jayaratne and Stewart, 2008). Qualitative research in women's studies, such as its specific ability to reveal subjective experiences, can help researchers to gain an understanding of women's issues from their own viewpoints (Maynard, 1994). Face-to-face interviews are used by feminist researchers to obtain descriptions of the life world of the participants with respect. For instance, such interviews require a respect for and curiosity about the participants' experiences and make a systematic effort to understand every participant (Kvale, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 2011). I used quantitative methods only as secondary materials, because my research did not mainly involve the use of quantitative methods for data analysis. I only employed them when, during the observation, I chose to record statistics about the number and type of metro carriages. Research methods need to be chosen for their 'fit' to the topic under research (Letherby, 2015), so qualitative methods were essential for my fieldwork. Considering the continuous and reflexive attention to the significance of gender as the essential factor in gender-sensitive methodologies, which pay attention to the differences and similarities between women's and men's opinions and experiences (Oakley, 1981), this approach

takes gender seriously, rather than the previous perspective of ‘only one sex and one class are represented as general’ (Smith, 1988:19). Thus, in order to collect better research data, I adopted qualitative methods using gender-sensitive methodologies and combined semi-structured interviews and observation within the research process. My purpose was to learn about and feel the experiences of male and female passengers when they use or see the ‘women’s carriages’.

#### *a. Semi-Structured Interviews*

With regard to choosing gender-sensitive methodologies, I planned to use semi-structured and in-depth interviews to achieve the goals of exploring specific themes about passengers’ and staff’s daily experiences via various aspects of gender, class, age and occupation in detail, such as their opinions of ‘metro carriages for women’ and how they used the carriages. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews provided space to expand and probe further when a new topic emerged (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007). On the other hand, it also allowed me some control to adjust topics immediately during the interviews; for example, to cover issues in which I was interested within the limitations of a relatively constrained schedule (Bernard, 2002). Although semi-structured interviews allow participants to better participate in the research and also let them express more opinions, as the researcher, I still had control over the questions (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007). Therefore, I anticipated some disadvantages of semi-structured interviews in advance and minimised the drawbacks in the real interviews.

#### *b. Observation*

As the Guangzhou metro only operates the women’s carriages on metro lines 1 and 13, and their operating times are fixed at 07:30–09:30 and 17:00–19:00 on working days, the observation focused on these two lines. I conducted the observation of the women’s carriages and mixed carriages on the two lines during four time periods on working days: 07:30–09:30, 12:00–14:00, 17:00–19:00 and at the time of the last



train. The other metro lines in the rest of Guangzhou metro were also observed, but they are not the target of this thesis.

The Shenzhen Metro Company has extended the women's priority carriages from the pilot lines to all metro lines, distributing the carriages in the first and last sections of each metro train and there is no time limit, with the carriages operating all day.

Therefore, when conducting the observation, the method was generally consistent with Guangzhou, but the metro train lines were different, and all the lines and the whole day were observed. The observed lines were all the metro lines of Shenzhen metro: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11; the observation times were four time periods: 07:30–09:30, 12:00–14:00; 17:00–19:00 and the time of the last train.

### *c. The content of the observation*

I observed the setting of the women's carriages: such as the slogan marking the women's carriages; the number of reminders about the women's carriages; the differences in design between the women's carriages and the other, mixed, carriages; whether there was a member of the metro staff walking around and guiding the ride. Location of women's carriages: where are the women's carriages on lines 1 and 13 located at each metro station? For example, whether they are designed to stop near the elevator entrance. And whether there is a camera inside or outside the women's carriages. Operating effect of women's carriages: user rates for women carriages; whether women's carriages offer a certain protection for women; the proportion of male and female passengers in women's carriages needs to be roughly estimated whether women's carriages are distributed near the elevators, which might lead to more male passengers using them; whether the transfer station has an impact on the use of women's carriages; what are the age groups of male and female passengers who are using women's carriages? Is there a difference from mixed carriages? The behaviours of men who use women's carriages and occupy seats and what their

reactions and attitudes are towards the surrounding women; whether men in women's carriages take the initiative to give seats to women; how do men in the women's carriages react when reminders about women's carriages are broadcast?

### **Designing the questions**

I intended to interview metro passengers and metro staff by using gender-sensitive methodologies. For example, by discussing participants' daily experiences on the metro, especially after the establishment of the women's carriages, through their stories and insights to expand the discussion about gendered public space, sexual harassment in public, social advocacy for women's priority, gender-sensitive topics and equality. For metro staff, the main content of discussion was around the establishment of the women's carriages, covering topics such as the problems and management experiences they encountered in establishing the women's metro carriages.

The purpose of feminist research is to allow women to share their experiences with confidence (Wei, 2011). During the design period, I hoped that each participant could feel relaxed and confident during the open-ended conversation, and that a relatively familiar and private environment could allow them to better integrate into the interview. But, as both a researcher and an interviewer, I was still aware that I had some control over the interview's direction, progress and responses (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007). While designing interview questions, I set different themes according to the identities of the metro passengers and staff, and further designed different sub-topics according to each theme (see Table 2 and Table 3). I hoped that using this approach could open up their responses according to their own experiences and opinions. Although the themes and sub-topics were designed in advance, the actual interview sequence did not have strict order requirements and was adjusted according

to the interview content provided by each participant. However, all the themes and subtopics were reflected in every interview.

Table 2 : Interview questions with metro passengers

Themes	Subtopics
1. Being a young woman resident in Guangzhou/ Shenzhen (18- 35 years old)	Traveling in the city
	Daily dressing and make-up
	Residence, like the motivation to choose this city
	Current work or learning environment
	Being a male resident in Guangzhou/ Shenzhen (no age limit)
2. Take the Metro	Daily concerns, such as concerns about public transportation
	Reflections on the city
	Experience
	Daily concerns
	Memorable events on the metro
3. Metro facilities	Sexual harassment experience on the metro
	Experience of using the metro in the morning and evening peak period
	Indication
	Security
	Publicity
	Design of functional facilities
	Design of shifts, times and number of metro trains
	The overall concern
	Attitude and opinion
	Some related publicity and news
	Experience

4. Women's metro carriages	Pink logo on women's carriages
	Gender relations, such as gender space, gender isolation
	Notable memories
	Passengers' identity
	How to treat the men who take the women's carriages
	The background reason for operating it in this city
5. Sexual harassment	How to judge sexual harassment
	Ways of sexual harassment
	Security awareness
	Legal punishment for sexual harassment
	Potential sexual harassers
6. Peak period	Civilized moral requirements for passengers
	Civilized ethics of the city
	Traveling experience at peak time
	Travel time for work or study
	Views of physiological differences between genders

Table 3 : Interview questions with Metro Staff

Themes	subtopics
1. Type of work	Working time
	Working locations
	Responsibility
	Rules and regulations
	Administration and management
2. Metro operation	Departmental cooperation
	Supervision

	Publicity
	Operation
	Metro line distribution, time and shift adjustment
3. women's priority metro carriages	Initial proposal, such as purpose of establishment
	Initial implementation
	Expected results
	Maintenance measures
	Feedback received at work
	How to deal with passengers' opinions
	how to solve the conflicts
	Current operational status
4.sexual harassment	Frequency of occurrence
	The experience of victims and offenders: such as age group, criminal means and the time period in a day
	Solution
	Relevant sexual harassment policy
	Publicity and education for the public
5. Peak Period	The frequency of the peak line
	Problems encountered by passengers, solutions to them
	Time period of peak
	Physiological differences between genders

There are many similar themes and subtopics covered in the two interview groups, because these topics are crucial factors for this fieldwork, and comparing different groups' answers (the male passengers and female passengers; passengers and metro staff) is also necessary for the research, because comparing the differences in terms of the aspects of each individual's social identity – gender, class, age, ethnicity and so on

– are also essential determinants of experience and opportunities within a gender-sensitive research approach (Letherby, 2015). The results of these comparisons between groups will be discussed and analysed later. In addition, when I was conducting observations, I observed the women’s metro carriages from the identity of a passenger and drew upon my observations and experiences of the carriages when I raised the interview questions. I realised that the issues encountered during the fieldwork are both part of the research process and inform the analysis of the results. It is also important to note that qualitative researchers’ fieldwork ranges from designing to reflecting, to conducting interviews and processing the interview data. Therefore, all of these were progressed during the process of accepting, rethinking and improving.

## **Ethical Review**

Before entering the fieldwork site, according to the ethical research requirements of the University of York, each researcher is asked to complete an ethical application before doing fieldwork and to explain the ethical issues that will be involved in the research and how to resolve any problems. Only after the application is approved can the researcher start doing fieldwork, as the official procedure requires researchers to finish obtaining ethical approval forms from the ethics committee (Mason, 2002). Ethical issues have important research implications for qualitative research. The use of qualitative interviews as a data-generation method raises several general ethical issues, and there are also specific ethical concerns connected to any one particular project. ‘You must prepare yourself to do this, by thinking through the kinds of ethical issues which might arise, and your possible response to them. While you cannot anticipate all of them, this will nevertheless help you to ensure that you are thinking and acting in an ethically principled way even in the face of the unexpected’ (Mason, 2002: 79). Therefore, during the process of preparation, I was particularly concerned

about the ethical issues that might arise during the fieldwork.

I prepared different informed consent forms and project information sheets for the metro staff and metro passengers (male and female). I translated all the forms into simplified Chinese myself, enabling them to understand the content better. The informed consent form is a measure to inform participants about the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits, and is also a protection tools for participants' privacy (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 70). Once I had contact with participants, I sent the consent form and information sheet to them via WeChat (Chinese social media) or by email, and explained that they would have the right to terminate their involvement at any time within six months.

After I realised that some well-organised interview questions may be meaningful to the research, but might cause interviewees to feel uncomfortable about participating, the practice of informed consent became increasingly necessary. As Thorne (2008: 461) points out, informed consent can be seen as revealing the researcher's attitude towards to the participants, to show respect for interviewees' autonomy and dignity, rather than treating them as just research objects. Therefore, giving consent forms and project information to participants emerged as a plan that changed their imagination into a viable and acceptable written work. Telling them about the research purpose, what would happen during the research process and also what is expected of them would help to dispel concerns and participate based on trust. 'However, I could not neglect the reality that, there are limits to how adequately a researcher can perform information disclosure to all participants. But, as I said, I can't ignore the reality of how researchers can fully disclose information to all participants' (Mason, 2002: 81).

Furthermore, I pay particular attention to local ethical considerations, accepting verbal informed consent from participants. Because 'even though the set of institutionalized

ethical review procedures that aims to do no harm underpin the western concept of good research, the assumed transparency and social values of Anglo-American research norms can create awkwardness in a Confucian-influenced research field' (Park and Lunt, 2015: 8). Within the Confucian-influenced social cultural environment of China, as Liu mentioned, signing a formal written form in this context may cause a certain psychological pressure on the research candidates and even rejection (Liu, J., 2006). I recognised the necessity of adapting this procedure into my fieldwork plan and allowing verbal consent from interviewees. Before the interview, I told participants that they had the option to choose verbal consent if they felt hesitant about the signature. I also explained the purpose of the written consent form, and that it would be kept strictly confidential.

## **Recruitment**

My initial plan was to recruit 20 metro passengers separately in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, with a total number of 40 interviewees, including 38 passengers and two metro staff. The original profile for potential participants was female metro passengers aged between 18 and 35 years old (because women in this age-group are usually regarded as one of the main targets of sexual harassment), who use the city metro frequently. I also intended to interview some adult male passengers without an upper age limit, who also have the experience of taking the city metro. As for metro staff, there were no age or gender limits, only familiarity with the daily operations of management at the metro station.

Since my hometown is in north-eastern China and I have always lived in the north so far, interviewing in Shenzhen and Guangzhou caused me some difficulties and pressure. For example, the most difficult issues I faced were: my 'outsider' identity meant that I lacked a deep understanding of the local language and social culture; I



was also lacking in local personal connections (also called *guanxi*, 关系) to find participants. I planned to use two recruitment methods. Firstly, to use new media, putting the recruitment information on Chinese social media, such as WeChat friends circle and Sina Weibo to find interviewees; secondly, to use a ‘snowballing’ approach: using acquaintances to find more participants and extend my personal networks (*guanxi*, 关系). *Guanxi* plays a crucial role in research on East Asian societies, such as accessing research interviewees, obtaining consent and achieving rapport (Jackson, et al., 2016, 2017; Liu, J., 2006; Park and Lunt, 2015). Recruiting through *guanxi* (personal relationships) is far better than any other approach in East Asia, because it fits ‘somewhat more naturally with Confucian mores and expectations than attempting to recruit unknown individuals who lie outside networks’ (Park and Lunt, 2015: 7).

After confirming the recruitment method, as the first step, I posted the recruitment information on my social media, WeChat friends’ circle. Some of my friends in Guangzhou and Shenzhen saw this, then they sent me messages, asking if I would come to Guangdong to do research. I sent brief introductory information about my research to them, and they posted the same information in their WeChat friends circle as well (this is similar to the features of Twitter and Instagram, but only their network friends can see the content they post), which helped me to expand the diffusion to recruit interviewees. This method resembles the combining of social media with the snowballing recruitment method, so that the effect of communication is more significant. Meanwhile, I contacted my friends who live or work in Guangzhou or Shenzhen through WeChat. I briefly introduced my research, asking them if they were willing to participate. Then I sent them an electronic version of the information sheet and informed consent in advance, but also prepared a hard copy prior to the interview day, to ensure that they could truly understand the interview and to safeguard their rights.

In East Asia, interpersonal recommendation is one of the most effective research methods. A friend of mine, who is also a participant in the research, told me, ‘When friends make a request, nobody will refuse.’ To some extent, this is also related to China’s cultural background, in which people establish and maintain *guanxi* (关系, personal relationships) through gift-giving, which may consist of giving a material gift or doing somebody a favour. There is a common Chinese idiomatic phrase: ‘acquaintances can always meet good need’. Furthermore, it would be difficult to persuade an unfamiliar person to participate in qualitative research such as interviews and to create rapport unless they are introduced by a known and trusted intermediary (acquaintance); this is also related to the importance of personal networks, *guanxi* in China (Liu, J., 2007). It is also saying that people always give acquaintances ‘*mianzi*’ (面子, face), which shows respect and honour to the other. On the other hand, it is also because participants then have a sense of trust in the interviewer. ‘A feminist bond shared with friends is a strong force that has a substantial effect’ (Chin, 2018:50), but how to distinguish the boundary between the identity of acquaintance and participant is also particularly important. However, there were still some ethical issues related to this method; for example, acquaintances might ignore the necessity of ethics. I will explain these issues in the following section.

During the initial recruitment process, I set a target of 40 interviewees, but I did not limit this number. Because when I was introduced by my friends to their friends, the question I met mostly was: ‘How many participants do you need?’ My response was usually: ‘When the time and place allow, the more the better.’ Although the number of participants was a little higher than expected, which might put some pressure on the later transcription process, when a friend said: ‘I have a friend, his thoughts may be helpful for you’, then I could not restrain myself and became very eager to meet them. After all, the process of interviewing is not only a process of collecting data but also a stage of establishing a network of connections.

The recruitment method of snowballing through acquaintances is also very suitable for the Chinese or East Asian environment because some of the participants are usually friends of my friends, or friends of participants who have already been interviewed, and they have already established a familiar personal network. Due to such a relatively strong relationship of trust, they trusted me more. This recruitment method was even more important when arranging interviews with metro staff because the Metro Company is still a state-owned enterprise in China, which means that metro staff cannot accept interviews with the media or other institutions privately. If they were to be interviewed, they needed to gain consent from higher authorities. Therefore, when I tried to recruit the metro staff through social media, it failed. Instead, Xiaodan is one of my friends and I conducted an interview with her friend Sam. Once Sam and I had dinner, when he learned about the goals of my research, he told me that his cousin Luca was working for the Guangzhou metro company, and Luca introduced her friend Qianxun, who usually taking the metro.

When I was recruiting the metro staff to participate, they expressed greater concern about ethical issues, because they were worried that their real names and information might appear in the research data, so they were concerned about confidentiality and privacy. After introducing the basic ethical guarantee measures, I promised that all the information I used would appear under pseudonyms and be treated confidentially. After I compiled the data, I sent the content of the interviews to them to ensure the research data's authenticity and confidentiality. Due to the nature of their work, they showed some hesitation about the invitation, but their interpersonal relationships allowed them to choose to be interviewed and to express a certain sense of trust. After the interviews, they and I became WeChat friends and often commented on each other's social media content. This kind of trust evolved into a new friendly relationship.

As shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4, the interpersonal relationships at the first level were usually a friend or classmate I knew; that is, a direct acquaintance relationship. There is no obvious gender distinction in this layer, but in the second layer of the snowballing process and the interpersonal relationships in the latter, there were certain limitations in finding male participants. The vast majority of my friends are between the ages of 20 and 30, so when they introduced female participants, the age was almost in line with the previous settings (see table 3). Also, when the female participants heard that the researcher was a young woman of the same age as them and that her educational background was women's studies, they were usually very interested and willing to participate. However, when recruiting male participants, one man said to me: 'I don't think I'm suitable for your topic. Aren't you studying women's studies?' Then I explained to him the significance of why I need male participants involved in my topic. I also told him that if he was not willing to participate in the interview, he could withdraw at any time. Although he did not quit and was interviewed successfully, I realised that being a female researcher could create some difficulties and obstacles in interviewing male participants. Some friends showed me screenshots of their chat records with their friends, so I could see that the male participants usually expressed hesitation before agreeing. The number of men who effectively participated in the interviews was also lower than that of female participants. And because of the snowballing technique, there were other restrictions when looking for male passengers during the actual recruiting process. For example, most of my acquaintances are similar to my age, so the friends they introduced were also young men, aged between 18 and 30 years, and has a high educational background. I found that introducing new contacts through acquaintances by the snowballing method may lead to them having similar characteristics to each other's identities and experiences, so there was a certain difficulty in collecting data for male passengers over the age of 30.

At the same time, we must also consider another social situation in China, which is that a huge number of men over 30 years old have already set up families and bought a house and a car, which are regarded as the ordinary prerequisites for marriage. Most men over 30 years old and still single are regarded as ‘high-quality men’ who always work hard for their career development and so have limited time to fall in love and get married. The social impression of such men is a middle-class man who is a ‘professional success’, so they usually have a car, and even a house. Thus, finding male passengers who are over 30 and frequently take the metro as a daily mode of transport presented certain difficulties in the recruitment process.

In addition, another major problem I encountered during the recruitment process was that large numbers of potential participants who wanted to participate in a face-to-face interview found it difficult to find an appropriate time and place to meet, and these difficulties impacted directly upon my recruitment process as well. Because Guangzhou and Shenzhen are the most developed regions in China, connected to the Hong Kong and Macao economic belt where the economy is developing most rapidly, office workers are always following the 996 or 997 working system. (This means their working time is from 9am to 9pm and they need to work six or seven days every week. I will discuss this in more detail later.) Not only in the work context, but even students at university may experience the ‘996 school system’. Under such high-intensity study and work pressure, participants often encountered difficulties in finding time for the interview; for example, they may only be able to participate during their lunch break on Sunday. Some people also said that they were unable to participate in the interview because of their intensive working hours, or asked whether they could be interviewed by telephone or over the internet. In the face of this situation, I tended to show my sincerity, saying that I would be pleased to have lunch or coffee with them near their workplace, or expressed my willingness to wait for

them to have free time before scheduling an interview. When the participants felt my sincerity, they generally indicated that they were looking for spare time for me to conduct interviews. There were also a few people who refused to be interviewed because they were unable to find a good time and/or place.

Although there was no direct payment to the participants, I would pay for the coffee or lunch during the interview. For the metro staff, I prepared hand-made cookies brought back from York as a gift of thanks because, in Chinese culture, preparing a small gift could make participants more inclined to engage in research (Liu, J., 2007).

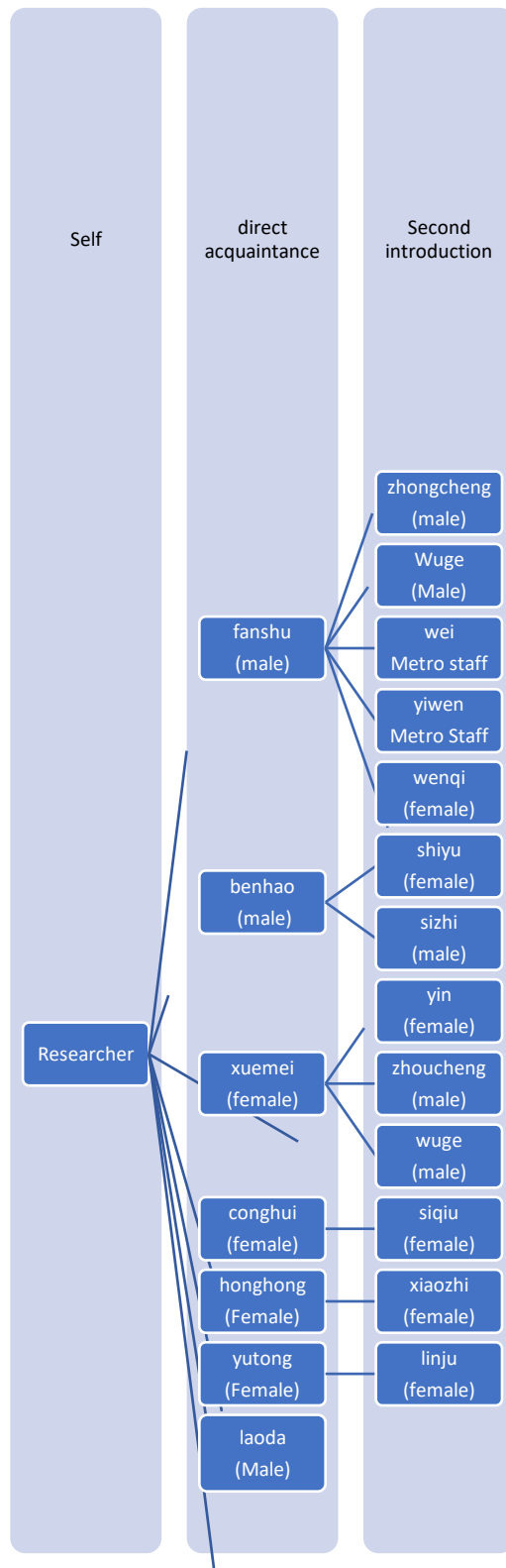


Figure 3 : Snowballing process in Shenzhen All names use pseudonyms

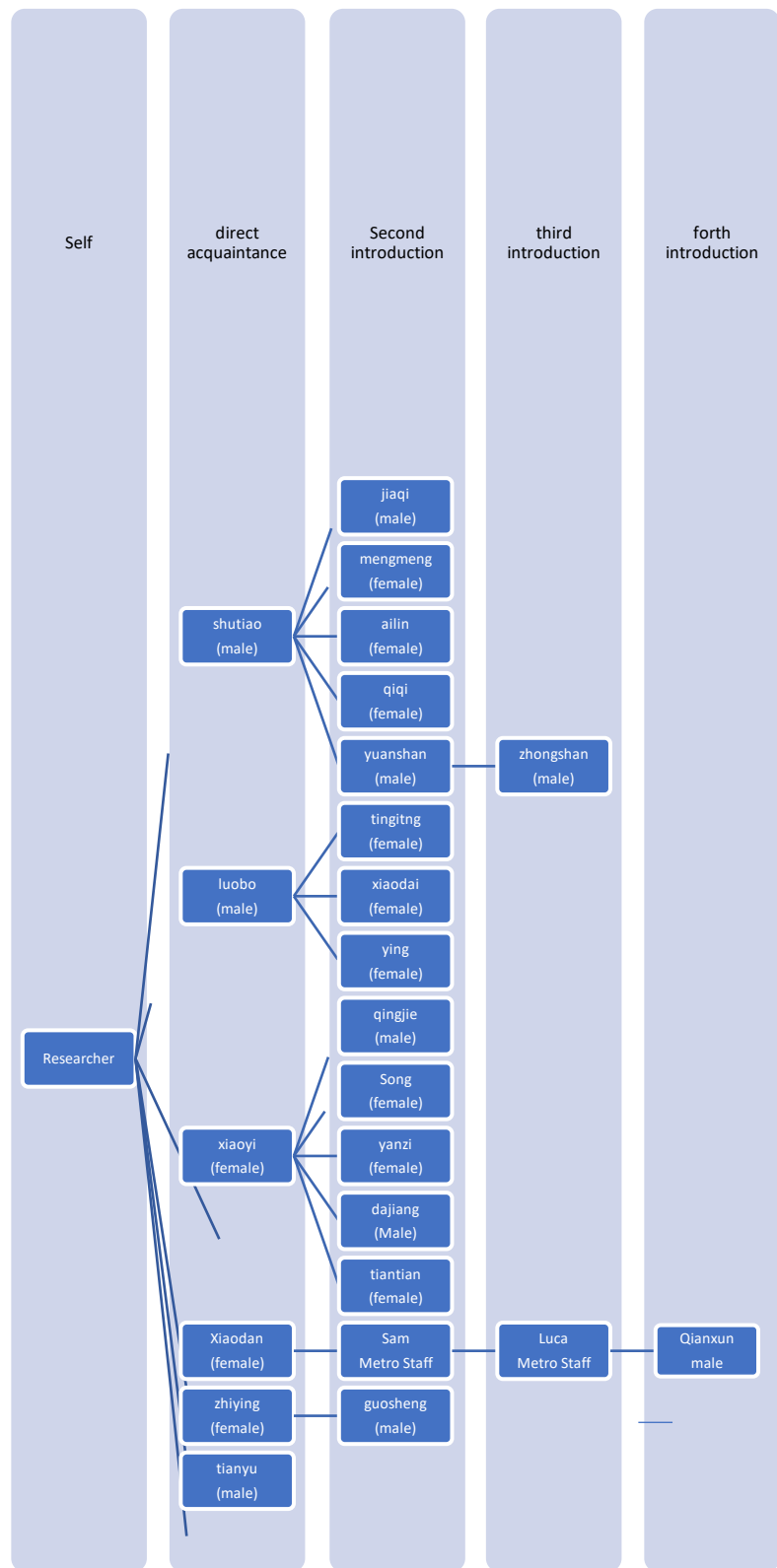


Figure 4 : Snowballing process in Guangzhou All names use pseudonyms



Table 4 : personal basic data of the 44 interviewees

Name (Pseudonym)	Personal Information				
	Age	Gender	Educational level	Frequency of using city metro	Frequency of using women's carriages
Fanshu	47	male	Master	Once a week	rarely
Benhao	27	male	Bachelor	everyday	never
Xuemei	24	female	PhD	Three times a week	usually
Conghui	25	female	Master	everyday	used to often
Honghong	26	female	Master	Once a month	rarely
Yutong	26	female	Bachelor	everyday	hard to say
Laoda	26	male	Master	Everyday	rarely
Zhongcheng	34	male	Bachelor	Occasionally	used to never
Harrison	32	male	Bachelor	everyday	only with friends
Wei	31	male	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Yiwen	22	female	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Wenqi	25	female	Bachelor	weekend	barely
Shiyu	26	female	Bachelor	everyday	not often
Sizhi	27	male	Bachelor	often	hard to say
Yin	23	female	Master	often	never
Zhoucheng	29	male	Bachelor	weekdays	always
Siqiu	24	female	College	frequently	sometimes
Xiaozhi	19	female	Bachelor	weekend	often
Shutiao	27	male	Master	frequently	use frequently
Jiaqi	24	male	Master	everyday	never

Mengmeng	23	female	Master	everyday	usually
Ailin	23	female	Master	Twice a week	never
Qiqi	23	female	Master	Three times per week	several times in total
Yuanshan	24	male	Master	once a week	once
Luobo	28	male	PhD	everyday	never
Tingting	21	female	Bachelor	everyday	often
Xiaodai	21	female	Bachelor	everyday	several times
Ying	30	female	Bachelor	everyday	several times
Xiaoyi	27	female	PhD	occasionally	never
Qingjie	28	male	Bachelor	everyday	often
Song	26	male	Bachelor	everyday	few
Yanzi	27	female	Bachelor	Often	sometimes
Dajiang	29	male	Bachelor	Once a month	never
Xiaodan	27	female	Master	everyday	occasionally
Sam	24	male	College	Metro staff	work
Luca	28	female	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Qianxun	27	male	Master	everyday	used frequently
Zhiying	25	female	Master	everyday	rarely
Guosheng	30	male	Bachelor	frequently	never
tianyu	27	male	Master	often	twice only
zhongshan	27	male	Master	everyday	often
wuge	36	male	Bachelor	everyday	not noticed
linju	19	male	College	everyday	never
Tiantian	25	female	Master	everyday	often

## **Pilot Study**

After I had confirmed my interview themes, I prepared some subtopics relating to each theme. To ensure a better interview effect, I first conducted two pilot interviews. I contacted one of my good friends in the hope that she would help me to complete the first pilot interview. As she met my desired profile for the female passengers, aged 18 to 35 years and usually using the city metro to travel to work, I wanted to find out in advance some of the problems that I might encounter when I proceeded to the formal interviews.

I found that my way of asking questions was too direct and her answers were overly short. For example, at the beginning, many questions I asked were similar to: ‘Do you feel uncomfortable when you squeeze into metro carriages at peak times?’ and she would directly answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. I received less participants’ feedback through this way of asking questions, and the interview data was less useful than I had hoped.

Because my friend is an introverted person, she basically only answered my questions but would not offer more content from her experience. This pilot study led me to reflect that these general questions were unable to collect sufficient interview data and were not suitable for qualitative research methods. More crucial was the summary, that the way of asking and the interview themes needed to be adjusted according to each participant’s varied character, to find a different but suitable method for each interviewee. After adjusting my way of interviewing, I used an open-ended method to ask the same question: ‘How do you feel when you squeeze into the metro at peak times?’ This time, my friend pulled a helpless face and began to share her daily travel experiences, such as complaining about the metro environment during the morning peak. Afterwards, based on the different groups of participants (such as metro staff, male passengers and female passengers), I arranged distinctive themes and subtopics

for each group by using an open-ended interviewing method. Participants often exhibited increased enthusiasm with positive feedback. When I asked emotional questions, it was easier for them to express a lot of their own experiences and some of them even became emotional.

When I conducted the second pilot study with one of my male friends, I paid attention to the lessons learned. Considering the process of ethical issues, I explained to him that recording equipment would be used during our interview. But when the one-hour interview was finished, I found that my recording equipment had crashed, resulting in all the recordings being lost. Although I was on the verge of collapse, I was glad this was my second pilot interview. Afterwards, I always prepared two recording devices to record at the same time and explained the reason for this to the participants.

The above pilot interviews were both conducted a second time with the participants' agreement. Through these practices, I progressively developed the necessary interview skills and the interview experience was significantly improved. Therefore, I was very fortunate that I had the opportunity to conduct the pilot study as it allowed me to reflect on my failures and mistakes, which made my subsequent interviews more effective. More importantly, the two pilot interviews enabled me to practice the necessary skills to enable my participants to openly share their experiences and reflections (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

## **Making appointments**

After I had made contact with the participants, I used WeChat or email for further communication with them, such as sending an electronic version of the information sheet and consent form. If they had any questions after reading these, they could always connect with me online. In this way, they would have plenty of time to

seriously consider whether they were willing to participate in the interview and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the entire research. At the same time, I also explained their rights as participants, such as the fact that they could stop the interview at any time, or refuse my tape recording or note-taking.

Apart from those respondents who had objective reasons for why they could not be involved in the interviews, the rest almost immediately indicated their willingness to participate. Then I sent them the information sheet and informed consent electronically, asking them to read more about the research details, and then we discussed the time and place for the interview. Most of the replies I received said something like: 'I believe you and we're familiar with each other, so there's no need to be too formal.' (This is a very common way of chatting between acquaintances, especially in North China, to express trustworthiness and a feeling of warmth.) Nevertheless, when I encountered this situation, I still insisted that they should read the information carefully. I would also crack a joke in a relaxed tone, such as: 'You must look at it carefully, otherwise I'll test you on what I've written on the day of the interview.' This is an existing ethical issue in China when interviewing acquaintances, and the ethical issue of informed consent will be discussed later.

Also, I seriously considered the participants' suggestions and opinions before the interview, such as the location and time they preferred. For example, I usually went to the city where the participants resided and tried to choose the area where they worked or lived, so that the interview could be carried out in a nearby place. As I explained before, many of the participants are very young office workers, so the places they chose were mostly cafés near their work units or in their work offices. Usually, female participants preferred public places, such as cafés near their work unit or in the mall because such occasions could allow them to feel relaxed and could also provide a pleasant conversational environment. As Wei mentioned, sometimes interviewing in a

public place works better since such environments always encourage women to feel more relaxed (Wei, W., 2011). Male interviewees generally chose to conduct the interviews in a tea house near their work units, or within the unit, but then the interview was usually interrupted by their colleagues or work matters. When conducting interviews with metro staff, I conducted the interviews in their offices to adjust to their busy working hours. Their offices are not situated in a crowded public environment but rather in private and quiet rooms, however other staff occasionally and briefly entered and exited during the interviews. Nonetheless the interviews remained private, with just brief pauses in the interviews when someone entered and left. This setup ensured that I was able to maintain the privacy of their interview data without compromising their work responsibilities.

In order to encourage more participants, I promised that one-to-one interviews would be conducted during the research, and that the interview process and results would be kept strictly confidential (Reinharz, 1992). But there were still great difficulties in booking interviews with them. According to Sprague (2005: 128), conducting qualitative interviews with less privileged people, such as women, the poor and ethnic minorities, is difficult because they may have less control over their time. Most of my participants were employed workers in the most developed areas in China, so almost all of them were facing the issue of lack of control over their own time. These young office workers are facing '996', a high-intensity working mode of Monday to Saturday that influenced their lifestyle. That is, using the metro during the morning peak because they have to get to work on time, and getting off work at about 9 pm (and often working overtime). If they do not pay enough attention to the time, it is possible to lose their full-time bonus or even face deductions from their salary. On Sundays, many interviewees continue to work overtime; if they do not need to work, young people in relationships have to make time for dating their partners. One interviewee told me that he has no time to fall in love while he is working in

Shenzhen. As a single person, his family had even arranged for him to have a marriage interview on Sunday, but the meeting place had to be near his workplace, because he might be called in to work at any time. Sometimes, I contacted the participants about a week or two before the interview to arrange a time, but there was not a small number of interviews that were postponed and re-scheduled because of their temporary overtime. Therefore, under the influence of the entire socio-economic and cultural environment, the free time that participants could use to participate in interviews was very precious and rare.

## **Conducting Interviews**

My interviews were usually between one and two hours in length. None of my interviewees felt confident in speaking English, so all interviews were conducted in Chinese Mandarin (Putonghua). This practice offered me a better understanding of the interview data, and also enhanced the strength of my participants' experiences and stories. Almost all the interviews were tape-recorded, but one male passenger refused to permit me to use the recording devices, so I took detailed notes during this interview and wrote up these notes as soon as it was finished. Furthermore, I kept notes during each interview to write down any reflections or ideas which may flash into my mind during the interview. An even more important point is that the recording device cannot record participants' facial expressions or the surrounding environment, and sometimes the changing facial expression and the modal particle could reveal participants' emotions and viewpoints; however, researchers can miss these minor details if they do not take notes. Moreover, as some interesting or essential data was mentioned during normal chat, not during the interview itself, I would also record these in my notes. Despite employing a semi-structured interview approach and designing open-ended questions to encourage participants to provide diverse perspectives, none of the participants mentioned topics related to the LGBTQ+

community, such as the discussions raised by Western scholars regarding whether trans women have the right to access women-only spaces, as mentioned in my literature review. While I did not impose any restrictions on the interview topics, China lacks legal protections and cultural recognition of gender minorities, and many Chinese people have limited knowledge of trans issues, which may have contributed to the limitations in my interview data concerning trans women's experiences on public transport.

### **Creating rapport**

When I realised that the interaction between researcher and interviewees, especially when they shared their empathy and rapport, might affect the research data produced (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010), I paid attention to the importance of creating rapport during the face-to-face interviews. This has also been well recognised in the area of women's studies (Goodwin et al., 2003; Phoenix, 1995). Thus, I gathered four personally experienced useful strategies to create mutual trust between my participants and me.

Firstly, to overcome the embarrassment of new interviewees, I took the initiative to discover some of their hobbies in advance, and we briefly talked about topics of interest before the interview. For example, one young woman likes rock music very much, and posts a lot of related content in her social account, so I started talking with her about some bands. I could see her look and eyes changing from initial tension and doubt to relaxation and more excitement, and her involuntary speaking also increased. In addition, when talking about some 'less relevant' questions, sometimes I could adjust my question outline, add some questions that were suitable for particular interviewees and rethink my approach.



Secondly, in Chinese culture, it is a very good practice to take small gifts when you visit a friend for the first time (Liu, J., 2007), especially when meeting elders or senior officers. So, I prepared some York-made biscuits and teas for them to serve as a first-meeting gift. The rest of the participants for whom I did not prepare a small gift, I would communicate with them before the interview to see what kind of coffee or tea they liked, and I would prepare their favourite drinks before they arrived. When I asked one participant if she wanted to drink tea or coffee, she looked a bit cautious and asked if she could change to a fruit salad. When she saw the fruit I had prepared, the atmosphere became a lot easier.

Moreover, appropriate behaviour was also vital in establishing a rapport, positioning myself as a humble and equal friend. Chinese seniors pay great attention to their ranks and the ranks of their seniors. For example, juniors should use ‘*Nin*’ (您) in the process of speaking to elders. ‘You (你, *Ni*)’ can only be used between peers. Although they all express the same meaning, *Nin* shows greater politeness and this will be recognised by older people (Wei, W., 2011).

In order to create a sense of familiarity, I also paid attention to ‘impression management’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). There is a saying in Chinese that, “the public always judge people by appearance, that is, we judge a person’s character through the first impression they leave”. Therefore, during the interviews, I also worked hard on my appearance. For example, when interviewing an elder or an officer, I usually wore trousers and a white T-shirt, which is a suitable image for a ‘good Chinese student’, showing that I am mature and unchallenging. The ‘good student’ appearance always helps unfamiliar people to identify with a new person more easily in Chinese stereotypical awareness.

The above tips can be summed up as: during the interviews, they helped me to better close the distance between myself and the interviewees and made the interviews easier and smoother to achieve better results. However, these skills are all based on sincere communication with the interviewees, and each participant and their stories were taken seriously, showing that my respectful attitude was the most important factor for building up a rapport with my participants.

### **Power balance in the interview interactions**

As many researchers have mentioned, the balance of power between researcher and participants within feminist research is an important consideration (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994). I realised when I first came into fieldwork, how naïve I was in thinking that I could achieve an ‘equal, balanced relationship’ with all my participants, no matter what their gender, age, occupation or cultural background might be. Therefore, I had to admit that power-based dynamics existed in my fieldwork and also interactively impacted upon the research process. My goal was to find a balance point in order to fit my participants’ diversities of gender, age and other identities (Cotterill, 1992). This is about the basic qualities of power as well as the way to access power.

In fieldwork, the dialogue with participants is not only research-oriented, nor is it unilaterally led by the researcher. The mode of the participants’ responses can be changed; for example, participants can also freely ask the researcher questions. The interview is a mutual interaction. The researcher should invite intimacy by being open about herself to the participants by talking about herself and answering participants’ questions (Oakley, 1981). Since feminist researchers have argued that self-disclosure can help to equalise and humanise the interview relationship (Oakley, 2013), I disclosed things about myself as though it was a friendly conversation, but was

conscious not to influence the quality of my interview data. For instance, the most frequent question I was asked by participants was my own research question: ‘So what do you think about the existence of women’s carriages?’ I usually introduced the process of changing my opinions and showed participants my standpoint as a feminist. It is extremely difficult to determine exactly how much and what kind of disclosure is appropriate (Reinharz and Chase, 2002). After I had indicated my standpoints and opinions, the participants might drop into silence, for example, when they agreed with my points, and might no longer express more opinions; or they might change their opinions after my self-disclosure information and thus I could not obtain enough interview data. Therefore, I insisted on trying to weaken the researcher's leading and strong identity as much as possible during the interviews, so even if there was a disagreement with my point, I would respect and listen to every participant’s viewpoint carefully. This is because my goal was to achieve an active dialogue rather than arguing about a point on a particular issue with the participants.

Although during the process of self-disclosure it was difficult to gauge the scale that might lead to disadvantages, revealing my standpoint still had a certain positive impact on my research data. Through the participants’ questions to me, my answers would inspire participants to rethink the topic, such as, when talking about the establishment of women’s carriages, some people did not understand the initial purpose or its cultural background. After the interview, some of them sent me a WeChat message saying that they had deliberately taken the women’s carriage that day to express their feelings and experiences when they rode in the carriages again after the interview. Some participants also recommended related articles and movies to me. They left a message on WeChat: ‘I don’t know if these would help you, but I saw them and thought about you.’ Therefore, the process of interviewing is a process of mutual understanding and mutual learning, and I really enjoyed the interviewing process with my participants.

As some feminist researchers have argued, the researcher should always hold the balance of power during the interview and place limited control over their involvement to avoid a power imbalance (see Dickson-Swift et al., 2007; Hubbard et al., 2001). Sometimes I tried to find a balance point during the interview, but I still found that participants exercise a form of control over the data they choose to disclose. For example, when I interviewed male participants, because my identity is a female researcher, the difference in gendered identity caused me to feel a certain power imbalance with them. One man who knew that I am studying women's studies asked me: 'Are you a feminist?' After I answered yes, I felt that he was obviously working hard to express his support for gender equality, but this did not match his usual views. These changed and he omitted certain crucial information, which made me realise how to use my overall power over the whole interview. Especially when interviewing male seniors, I found it really hard to control the interview direction, especially within China's cultural background, where juniors are low in the hierarchy and are only supposed to listen to what older people say and act accordingly. When I was interviewing a man in his 40s, he didn't wait for me to introduce myself, and his first sentence was: 'How long will you need to conduct this interview?' In this case, I expressed my patience and respect and upheld my professional identity to lead the whole interview process, to make sure the interview went smoothly.

In contrast, when the interviews came around to talking about emotional topics, some participants could not manage to control their emotions and transferred their feelings of anger to some other irrelevant topics. Kvale (1996: 116) suggests that the interviewer should be aware that the openness of the interview may lead some interviewees to over-disclose information they later regret, and how to discourage participants from over-revealing certain information can be another serious problem. Usually in such cases, I reflected my identity as a researcher in the fieldwork and

adjusted the topic and rhythm of the interview. And, as a researcher, I was aware that I do have the overall power over my research, particularly in interpretation.

Interpretation is exercising power, and our choices have consequences such that we need to be held to account (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994). The variety of life experiences among my participants has really humbled me and has led me to consider carefully when it comes to the interpretation and representation of my group of participants.

### **My identity as ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in the fieldwork**

As Dwyer and Buckle stated in their article, ‘the issues of researcher membership in the group or area being studied is relevant to all approaches of qualitative methodology as the researcher plays such a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis’ (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 55). Therefore, when I started to conduct my fieldwork, especially when I bring my whole fieldwork process to mind, then I found that my identity, whether as ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’, has a huge impact on my fieldwork and also my research process.

Firstly, I have obvious identities of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in the whole research; for instance, referring to my own status, I am an ‘insider’ because my participants and I are all Chinese and grew up within the Chinese cultural context. However, I have a constant ‘outsider’ identity at the same time. As mentioned before, my hometown is far away from Guangdong province, which is in southern China, so the local people and I speak two almost completely different languages, Cantonese and Putonghua. Even though Putonghua is the standard language in China and most people across the country speak it, people who live in southern areas still have a poor standard of Putonghua with a strong local accent. Therefore, even when conducting face-to-face interviews, sometimes I needed to be very careful about the accent to identify what

the participants were saying. In addition, due to different languages originating from different cultures, and different cultural influences on the residents of each region, many of my participants in Guangzhou spoke Cantonese and also had a deep-rooted Lingnan (岭南) cultural (or Cantonese cultural) complex. In Shenzhen, this phenomenon was not as obvious as in Guangzhou because Shenzhen was chosen to develop from a small fishing village into a modern international city after China began its economic reform and opening up in 1978. However, Guangzhou has a more than 4,000-year history, so the Lingnan (岭南) cultural context is deeply rooted in Guangzhou and the majority of citizens speak the typical language, Cantonese, as well. Therefore, the people who live in Guangzhou and many of their ancestors have been influenced by Lingnan culture from generation to generation. Therefore, my 'outsider' identity was also influenced by the fieldwork cities' cultural background.

When acting as a female researcher in interviewing two different groups of female and male participants, my researcher identity was also challenged in different conversations. I interviewed the female passengers at the beginning, and increasingly revealed my 'insider' identity as a young woman who usually takes public transport and once had experiences of sexual harassment, because it is important for qualitative researchers to situate themselves in the research (Ely, et al., 1991). My personal experiences not only helped me greatly when checking the data of the female passengers, they helped me even more in enhancing the depth and breadth of my understanding of my participants. Referring to the topic of sexual harassment may have been an embarrassing dialogue to some of my introverted participants, but when they heard about my own experience of sexual harassment, they became more relaxed and told me their stories. Therefore, participants are typically more open with researchers who share their experience so that there may be a greater depth to the data gathered (see also, Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

On the other hand, as a researcher, my own knowledge and experiences were also one of the vital elements enabling me to judge the reliability of interviewees' accounts. For example, one of my participants told me that she never wears shorts or skirts when taking public transport, even during the hot summer, because she had once witnessed a man using the camera on his mobile phone to take photos of a young woman wearing shorts from below. Then a sick and slightly terrified expression appeared on her face. I told her that I once saw a woman on the metro trying to snatch a man's mobile phone because she thought he was taking pictures of her chest, so I could feel that my participant's story rang true. And our similar experiences led my participants to accept me as belonging to their category.

However, insider researchers might struggle with role conflict if they find themselves caught between 'loyalty tugs' and 'behavioural claim'. For example, interviews may put a researcher into a vulnerable position if they get too close to participants' feelings and this taps into the researcher's emotions as well (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007: 70). I also explored some disadvantages of an insider identity; for instance, once a participant and I denounced the offender's conduct as despicable, it was a long time before I could quell my angry emotions. Also, it is possible that a participant might make assumptions of similarity and therefore fail to fully explain their individual experience. Hence, when asking follow-up questions, I bore in mind the importance of not asking questions that were too leading, allowing participants to extend their topics rather than confirming my own standpoint.

Although the benefits of being an 'insider' helped me to learn more about the female passengers, when I conducted interviews with other groups of participants, like male passengers, metro staff and some female passengers with different backgrounds, I realised that I was a total 'outsider' to them. For example, some young women told me that women should be looked after by men, and that this needs to be proposed.

They claimed that their female identities make them inferior to men, no matter what the physical bodies or the social status, so the majority of men in society must take care of women. This opinion was quite different from my identity as someone who is studying women's studies and stands for equality between men and women. And sometimes when I conducted interviews with male passengers, especially older men or men who had a high social status, some of them might show impatience, based on age, social identity, jobs, gender and so on. But it was my hope to learn from them and their experiences so that I and others might gain insight into their opinions. Moreover, my birth and cultural background also meant that I had a totally 'outsider' identity.

Even though my 'outsider' identity in relation to the participants did not seem to affect the interviews negatively, it raised an important point that considering all research endeavours with participants who identify with a group based on shared experience, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). And also, my 'outsider' identity put me in a more professional position, with eyes opened to analysis the data critically.

### **Ethical issues during the interviews**

I was especially concerned about the ethical issues, combined with the local ethical considerations in China. Before starting my fieldwork, I learned that some interviewees are likely to view signing written documents as a threat (Liu, J., 2006), because of a psychological shadow hanging over participants that anything which exists on paper could be filed in their *dangan* (档案; dossiers) and may generate a negative influence. Thus, they prefer not to sign consent forms in order to avoid getting themselves into trouble (Wei, 2011). Therefore, I explained to participants at the beginning that verbal consent was acceptable. However, I experienced a total



contrast to previous generations. All of my participants accepted and completed the written informed consent forms. During the interviews, only metro staff asked me to ensure the confidentiality of their signed identity in order that they would not be recognised by their companies, and it was only these employees who had some concerns about ethical issues. As participants who worked in *danwei* (单位, the working system) in China, they all had *dangan* (personal dossiers) kept by their *danwei* (Liu, J., 2007), and their working life is closely related to their personal life, and may even affect their personal lives. Therefore, they were particularly concerned that their written signatures should not be recognised by their *danwei* (单位). I promised the anonymity of all participants on the information sheet and informed consent form, such as using pseudonyms in the thesis and that it would not contain any identifying information, implying that their interview data would also be kept confidential throughout the research process and that I would not reveal their personal information or contact details.

Apart from the metro staff, none of the remaining participants mentioned any ethical concerns to me, and none of them objected to signing the informed consent. This phenomenon made me realise another ethical issue, that Chinese participants lack an awareness of ethics in social research. Huang and Pan (2009) pointed out that China lacks ethical guidelines in conducting social research and emphasised the importance of gaining informed consent. For example, almost half of the participants said to me: 'Do I still need to sign? It seems more formal than I expected.' Some of them were my acquaintances, who more easily ignored the importance of ethical issues. Chin also mentioned in her fieldwork that she encountered similar situations when interviewing acquaintances; that is, acquaintances may mix up the personal and research aspects of the researcher's identity due to their relationship (Chin, 2018). And a good relationship may overlook some of the ethical issues between interviews. Some of participants who ignored ethics in research, including some international

students who have studied in the UK before, did not reject the form but they still seemed unfamiliar with the idea of signing it. Although the young generation in China did not show resistance to signing a written form, the public still lacks an in-depth understanding of informed consent, which can protect data as well as themselves through legal documents in research. But, as a researcher, especially a feminist researcher, it is necessary and a precondition for conducting interviews to give them the comprehensive interview information and describe the problems that may be encountered during the interview period. Therefore, when facing this situation, I usually asked my participants to carefully read the information sheet. After reading, I gave them a consent form which emphasised that participating in this interview was voluntary, not mandatory, so they could unconditionally refuse or withdraw from the research project, and participants always have the right to ask questions. Then they signed the consent form after they fully understood. When I began each interview, I also asked if they would allow me to use the recording equipment to record the whole process of our interview. If they did not want to, they could choose to refuse and I would use my interview diary when conducting the interview instead.

Because I chose semi-structured interviews, I hoped that the whole interview process could allow participants to enjoy the process in a comfortable and relaxed way, especially when referring to sensitive topics like sexual assault in public space. Topics about sexual matters or even gender characteristics in China are regarded as sensitive and private, and people may exhibit shyness and unwillingness to talk about personal experiences because they concern a person's reputation (Ho, P., et al., 2018).

Therefore, before I asked the question: 'Is there anything you have experienced or witnessed in the metro carriages that could be sexual harassment?', I would explain to the participants: 'if the next question makes you feel uncomfortable, you can choose not to answer it, or you can terminate the interview process at any time, then complete the interview when you want to continue, or you can even choose to opt out of the

project'. Although some participants said that they did not mind talking about these topics because they did not do anything wrong, I also remembered that several female passengers' eyes expressed fear and worry when referring to sexual harassment. For example, one young woman told me that she had experienced a guy putting his hand into her shorts in Shenzhen's metro carriages, then she paused several seconds and said nothing. I knew that recalling the memories of sexual harassment might have brought her scary feelings back, so I turned off the tape-recording device for a while, handed her a bottle of water, and let her know that we would start again after she was feeling better. Xiaodan, one of my participants, told me after the interview that she did not think my interview questions would make her feel offended or uncomfortable; on the contrary, she felt that these words I said to her made her feel very relaxed, because I cared about her feelings, so she believed that I was also very trustworthy. Even if the participants were introduced by acquaintances, I told them that they should not feel stressed or bound by the relationship of acquaintance. If they felt uncomfortable or did not like the experience, they could quit or refuse to be interviewed at any time. Therefore, when I conducted the interviews, I regarded the interview data as an essential part of my research, but participants' feelings were equally important, not only because more complete data could be gathered if they were in a better state, but also because dealing with ethical issues can gain the trust of participants.

In addition, interviews are a process of intertwining. Interviewing in an ethical way not only protects participants, but I also realised that one problem is that researchers are also vulnerable, so conducting research in an ethical way can protect interviewers at the same time. For example, when I interviewed an elder, I could feel the stress from them because I am a new and young researcher, and there is a certain level of pressure from top to bottom, elder to younger, in terms of both age and social experience. And ethical issues allowed me to predict this phenomenon in advance and

make the best psychological preparation to reduce the impact of this pressure on me so that I could better complete the interview as a researcher. Research ethics are a matter of practice, and also made me rethink reflexively. Like the author said: ‘If ethical practice indeed evolves from reflexivity, then the regulatory ethics form was useful material that served to trigger my reflexivity on the potential ethical issues raised by this study’ (Halse and Honey, 2005: 2142).

### **Unexpected things happened**

I know there is no way to achieve the ‘perfect’ research process and, frankly, I still wished for a successful fieldwork experience at the beginning, but before I actually investigated it, I realised that it was destined to be unusual fieldwork. It was after I read Chin’s methodology as part of her PhD fieldwork that I decided to write about my awkward experiences that I had not imagined before and which also made me feel very depressed. Because these unexpected troubles seem like an indispensable part of my fieldwork, even of my life, if I erase them, I would never have a deeper memory or stronger feelings for the research than now.

The trouble that I remember most clearly is the experience of not catching the train several times. Guangdong province is not my hometown, so I had been staying at my friend’s home in Shenzhen. I stayed in Shenzhen longer than Guangzhou, but because participants in Guangzhou had special interview time requirements, sometimes, I took the morning train from Shenzhen to Guangzhou, then caught the evening train back to Shenzhen. I can still remember that there were a few difficult times returning to Shenzhen after I finished the interviews in Guangzhou. Because many of my participants are young office workers, they need to comply with the 996 or 997 working-hours system. Therefore, some interviews needed to be arranged during their off-duty time, but I did not want to limit the interview time for each participant. I

adopted the semi-structured interview, which means that every participant was able to discuss their different topics and unique experiences and these interview data are so important to me that they cannot be repeated or lost. I must say that such a fixed interview time also meant that the unexpected difficulties were greatly increased. For example, once, after I had interviewed a participant in Guangzhou, I was going to take the last train back to Shenzhen, but I forgot that it was Sunday, so when I arrived at the train station, the train tickets to Shenzhen were sold out. Similar things also happened; like the time when I interviewed a university student in Guangzhou, I thought I had reserved enough time in advance for the train ticket back to Shenzhen, but the participant and I probably talked for about two hours. I did not want to interrupt her and make her cooperate with my time schedule, which might mean that I would miss a lot of valuable interview data. Therefore, when I arrived at the train station, I found that I had missed my train and the tickets for the day were also sold out.

As I mentioned in the literature review section, trans women and gender minorities also experience significant harassment on public transport (Lubitow et al., 2017). However, due to the lack of discussions of non-binary gender by my interview participants, my research data lacks discourse on gender minorities. This may be attributed to the lack of understanding and recognition of trans people, gender-fluid individuals, non-binary individuals, and other minority groups in Chinese society. Thus, based on the current interview data, my analysis primarily focuses on discussions of cis-gendered experiences. For future research, I will specifically consider the viewpoints and concerns of gender minorities in the whole interview design.

These real experiences may lead readers to feel that my process was imperfect, but I still think it is worth discussing. For me, it is not only my research process, but this

fieldwork is a fragment of my life, and life experience may not proceed as smoothly as expected. So, no matter how perfect the plan is before the fieldwork, uncertain things may still happen. After reading other researchers' fieldwork experiences, I realised that feminist methodology uses reflexivity as a method of critical knowledge production (Chin, 2018). And I am also conscious that telling all these unexpected things helps me to approach reflexivity. Because feminist research is definitely not flat, like a traditional way of describing research experiences, revealing what was not expected is what a feminist should do (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010:1).

### **Transcribing, translating, and analysis**

During my fieldwork, I only made one transcription, because one of my participants said he did not want to be interviewed on tape. Therefore, I conducted a text interview with him and transcribed his interview immediately afterwards. I began work on the rest of my 43 transcriptions after I returned to the UK in 2019. At first, I had great confidence in this work, thinking that I could quickly complete the transcriptions and devote myself to data analysis and writing. But I must admit that I underestimated the difficulty of this work of transcription, and the progress, which was slower than I expected, left me a little frustrated. I used pinyin for Chinese transcription, one of the methods of typing Chinese, and this pinyin system means that when I input one word's pronunciation it often shows multiple choices of different words or characters. Also, for researchers, transcribing emotional stories can be an emotional experience (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). When I transcribed my interviews with the victims of sexual harassment, I often recalled their words and expressions. But scholars also acknowledge the importance of an accurate description of what happened during the interview (McCracken, 1988). Hence, I regarded the process as a challenging yet fascinating experience.

All my interviews were conducted in my native language, Mandarin. During the transcription process, I transcribed all the interviews in Chinese word for word and then, after coding, I extracted the important content and translated it into English. I chose to complete the transcription myself instead of handing it over to other parties because, firstly, I wanted to ensure the safety and confidentiality of my participants' data and prevent data leakage and, secondly, I hoped that, through the process of transcription, combined with the diary I recorded during my fieldwork, I could get close to the data again, recalling and retaining some important details that might otherwise be overlooked.

Some scholars have mentioned problems that can arise during transcription, such as deliberately skipping minor information by removing certain words to organise the narrative and make the data more understandable (Standing, 1998). However, as Davidson (2009: 38) pointed out, 'all transcription is selective in one way or another', so interpreting the details and content of interviews is another crucial factor within research (Kvale, 1996). I tried my best to ensure the integrity of the information in the data during the transcription process. For example, as well as transcribing the interview data, I recalled details that had occurred and combined these with details recorded in my fieldwork diary about the interviewees' expressions, body movements, pauses, and changes in tone of speech. I added these to my transcriptions to make the data more complete and comprehensible.

Listening to data is seen as essential for sociology research (Back, 2007), and translation is also important for qualitative scholars conducting cross-cultural research or using multi-language research (Lopez et al., 2008). My interview data needed to be translated from Chinese to English in order for me to present my research findings. This brought a new challenge for me, because English is my second language. Some Chinese terms are difficult to express in English, where it is hard to find words with

corresponding meanings, or there is a lack of related English terms. During this process, my supervisors have provided me with help in finding translations. For example, when discussing women's carriages in Chapter 4, the Chinese government advocates that men show a chivalrous attitude (谦让; *qianrang*) towards women. '谦让' (*qianrang*) is translated into English as 'humble' or 'modest', but this does not accurately express the original meaning. After discussion, my supervisors suggested that I use the gendered word 'chivalrous' to express the desired male attitude towards women. I also paid particular attention to avoiding the use of formal language so that I did not lose my participants' individuality. In addition, certain phrases or concepts are culturally specific and would change their meaning if translated, so I chose to transliterate these, keeping the pronunciation in pinyin and explaining the meaning in appropriate English in the main text or as a footnote during my analysis. Such words included *danwei* (单位, *work unit*), and *guanxi* (关系, *relationship, network*). Although the effort to ensure the reliability of my transcripts and not change the original meaning of the research data has caused certain difficulties for me as a translator and researcher during the translation work, this process has also provided me with an opportunity to pay attention to cross-cultural meanings and logic (Temple and Young, 2004).

After transcription, I coded my data using the software NVivo. NVivo is a popular tool for qualitative researchers employing effective thematic analysis (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). I used NVivo to tease out the large amounts of interview data into distinct themes. Even though each statement made by the participants is very important, it is unable to summarise and reflect the whole theme simultaneously (Alhojailan, 2012). So NVivo helped me produce a list of selected codings and use thematic analysis to help gain a broader view of the data (Joffe and Yardley, 2004). For example, after I started the coding work, I formed several conceptual terms in my mind, such as 'women's carriages', 'public transport', 'sexual harassment', 'gender



inequality', 'Chinese feminism', and 'changing gender identity'. These correspond to my research topics and also form the basis for the presentation in the following chapters. In particular, it helped me to think about the connection between these emerging codings, and initially constructed the framework of my dissertation. Therefore, in the next three chapters, I present the following themes, which are most important for my research questions, and I begin to paint a picture of my participants' travelling experiences in three parts: women's metro carriages on public transport, sexual harassment on public transport, and changing gender relations among the young generation of Chinese people.

## Chapter 4

### Research on women's metro carriages in Guangdong Province:

#### Sex segregation in the name of love

In this chapter, I analyse the implementation of women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen and discuss both the practical implications of their introduction and also male and female passengers' different attitudes towards these carriages. As I explained before, the women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen are priority carriages for women, rather than mandatory women-only carriages, so there is mixed use by men and women during their actual operation. Also, both men and women have mixed feelings about the carriages' usefulness. Some women see them as a safe space, but others see them as reinforcing the stereotyped gender inequality of women as weak and in need of protection. Some of my male participants believed that women's carriages are necessary because the carriages can promote a good socialist spiritual civilisation, such as respecting and protecting women in this way, but others argued that the women's priority carriages are useless because they cannot separate male and female passengers. In addition, when interviewing metro staff, I found that they faced embarrassing situations, such as when they received complaints from male passengers, at the same time as requests from the government to implement policies for women's carriages.

As I described in the literature review chapter, women's carriages as a method of sexual segregation have been opened in many countries to prevent sexual harassment on public transport, but in China the carriages have strong political overtones because they were set up on the basis of a male politician's proposal. The proposer, Su Zongyang, said that he hopes the carriages can play a role, not only in preventing

sexual harassment, but also in conveying a good social atmosphere that respects and protects women from men. Based on this background, I analyse the data from my participant observations and in-depth interviews with metro staff and passengers who use the metro daily in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, to explore young women's and men's perspectives on and experiences of travelling on the metro in general and in women's carriages in particular; and consider the extent to which there are gendered differences in their responses and why. Considering these research questions, I explore the current implementation and influence of women's carriages in Guangdong Province from four perspectives.

## **Basic information about the women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen**

In March 2019, I travelled to Shenzhen and Guangzhou to do fieldwork. Based on my personal travelling experience and observations of the metro, combined with the data obtained from interviews, I have summed up some of the primary conditions for the implementation of women's carriages in these cities.

So far in China, only Guangzhou and Shenzhen have operated metro carriages for women. Although they opened women's carriages at almost the same time in 2017, the two metros are operated by different companies. There are also some differences in the setting of women's carriages. For instance, the names of the carriages are different. In Guangzhou, they are called: '女性车厢' (women's carriages), with the English logo 'For ladies'. In Shenzhen, the full name of the carriages is '女士优先车厢' with the English logo: 'Priority carriages for women'. The discussions that follow examine and introduce six different basic situations relating to the women's carriages operating in Guangzhou and Shenzhen:

Time: In Guangzhou, women’s carriages are available during rush hour (7:30–9:30 in the morning and 5:00–7:00 in the afternoon). Female travellers are encouraged to use women’s carriages during these fixed times. During other periods, women’s carriages in Guangzhou are used as regular carriages. The Shenzhen Metro runs priority carriages for women all day, seven days a week.

Location: Guangzhou Metro has set aside the last carriage of Line 1 bound for Guangzhou East Station and the first carriage of the train to Xilang as women’s carriages. Doors 2 to 5 of these carriages are set up for women’s entrances and exits. The first door is the ‘courtesy waiting area’ (爱心候车区), with icons suitable for the elderly, pregnant women, the disabled, mothers, and babies. It is marked with a yellow sign in the ‘courtesy waiting area’. Guangzhou Metro uses colour to distinguish between people who need special care and female passengers (as shown in the pictures below).



Figure 5 : The door of the courtesy waiting area (quoted from Cao and Deng, 2017)



Figure 6 : The door of the women’s carriage (quoted from Sohu News, 07 May 2021)

In Shenzhen, women's carriages are installed in each metro train's first and last carriages. All Shenzhen metro lines are equipped with women's carriages and each one has a total of 48 seats. In addition, I found fewer passengers in the first and last carriages than in regular carriages, which is one of the crucial reasons why passengers choose to use women's carriages. The first and last carriages are located close to the upper and lower stairs of the metro station, which is not only a convenient consideration when designing the carriages, but also in terms of safety it keeps women secure on the platforms.

**Announcements:** Announcements were repeated in Mandarin/Cantonese/English on metro platforms and carriages in both Shenzhen and Guangzhou. For example, Shenzhen Metro uses a voice prompt: 'The first and last two carriages of this train are women's priority carriages' to let passengers know about them. The number of reminders on each train in Shenzhen Metro has increased from three to six during each train's journey (*Jiemian News*, 11 September 2019). The Guangzhou Metro also broadcasts announcements, both on the platform and inside the carriages, to promote the location and operating hours of the women's carriages.

**Decoration:** The women's carriages of the Guangzhou Metro are decorated with pink silhouettes of women, flowers, and other images that are associated with women's identity. On the notifications, pink Chinese characters (女性车厢; women's carriages) and English characters (for ladies) are used to mark the carriages that are designed for women. The handrails inside the carriages are pink as well (as shown in Figure 7).

The signs for Shenzhen's women's priority carriages are posted on the platform, and on the glass inside each carriage, with pink as the background and the words 'priority carriage for women' highlighted in white Chinese and English, also with the silhouettes of female figures in white. There are four signs for the women's priority

carriages in each of Shenzhen's metro trains, and they are placed diagonally above the heads of the passenger seats (as shown in Figure 8).



Figure 7 : Decoration of women's carriages in Guangzhou.  
(quoted from Sogou.com, n.d.)



Figure 8 : Decoration of priority carriages for women in Shenzhen.  
(quoted from Jiemian News, 11 September 2019)

Staff: The Shenzhen Metro is equipped with security guards to patrol the safety of each carriage. When I ride and observe the women's carriages, I often encounter male security patrols but no female guards.

However, I did not find any security guards patrolling the women's carriages in Guangzhou, although security guards could be seen standing and patrolling on the platforms. In the Guangzhou Metro, staff held up signs for the women's carriages on the platforms to guide passengers. One of the interviewees said that he had seen metro staff guiding women on the platform in the early days when the women's carriages

were first becoming established. Yet, during my fieldwork in 2019, I did not see any passengers heading along the platforms to take the women's carriages on the metro in Guangzhou.

Promotions: Shenzhen Metro Company operates through its WeChat public account (微信公众号) to promote women's carriages. For example, on 26 June 2017, an article was published entitled: 'Shenzhen Metro will set up women's priority carriages for the first time in China'. Also, Shenzhen Metro has published many articles on its public account about passengers' experiences of sexual harassment in public spaces, and how to identify sexual harassment on public transport. However, when I searched the Guangzhou Metro's WeChat public account, I could not find any articles about women's carriages and only a few mentions of sexual harassment in a warning article. There are no additional promotional articles for women's carriages.

In addition to my own observations, one of my interviewees, Mengmeng, a 23-year-old woman, said that she lives in Guangzhou, but she has also taken the women's carriages in Shenzhen. She thinks that the carriages in Shenzhen are more reasonable and more precisely promoted and managed than the carriages in Guangzhou:

Mengmeng: Perhaps Guangzhou's population base is larger than Shenzhen's, or it may be that Shenzhen's resident population is much younger than Guangzhou's. People in Shenzhen are more receptive to new things than in Guangzhou. For example, I saw the women's carriages in Shenzhen. I can't say that they operate very well, but you can still see security guards patrolling the women's carriages. There are also some public welfare promotions on preventing sexual harassment on the subway platform. However, Guangzhou Metro doesn't seem to take women's carriages seriously. Many male passengers are crowded into the women's carriages, and there are no more management or promotions.

Whether in my actual observation or from the interview data of the participants, I found the names of the women's carriages in Guangzhou to be vague and unclear. For instance, there is no indication of whether the women's carriages are exclusively for women or women's priority carriages like Shenzhen. In addition, taking women's carriages in Guangzhou can only be done at fixed times. Undoubtedly, dividing the day into periods has made managing women's carriages more challenging. For example, the carriages in Guangzhou operate during peak hours, but even though they are priority carriages for women, it is difficult to guarantee that male passengers will not take the seats during peak hours when going to work. Also, it is difficult to strictly control the time and make passengers abide by the regulations, which makes women's carriages more vulnerable to questioning and misunderstanding.

From a practical point of view, the women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen are priority carriages for women rather than women-only carriages. As for their decoration, pink is used as the representative colour. Also, the flowers and female silhouette patterns used to represent women's identity, which distinguish the women's carriage from other carriages, are conventional gender stereotypes. Pink versus blue usually goes with female versus male genders (Pomerleau et al., 1990). Using pink to stereotype gender, especially on densely populated public transport, stimulates passengers' senses and deepens their perception that 'pink represents women', which points to the acquiescence of Chinese patriarchal society to gender stereotypes. In my interviews, none of the participants questioned the signs or colours of the women's carriages, which also proves that passengers automatically activate gender identification based on colour cues in China. For example, pink is automatically associated with women, and blue is associated with men.



## Current operational status of women's carriages

From 13:30–14:30 on 12 Mar 2019, I took the women's carriage of Shenzhen Metro Line 5: More female passengers than men in the carriages, but several male passengers are sitting there. In comparison, there are primarily male passengers in the ordinary carriages next to this carriage, and most of the male passengers in those carriages are standing. Also, according to my observations, a few young male passengers gave their seats to female passengers, but most male passengers sat on the seat and turning a blind eye to the standing female passengers. During the observation period, the women's carriage is more relaxed than ordinary carriages, with relatively few passengers.

Above is a paragraph from my interview diary. I took the women's carriages in Shenzhen and Guangzhou during peak and off-peak hours as a passenger. One of the primary purposes of my research was to acquire actual operational data for women's carriages in Shenzhen and Guangzhou, to fundamentally understand why passengers are satisfied or dissatisfied with the design of women's carriages. During my observations, I found that the actual operation of the women's carriages is not the ideal state as proposed and imagined by the political commissar. The women's carriages did not achieve their intended role and function. The main reason for this is that they are women's priority carriages rather than women-only. No rule or regulation requires men not to use women's carriages. This setting allows male passengers to decide whether or not to ride in the women's carriages entirely on their own initiative. Without the mandatory requirements of laws and regulations set by the metro as essential prerequisites, the women's priority carriages seem to be a kind of public transport facility based on morality, which is dominated by personal will and Suzhi (素质; which literally means 'quality' in the sense of good moral character), the notion that men of good upstanding character will not choose to travel in the women's carriages. Suzhi is essential to modern citizenship processes in China and forms of state governance and social control (Jacka, 2009). Since 1976, the term 'suzhi' has

undergone discourse changes. Originally used to indicate the ‘low quality’ of the populace in rural areas, it is now used in the discourse production of ‘high quality’ to distinguish the middle class and reflect their desire for social mobility (Anagnost, 2004). And here *suzhi* is a way to distinguish passengers’ class by observing their behaviours. Hence, it is an essential premise that the women’s carriages opened in China were not women-only carriages, but women’s priority carriages, and later all the research data are based on this premise.

Women’s priority carriages have been opened in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, but the basic situation of the two cities is different, such as the urban population, the construction of the original metro lines, and the cities’ cultures. Even though women’s carriages cannot be set as women-only carriages, the most significant difference is that Shenzhen still vigorously promotes and operates women’s priority compartments and adds other functional designs based on the establishment of women’s carriages. Since the women’s carriages were established in Guangzhou, there have been no more updates, but they have not been cancelled or banned so far. For example, Shenzhen’s metro company has added temperature adjustments to women’s carriages, implementing it in the same metro train. Different carriages have different temperatures and are set to ‘weak cooling’ (弱冷) mode for women’s priority carriages (*The Paper News*, 2019). In December 2019, Shenzhen Metro tried the approach of ‘same car with different temperatures’ on Metro Line 7, setting the first and last women’s carriages to weak cooling mode (25 degrees Celsius). The ordinary carriages were in strong cooling mode (23 degrees Celsius). Passengers could choose different carriages according to their different preferences for temperature.

According to the Shenzhen Metro Company, this adjustment is based on feedback from passengers (*The Paper News*, 2019). Female passengers thought the air-conditioning temperature was relatively low in the metro. Therefore, Shenzhen Metro

combines weakly cooled carriages with women's priority carriages to look after women. It is not mandatory for women to ride in women's carriages, or that men must not ride in women's carriages. However, since the temperature adjustment has been integrated into women's carriages, new contradictions have arisen. For example, even if men are unwilling to take women's carriages, they may be 'forced' to ride in them because the temperature in the ordinary carriages is lower, and they feel cold. Female passengers who do not ordinarily take the initiative to choose women's carriages may also select 'women's carriages' because the temperature of normal carriages is too low. However, no matter what the situation is, combining the temperature adjustment of the compartment with the women's priority carriages is another attempt by Shenzhen Metro to adjust the women's carriages based on 'female passengers' feelings'. At the same time, by making women's carriages warmer, they are adhering to the idea that women need (or deserve) special protection.

On the one hand, this adjustment proves that the Shenzhen Metro Company still wants women's carriages to play their role and provide women with targeted services. On the other hand, in the current situation, where women's carriages are full of controversy, the improvements in these carriages do not resolve the dispute. Still, it may make the argument for women's carriages even greater. In addition, it is crucial to know who is permitted to ride in the priority carriages for women and how women's carriages are different from regular carriages.

During my three-month fieldwork, I took women's carriages on the main metro lines in Shenzhen and Guangzhou to observe them during both peak and off-peak periods. The operating conditions were as follows: There are some differences between them and ordinary carriages, but there is no pronounced difference. Because the setting of women's carriages only encourages women to take these priority carriages, it is suggested that male passengers give priority to female passengers. However,

passengers are not forcibly sex/gender segregated. Therefore, summarising the actual operational situation, according to my observation and the feedback of the interviewees, I concluded that many male passengers are using women's carriages. During off-peak hours, the overall number of passengers, and of male passengers, is relatively low in women's carriages compared to other carriages. During the morning and evening rush hours, the number of female passengers is almost the same as in the other, ordinary carriages; also, many male passengers are in these carriages. Because of the high volume of traffic, the large numbers of passengers make the women's carriages very crowded and difficult to pass through. Meaningful feedback from observing women's carriages and interviews with passengers is that women's carriages have no practical effect and are not much different from ordinary carriages during peak hours.

Although some passengers whom I interviewed believe there is no difference between women's and regular carriages, my observation found specific differences during off-peak hours. There are fewer female passengers in the women's carriages than in regular cars during off-peak periods, which is also influenced by their physical location as the first and last carriages. Because the escalators in the metro station generally lead to the middle of the platform, fewer people will walk to the first and last carriages, so the women's carriages have fewer passengers during off-peak hours.

In addition, the priority carriages for women lack clear management guidelines, which makes it difficult for metro staff to manage them. When I interviewed the metro staff, they said that it is a headache to balance the male and female passengers who use women's carriages. On Shenzhen's metro lines, patrolmen can be seen to take the metro with passengers in order to inspect safety issues, but they do not guide passengers to use the priority carriages for women and pay more attention to general passenger safety issues. My interviewee, Sam, who works for the Shenzhen Metro

Company, told me that the patrolmen in the metro carriages are hired by the Metro Company from professional security companies, so they are neither from government departments nor metro staff.

### **Passengers' perceptions of and attitudes towards women's metro carriages**

Forty-four interviewees participated in the face-to-face and in-depth interviews, 20 young adult women and 20 adult men (the women significantly younger than the men) who used the metro, plus two metro staff in Shenzhen, and two metro staff in Guangzhou. The interviews were conducted in Guangzhou and Shenzhen respectively. Among them, 43 interviewees agreed to be audio-recorded after giving their consent. One of the interviewees, a man, said that he did not want his interview to be audio-recorded, so a written record was used for him. Because I conducted semi-structured interviews, most of the interview questions were set as open-ended questions. The questions focused on the passengers' experiences of using the carriages and their views and attitudes towards them. In this section, I analyse the purpose of setting up women's carriages from the passengers' perspective, rather than understanding the purpose of government policymakers or the metro company.

#### **Men's viewpoints on the setting up of women's carriages**

Of the 20 male participants, more than half expressed support for women's carriages. Five male respondents expressed ambivalence, and only two disagreed with establishing women's carriages. When asked the interview question: 'What is the purpose of setting up women's carriages?' the three most frequently mentioned answers were as follows.

The first reason is showing respect for women. During the morning and evening peak hours, male and female passengers often come into physical contact due to the crowded environment. The women's carriages can provide a space for women who are concerned about these physical contacts:

Laoda: I think the government set up women's carriages to protect and respect women. Especially during rush hours, passengers often have physical contact. The carriages can make women feel less jostled when they catch the metro.

Laoda's consideration was the first reaction of most of the participants, both male and female, when talking about the carriages. They considered them to be safe spaces protecting women from sexual harassment. The geography of fear caused by sexual harassment in public spaces is regarded as an important factor affecting the mobility of women, and it also has a serious impact on women's safety (Valentine, 1989a; Pain, 1991; Boyer, 2022). According to the World Health Organisation, 'violence against women is a violation of human rights, is rooted in gender inequality, a public health problem, and impedes sustainable development' (WHO, 2019: n.p.). Hence, respecting women and preventing potential violence against women is considered vital to promoting gender equality. Some male participants think that the carriages are reasonable because they believe women's carriages create a safer environment for those insecure women.

The second reason is to promote the city's civilisation, but is also a reflection of men's caring ethos. Fanshu, a middle-aged male participant living in Shenzhen, said:

Fanshu: I'm not surprised that Shenzhen would open women's carriages because it's a frontier city in reform and opening up, and the city is more advanced in spreading ideologies. Compassion and care for the old, the weak, the sick, and the disabled are traditional Chinese virtues and a manifestation

of quality (suzhi; 素质). The women's carriages reflect the fact that Shenzhen is a city that attaches great importance to the city and individual civilisation. The opening of women's carriages also appeals to Shenzhen residents to pay attention to the groups with special needs and care for them. When the women's carriages were opened, the Shenzhen media reported on them a lot, and society also appreciated this action very much. I heard very few opposing voices.

The ability to control aggressive and emotional outbursts, such as violence, is critical for identifying a civilised body (Elias, 1994). Cao described the conception of the civilised body as echoing suzhi, meaning Chinese moral character (Cao, S., 2021). Cao stated in her research that suzhi has also become a taken-for-granted standard to measure geographical masculinities. This was illustrated when the participant, Fanshu, stated that some men show their individual high quality (高素质) by respecting and protecting women, to prove their educated and well-mannered masculinity. Participants also think that the improvement in suzhi is key to the whole civilisation in the city, which is closely related to the discourse creation of suzhi and the development of Chinese society. For instance, Chinese state argues that the development of urban modernisation is correlated with the suzhi of the population and believes that the obstacles to modernisation in the 1980s were caused by the low suzhi of the population. Improvements in suzhi were combined with the birth control policy to jointly adjust the quality of the population (Anagnost, 2004). Therefore, suzhi is not only a manifestation of individual behaviour, but is also regarded as a catalyst to promote the process of urban civilisation.

The third frequently mentioned answer is that women's carriages could prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment. Some male participants supported the establishment of women's carriages because their female family members or friends had encountered sexual harassment on public transport before, or they had witnessed other women's sexual harassment while travelling. My interviewee Luobo, 28-year-old,

said that his girlfriend had experienced sexual harassment on the bus, and so he favoured establishing women's carriages, which could protect some women from being sexually harassed on public transport.

Luobo: One day, I got off work very late and couldn't catch up with my girlfriend, so she came home on the metro by herself. But I received messages from her on the way, telling me that she could feel a strange man who was always squeezing behind her on purpose, and she was terrified. I told her to get out of the carriage at the next stop and get away from that man. Fortunately, she was not in danger. But I think the women's carriages were set up for women to keep away from sexual harassment.

Men's awareness of sexual harassment is relatively weaker than women's and it is difficult for them to understand women's fear (Osman, 2004). However, when familiar women have experienced sexual harassment, some men do develop a certain degree of empathy for women and realise the harm that sexual harassment does to women.

Sexual harassment on public transport is widespread, and some countries have set up women's carriages to protect women from it. In China, Can (1994) reports that 88.6% of women have experienced sexual harassment in a public space (including public transport and work settings). Therefore, some male participants believed that establishing women's carriages to prevent sexual harassment on public transport is significant. An in-depth discussion of sexual harassment follows in the next chapter.

### **Women's viewpoints on the setting up of women's carriages**

In summary, of the 20 young female passengers who participated in the interview, most held a supportive attitude. Some women had mixed feelings, and a few expressed their opposition to the carriages. Similarly, when I asked them what they



thought about the purpose of setting up the women's carriages, they believed that it could help some female passengers with special needs, and there were three issues most frequently mentioned by women: breastfeeding, menstruation, and protection from sexual harassment. The most often cited answer was that the carriages are convenient for pregnant and breastfeeding female passengers.

Twenty-four-year-old Siqui said that she thinks China rarely considers the needs of pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers in the design of public facilities. For example, it is not convenient for mothers to breastfeed in public places when taking a train or metro. Therefore, establishing women's carriages can make breastfeeding mothers feel more comfortable because there are other female passengers around them.

In China, there are few dedicated nursing rooms in public places. Due to the inconvenience of breastfeeding, the travel range of young mothers wanting to take their babies outside is severely limited (Chen, J., et al., 2019; Hanser and Li, 2015). In 2012, a total of 2,390 people took part in research conducted by *China Youth Daily* newspaper. The survey showed that 84.1% of the respondents called for special nursing rooms in public places, and 75.2% said there are many embarrassing situations for women breastfeeding outside (Han, M., 2012). In 2020, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions issued the 'Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of Maternal and Infant Facilities' to cooperate with the implementation of the 'Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Implementing the Comprehensive Two-Child Policy Reform and Improving the Administration of Family Planning Services' (ACFTU, 2020). Therefore, female participants said that women's carriages could help breastfeeding mothers to feel comfortable and avoid breastfeeding in front of male strangers, which could alleviate the issue of the lack of public space for breastfeeding in China.

Secondly, some female interviewees believed that the carriages are convenient for female passengers who travel during menstruation. 27-year-old Yanzi expressed her support for women's carriages because she understood that it would be inconvenient for women to travel for a few days each month. The carriages would make female passengers feel safe and comfortable.

Yanzi: I always feel pain in my lower body during menstruation. If I were crowded with men on the metro during those days, I would feel very uncomfortable. In addition, on the metro during menstruation, I'm always afraid that my 'aunt's blood' (姨妈血; referring to menstrual blood) will cause stains on my trousers. If strange men see that, it will make me feel very embarrassed.

According to a survey of menstruating women, women may be treated negatively for revealing that they are menstruating (Roberts et al., 2002). Women can feel shame and embarrassment as well as discomfort when they are menstruating. For example, menstruating women hide their menstrual products, such as sanitary napkins, and are afraid their clothes will be stained with menstrual blood or develop a particular smell (Kissling, 1996). They are especially afraid of letting men know that they are on their period. In China, to avoid letting men know about menstruation, women will use other nouns, like 'auntie' (姨妈) to replace menstruation (月经), and will say things like: 'I'm coming to auntie' (我来姨妈了) or 'I'm coming to that' (我来那个了). Therefore, the reason that some women support the establishment of women's carriages is that they think these carriages can give menstruating women psychological security. If there are relatively few people in women's carriages, that can make menstruating women feel more comfortable.

The prevention of sexual harassment was also one of the primary reasons that female

passengers cited for setting up women's carriages. The female participants generally believed that women's carriages can prevent the occurrence of sexual assault in public. Xiaodan, 27 years old, said that the women's carriages could protect women from sexual assault; also, they can be regarded as a warning to remind male offenders not to engage in sexual harassment.

Xiaodan: One of my female friends was touched by a male stranger on the metro, and she was very vigilant when she went out. I think women's carriages can make some women like my friend feel safer. Also, let those offenders understand how abhorrent their sexual behaviours are. The carriages can serve as campaigning against sexual harassment in public.

Even though women have a certain fear of sexual harassment in public spaces, especially public transport, their awareness and understanding of sexual harassment has also improved somewhat. It can be argued that borrowing the term 'sexual harassment' from the western context has provided a sense of equality and awareness of women's rights among Chinese women (Can, 1994). However, men and women have different perceptions of the concept of sexual harassment, and they also have different degrees of fear, with women's fear being much stronger (Osman, 2004). A study of women's perceptions of sexual harassment showed that they think stranger harassment is more prevalent and widespread than non-stranger harassment; hence, stranger harassment can affect women's fears more strongly (Macmillan et al., 2000).

### **Men's various perceptions of using women's carriages**

When I asked if the male participants would use women's carriages, more than half of them said they would not, because they said the name and pink decoration of the women's carriages would make them feel embarrassed due to its incompatibility with their gender identity. Dajiang, a 29-year-old man who lives in Guangzhou, told me

that he would never use women's carriages because he does not want to be a strange man.

Dajiang: I feel so out of place when I imagine that setting in a pink carriage with flowers. I wouldn't choose to take women's carriages unless I'm with my girlfriend; otherwise, it's too embarrassing for others to see I'm there.

The appearance of women's carriages shows that their design is a manifestation of gender stereotypes. When male passengers see pink, they intuitively exclude themselves, which is a manifestation of gender-related self-cognition and sex-role attitudes (Lee, K., et al., 2020). Research has suggested that increasing men's associations with pink is a way to reduce gender stereotypes and traditional sex-role attitudes (Ishii et al., 2018).

Other male passengers said that there is no significant difference between the women's carriages and the ordinary carriages, so they may choose whether to take the women's carriages on a case-by-case basis. If women's carriages become mandatory women-only in the future, they absolutely will not take them. In contrast, only a few men said that they were willing to take women's carriages because they are women-first, rather than women-only, so they think that men also have the right to ride in them. Also, because there are fewer people in the women's carriages, the environment is better than in the other carriages. Shutiao, a 27-year-old man who lives in Guangzhou, told me that he opposed the setting up of women's carriages and would use these carriages as well.

Shutiao: I usually use the women's carriages because I've been accustomed to using the first metro carriage. I won't change my habit just because of a 'name' [referring to women's carriages], and you can see there's no rule stating that men can't use these carriages.

The premise of men who choose to use women's carriages is that these carriages advocate women's use, but it is not mandatory. Hence, the concept of 'priority' carriages for women is quite vague, especially during peak hours when there is a high flow of passengers. Nevertheless, traditional Chinese culture emphasises gender relations in which men are superior to women (Song and Bian, 2014), so requiring men to show chivalrous behaviour to strange women lacks a traditional cultural foundation. I return to the question of whether male passengers have the right to use women's priority carriages, and the conflict arising from that question next.

### **Women's various perceptions of using women's carriages**

Most of the female participants expressed an ambivalent attitude towards women's carriages. They said that they would decide whether to take the initiative to use these carriages according to future developments. If women's carriages in the future remain in the same situation as now, where they are not much different from the ordinary carriages, or if there are still many male passengers crowding into the women's carriages, in both cases, they will not deliberately choose to take the women's carriages. Yutong, a 26-year-old woman who works in Shenzhen in a white-collar job for a foreign company, told me that she does not care if she uses a women's carriage or an ordinary carriage in daily life.

Yutong: I think there's no special difference between women's carriages and the ordinary carriages, especially during the morning and evening rush hours when everyone is crowded into a 'meatloaf'. Who cares about whether it's a women's carriage? It's great if you can catch the nearest metro.

Because some female passengers thought the carriages were not significantly different from ordinary carriages, they would not have much impact on their daily travel. Some

female participants said that they were very dissatisfied with the current women's carriages, thinking that they were only a token gesture. They noted that many male passengers crowded into them, and the carriages lost the role they were supposed to play. Some female interviewees even said that it would be better to cancel the women's carriages because they did not want to be unable to use these carriages and also let men know that women consider themselves an inferior group that needs to be particularly protected. In this regard, some women expressed dissatisfaction and even showed 'misandry' (厌男). I have selected three female participants' viewpoints regarding women's carriages, which I present below:

Honghong: Why should women be protected by men? It's clear that men hurt women, but in turn they advocate the protection of women. That's ridiculous, [they] say one thing but do another. (26-year-old, working in Shenzhen)

Xiaoyi: To be honest, I think the priority carriages for women are stereotyped gender discrimination against women which should be cancelled. I never use the carriages because I don't think I need them or any men to protect me. Standing there will make me appear to be part of a vulnerable group in society who needs extra attention and care. (27-year-old, living in Guangzhou)

Conghui: I originally had certain expectations for the establishment of the women's carriages. However, after they were set up, I went to the end of the platform to take the women's carriages. But honestly, I'm so disappointed. Women's carriages were full of men, how dare they walk into the women's carriages and sit on the seats, and let the female passengers stand? (25-year-old, office worker in Shenzhen)

Women who refused to use the women's carriages and women who supported and took the initiative to ride in women's cars accounted for just a small group of participants. Most of the female participants showed ambivalence during the

interviews because male passengers can also use the women's carriages. The female interviewee who held an opposing attitude said it was a form of discrimination against women and deepens the gender stereotypes of women being perceived as inferior to men. However, the female participants who chose or agreed with the women's carriages talked about their experiences of being sexually harassed or witnessing other women experiencing sexual harassment in public. Therefore, they did not want to have physical contact with unfamiliar men and also hoped that women's carriages would play a role in preventing sexual harassment. In the next chapter, I discuss women's experiences of sexual harassment on public transport in more detail, as well as their fear of male strangers when they are alone, which means that some women want a safer environment on public transport, rather than advocating women's carriages.

### **Realistic conflicts and contradictions relating to women's carriages**

In January 2022, the hashtag #Shenzhen Metro does not prohibit men from using women's carriages# (#深圳地铁未禁止男士使用女性车厢#) again became the eighth most-searched topic on Sina Weibo, with 80 million views and ranking No. 1 in Shenzhen news. It has been nearly five years since women's carriages were established in 2017, and they still provoke this amount of public discussion. The fact that women's carriages still arouse such heated debate proves that their establishment is still controversial. The controversy mainly revolves around two contradictory questions: 'Why set up women's carriages?' and 'Do men have the right to use the priority carriages for women?' Next, I discuss these contradictions by presenting some popular posts from Sina Weibo and interview data from my participants.

When women's carriages became controversial on Chinese social media, I browsed some popular posts with the hashtag #women's carriages (#女性车厢). I selected one

post with the most likes, presented below:

Think firstly, why are there women's carriages? 'Ladies first' is a traditional social virtue. Secondly, it is an objective fact that 'some women's rights and interests have not been properly protected' in recent years, and the issue of sexual harassment on the metro has occurred frequently. It is a fairer, more objective, and more open view to consider gender relations as having been a 'sensitive point' in society for a long time. Many male passengers do not care about paying attention to being a 'gentleman' [when they're] in a hurry during peak hours. Forcibly restricting men's rides will inevitably lead to many new problems and contradictions. It is more feasible to mobilise more comprehensive public opinion and guide more thoughtful on-site orders, rather than relying solely on mandatory enforcement by legislation. At least to make more men have more active recognition of the concept of these carriages. (Jia, 2021, my translation)

This netizen affirmed that the setting of women's carriages is a manifestation of civilisation, but pointed out that the biggest problem facing women's carriages is the fact that men do not understand what 'women first' means. At the same time, it was pointed out that some men are not considered by women to be real gentlemen because their behaviour does not put women first. Here, young Chinese people use the word '*shenshi*' (绅士; gentlemen), which refers to the western gentlemen, not the Chinese term for gentlemen, '*junzi*' (君子; Confucian gentleman). '*Junzi*' is often translated as western gentleman but, although they are both gendered words that usually refer to men, they are still slightly different. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word '*gentleman*' is defined as 'a man who is polite and behaves well towards other people, especially women' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), while the term '*junzi*' is used to describe 'a model of self-cultivation, self-containment and respectability. "*Junzi*" embodied the wen path of "control and restraint", including the containment of sexual passion...[The] *Junzi*'s status derived from his moral embodiment of Confucian virtue, observance of the rites...' (Hird, 2017: 3). Generally, '*Junzi*' is related more to *being* good, whereas gentlemen are often referred to as *doing* something good (Yang,



2008). Although the Confucian *junzi* can be translated as gentleman in English, younger Chinese men often use the term ‘*shenshi*’ to express a particular kind of manhood that is educated, well-behaved, and high quality, drawing on traditional British notions of being a gentleman, which is to be upstanding, honourable, and respectable (and to be respected in turn). The traditional Chinese concept of masculinity is influenced by the image of an educated, well-behaved gentleman from the West (Louie, 2014). Therefore, respect for women, such as showing cultivated behaviour towards them, becomes an individual moral examination of whether a gentleman meets the standard.

Another typical attitude on Sina Weibo is opposed to the setting up of women’s carriages, and I have selected a paragraph from a blogger who posted the following:

This kind of carriage is the biggest discrimination against women, and it is direct physical discrimination. Society’s prioritised treatment of women is a kind of discrimination. For example, as preferential treatment in the workplace, some women are punished less when they make mistakes and can do less work, but promotion will not be considered. All preferential treatment has a price. This kind of special treatment will make you seem troublesome in leaders’ eyes because of your gender, a privilege in the eyes of colleagues. A truly independent woman would rather not have this kind of preferential treatment because this kind of ‘preferential treatment’ is only good for people who want more benefits but do not want to work hard (好逸恶劳). (Li, 2022, my translation)

Unlike the previous netizen, this one stated unequivocally that women’s carriages demonstrate sexism against women, because by being given separate carriages women are constructed as vulnerable and inferior, and therefore women’s carriages were created to protect the weak. In psychology, sexism is divided between hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. The women’s carriages can be seen as a form of ‘benevolent sexism’. In their research, Glick and Fiske (2001:109) stated: ‘Benevolent

sexism (a subjectively favourable, chivalrous ideology that offers protection and affection to women who embrace conventional roles) coexists with hostile sexism (antipathy toward women who are viewed as usurping men's power)'. Therefore, benevolent sexism is another face of gender inequality. 'Benevolent sexism' is a crucial component of sexist views that maintain gender inequality because it provides relational benefits that disguise the potential costs of these sexist attitudes (Glick and Fiske, 1997). Therefore, Chinese feminists regard women's carriages as a phenomenon that discriminates against women.

There is another blogger mentioned in Weibo post that:

the words 'women first' are essentially the elegance and romance of the superior. The premise of advocating this is that women are subordinate to men. 'Women first' is based on gender inequality. When true feminists see 'women first', they will think it is discriminatory against women. Therefore, the idea of 'women first' is discrimination against women. (Fou, 27 November 2022, my translation)

There is also controversy about why women's carriages are created, because men have the right to ride in them. My interviews with metro company employees and male passengers revealed these inconsistencies.

Wei is a metro staff member responsible for the station's daily operation in the Shenzhen Metro Company. He is a student of one of my relatives, so when I asked him about the actual process of the women's carriages during the interview, he said that because of the 'special relationship' between my relative and him, he was willing to say something. The interview with Wei was conducted as a one-on-one interview in his employee office. He said bluntly: 'We're also completely helpless'. Through our conversations, I learned that the policy for women's carriages was implemented after

a proposal by the Guangdong Provincial Government. However, the metro companies and metro staff are the ones who have to implement the policy and deal with its practical application.

Huawen: Can you provide some basic information about women's carriages, such as the metro company's preparations for this in the early days? And in running the women's carriages, what problems were found?

Wei: In fact, the government gave instructions for the women's carriages to the Shenzhen Metro Company, hoping that the company could set up women's carriages. This top-down political directive to open women's carriages is a mission-like requirement for us. However, there are no instructions for women-only carriages, and we have many practical problems when running 'priority carriages for women'. For example, male passengers don't understand why women should have priority, especially during peak hours. This conflict has broken out more, and we often receive complaints about women's carriages.

Huawen: Are the complainants generally male or female passengers? What is the content of the complaints?

Wei: For example, when we first operated the women's carriages, our company initially wished to advocate the idea of 'women first'. Our colleague held up a sign with the words 'priority carriages for women' during the peak hours to guide passengers. We use a combination of promoted ways to persuade male passengers to use ordinary carriages and encourage female passengers to use women's carriages. However, we encountered some male passengers insulting our staff during the morning rush hour, and they had a strong reaction after hearing the advice given by our colleagues to use regular carriages, and some men questioned it loudly, like: 'Why do women have priority? This carriage is a kind of discrimination against men'. We've also received many complaint calls, mostly from men complaining that the women's carriages make them feel discriminated against and excluded. Their emotions are intense, but due to the government's instructions, we can only try to soothe the feelings of complainants and have never thought about cancelling the carriages due to these protests.

Huawen: Have you ever received complaints from female passengers? From what you know as a metro staff member, what attitude do female passengers hold towards the carriages?

Wei: Female passengers don't react as much as men. We've learned that female passengers have complaints about male passengers using and riding in the carriages, but they don't have such sharp attitudes as male passengers.

Huawen: Considering the contradictory status quo of women's carriages, will the metro company make any adjustments?

Wei: There is no other way. We'll just continue implementing the government's instructions and providing the women's priority carriages. We have no way to enforce that men can't use women's carriages. The method of persuasion has not achieved outstanding results, so we only try to maintain the status quo.

As the voice of the Chinese government, the *People's Daily Digital Communication* commented on the women's carriage:

'Don't just hang "ladies first" on the wall.' A good original intention needs to be accompanied by detailed guidelines for implementation, to accelerate the realisation of a considerate atmosphere. (Zhang, 13 January 2022, my translation)

Comments in the *People Daily* show the government's confident approach, by encouraging the metro company to improve and supplement a series of relevant rules to support the women's carriages so that they can provide their expected value. However, the metro company is under multiple pressures from the government and passengers, and it is difficult for metro staff to adjust to the contradictions between the three. By contrast, the government and mainstream media lack investigation and understanding of the current situation regarding women's carriages.

Su's proposal on women's carriages (*pwccw.gd.gov*, 2017) reveals the government's appeal to care and respect for women through women's carriages in order to promote 'gender equality'. However, this kind of thinking manifests within male-dominated politics in China's patriarchal society. Consider this phenomenon in terms of the

concept of patriarchy, where men are usually the policymakers and ruling social classes, to whom women are insignificant and subordinated as social actors (Acker, 1989). Nevertheless, due to young people's understanding of the concept of gender and the development of the women's movement and minority movement in China, people are beginning to rethink the meaning of gender equality.

Hence, are the women's carriages a manifestation of gender equality or gender discrimination? It is generally accepted that segregation must be based on the public interest in order to be justified, such as segregating dangerous criminals, otherwise it will promote discrimination (*Jiemian News*, 2017). Yet, women's carriages advocate social civilisation in the name of love to enable gender segregation to quietly appear in public, justified as a product of patriarchy.

Another concern of participants was whether men could use women's priority carriages, which has caused some controversies. After summarising the answers of the male participants who said that they have at some time used or chosen to ride in women's carriages, I came up with three reasons they mentioned.

Firstly, the priority carriages for women have fewer people and a clean environment. Zhoucheng, 29-year-old, a young man living in Guangdong. Due to his work needs, he often takes the metro in Shenzhen. He admitted that he would take women's carriages because the number of passengers here is smaller, and the environment is better than in the ordinary carriages:

Zhoucheng: I usually take the first or last metro carriages because when you go down the stairs, you will find so many passengers in the middle of the platform, so I usually go to the first or last carriages since fewer passengers are there. It's my habit. I don't mind if it's a women's carriage, because I simply take it as the first and last metro carriages. In addition, the women's carriage has a relatively good smell and clean environment, which is a

benefit. But in my case, the difference between the women's carriages and the ordinary carriages is not apparent. On account of my cleanliness addiction, I choose the women's carriages.

Due to the physical location of women's carriages, there are not as many passengers going to the end of the platform to take these carriages. And compared with other carriages, women's carriages have a better environment, and there is less of a sweaty smell around female passengers in summer. Horri and Burgess also mentioned this point in their discussion of women's carriages in Japan, stating that some passengers choose women's carriages because of the better overall travelling environment (Horri and Burgess, 2012).

Secondly, it is because of the male herd mentality. If men think that other people will see travelling in the women's carriage as unmasculine, then they are reluctant to do so because they see it as a feminising act. However, the more men who use the carriages and the more usual/normal it is to see men in the women's carriages the more comfortable many men feel about using them because it does not question their masculinity. By combining Connell and Messerschmidt's (2015) concept of hegemonic masculinity, using women's carriages is a change in the gendered order in everyday practices and the change is regarded as a challenge to male hegemonic masculinity (Buschmeyer and Lengersdorf, 2015). The conflict between dominant and subordinate groups of men results in the production and reproduction of masculinities (Coles, 2009).

Zhongcheng, 34 years old, is a teacher living in Shenzhen. Before buying a private car, he often travelled by metro and used women's carriages. He initially felt a strong resistance to these carriages because he thought it would be embarrassing for him to use them as a man, but he later started using the carriages because of this herd mentality:

When women's carriages were first introduced, I would deliberately avoid taking them. Later, I found that there were always men in women's carriages, so I didn't avoid using them. After entering the car, I don't choose to find a seat because I will soon encounter the situation of giving up my seat to someone who needs it. If there were no male passengers in the women's carriages, I would never have entered; if there were some male passengers in it, I would choose the carriage. It was my impression, at the beginning, that men didn't ride in women's carriages, but I don't know why there were so many male passengers in women's carriages later. Because there's no difference between women's carriages and ordinary carriages during peak hours, and people don't seem to have this concept in their minds that 'I can't go in women's carriages'. Later, after women's carriages were no different from ordinary carriages, people didn't care so much, and their awareness faded. So far, I've personally taken it as a regular carriage. Without the coercive measures of morality, public opinion, and law, and relying solely on personal self-discipline to take women's carriages, men will have a herd mentality that 'if other men use the carriages, I'll use them too'.

When analysing Zhongcheng's behaviour, it is necessary to associate masculine behaviours with herd mentality. As Zhongcheng mentioned, the names and decorations of the women's carriages make men feel excluded by their sex. However, if other men are using the women's carriage, a link is formed between men, which allows them to use the carriages without regard for their male identity.

Thirdly, some men opposed the establishment of women's carriages. Qingjie is my friend's friend. When my friend recommended Qingjie to me, she texted me complaining that she had just had a gender equality debate with him. Qingjie believed that women's carriages were a privilege for women and a form of discrimination against men. He expressed his opposition to the setting up of women's carriages. If one must open women's carriages for the sake of women, it should be fair to also open men's carriages for men.

Huawen: I learned before that you don't support the establishment of women's carriages. When you travel, do you usually use women's carriages?

Qingjie: I use women's carriages. Because there's no significant difference between women's carriages and ordinary carriages, no one cares or abides by the rules of women's carriages. On the other hand, I have a lot of doubts about women's carriages. I think establishing women's carriages is a manifestation of sexism.

Huawen: How do you think women's carriages reflect sexism?

Qingjie: Nowadays, people claim 'equality between men and women'. If gender equality has been achieved, why should there be a separate carriage for women while male passengers make concessions? The real equality should be that men and women enjoy the same rights. If there's a carriage for women, I think there should be a men's carriage for men. Otherwise, there shouldn't be any services for women. [If you] treat women as objects to be protected and force men to make concessions, then I think such approaches are discriminatory against both women and men simultaneously.

Male passengers like Qingjie have also posted opinions on the Internet that similarly question women's carriages. They believe that women's carriages are a manifestation of gender discrimination rather than advancing gender equality in modern civilised society, but whether it discriminates against women or men is seen differently in different discussions. Ailin, a 23-year-old woman, who was one of my female interviewees. She stated bluntly in the interview that she would not take the women's carriages because she thinks that such carriages are discriminatory against women because they regard women as needing to be protected by men to ensure their safety. The ironic thing is that many dangers faced by women happen to be violence against women initiated by men. And now women needed men to ensure their safety, and Ailin thought that was ridiculous.

The discussion of gender issues, including gender relations among the younger generation in China, is the main content of my sixth chapter, which includes some of the interviewees' analyses of misogyny when discussing women's carriages and how



they feel about themselves as their gender identities change today. I discuss these changing gender relations in depth in Chapter 6.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the actual operation of women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. I found that they fail to achieve the initial obligation of protecting and respecting women on public transport, which was proposed by the government. This is because, in practice, women's carriages are difficult to implement as the bar on men is not mandatory but advisory. In particular, women's carriages do not work at peak times, when overall space on the trains is limited.

Women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen embody gender stereotypes by reinforcing the notion that women are different from men and weaker, which also reinforces a binary distinction between men and women. However, by the same token, the feminising of carriages could be a strategy to keep men out. Some men feel that they have to perform a certain kind of masculinity, which means distancing themselves from anything considered feminine. For such men, using women's carriages might challenge their hegemonic masculinity but, on the other hand, they can assert a dominant form of masculinity. Hence, the sex/gender segregation of women's carriages to protect women is viewed both positively and negatively – negatively in that some women see this as labelling women as weak and in need of special treatment, and by men who see it as an infringement on their rights, a kind of inverted sexism. This is also one of the reasons why women's carriages receive many complaints and contradictory reactions.

The metro company seems to be in a dilemma when it comes to the issue of women's carriages, but in fact, it can serve those women who need it from women's appeals,

for example, women who demand a safe traffic environment and mothers who travel need space for breastfeeding. The reform of the system: how to do an excellent job of promoting the carriages, building passenger awareness, establishing a punishment system, and ensuring enforcement are all issues that metro companies need to think about if they want to operate women's carriages in an ideal manner. On the other hand, if China is going to promote gender equality and improve the social status of women, it is far from enough to rely on a sense of justice or slogan-style policy inspiration. The factors that need to be in place, such as correct publicity and education, are needed to ensure that the public has a proper understanding that sexual harassment and gender discrimination are obstacles to gender equality. Also, people need to have a specific understanding of 'what true gender equality is'. These will be the means to promote the process of equality between men and women and improve the status of women in society. Compare this with the vaguely defined women's carriages, the planning and operation of which are not very clear. The spatial isolation method is used to place women in a fixed carriage in the name of protecting and caring for them. Male political decision-makers want the patriarchal society to put on a sweet cloak, but they look at women from a patriarchal perspective, and in a gender-fixed way that sees women as the objects of sexual harassment, requiring the protection and care of men and society. These are the oppression of gender identity in China.

Gendering in space, according to feminist geographers, has a significant impact on women (Doan, 2010), hence sex-segregated space has attracted many doubts (Sepper and Dinner, 2019). Under gender mainstreaming, the emergence of women's carriages in China has a certain inevitability and rationality. To put it another way, given the deep-rooted history of patriarchy in China, in order to promote gender equality, measures in the name of 'caring for women' such as women's carriages, embody the development of the women's movement during this period. The younger

generation of Chinese has engaged in controversy over women's carriages, and young Chinese women in particular have begun to think about why women should be protected and by whom. These social issues also reveal the development of gender equality in China from another perspective. In the next chapter, I explore the connection between women's carriages and sexual harassment on public transport.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Sexual harassment on Guangzhou and Shenzhen's public transport**

This chapter draws upon the experiences of my interviewees and focuses particularly on the issues of sexual harassment on public transport. This is also one of the main reasons for the establishment of women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen: to prevent sexual harassment from taking place on the metro. Sexual harassment is one of the main topics that feminists care about, and it is also an essential manifestation of today's gendered inequalities. The issue of sexual harassment in public places is prevalent, but difficult to define, and it is a daily problem that oppresses women by limiting their travel and activities to a significant extent and increasing their fear of the surrounding environment (Wilson and Little, 2008). As discussed in the literature review chapter, Valentine (1989a) came up with the concept of a 'geography of women's fear' to describe women's fear of male violence and their desire for a safe space when they are in public places.

In this chapter, the predicament of sexual harassment faced by its victims is examined, including how to define sexual harassment on public transport, the differences in gender-based perceptions of sexual harassment between men and women, the influences that encourage sexual harassment on public transport, the effects of sexual harassment on victims, and safety precautions that can be taken.

## **‘What is sexual harassment?’ A sense of fear that cannot be explained accurately**

When I chatted with my interviewees, most of them (especially female participants) believed that the establishment of women’s carriages was mainly to solve the problem of sexual harassment against local women, which I mentioned previously in the Chapter 4. Most of them thought that women’s carriages were provided to satisfy the needs of women (such as preventing sexual harassment or providing women with a comfortable travelling environment). However, when I probed further, to determine how they defined sexual harassment, my participants found it harder to explain. In the interviews, I found that most women have a sense of fearing sexual harassment, which leads them to adjust their travel routine, dress, and makeup when travelling by public transport, but most men do not have this worry, nor do men anticipate having to adapt their routines in advance or during travel due to this concern.

Many women significantly restrict their activities, limiting their own freedom in order to feel safe enough to spend time in public without being accosted (Vera-Gray, 2018: 12). The women I interviewed shared their understanding of sexual harassment, especially in crowded public spaces, such as public transport during the morning and evening peak hours. The women shared experiences of having strangers crowding around them and being physically touched due to the limited transport space. However, when touching or rubbing occurred, they were not always able to accurately determine whether such behaviour was intended as sexual harassment.

It was clear from their accounts that these forms of sexual harassment on public transport have specific spatial and temporal characteristics. It is therefore important to consider the temporal and spatial contexts in which unwanted touching is more likely to occur. Peak-time travel during mornings and evenings when transport is crowded is

not only a high-incidence period and location of sexual harassment, but these were also the times when the women had to be more vigilant about their surrounding environment. The particularity of the time and location sometimes makes it impossible for women to determine whether they have in fact encountered sexual harassment.

Tiantian is a graduate student in her mid-twenties living in Guangzhou. She said that the women's carriages were set up with the purpose of protecting women. Due to the large passenger flows in Guangzhou and the mixed nature of passengers, sexual harassment can easily happen to young women. However, the crowdedness of the trains makes it difficult to judge whether the harassment is intended or not:

Tiantian: My friends and I usually go out to take the metro after class in the afternoon at the metro station in front of the school. Because it's not the first station, there are many passengers in the carriage, often crowded together like sardines. At first, I would tell my friends to consider waiting for the next metro to be less crowded, but I found that every single one was very crowded during this period. Sometimes you can hardly get into the carriage. In summer, it's very uncomfortable to huddle with a group of strangers without distance in the carriage, especially when strange men are huddled nearby. You don't know if they're touching you accidentally or on purpose. If you warn them directly, if they didn't intentionally create physical touches, both parties will be too embarrassed.

Women like Tiantian are not the only women to have such concerns. As discussed above, China's first-tier cities have an extensive population base, and public transport carries a vast number of passengers every day. As in Tiantian's case, women living in super first-tier cities face a potentially greater risk of sexual harassment on public transport because they use it regularly at crowded peak times. Female victims like Tiantian stated that they cannot always make a correct judgement as to whether or not their experience is sexual harassment. In the literature review chapter, I have

discussed the difficulties that scholars have met in defining the term ‘sexual harassment’. It is challenging to define sexual harassment on public transport, because accusations are made based either on the subjective experiences of the victims or the actual behaviours of the perpetrators. Considering that sexual harassment on public transport often occurs when strangers gather together in a closed space (a carriage) at a certain time of day, if the victim feels uncomfortable and accuses strangers around them of being sexually harassing, there is a possibility that the person has unintentionally made physical contact because the carriage is too crowded. In that case, the ‘victim’ may find themselves in an embarrassing scene in which those around them might criticise them for making a fuss. In some large cities in China, because of the large population, sexual harassment on public transport during peak periods becomes more difficult for the victim to judge subjectively. In addition, not only is it difficult to judge sexual harassment during peak travel times, but the definition of sexual harassment is also vague. Zhiying (25-year-old) told me that, as a woman, when she finds herself in a crowded space, she might feel uncomfortable, but sometimes she cannot identify what sexual harassment is.

Huawen: What do you think sexual harassment is?

Zhiying: This is a problem that’s troubled me for a long time because we don’t have a clear law to tell us what sexual harassment behaviours are, but when I commute on public transport, I feel uncomfortable. One, it’s too crowded, and, on the other hand, I unconsciously feel insecure.

Huawen: Under what circumstances would you feel unsafe?

Zhiying: For example, when you’re on the metro or bus while wearing a skirt, someone on the opposite side with a mobile phone in their hands. You can’t identify whether the person is taking a picture of you or playing with the phone. Moreover, when it’s summer, there’s always someone staring at you, which makes me feel very uncomfortable, but I don’t know if this is considered a form of sexual harassment because they didn’t touch you physically.

Zhiying's concerns mirror women's common worries about the public transport environment. Faced with the diversity of forms of sexual harassment, victims cannot judge whether the 'potential' offender's non-physical behaviours are aimed at them. For example, if there are many women around in a public space, they may not be the only specific victim. However, this sense of fear causes victims to remain vigilant of the surrounding environment. With the development of the Internet, especially now we have entered the information age, almost everyone is using smartphones to get news, and it seems that it has become a common phenomenon that mobile phones never leave people's hands. When we are in a public space, if we are being secretly photographed by a stranger with a mobile phone, is this considered sexual harassment? This is still an unclear topic in academic discussions (Tran, 2015). However, Zhiying and Qiqi have become frightened and confused about whether secret photography with mobile phones counts as sexual harassment. Qiqi also had the experience of seeing a man taking pictures with a mobile phone on the metro. Although she was not a victim, this experience also affected her:

Qiqi: I took the metro that day, and I was leaning near the metro door because there was no seat. I usually get in the carriage and play with my phone, but my phone was dying that day, so I just stood there and did nothing. As a result, I saw a middle-aged man pretending to lower his phone and approach a young woman inadvertently, and that young woman was wearing a short skirt. I guessed he was using the phone to take a picture of the woman's underwear. But because I'm not sure whether he did it, and I was travelling alone, I didn't dare to stop him. But since then, I've always worn trousers when I take the metro, and even avoid shorts. [Qiqi is a 23-year-old woman.]

The relevant content of sexual harassment has already been considered in Chinese laws. For example, in the 2018 revised 'Constitution of the People's Republic of China', law No. 37 stipulates that the personal freedom of citizens is inviolable, and law No. 38 emphasises that the personal dignity of citizens is inviolable (Gov.cn,



2018). In the ‘Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China’, revised in 2019, law No. 237 protects citizens’ rights and interests from the perspective of criminal offences, such as using violence, coercion, or other methods to force indecent acts or insults upon women, with a penalty of imprisonment of not more than five years or criminal detention (Baidu, 2019). In the ‘Civil Code of the People’s Republic of China’, enacted in 2020, protection is carried out from the perspective of civil rights and interests (Junhe, 2020). ‘The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests’, revised in 2018, provides protection from the perspective of women’s rights and interests. Law No. 40 in this document states: ‘Sexual harassment of women is prohibited, and the victimised woman has the right to report to the relevant agencies’ (Beijing.gov., 2022). The rights and interests of minors are protected in the ‘Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Minors’, revised in 2020 (Humanrights.cn, 2020). However, these legal provisions do not stipulate the types or scope of sexual harassment. This problem also troubled some of my female participants. For example, they wondered how to judge what forms of behaviour are sexual harassment and how this is affected by factors such as time, space, and location, as well as the subjective judgement of the victim or potential victim.

### **Different gendered perceptions of defining sexual harassment**

‘I didn’t touch her. Does this count as sexual harassment? She was so hot.’ This was something Tianyu said in our interview. He is aged 27, and a friend of my master’s degree classmates from Leeds. I met him again in a milk tea shop in Guangzhou, where I interviewed him. He said that because of his company’s business trips, he often travels between Hong Kong and Guangzhou every week. I do not know if it is because he and I are friends and classmates that he could be so open with me, but his comments surprised me. His words also made me think deeply about what kinds of

sexual harassment are happening in public spaces (such as public transport):

Huawen: Have you ever witnessed or experienced sexual harassment on public transport?

Tianyu: I haven't experienced sexual harassment, but I have been treated as an 'offender'. (Looks at me and laughs)

Huawen: Can you tell me more about this circumstance?

Tianyu: I took the metro during the morning rush hour. It was summer and very crowded. I wasn't using my mobile phone, so I held it in my hand to look around. I was fascinated by the figure of a woman. She had a big chest and was wearing a tight top. I probably stared at her for dozens of seconds and finally met her eyes. She had a very disgusted expression, as if she was saying 'colour wolf' (色狼; translation refers to sexual harasser) to me, and then turned and stood with her back to me.

Huawen: How do you evaluate this experience? Did you feel embarrassed at the time?

Tianyu: I don't think it was sexual harassment because I only stared at her, rather than touching her. That's because she had such a good figure, and every man would want to look at her. Let me tell you, this is a man's physical instinct, and it has nothing to do with sexual harassment.

Such sentiments were echoed in interviews with other male participants. A few male interviewees also said that if women who are dressed in a 'hot' way have good figures, they cannot help looking at those women. They think this behaviour is not about sexual harassment but is based on men's 'natural' instincts. This is in line with natural/biological theories which suggest that:

Those who belong to the Natural School interpret sexual harassment as a natural sexual attraction between people. According to this model, men have stronger sex drives and are, therefore, biologically motivated to engage in sexual pursuit of women. Thus, the harassing behavior is not meant to be offensive or discriminatory but is merely the result of biological urges. This implies that a person may not have any intention of sexual harassment but

still would involve in the act owing to the motivation provided by the opposite sex attraction which is a natural attribute; thus, harassing behavior may not necessarily be interpreted as offensive or discriminatory. Therefore, according to this model, the concept of sexual harassment is a mistaken one because the relevant interactions are most appropriately viewed as courtship behavior. A key strength of the natural/biological perspective is that it acknowledges the innate human instincts potentially driving sexually aggressive behavior. (Tangri, et al., quoted in Kapila, 2017: 33)

However, this explanation has been heavily criticised as lacking empirical adequacy (Kapila, 2017; Pina et al., 2009). Regarding whether a man who openly stares at women in a lascivious way is simply following a man's physiological response, Crosthwaite and Priest believe:

Ostentatiously leering at a woman's breasts is unlikely to be a matter of obtaining sexual pleasure from looking at her breasts; it is better explained as forcing her to be aware of her sexuality as perceived by men and of herself as vulnerable to the sexual predation of men. (Crosthwaite and Priest, 1996: 68)

Tianyu's recounting of his experience suggests that the woman he was staring at felt uncomfortable and disgusted by the gaze of a stranger. He had recognised her look of anger and discomfort but still did not consider his behaviour to be sexual harassment. The behaviour of gazing at women's bodies is perceived as admiration and a 'natural' instinct rather than sexual harassment by some men, like Tianyu, but women may perceive it as such. This is also mentioned in some scholars' research (Fitzgerald and Omerod, 1991; Katz et al., 1996) as demonstrating gender differences in thinking about sexually harassing behaviours.

## Geographical features of public transport

Considering that public transport is one of the main locations for occurrences of public harassment, it is also the main research subject of my study. Firstly, the scope of my next discussion is public transport<sup>11</sup> within the city, such as buses, urban metros, intercity trains, taxis, etc., and other service facilities that form part of public transport infrastructure, such as platforms, elevators, waiting halls, etc. In these contexts, taking public transport usually requires paying for a ticket. Therefore, public transport belongs to semi-public space. Some areas, such as platforms and waiting halls, are only accessible to those who have paid for entry and use, while other areas can be used without paying for a ticket. Therefore, it needs to be emphasised that here I am talking about the definition of urban public transport as a generalised public space – a gathering place, which is an element of the broader concept of social space.

Even though public space is subdivided, public transport has its particularities compared with other public spaces, including large volumes of people, high mobility, crowded surroundings, and new passengers getting on and off at each stop. Such geographical characteristics mean that victims may not be able to judge the identities of the strangers around them on crowded public transport, and some passengers cannot concentrate on suspicious harassers. Beyond that, the crowded environment of public transport gives offenders more opportunities to engage in forms of sexual harassment such as touching and groping. In addition, frequent stops also give perpetrators the opportunity to leave at any time so that victims cannot react and catch them in time.

---

<sup>11</sup> The broad scope of public transport includes civil aviation, railways, highways, water transport, and other transportation methods; the narrow scope refers to the transportation methods such as bus and rail transport, ferries, ropeways, etc., which are operated within the city. The public transport discussed in this article refers to the narrow scope of urban transport.

Tingting: I once encountered sexual harassment on the metro. It was a transfer station, I noticed that many people suddenly entered the car. I stood in the middle and looked at my phone. After the metro started, I felt a man behind me and close to me with his lower body. Because there were so many people there, I suspected that I was overthinking it until two stops later, I felt him rubbing my butt with his body. When I stared back at him, he took the opportunity to move to the door and exit quickly [Tingting is a 21-year-old young woman in Guangzhou]

Tingting as a victim told me about her experiences of sexual harassment, explaining that, when it happened, due to the complexity of the metro location, she did not recognise the sexually harassing behaviour in time, and the offender left quickly so that she could not do anything to punish him. Hence, when considering the issue of sexual harassment on public transport, its geographical characteristics and the high mobility of harassers will affect the likelihood of sexual harassment occurring.

### **Various forms of sexual harassment on public transport**

Based on the experiences of my participants, here I divide the forms of sexual harassment on public transport into physical and non-physical sexual harassment. The issue of groping is a common safety problem on public transport, which is aided by crowded environmental conditions (Horri and Burgess, 2012). Groping is relatively common on public transport compared with private places and hidden places, in the form of strangers harassing victims through physical touch. Compared with other forms of sexual violence, groping may cause less physical harm to the victim, but it is still emotionally abusive. When asked about sexual harassment, some of my participants, especially female interviewees, said they had been physically touched on public transport.

I feel uncomfortable with male passengers sticking to my body [Shiyu, a 26-year-old young woman].

It's too crowded on the metro, so I don't know if they're sexually harassing, but I will be wary if someone is close to me for a long time [Xuemei, a 24-year-old woman].

I usually observe their hand position, and I will feel much more relaxed if they're holding the handle [Tingting, a 21-year-old young woman].

The above are some excerpts from my female interviewees. Obviously, the heavy traffic situation gives sexual harassers some advantages for committing crimes. For example, a crowded environment can conceal their criminal behaviour. Even though some victims criticise the groping acts, the perpetrators can explain them away by using the excuse of the crowded carriages. In comparison, non-physical sexual harassment is difficult and requires some time to detect, which is also strongly correlated with victims' judgement of sexual harassment. Examples include: staring at women in a lascivious way, whistling at victims, commenting on the victims' bodies in a sexually suggestive way, secretly taking pictures with a mobile phone, following the victim, or constantly asking the victim for personal information after being rejected. These acts of sexual harassment do not involve making direct physical contact with the victim, nor do they cause physical harm. However, they can still cause emotional distress to victims, such as decreased self-esteem, anxiety, depression, etc. (Larsen and Fitzgerald, 2011).

I was followed by a strange man from the bus stop and then every time I hang out alone, I will be very careful about the identities of strangers around me [Xiaodan, 27-year-old woman].

Sometimes I see people in the carriages staring at me, especially at my body, which makes me feel very nervous, and I will move to another carriage to avoid further contact [Ying, a 30-year-old woman].

Sexual harassment can cause the victim to repeatedly recall their experience. Even if the incident took place a long time previously, the victim will still repeatedly recall

these experiences and feel fear (Pina et al., 2009). Some scholars have also stated that the various types of sexual harassment increase the victim's awareness of risks in public spaces, making them feel in danger and fearful (Kirchhoff et al., 2007). Women in general have a stronger sense of uncertainty and fear than men (Loukaitous-Sideris and Fink, 2009; Vera-Gray, 2018: 40). Therefore, the invisible geography of fear has put women at a disadvantage and in an unfair position when using public space and public transport.

### **Women are still the main victim group**

When my participants recalled their experiences of being sexually harassed on public transport, I found that women are still the main target group. The conventional perception is that women are potential victims, although two male interviewees also stated that they had experienced sexual harassment.

Xiaodai's hometown is Guangzhou, and she was studying for an undergraduate degree in the UK when I interviewed her. The interview took place in Guangzhou, where she had returned during the Easter holidays. When talking about the topic of sexual harassment on public transport, she said that she had a lot to share because she had personally experienced sexual harassment on the metro.

Xiaodai: I remember about two years ago [2017], I was still in high school, and I took the metro home one weekend. I was wearing a white T-shirt and denim shorts that day, and I stood in the middle of the car. I was playing on a mobile phone, and suddenly I felt a hand reaching into my pants and touching them and then touching my underwear. I looked back in fear and saw that it was a very young man, like an office worker, dressed very cleanly, not like a migrant worker. Then he looked at me with a smirk. When I looked back at him, he still didn't take his hand out, and he even stretched it inside. I was very scared at the time, so I hurriedly got off the metro when I got to the next metro station and found that he had also gotten off the train. I quickly ran in

the opposite direction to a crowded place and looked back to see if he was following me as I ran, so I hid in the crowd and waited for the next metro to return home after making sure that he hadn't followed me.

I asked Xiaodai if she had thought about calling for help from other people in the car when she was sexually harassed. She said no because she did not want to irritate or shame him in front of so many people. It is a common phenomenon for victims to be sexually harassed but unwilling to point out the offenders' behaviour in public or to report sexual harassment criminals. These feelings were shared by several of the young Chinese women I interviewed, like Xiaodai. During the interview, when I asked some young women who had not encountered sexual harassment before, how they would react if they were sexually harassed, most said that they would treat it as though nothing was happening or leave quickly. The reasons they gave were the same as Xiaodai's, such as fear of angering the man into taking some form of revenge (Boyer, 2022:402), while others felt that speaking out loud would make the perpetrators embarrassed because it was a very private and sensitive topic. One female participant said: 'If he just touches me, I have no evidence to accuse him.'

The silence of female victims has always been a topic of concern and discussion among feminists (Garrett and Hassan, 2019). With the development of feminist movements, such as the development of the '#MeToo' movement around the world and within China, more women have increasingly realised that breaking the silence can gradually promote women's equal status. Ying, 30 years old, is a young Chinese woman who is very concerned about the topic of women's equality and rights. She told me that because she has encountered sexual harassment, she is very engaged with the '#MeToo' movement and a series of women's topics.

Huawen: Can you share with me the story of your sexual harassment?

Ying: I was taking Guangzhou Metro Line 3 at the time. This line is also



called 'Death Line 3'. There are too many people to get on the train. I rushed to the metro to get to a part-time job and finally squeezed into the carriage and huddled with the people around me. At this time, I felt something rubbing my butt. I tilted my head and looked back and found a man in his 30s or 40s with one hand on the armrest and the other underneath. But because it was too crowded, I couldn't turn my body to see what his hand was doing. But I could still feel something rubbing my buttocks. Just when we stopped at the next station, some people got out of the car. I turned around a little bit and saw his other hand on his genitals.

Huawen: So when you found him rubbing your butt with his genitals, how did you feel?

Ying: It's disgusting. I really had a physical reaction and wanted to vomit. When I found out, I turned my whole body to face him, and asked him loudly: 'What are you doing to me?' And then many people around me were taken aback by me. They all turned sideways to look at him. The zipper of his pants was still open at this time. I yelled: 'This abnormal guy has his trousers down.' Then he wanted to get out of the carriage, but because there were too many people, he couldn't squeeze out of the carriage until the next stop.

Huawen: You're really brave. Many women daren't say anything in public. Why did you choose to point it out in public?

Ying: Actually, I wasn't sure at first whether he was sexually harassing me because it was too crowded. If I hadn't seen him masturbating, maybe I wouldn't have pointed it out in public. One [reason] is that I think this kind of behaviour is too disgusting, and I can't accept it. Second, because I saw him unzip his trousers at the time, there was evidence of sexual harassment that I could accuse him of. Otherwise, he might have quibbled if I hadn't had any evidence.

Ying told me that, since she had this experience of sexual harassment, she has paid attention to such topics because she herself has become very careful, but she feels that this is unfair. Women have been sexually harassed by strangers but have felt full of panic in their surroundings, which is not fair on women. Female victims have changed their daily routines as a precaution but there is a low cost to harassers for their crimes. Ying also told me that she thinks women should speak out loudly when they encounter sexual harassment if they can protect their own safety. 'Because the fault is

not ours, it's on the perpetrator.'

When interviewing Xiaodai and Ying, I noticed that, when female victims are being sexually harassed, they have different ways of responding to the criminal behaviours, such as leaving quickly, or they may choose to publicly accuse the perpetrator, but both decisions are made based on the consideration of protecting themselves.

According to the research conducted by Neupane and Chesney-Lind (2013) on the issue of sexual harassment faced by women in public transportation in Nepal, young women in Nepal experience significant trauma as a consequence of sexual harassment. However, the female victims display reluctance in reporting incidents to local authorities because of lacking trust in the authoritative institutions, as the female victims fear potential retaliation or exposure to future risks. In certain instances, if women fear that those around them will not trust them as victims, they will choose to remain silent in order to protect themselves. Because some victims are unwilling to talk about their experiences or report the incidents to officials, the statistics on the real incidence of sexual harassment will be affected (Mellgren, et al., 2018). Additionally, there may be some differences between the accounts of sexual harassment cases that are recorded and those that actually occur.

## **Men can also be victims of sexual harassment**

During my investigation, I found that the victims of sexual harassment on public transport are not only women but also men. However, women are more likely to report being sexually harassed than men. But because men's subjective sense of security in public spaces is greater than women's, their awareness of danger is lower than women's (Larkin and Popaleni, 1994). This can be shown from the accounts of my male participants, who almost never presuppose that they might be sexually harassed. When they do encounter sexual harassment, they have very strong reactions

of resistance and hostility.

Jiaqi and Yuanshan were the only two male interviewees who told me that they had experienced sexual harassment. One of them was sexually harassed by a male passenger, and the other by a female passenger. They both seemed embarrassed when they told me about their experiences, but their responses were different from those of the female victims as they were unwilling to talk more about their experiences. They thought it was shameful for men to be sexually harassed. Research on sexual harassment against men remains limited (Berdahl and Magley, 1996), but I found that sexual harassment against men makes male victims feel the damage and loss of masculinity.

Jiaqi is a very extroverted young man, about 24 years old, tall and thin. When I asked if he had ever experienced sexual harassment in public spaces, he answered positively: 'Yes'. But when I asked what was going on at the time, his eyes became a little evasive, and he hesitated for a while, saying: 'Forget it, if it helps you with your research, it doesn't matter.' Finally, he said:

Jiaqi: I went to work in a hotel as a lobby manager after graduating from high school, and I got off work late. One day, I remember that it was about nine o'clock in the evening. I took the metro home and kept looking at my phone on the metro. Then I felt that someone was staring at me all the time. When I looked up, it was a boy who was a little shorter than me. I couldn't tell the look in his eyes, but I just thought he was weird. Because we were both men, I didn't care. When I got off the platform, I heard someone call me to wait. I turned around, and it was the little man, and he wanted my contact information. I thought it was strange, so I didn't give it to him. I left the metro station and walked home. There weren't many people on the street. I noticed a shadow of a person behind me. I looked back and found that it was the same man. I didn't want to cause trouble, so I speeded up and turned into another street, but found he was still following me. I was quite angry and turned back, and yelled at him: 'You're sick, don't follow me.' Then I quickly stopped a passing taxi and took the taxi back home.

Like Jiaqi's reduction of precautions around other men, most men will measure their safety level when they encounter unfamiliar men in public spaces, but this estimated safety environment is different from that of women. Research suggests that women first consider whether they are likely to be sexually harassed and assaulted when assessing public places, and after that they will consider the risk of being robbed and other security issues. However, men first think about whether they can adequately defend themselves against other men's attacks, such as robbery (Lane et al., 2009; Stanko, 1987). Jiaqi's experience shows that men will ignore same-sex sexual harassment to a certain extent, while Yuanshan (24-year-old), who had just become an office worker, demonstrates that men can also reduce their defences against sexual harassment by female strangers.

Yuanshan: I usually travel by metro and occasionally take the bus. Once I went to a company for work and took the bus home. At that time, there was no seat on the bus, so I stood near the back door and held on to the handrail. Because the bus is sometimes not very stable and shakes frequently, it's inevitable that you bump into the passengers around you. That day, I felt someone touch my side and make physical contact. I didn't care at the beginning, but suddenly I felt the person grabbing my ass with a hand. I looked back in surprise and found that it was a middle-aged aunt, about 40 or 50 years old. I'm pretty sure it was her because there were no other passengers beside us, and she was the closest to me. I felt a little ashamed and couldn't publicly accuse an aunt of sexually harassing me, so I immediately got out of the bus at the next stop.

When I suggested that they had been sexually harassed, both Yuanshan and Jiaqi stated that they had never thought they would be the target of sexual harassment. They also mentioned that being sexually harassed as a man is a difficult thing to speak about because there is so little sexual harassment against men, which made them feel very ashamed. Even so, this phenomenon shows that, on public transport, the targets

of sexual harassment are not only female victims, but men may also be subjected to same-sex or opposite-sex sexual harassment. Nevertheless, the fact that these male victims felt the damage to their manhood also proves that women are stereotyped to be victims of sexual harassment. This emphasised their sex role, which also reflects the gender inequality in public spaces (Srivastava, 2012; Bastomski and Smith, 2017). Public spaces have been seen as a male domain (Gekoski et al., 2017; Rosewarne, 2007), which affects the cultural norms of Chinese women in China's patriarchal society. When describing the patriarchal society, Johnson once pointed out that:

if men's use of coercion and violence against women is a pervasive pattern – and it is – it is because force and violence are supported in a patriarchal society; it is because women are designated as desirable and legitimate objects of male control and because in a society organized around control, force and violence work. (Johnson, 2004: 28)

Jiaqi and Yuanshan did not explain why they thought it was an abnormal thing for men to be sexually harassed. Patriarchal society seems to be a social system in that people have not particularly thought about the problems of such a system in daily life. However, the daily feelings of everyone reflect the harm that the patriarchal system has brought to most women, or to men like Jiaqi and Yuanshan. On the other hand, although both Jiaqi and Yuanshan felt ashamed after experiencing sexual harassment, it is worth mentioning that when Jiaqi was sexually harassed by a man, he rebuked the male offender loudly, while Yuanshan refused to accuse his female harasser because, in the context of hegemonic masculinity, men feel ashamed to be sexually harassed by women in public places.

## **The impact of the fear of sexual harassment**

Research indicates that sexual harassment has a serious psychological impact

(Schneider et al., 1997; Avina and O'Donohue, 2002), such as women being afraid to go out alone, especially at night. According to a sample survey examining women's fear of sexual assault conducted by Mark Warr (1985) in urban Seattle and quoted in Vera-Gary's research (2018: 13), 42% of women are afraid of going out alone, but only 9% of men. Whether or not women have experienced sexual harassment, they will adopt precautionary measures to improve their sense of safety in public spaces (Vera-Gray, 2018: 79–107).

Whether or not sex/gender-segregated public service facilities such as women's carriages can really help women to reduce their risk awareness and improve the safety of the surrounding environment has become a topic of great concern to passengers. For example, one of the main reasons for the women's carriages set up in Guangzhou and Shenzhen is to prevent sexual harassment and help women achieve safe travel and improve mobility. However, the design of the women's carriages is based on personal moral behaviours without the mandatory requirement for passengers to prove their sex identity, which greatly reduces its expected effectiveness. At the same time, the women's carriages are expected to have some negative effects, such as reinforcing the notion of women as vulnerable, and also changing women's behaviour but not men's. They potentially also increase the probability that women who use ordinary carriages will be sexually harassed. During the interviews, some female interviewees stated that they did not oppose the establishment of women's carriages, and even supported it, but their biggest concern was whether they could actually protect women. Mengmeng, a 23-year-old 'Guangpiao' (广漂; referring to people working but not born in Guangzhou), said in an interview that she does not want the women's carriage to become counterproductive:

Mengmeng: I can empathise with women who need help. They need some protection in such a complicated social environment. The women's carriage is a good proposal but based on the current operating status of this

compartment, and public debates about it on social media, it can't help with the fear of sexual harassment from female passengers. As far as I know, there are positive and negative comments about the female carriage. Some of my female friends are also sceptical of this compartment. They're worried about whether they will be more likely to be sexually harassed if they travel in the non-segregated carriages and, if they are harassed, whether they could be blamed for not using the women-only carriage, and so taking an 'unnecessary risk'.

In the quote above, Mengmeng expressed her concerns about women's safety on public transport. The current women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen cannot eliminate women's fear of sexual harassment on public transport; on the contrary, they might bring some negative effects. Access to public space is a basic human right, but there are different gendered perceptions of the vigilance required within the public environment, which leads to different safety measures. In line with Dhillon and Bakaya's (2014) research in India, also Infante-Vargas and Boyer (2020a) research in Mexico, concerns were expressed by my participants that the introduction of women's carriages did not address the underlying causes of sexual harassment.

Women routinely perform a multitude of different forms of safety work in public spaces, while many men will not do so. Men's awareness of the safety of public spaces is reflected in the consideration of their own safety in general, and they hardly ever consider safety from the perspective of sexual harassment. Shutiao is a friend of mine. He told me that he has hardly ever considered whether he will encounter sexual harassment. Rather, when he is out, he will judge whether he is safe by looking at the strangers around him.

Shutiao: When I go out, I try to put my back against a wall to prevent someone from attacking me from behind. If I usually walk along the road, I will often look at strange men around me, look at their figure, muscle mass, age, appearance, etc., to judge whether I can beat my opponent in the event of a fight [Shutiao, a 27-year-old, man].

Men are fearful of violence from other men, but not sexual violence. They believe that they may be attacked by same-sex strangers in public spaces, so they will make advance judgements about male strangers. But this is based on basic safety considerations around the general threat of physical violence from other men, not from the perspective of sexual violence. Similarly to Shutiao, Sizhi, another male interviewee of mine, also said that he would be more vigilant around men when going out and would think ahead of time about what he should do if he gets into a fight with aggressive men around him.

Sizhi: When I travel, I usually observe the actions and expressions of the men around me to judge whether they seem aggressive towards me. If I meet a young, aggressive man, I usually think about whether I can beat this opponent if he causes harm to me, such as robbery. If I encounter a very tall and strong man, I will generally be vigilant and prepare in advance [Sizhi, a 27-year-old man].

Judging from the descriptions of male interviewees, when they go out, they will barely be wary of strange women because most of them determine their safety by judging the strange men around them. Unlike men's risk awareness, women's concerns about the public environment are first to consider whether they are likely to be sexually assaulted by strangers. Wenqi is a young woman in her twenties who came to Shenzhen to work. She has a very beautiful appearance. During the interview, she said that she had never dared to go out alone, and even if there were women travelling with her, she tried to avoid going outside too late.

Wenqi: I'm actually very afraid of going out alone, because the apartment I live in is a bit far away, so I try to get home from work before nine o'clock in the evening. Sometimes I need to socialise, so I will call my friends to pick me up and go back together. Because I've heard stories about women being sexually assaulted or harassed, I was very afraid that such things would



happen to me. Some people are looking for money, but committing sexual harassment is just a whim. If it happens to me, I will give him all my money for peace.

Wenqi's thoughts are not unusual. During the interview process, fear of sexual assault was the issue that women said they worry about most when they go out, but men are worried about attacks of their own, such as robbery. For example, even though Wenqi has not experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault, she still has strong fears and worries about sexual harassment. This is because today's women are living in a climate of fear. Media reports about women experiencing sexual violence will increase the number of fearful women (Vera-Gray, 2018). Women who have experienced or witnessed violence in their family are likely to feel more fear of the outside world because fear of the public and private spheres are connected. However, such concerns have seriously affected women's sense of safety in public. Women who lack a sense of safety usually employ various precautions to increase their safety.

## **Safety strategies**

Women dress themselves up as a 'good girl' by changing their daily clothes and makeup, such as wearing long trousers, light makeup, or no makeup, for example, so as to avoid appearing 'sexually attractive' as far as possible. As Quinones mentioned (2020), women in Bogotá also face serious issues of sexual harassment in public transportation. In consideration of their safety, female passengers typically adopt safety strategies such as altering their destinations and avoiding tight-fitting clothing in favour of loose-fitting, long coats to reduce unwanted attention. Although they said in their interviews that they still want to wear beautiful clothes and makeup, considering that such an appearance will make strangers feel that they are 'frivolous', they have to 'normalise' themselves, not even hesitating to make themselves 'ugly'. Xuemei is a very good friend of mine. She is studying in Shenzhen. She told me that

when she goes out, she will pay extra attention to what she wears.

Huawen: What do you mean by special dress? Does it mean any special clothing?

Xuemei: Generally, when I go to school or on daily trips, I choose to wear a hoodie, a long-sleeved shirt, and jeans. I try to avoid wearing short tops or shorts or short skirts. On the one hand, I think that ordinary clothes will make it easier to travel daily. Also, I think these kinds of conservative clothes can be safer and not too ostentatious.

Huawen: What kind of danger do you mean by security?

Xuemei: For example, to prevent 'perverts', I will try my best to pay attention to what I wear.

Huawen: Do you like this 'comfortable' dress, or is it for safety reasons?

Xuemei: Mostly from a safety point of view, because on weekends, when I go out shopping with my friends or go out to play, I'll wear some of my favourite clothes, such as suspender skirts. Or maybe it's because I feel safer travelling with friends [Xuemei, a 24-year-old young woman in Shenzhen].

This is a practice that is shared by many women, who feel that changing their clothes improves their safety. They think that if they do not wear appropriate clothes one day, their outfits are likely to be seen as provocative clothing that may arouse sexual impulses in offenders. Therefore, they pay a great deal of attention to their appearance and try to reduce the sexual impulse of potential criminals in order to protect their own safety.

According to Beiner's research on rapists, however, the victim's clothing is not an important factor in triggering sexual assault. The offenders usually seek passive women against whom to commit their crimes, and very passive and submissive women often wear clothing that covers their bodies, such as long-sleeved clothes (Beiner, 2007). Because of their fear of sexual assault, and also as a result of our

victim-blaming culture, women are blamed for sexual assaults due to what they were wearing, so they think that it is a safe option to dress more ‘conservatively’, and that this will make them less likely to encounter the problems of being sexually assaulted. This kind of latent consciousness invisibly gives women a false sense of security, and they hope that their clothing can deliver a safety signal to unfamiliar men that they are not sexually attractive targets. Shiyu also expressed similar thoughts in her interview. She told me that she would choose different makeup according to different occasions because she believed that makeup could have a visual impact and provide sexual cues to men.

Shiyu: I usually pay attention to my makeup when I go to work. I choose light makeup or warm coloured makeup. Because I think, for example, even though the popular ‘cat makeup’ is very attractive recently, when I go to work with such makeup, it’s very ostentatious and likely to be stared at by others. When I go to nightclubs with friends on weekends, I usually wear heavy makeup or makeup that looks like western makeup and cat makeup [Shiyu, 26 years old, working in a foreign company].

Like Xuemei, Siyu believes that, by changing her appearance and keeping herself conservative, she can improve her safety index and reduce the risk of sexual harassment and sexual assault. An exhibition called ‘What were you wearing?’ held in the United States in 2018 displayed the clothes worn by female victims of sexual assault (Gomez et al., 2018). In this exhibition, the clothes worn by the violated women are rarely revealing or sexy, but resemble ‘safe’ clothes. On the one hand, women’s unconscious ‘safety awareness’ is based on the fear of criminal acts such as sexual harassment; on the other hand, although women are disgusted by the victim-blaming culture, they show powerless in such cultural climates. Therefore women change their appearance to make themselves safe.

To some extent, this is consistent with the ‘victim guilty theory’, which posits that

women who wear exposing clothes are more likely to be bothered by sexual harassment, while ‘good girls’ with conservative appearances are less likely to be sexually assaulted. Women themselves are forced to buy into stereotyped ideas about sexuality and femininity. In addition, women’s considerations about their safety strategy are also in line with/confirmed by Tianyu, my male participant (discussed above), who thinks that if a woman is dressed a certain way it is fine to stare at her, and that the behaviour of staring at a woman’s body cannot be regarded as sexual harassment.

### **Creating a safe environment**

In addition to changing what they wear when going out, women also try to find and create a safe environment to enhance their sense of security. Xuemei told me that she would choose her own transport mode according to the purpose of the trip.

Xuemei: I generally decide what I’ll wear according to the purpose and location of the trip, and I also consider the mode of transport. Generally, I choose the metro when I go out to eat or go to school, but if I want to go to a bar or nightclub with friends, I won’t choose the metro or the bus. Because I usually wear short skirts when going out to nightclubs. I think it’s very unsafe to wear short skirts when taking the metro or bus at night. It might be better to take a taxi. Although once I experienced verbal sexual harassment from the taxi driver, I was scared to death at the time. Later, I didn’t dare to travel alone at night. If I must go out, I would take a taxi together with my friend.

Because they are worried about being sexually harassed or being followed on public transport, women will choose their mode of transportation according to their purpose for travelling and income. Taxis are considered to be a relatively safer form of public transport, followed by the metro or bus. If they chose to travel by metro, the women stated that they had certain strategies to try to create a relatively safe environment

during the journey. Xiaozhi is a young student who is studying in Shenzhen. She told me that every time she takes the metro, she likes to stand in the corner and lean against the carriage wall, which will make her feel safer.

Xiaozhi: I usually travel by metro. If I travel with friends, I feel safer. But if I need to go out alone, I will lean against the corner of the carriage. Leaning against the carriage wall, you don't have to worry about someone doing bad things from behind, such as stealing or sexual harassment, etc. But sometimes, when the carriage is too crowded, I can't find a space in the corner of the carriage, so I try to walk towards other female passengers to find more space, because I think women are safer and more reliable than men [Xiaozhi is a 19-year-old young university student].

Whether choosing a taxi or seeking to find a relatively spacious corner in the metro, or standing with other female passengers, women seem to assume that public transport is a place where sexual harassment usually occurs, and they will try to choose a safe place to keep themselves away from such encounters. Xiaozhi makes her own safety judgements in the metro carriages, such as choosing a position leaning against the carriage wall or choosing to stand with other female passengers. In this way, sexual harassment from strange men can to a certain extent be avoided. These precautioned measures were taken to improve their own safety because of their fear of sexual assault in public.

Whether or not this type of safety precaution can actually stop sexual harassment, it reflects the fundamental status quo: women are extremely watchful and afraid of sexual assaults, such as sexual harassment. They also worry about whether they will make a mistake that gets them into trouble as a result of their own decisions. Therefore, women – not the harasser – assume responsibility for protecting their own safety. Sometimes they may even limit their social activities due to considerations of personal safety. Next, I will explore where women's fear of sexual harassment comes

from.

## **Public transport sexual harassment in pornography**

According to the proposal made by policymakers to provide women's metro carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, preventing sexual harassment is one of the main reasons for setting up these carriages. As discussed above, the policy decision was justified by the long summers and high temperatures in Guangdong province throughout the year, when female passengers usually wear fewer clothes, which frequently leads to more cases of sexual harassment occurring. This view was questioned by my participant, Harrison, who believed that sexual harassment on public transport is one of the East Asian cultural manifestations influenced by Japanese sexual culture. He said:

Harrison: I think the sexual harasser committing crimes on the metro might be because they're affected by Japanese AV. This porn culture makes them into perverts who like to commit crimes on the metro for sexual pleasure.

Japanese adult video (AV) culture has had a great influence on China. Tiantian confessed that when she first saw women's carriages, she thought of the '*tram culture*' (电车文化) in Japanese AVs. Even though she had not seen this kind of AV herself, she had seen reports of male 'salted pig knuckles' (咸猪手; referring to male sexual harassers) in the newspapers, where the media will use the term '*tram Chikan*' (电车痴汉; tram harassers). She did not understand the meaning of this term at first, but then when she checked it out she discovered scenes set on trams that often appeared in Japanese AV.

Tiantian: When I was in high school, I saw media reports that someone was sexually harassed on the bus. I clearly remember them using the term '*tram Chikan*' (电车痴汉). Although I probably understood what it meant, that was

the first time I saw it. I checked on the Internet and found that most of them are related to Japanese AV. Therefore when I saw that the women's carriages were being set up, I guessed that it was to prevent sexual harassment such as '*tram Chikan*'.

The prevalence of these video representations of the sexual harassment of women on public transport normalises such violence. Several male interviewees mentioned the connection between Japanese AV and women's carriages. They also thought that the sexual harassment occurring on the metro or other public transport was due to Japanese AV's impact. As for men, especially those who have no direct sexual experience, AV will have a subtle cultural impact on their sexual behaviour as it provides them with sexual fantasies.

Wuge is a local Cantonese man, who was 36 years old in 2019. He told me that he believed that some sexual harassment on the metro is due to the influence of AV, and that these perpetrators want to seek excitement and pleasure from harassing strangers in public spaces.

Wuge: I don't know if you know that Japanese AV has some specific content about sexual harassment and sexual assault on public transport. Almost all men have watched AV. For those offenders, and I guess maybe because they've watched the AV about sexual assault on the metro, they want to seek some excitement from strangers. The carriages are so crowded, and sometimes the woman may not feel it when she's being touched, and perhaps she feels good about it. Nevertheless, I've absolutely never done it.

In the process of chatting with Wuge, I could feel his frankness and humour, but when Benhao, a young man in Shenzhen, mentioned Japanese AV to me, I learned that it has a profound influence on Chinese men. Because Benhao was my master's degree classmate, I have a close relationship with him, so he could talk to me in more detail about Japanese AV. The content is divided into many types, and most of them re-

enact familiar scenes from everyday life, such as the relationship between teacher and student in the classroom; boss and subordinates in the office; family members at home; or in public places such as restaurants, toilets, or metro carriages.

Huawen: To be honest, do you think these AV products will affect your sexual fantasies?

Benhao: Ummm, I think there still could be a minor impact. Although I would never try this, I think some immature or young men might have fantasised about similar scenes. Because porn shows women as being very resistant at first, but when their sexual needs are satisfied, women will behave very happily, and this might give some immature men the illusion that this sexual behaviour doesn't matter. Most men won't do this, but it could be possible for somebody who watched a pornographic movie to suddenly want to try it, so I think it's a good idea to set up women's carriages on the metro.

Whether or not pornography influences male sexual crimes has been discussed in academia, especially from the 1980s onwards. Some scholars believe that the degree of harm caused by pornography is exaggerated, and that the actual rate of sexual crimes is inversely proportional to the proportion of pornography (Diamond and Uchiyama, 1999); but other scholars have shown that watching pornography increases the likelihood of committing sexual crimes (Zhou et al., 2021). Others, for example, around the debates on pornography during the 1980s and '90s, reject a causal approach and argue that it is too simplistic to assume that images cause people to act in a specific way.

In general, the culture of '*tram Chikan*', which was mentioned by interviewees, is indeed a potential factor in stimulating the crime of sexual harassment on public transport. Some of my participants, like Benhao, suggested that such a pornographic culture might lead to some male audiences developing vague concepts of sexual harassment and they might initiate harassing behaviours for sexual stimulation.



Besides affecting Chinese men, this kind of ‘tram chikan’ culture has increased women’s fear of entering public spaces. Due to the Internet, people can access more information about sexual crimes, including from the news, movies, and books. This leads people to subconsciously form a certain pre-judgement of sexual criminals, which is called the prevailing crime ideology. In western countries, the prevailing crime ideology of criminals is that they are consistently poor, immigrant, male strangers, and victims are only ever passive, white, middle-class women (Vera-Gray, 2018). With the spread and popularity of Japanese AV, women have based their images of victims and offenders on those in the AV, and several female participants had a pre-formed criminal ideology of sexual harassers matching the image characteristics of sexual criminals in the AV, or the image of actors in the AV as described by others.

I think the criminals who sexually harass women in public are usually middle-aged men who have no regular jobs, and their eyes are usually scary, as depicted in the movie [Zhiying, 25 years old ].

As described by this female participant, young women will make certain predictions about middle-aged men and take precautions against them, especially those of the lower class, in advance. The sources of these predictions are related to the portrayals of male criminals in pornographic film products. Alternatively, the public may build stereotypes about sexual harassers based on the media coverage of sexual harassment issues, leading them to suspect that certain groups of people are likely to be high-risk victims or offenders.

Xiaodan: Sometimes, some hot search topics on the news or Weibo will mention that women were sexually harassed while taking the metro, some were helped by the kind people around them, and some were just

photographed and posted online. Although I was lucky, this kind of thing didn't happen to me. But I think there are a lot of news reports on this kind of thing happening, so many women are troubled by this kind of problem. I usually pay attention when taking public transport by myself and try to avoid physical contact with unfamiliar men [Xiaodan, 27 years old].

As Xiaodan explained in the interview, because the news reports state that it is often middle-aged men who perform 'salty pig knuckles' on public transport, she unconsciously has a sense of fear of middle-aged men on public transport and deliberately guards against such groups. According to research, media content is crucial in triggering harassment-related social norms, which in turn either support or discourage harassing behaviours (Galdi et al., 2014). In a patriarchal society, the characteristics of gender roles have additional effects that cause women to fear sexual harassment and foster a criminal ideology of who the harassers are likely to be. Mengmeng told me that she believes the reason why she may be more defensive about middle-aged men on public transport is because of the use of 'exclusion methods' to target this group.

Mengmeng: I'm reminded by my family members all the time that girls must be careful when going out, so I pay special attention to my own safety, especially when I take a bus or taxi alone. I think that older men may not have any sexual needs, and teenage boys can't do anything, so I'm especially wary of young and middle-aged men. If a young man around my age did something to me, I might scold him for his behaviour. But I'm very afraid of middle-aged men because if I encountered sexual harassment by a middle-aged man in public, I would be afraid that no one would help me [Mengmeng, 23 years old].

The constant reminders from her family give Mengmeng a perception that the surrounding environment is dangerous, but her perception of criminal ideology is based on her judgement about the current Chinese patriarchal society. Mengmeng is worried that sexual harassment may happen to her, so she uses the exclusion method

to narrow down the criminal ideology to young and middle-aged men. However, she considers that she can accuse a young male offender more easily than a middle-aged man, because she thinks that it would be difficult to make the people around her trust her.

Although Mengmeng's stereotype of middle-aged men is a personal feeling, young women in China hold a certain criminal ideology about sexual harassment groups, and they are most vigilant around middle-aged men. In a study of sexual harassment among Chinese urban women, power differentials within the patriarchal social structure increase the possibility of women being sexually harassed (Parish et al., 2006). Valentine (1989b), in her investigation of women's fear of male violence and women's perceptions and usage of public space, claimed that the effect on women's mobility is a spatial expression of patriarchy. Therefore, women's concerns about sexual harassment on public transport are still founded on their inferior status within Chinese patriarchal society, as seen in their perspectives about the criminal ideology of male harassers.

## **Who can really help victims of sexual harassment on public transport?**

### **The protective effect of the women's carriages**

The discussion in chapter 4, about whether setting up the women's carriages can really help women solve the problem of sexual harassment or ease women's fear of sexual harassment, aroused the concern of my participants. After the interviews, both male and female interviewees asked me the same question: 'Do you think women's carriages can really protect women?' Or 'Do you think women's carriages can really promote gender equality?' It seems that young people support and affirm the concept

of protecting victims of sexual harassment on public transport, but are doubtful as to whether women's carriages can achieve these goals. My participants' attitudes show that they do not firmly reject the idea of setting up women's carriages but hope these carriages will actually be able to end the issue of sexual harassment on public transport. Although women's metro carriages were installed in Guangzhou and Shenzhen almost simultaneously, Siqu, a resident of Shenzhen, informed me that she believed Shenzhen's carriages to be superior. In other words, she believes that Shenzhen's carriages have a greater likelihood of resolving the issue of sexual harassment on public transport.

Siqu: My home is in Shenzhen, but I go to Guangzhou almost every fortnight to meet friends. I've seen the women's carriages on the Guangzhou Metro and also the women's carriages in Shenzhen. But I personally think that the operation of women's carriages in Shenzhen is much better than in Guangzhou. Because I also follow the official WeChat account of the Shenzhen Metro Company. They used to publish articles on how women deal with sexual harassment on the metro and prevent sexual harassment in public spaces. When taking the Shenzhen Metro, you often hear radio broadcasts about the use of women's priority carriages, but the carriages on the Guangzhou Metro are only set up, and people don't know how to use them.

As I discussed before, women's carriages in Guangdong Province are 'priority for women first' carriages, rather than women-only. Hence, this voluntary and non-mandatory regulation cannot prevent sexual harassment on transport, and it is basically only for publicity. The public welfare popularisation of sexual harassment by the metro company mentioned by Siqu is currently a relatively popular practice. In April 2020, 57 metro stations in Shanghai, China, issued the 'Sexual Harassment Prevention Handbook' in which four essential points were mentioned: 'Do not hesitate; Do not be afraid; Do not let him go; Do not blame yourself' to encourage women to speak up when faced with sexual harassment. This manual is also accompanied by a legal case, concerning 'Salty Pig Hand Sentenced to Six Months' as

a publicity case (Li, J., 2020).

It can be seen that the prevention of sexual harassment on public transport has always been an important manifestation of the progress of urban public security. However, Shanghai has not adopted the method of women's carriages in Guangdong Province using sex/gender segregation to protect women. On the contrary, the Shanghai Metro's approach is to encourage women to 'advance' instead of 'retreat'. This safety manual is an example of Siqui's suggestion that preventing sexual harassment through dissemination can allow women to understand the harm it causes, stop the 'victim blaming', and enable more potential victims to understand that sexual harassment is not a problem of women. At the same time, authorities such as metro companies will also target potential perpetrators with a certain deterrent, telling them that sexual harassment is not a zero-cost crime, and that sexual harassment on public transport also faces criminal legal penalties.

Sexual harassment may be prevented in a variety of ways, not just by the metro companies. I also found that sympathy and help from strangers is a very good way to solve the problem of sexual harassment faced by female victims. In the interviews, I found that women in particular are sympathetic to female victims and willing to extend a helping hand to unfamiliar victims.

### **Women are more able to sympathise with women**

'If I hadn't helped her, she would have been more afraid.' When I first met Yin, it was in her school coffee shop. I thought she was a very outgoing, free and simple young woman. When she talked about her love of rock bands, I thought she was very cool. She is a non-local student who came to Shenzhen from another city for postgraduate study, but like many other non-local students, she hopes to stay in Shenzhen to find a

job and take root. When talking about women's carriages, she said: 'Although I won't use the carriages, I think some women might need them.'

Huawen: Why would you not use women's carriages?

Yin: I don't think I need to be protected. It can be said that I don't need to be protected by society in this way, nor do I need to protect myself because I'm a woman.

Huawen: Then why do you just say that someone would need it?

Yin: Because I think there is a certain reason for their establishment. Our school is near the university town. There are many students, and the metro is always very crowded. I've seen the process of other female students being sexually harassed, so if the carriages can help this part of the group reduce the risk of being sexually harassed, I think it's necessary to set it up.

Huawen: Would you mind telling us in detail about your witness experience at that time? Where did it happen, and what was the specific situation?

Yin: I remember it was at this metro entrance near the uni. I was taking the metro with my friends to go shopping in the city centre. It was almost the evening peak, so there were a lot of people, and it was very crowded. When I got on the metro, I saw a young woman from our university who was also in the carriage. She and I had only met once or twice, so she looked familiar. After two metro stops, I saw a young man in his 20s or 30s standing behind her, touching her ass with his hand, and the woman looked panicked and a little scared. But no one came out to accuse the man.

Huawen: Did she come out to accuse the offender in person? Was there anyone to help her?

Yin: She moved her position a bit, but the man quickly moved close to her again. I'm pretty sure she was being sexually harassed. There was no one around her to help her speak up. I walked over and pretended to be her friend, put my arm around her shoulder, and asked her where she was going on the metro. This woman was shocked when I did that, after all, we'd never talked before. But she quickly understood my intention and then pretended to chat with me. The man behind her quickly moved away and got off at the next stop.

Huawen: You're really brave. You can stand up for a stranger who needs help.

Yin: Women can understand women better. If I hadn't helped her, she would have been more fearful. I'm a woman so I understand the fear, and people always say women support women.

Huawen: If you encounter the same situation again one day, do you also want others to stand up like you?

Yin: If one day I encounter something similar, I will immediately make him go away in public. Because women have been silent, making these men feel that women are easy to bully.

More young women think that helping other women is seen as a feminist act, that 'girls help girls'. Similarly to Yin, during their interviews, many female interviewees said that, if they encountered other women experiencing sexual harassment while travelling, they would help by asking strong men around them to stop the harassers or use their mobile phones to record the appearance of the offender and then call the police.

It has been shown that women have greater sympathy for sexual harassment victims than men (Valentine-French and Radtke, 1989). Depending on their personal experiences, women may have different levels of fear of sexual harassment, but by comprehending the concerns that other women have in particular situations, women may feel empathy for female victims. However, in my interviews, I found that the men held different attitudes from the female interviewees.

### **Men's self-preservation psychology**

As discussed above, the female participants said that if they or other women encounter sexual harassment, they expect that there is likely to be a man around them who can stand up to put a certain amount of psychological pressure on the perpetrator or help the female victim. However, during the interviews, I found that the male

interviewees were hesitant about intervening or helping when a stranger is a victim. They said that it is difficult to accurately judge whether a strange person is experiencing sexual harassment; or if their physique and strength are not as great as those of the perpetrator, they are afraid of getting themselves into trouble. Men will judge the degree of safety in the environment around them by comparing whether they are stronger than the offender. Qianxun is a 27-year-old office worker who has just begun working in Guangzhou. He said that he must first consider whether he can 'win against the harasser' before he is willing to help an unfamiliar victim.

Huawen: So if you see someone being sexually harassed on the metro, will you help?

Qianxun: I'm not sure. I would have to see what kind of sexual harassment the victim is experiencing and whether it's serious and needs to stop immediately. In addition, I would make a judgement about the perpetrator, if I can win against him. Otherwise, if I take further action, I might get hurt myself.

Qianxun believes that the severity of sexual harassment depends on the behaviour of the abuser, such as exposing his genitals, touching the victims with his genitals or intentionally touching the victim's butt, which are considered very serious and dangerous actions. He would not intervene and put himself at risk for ordinary groping, which does not cause physical damage. or if the acts are not too severe.

Unlike Qianxun's hesitant answer, Shutiao firmly gave the answer:

I wouldn't help because I would have no idea whether the other party is actually experiencing sexual harassment. This situation is too complicated. What if two people are lovers and they're just flirting, or what if the man just made some physical contact but not on purpose? If I go to blame the man directly, will it put everyone in a very embarrassing situation? This is too embarrassing [Shutiao, 27 years old, man].



A case similar to Shutiao's hypothetical one actually occurred at China's most prestigious university – Tsinghua University. In 2020, a young woman from Tsinghua University exposed on social media that she had been sexually harassed in the cafeteria by a male student from the same school (The Paper News, 2020d). As discussed, the young man touched her ass in the cafeteria, and she exposed all of his personal information on the Internet. For a time, this event became the hottest social topic. Many netizens advocated justice for the young woman and resistance to the sexual harassment of women in public spaces. However, after several days of investigation, surveillance videos proved that it was only the male student's backpack that had touched the woman's buttocks, not his body. But, due to being accused, this man was subjected to cyber violence and even verbally attacked when someone recognised him on campus.

With the growth of the feminist movement and sympathy for female victims, more and more people believe that encouraging women can enable them to talk openly about their experiences of sexual harassment. But the 'sexual harassment' reversal incident at Tsinghua University has caused an increasing number of people to become hesitant about the nature of sexual harassment or, like Shutiao, to question whether sexual harassment is actually occurring between strangers. Whether one can prove that a victim has been sexually harassed based only on the victim's remarks exposes issues such as the difficulty of obtaining evidence for sexual harassment. The decline in male sympathy for the sexual harassment of strangers also demonstrates to a certain extent that they cannot judge these behaviours as sexual harassment, and reveals their self-protection mentality.

When women experience sexual harassment, they anticipate some level of assistance from bystanders, especially male bystanders. However, while women sympathise with female victims and are mostly willing to provide assistance, men will only help the

victims based on considerations of their own safety. Another issue that needs attention is that men can also become victims. In people's stereotypical thinking, the victims of sexual harassment are usually women, so when men reveal their experiences of sexual harassment, they usually have less credibility than women. Additionally, male victims tend to receive less sympathy than female victims when they encounter sexual harassment of almost the same level (Davies, 2002; Mulder et al., 2016).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have broadened the participants' discussion of sexual harassment on public transport beyond the discussion of women's metro carriages. The study discovered that men can also be the targets of sexual harassment, although women are still the primary targets, by discussing the experiences of two male victims and several female victims of sexual harassment on public transport.

The participants' understanding of sexual harassment is still not sufficiently clear, however. Similarly to the findings of Dhillon and Bakaya's (2014) research on the establishment of women-only carriages in the Delhi metro, the setting of crowded public transport makes it challenging to recognise sexual harassment behaviours. Additionally, men and women have different concepts of sexual harassment. Some forms of behaviour that women experience as sexual harassment are not considered sexual harassment by men.

This chapter has also further elaborated upon the theory of 'the geography of fear' and explored the cultural impact of Japanese AV on sexual harassment on public transport. In a patriarchal society, women's fear of public space and their criminal ideology predictions targeting middle-aged men have deepened women's disadvantaged position. In such a setting, women are more likely to sympathise with

female victims, whereas men are more hesitant about assisting victims. In the next chapter, I will examine the issues raised by the women's metro carriages regarding the young Chinese generation's discourse on gendered issues.

## **Chapter 6: Changing gender relations in China**

The discussions in the previous chapter provide clear evidence of a strong correlation between the gendering of space in public transport and the occurrence of gender-based violence in such contexts. The participants in my study demonstrated a strong interest in gender-related issues, including issues of gendered space and sexual harassment. It is evident that examining the gendered space in public transport, particularly through the lens of women-only/priority carriages, created a platform for participants to draw connections between their experiences in public transport, their perceptions of women's space, and other gender-related aspects of their lives. The focus on women-only/priority carriages has thus served as a catalyst for discussing broader issues related to gendered spaces, and itself created a discursive space in which to discuss broader gender issues. The interviews revealed that the gendering of spaces and issues of gender-based violence were not confined to public transport alone. The women I interviewed also spoke about how their lives and the spaces they occupied were more broadly influenced by gender, commenting on their childhood experiences, family dynamics, education, workplace environments, and even online spaces in the interview discussions.

Therefore, the interviews clearly indicate that developing a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which participants' lives were influenced by gender helped shed light on their specific opinions and experiences of women-only carriages. It also facilitated an understanding of the underlying reasons behind their perspectives on such carriages. In this chapter, I will delve into the broader gender issues that emerged from the interviews, illustrating how the topic of women-only carriages both informs and is informed by other gender-related experiences. Thus I explore the participants' discussions on a range of gender discourses and gender-related topics in contemporary Chinese society. In analysing their viewpoints, particular emphasis will

be placed on their evolving attitudes towards gender identity, gender roles, gender relations, and other relevant factors that have contributed to these changes.

As previously described, most of my participants are post-Mao generation who were born after the 1980s and under the one-child policy. Most of them were also born in Chinese cities after the opening-up reformation. They have experienced a series of multi-environmental changes during their childhood and adolescence, such as the economic factors of the opening-up, the cultural factors of the introduction of western culture into the Chinese mainland market, and the political factors of the one-child policy, which all had a particular impact on the growth of this young Chinese generation. However, by adopting Confucianism as the state ideology, the Chinese government has continued to exercise strong control over gender construction. The post-Mao generation has been constrained by the return to the traditional requirements of Confucian patriarchal concepts, as well as the less traditional developments during their youth. Therefore, facing the influence of multiple factors, the younger generation in China displays a high degree of interest in gender topics and frequently debates them. In part, this chapter focuses on my participants' confusion about gendered discourses and the contradictions they face in simultaneously pursuing individual success and attempting to conform to traditional gender roles required by Confucianism. These include their changing gender identities and gender relations, and below I discuss and analyse the factors affecting the changes in their gendered perceptions within these changeable contexts.

## **Stigmatised Chinese feminism**

In Chapter 2, I outlined and discussed the main economic and political policies in China since 1949, which have had a considerable impact on gender relations among the parents of the one-child generation, as well as within the younger generation.

During the interviews, I found that young people seem to be particularly interested in topics related to gender, and one indication of this is their attention to feminism. In relation to the long-inferior status of women, ‘feminism’ was like a dawn that brought new enlightenment for women. Even though Chinese feminism has its own history, western feminism was unfamiliar in China until the reform era.

However, the word ‘feminism’ rapidly turned into a negative word with derogatory implications as it spread within popular discourse. Especially with the accelerated diffusion of the internet, net terms have become daily language. Many young people know the term feminism through the related internet buzzwords. Social media in particular provides an extensive online platform for people to express negative attitudes through such terms as ‘*Feminist whores*’ (女权婊; nüquanbiao) and ‘*feminist cancer*’ (女权癌; nüquan’ai), generating an image of radical, selfish, and money-hungry Chinese women (Wu and Dong, 2019). The most well-known and widely used term is ‘*Chinese country feminism*<sup>12</sup>’ (中华田园女权; zhonghua tianyuan nüquan). The word ‘*Chinese country*’ (田园; tianyuan) is taken from a type of ‘countryside mongrel’ animal, used to describe the non-pure-breed type, for example, ‘Chinese country dog’ (中华田园犬) or ‘Chinese country cat’ (中华田园猫), as distinct from the pure foreign category.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the term ‘Chinese feminism’ implies unique attitudes towards gender relations among some young Chinese people.

Linju: What is the research subject of your PhD?

Huawen: Gender studies and women’s studies.

---

<sup>12</sup> ‘Chinese country feminism’ is a derogatory term used in anti-feminist discourse and literally translated from ‘Chinese mongrel feminism’. When applied to feminism, ‘country’ emphasises the notion of ‘mongrel’, and it would be in line with how the term is used in anti-feminist discourses to suggest that feminism in China has been corrupted.

<sup>13</sup> Pure foreign category: In the Chinese category, ‘Chinese country dog’ refers to local mongrel dog breeds, rather than dog breeds that have pedigrees, like French bulldogs. Hence, the Chinese prefer pedigree species and ridicule the Chinese country breeds as impure and inferior. And in the context of Chinese country feminism, the argument amongst anti-feminists tends to be that feminism in China is dominated by this kind of corrupt or ‘mongrel feminism’.

Linju: Oh, I see, feminism, Chinese country feminism.

This conversation took place when my participant Linju and I first introduced ourselves. Many young Chinese people do not even have a clear concept of feminism, or Chinese country feminism, but every participant clearly knows that ‘Chinese country feminism’ is a derogatory term. Given this confusion and hostility towards feminism, the relations between traditional pressures on women and their increasingly untraditional gender awareness are in sharp contrast and create a source of tension. Ying, one of the rare participants who paid attention to women’s movements and gender equality, nonetheless told me that she was not a feminist because she did not want to be identified with ‘Chinese country feminism’.

Ying: I’m very concerned about some feminist movements, like the #MeToo movement, because some young women around me have encountered sexual harassment before, or anything unfavourable, so I usually pay extra attention to topics about gender.

Huawen: So you’re a feminist, right?

Ying: No, I’m not.

Huawen: Why? Why do you think you’re not a feminist?

Ying: You know now in China, feminism is always confused with Chinese country feminism. When you claim to be a feminist, other people can’t understand what feminists stand for, so I don’t call myself a feminist, but I still care about the progress of Chinese feminism.

According to Wu and Dong, Chinese feminism has been confronting difficulties stemming from state control and suppression. Suffering pressure from the state and government, feminists in China maintain a low profile and some state feminists, such as the All-China Women’s Federation, usually avoid using the term ‘feminism’ (Wu

and Dong, 2019; Wang and Zhang, 2010). Nevertheless, due to Chinese feminist activities being politically stigmatised and misunderstood, the general public avoids becoming connected to feminist activists, which poses a new challenge to Chinese feminism. Qingjie is one of the participants who was biased against feminism and feminists.

Huawen: What do you think feminists look like?

Qingjie: Do you mean feminists in China? They're female boxers (nüquan; 女拳) like the description on the Internet.

Huawen: Why do you think they're called female boxers?

Qingjie: Just like female boxers, they prove their existence by attacking men frantically. They're unreasonable but feel themselves to be righteous.

Recently, in Chinese social networks, Chinese feminists have been called 'female boxers' (女拳击手; nüquan jishou), because, in Chinese pronunciation, female boxing (女拳; nüquan) is pronounced the same as feminism (女权; nüquan). Expressing feminist viewpoints is also called 'punching' (打拳; daquan), which means fighting against men and patriarchy. Like Chinese country feminism, this title also has a derogatory meaning. However, the difference between the two is that female boxing is considered to be more radical and aggressive since the feminists who engage in it usually make personal attacks on men who hold different opinions. There is a certain correlation between my participants' attitudes towards Chinese feminism and their perspectives on women's carriages. For instance, Qingjie, a male participant, opposed the implementation of women's carriages as he viewed it as discriminatory against men. He argues that if women's carriages were introduced, there should also be a men's carriage. His stance on women's carriages was still rooted in considering male benefits, and it reflects certain biases he holds toward Chinese feminism.



With the increased attention on gender topics among the public, some observers have called this phenomenon a ‘Chinese feminist awakening’. Unlike self-organised institutions or government-organised groups, this involves more feminists at the grassroots level (Wu and Dong, 2019). Within the democratisation, these women-empowering viewpoints of ordinary women can be accessed through online debates on social media, rather than in academic journals or official documents (Munford and Waters, 2014). Also, based on considerations of Chinese social ideology, the CCP’s monopoly on power has made citizens sensitive to topics relating to state policy and democracy, so when they express personal opinions online individual feminists feel free and unrestrained. Moreover, promoting feminist viewpoints has become more prevalent online and has been developing into ‘popular feminism’.

Due to the changing gender and family system in post-reform urban China, modern Chinese women face unprecedented pressure and challenges from the labour market, family, and society; they suffer dual-burden stress imposed by traditional ideology and modernity (Ji, 2017), and the internet cultural realm has become their crucial battleground (Tan, 2017). Wu and Dong (2019: 472) use the term ‘made-in-China feminism’, or ‘C-fem’ to describe women’s agitation in contemporary China.

Although C-fem is usually treated as controversial and negative, it is still considered to be a new cultural backlash, reacting against the specific hegemonic discourse and Confucian patriarchal tradition manifesting in China’s current conjuncture (Wu and Dong, 2019). Hence, focusing on C-fem and current gendered contradictions has great significance for exploring gender relations and gender dynamics in Chinese society.

Ailin is one of my female interviewees, a 23-year-old woman, who expressed opposition to the establishment of women’s carriages and she told me that ‘now is the new era for women’.

Huawen: What do you think about gender relations in the present?

Ailin: I don't think we [referring to girls<sup>14</sup>] have differences from them [referring to boys]. The old era has gone, and now is the new era for women.

This leads us to think about what the new era is and what is meant by 'the old era'. Here, I think 'the old era' means the previous generation's youth, and the new era refers to the period of 'popular feminism'. For Ailin, the idea of women-only carriages was outdated, as it was based on the notion of men and women having intrinsic differences; for her in the new era she felt women were more equal and that did not need specific protection measures like women-only spaces, so she never used the carriages. Some of my other female interviewees also mentioned that 'times have changed and so have gender relations'. Therefore, I am unable to stop myself from wondering: How does the young Chinese generation define the 'new era' for women? Why does it happen, and what influence will it have on young people, such as the changes in thinking about gender relations and sexuality in contrast with the previous generation? In the next few sections, I will analyse the motivations for changing opinions on gender relations and sexuality from four perspectives: film and television work, family education, school education, and the social environment.

## **The motivations for changing opinions on gender relations**

### **TV film work as motivation**

Xiaoyi is my good friend, who is studying PhD in the field of film. In getting to know Xiaoyi, I found that she is a representative young Chinese woman, who is smart, independent, and insightful. For example, she was interested in topics relating to

---

<sup>14</sup> I use the words 'girls' and 'boys' rather than women and men because my participants used 'girls' (女孩) and 'boys' (男孩) in the interviews. In daily spoken Chinese conversation, girls and boys generally refer to unmarried young people who could be in their twenties, they do not specifically refer to male or female minors or teenagers.

gender and gender relations, and especially in today's society, where people's opinions are diverse and variable. She took herself as an example of how her ideas had changed.

Huawen: You said that you think you have different viewpoints on gender and sexuality than the social mainstream voice, so why is that?

Xiaoyi: I think this is because the film and television I watched influenced me a lot.

Huawen: What kind of film and TV productions did you watch? Can you give me an example?

Xiaoyi: I rarely watch Chinese productions, but more Euromerican work. And I think they played a large role in building my personality. For example, when I was a child, I usually watched the series about Disney Princesses. You can see, they're different from the girls that I was taught to be like, those princesses are independent and strong-willed. I remember that was in 1997, and I immediately bought the DVD of *Mulan* when it had just appeared on the market. Even the story of Cinderella, it let me know that girls should be a powerful woman inside. Hence, the Disney cartoons about princesses might have been important for my character shaping.

Huawen: So, in your childhood, why do you think western productions shaped you so much, rather than Chinese cartoons?

Xiaoyi: Because in that period, I mean in my childhood from the 1990s to the early 2000s, China's animation was very poor. How many classical Chinese animations can you remember from that time? The domestic animation *King Kong Gourd* (葫芦娃; huluwa) was very popular, but it tells the story of seven brothers and their grandpa. Otherwise, when we were kids, we watched *Journey to the West* (西游记; xiyouji), which narrates the story of a master and his three apprentices. Therefore, just like I said, Disney seems to be my

torchbearer, and every princess has her unique and valuable quality for girls to learn. When I was in high school, I usually liked to watch American films and TV plays, and I think that may have influenced me more.

Huawen: Can you illustrate some and explain how they affected your opinions on gender relations?

Xiaoyi: Sure, I remember that I watched some sitcoms like *Friends* (老友记), *Desperate Housewives* (绝望主妇), *Gossip Girls* (绯闻女孩) and so on.

These series led me to think deeply about what love is. In our traditional Chinese concepts, young women are eager for a long and stable love relationship, but I believe that love shouldn't be divided into only two parts, black and white ones, that could be up and down. Also, relationships are complicated. Let me give you an example. When I watched *Desperate Housewives*, I felt: life is dramatic! And that was the first time that I perceived the sense of time, especially in a relationship. I understood that affections are certain to change, so I have no requirement for fervent love. It's weird, right? At that moment, I began to feel that I was different from other female students, they always wished for a forever boyfriend who would love them for good. It's funny in retrospect, like little girls in fairy tales.

Xiaoyi was another participant who saw the introduction of women-only carriages as outdated and a step back for gender equality in modern Chinese society, so she told me that she never used them and opposed their introduction. She illustrated the process by which her personal character as a woman had been shaped by her viewing experiences. She believes that Mulan, the cartoon protagonist she favoured, inspired her understanding of women's gender identity. There is great irony in Mulan, a traditional Chinese heroine, being re-exported to China by Disney and then serving as a role model for a Chinese girl. For instance, even though Mulan is a woman, she can still take on the responsibilities of joining the army and achieving a good career.

Therefore, Xiaoyi thinks that Disney Princesses are representatives of an animated feminist in her mind.

Most of China's film and TV productions are largely propaganda about socialist core values and correspond to the Socialist Civilisation Spirit. Whether it was Disney animations or western TV dramas, Xiaoyi was seeing something different from the ideology around her, which inspired her to rethink what women's gender identity is and what gender relations should be like. By discovering the differences between the Chinese TV works she was watching and those from the West, she discovered that a woman does not necessarily have to sacrifice herself to be a good wife and mother, as shown in Chinese TV productions. This change in perception also affected her later attitude towards gender relationships in love.

Yanzi was one of my participants who was introduced by a friend, and the interview was the first time we met. Because of this, I tried to find a topic to make us feel familiar and more at ease. When she sat down in the café and looked at the time on her smartphone, I noticed that her mobile wallpaper was a cartoon character (水冰月) from the Japanese Anime *Sailor Moon* (美少女战士). I asked her if she liked this cartoon very much, because *Sailor Moon* has influenced a generation of young Chinese, and I also like watching it. She said yes and showed me that her key chain was also a Sailor Moon product. Talking about the cartoon was a good choice to begin our chat, so I asked her why she liked this cartoon so much.

Yanzi: When I was at primary school, every day when I came home after school, the television was broadcasting this cartoon. I especially liked the clothes worn by the girls in the cartoon, so fashionable and beautiful! I still watch this cartoon now! Back then, all the kids were watching Japanese anime, such as *One Piece* (海贼王), *Naruto* (火影忍者), *Slam Dunk* (灌篮高

手), and so on, but anime are all male characters. *Sailor Moon* is different and tells the story of five beautiful girls with superpowers who save the earth, so we girls all liked to watch it at that time.

Huawen: Which character do you like most and why?

Yanzi: I love Hino Rei (火野丽) so much!! When I first watched it, I didn't really understand the meanings of the cartoon's lines. I loved Hino Rei because she's the most unusual one. Now I find that she has the most pioneering thoughts. For example, I remember she had a line saying: 'girls should be independent, and as long as they have courage, girls will have the power to realise their dreams'. This sentence had a deep impact on me. I think my personality is very independent, maybe that's because of watching this cartoon I guess, but now in retrospect, it seems that there's nothing better than this cartoon, so that's why I'm still watching it now.

In both Xiaoyi's and Yanzi's experience, film and television can spread an ideology of gender identity to inspire and guide them on the path of growth. This is closely connected with the introduction of western culture into China after the opening-up reform of the 1980s. The settings of female characters in some western films and television shows are different from the female images in traditional Chinese concepts. For example, in western film works, women pursue a sense of self-worth, while Confucian moral principles for women require them to obey and dedicate themselves to male family members, such as the concept of 'three obediences and four virtues'<sup>15</sup> (三从四德; sancong side). Therefore, western film and television works introduced into urban China have become a window, to a certain extent changing the one-child generation's perceptions of gender identity and gender roles.

---

<sup>15</sup> Three Obediences and Four Virtues (三从四德) is a set of moral principles and a social code of behaviour for maiden and married women in Confucian culture. Women are required to obey their fathers, husbands, and sons, and need to be modest and moral in their actions and speech (Wikipedia, n.d.).

As Kaufman said: ‘The world of film and television serve as the arbiter of culture and drive our societies perception of certain values and ethics. We need film and television to provide a space for entertainment and a way to nourish our understanding of the human experience’ (Kaufman, 2019: n.p.). China experienced the Cultural Revolution, which ruined all cultural industries. The well-known film and television works took communist ideology as their principal theme, such as revolutionary films, also called ‘red films’ (红色电影). Therefore, the film and TV industry were too simplistic and educational, introducing Soviet films as the primary imported films. Under the reform and opening-up policy, western films became available for Chinese people to view, bringing more open minds. This was also reflected in people’s opinions on gender and sexuality. The 1980s was a starting point for modern China, and was when western individualisation began to influence China, including the exploration of more topics relating to sexual freedom and gender identity (Jackson, et al., 2008). Although western culture brought diversity and more choices in terms of cultural products for young Chinese, it also came into conflict with traditional Chinese Confucianism, and this was also deemed a risk by the Chinese government in the 1980s.

### **Family education as motivation**

Recent Chinese generations have also been affected by family education, especially girls who were born under the one-child policy. Yutong is a 26-year-old white-collar worker for a foreign company in Shenzhen. Yutong has a busy work schedule in Shenzhen and often relies on the metro for her daily commute. However, when she witnessed men overcrowding the women’s carriages, she expressed profound disappointment. She believed that the women’s carriages offered no significant distinction from the mixed carriages, and in contrast, she believed that the name “women’s carriages” was absurd, as if it forcibly emphasised the distinction between

men and women. She told me that the education she received as a child at home taught her to be strong. Her mother always calls her 'son' (儿子; erzi) as her nickname, so she thinks she is no different from boys.

Huawen: You just said, your mum called you 'son', so how do you feel when you hear that?

Yutong: No feeling...I think that's just a nickname for me. Ever since I can remember, my mum has always called me son. Afterwards, I found that other parents call their boys 'erzi' (son) and call their girls 'nüer' (daughter).

However, my family told me that I'm a girl, but I'm also 'son', so I got a bit puzzled and asked my mum why she called me that. She said it was because she wished I could be a son.

Huawen: And how do you understand this?

Yutong: Perhaps my parents were more eager to have a son rather than a girl, but I think they're more likely to want me to become a boy. I'm the only child in my family, and my parents give me all the best they can offer, for example, cultivating my hobbies and sending me to the best school. After I graduated from university, instead of pushing me to go back to my hometown, they supported me to stay in the big city and pursue my dreams. I think I'm the lucky one.

Huawen: So have you thought about the differences between you as a girl and boys?

Yutong: Maybe there's no difference. If I must state the gender differences, I would say that there was no difference in my childhood at least, but I can find some in my present life. When I was young, I had several male friends and usually played games with them. At school, I couldn't find differences among classmates at that time. But now I can find some differences at work; for example, I heard about one of my female colleagues who is taking maternity



leave, but her post was filled by someone else. Or individual male colleagues were promoted faster than my female colleagues, you know, they [referring to female colleagues] are working very hard and are excellent. These phenomena, I think these are gendered differences. But I have to say, they [referring to boys] also have it very hard sometimes. I have some male friends, and they often complain to me about their pressure, such realistic problems as buying a house, preparing to get married, and so on. Life isn't easy for anyone, whether men or women.

Huawen: So can I ask why you think there was no difference when you were a kid, but there are differences in the workplace now?

Yutong: When I was young, my parents didn't instil in me differences between men and women. As I said, they told me that I'm a girl but didn't tell me what to do as a girl, or what not to do as a girl. They sent me to study taekwondo when I was 10 years old and told me that I must study hard to get a chance in the big city. Hence, I think boys and girls are no different, as we play and learn together. However, facing many practical issues, I found that men might have more development opportunities than women, then I realised that I may be different from them, and this difference isn't controlled or determined by me.

The contrast between a privileged upbringing as a single daughter and the reality confronting women as adults is also mentioned in Xie's research (Xie, K., 2021). Chinese families controlled under the one-child policy could not change the sex of the child who was born, and so they faced conflicts with the traditional concept of 'son preference'. Hence, calling their single-child daughter a son is a common phenomenon in many Chinese families. This not only expresses the parents' desire for a son but also illustrates their desire to raise their daughter as a son, hoping that she will then take on the gendered role of a son to look after her parents in their old age

(养儿防老). Young women born under the one-child policy, especially urban women born into middle-class families, enjoy the same educational resources as men, which had never happened before in China's society. Nevertheless, they face gender inequality when they pursue individual success after reaching adulthood. Yutong was not conscious of any differences between women and men until she entered the workplace, but the gender inequality she encountered then made her realise that men and women are different. This means that China's workplaces face very serious issues of gender inequality that make a person who has grown up in an environment without gender concepts feel that they are being unfairly treated. This further illustrates that female employees are at a disadvantage because they have to carry the responsibility of giving birth and raising children.

Influenced by the traditional Chinese ideas that 'men are superior and women are inferior' (男尊女卑; Nan Zun Nü Bei) and 'have a son to carry on the family name to continue the family line' (传宗接代; Chuan Zong Jie Dai), the previous generation in China preferred to have a son rather than a daughter. Yutong's mother called her 'son', and I also encountered this situation in others, some girls who are the only child are called 'son' by their families. As Yutong said, she does not know whether her mother wanted a boy or not, but it is certain that her mother wanted her to behave like a boy and raised her as a boy. There are two main reasons why Yutong did not feel any obvious gendered differences when she was young: Firstly, it is because she is the only child in her family. Many Chinese families have become richer since the opening-up reform, so they can concentrate their finances and energy on bringing up a child. Secondly, China's patriarchal society mainly reflects the distribution of class and gendered power, and children are more influenced by their family education as they grow up, rather than society. For example, Yutong's parents deliberately did not express the gender gap during her upbringing, so she only felt this gap and the gender difference in later life and the workplace.

Therefore, the one-child policy allowed young Chinese women to receive a better family education than before, and parents could focus more attention and love on them. In other words, the one-child policy weakened many traditional concepts of gender differentiation and gender discrimination in the family education of some families with daughters in China. However, the requirements of family education for boys have not changed much compared with traditional concepts, and boys are still required to maintain their masculinity and grow into the backbone of the family. Guosheng is a 30-year-old man who was working in Guangzhou when I interviewed him. When talking about the morning and evening rush hours on the metro, he said that he never travelled on women's carriages believes it is men's responsibility to be chivalrous to women. This is because, when he was a child, his parents told him that boys should protect girls. Thus women-only carriages were, to him, an extension of this protection.

Huawen: You said that your parents educated you to be a gentleman when you were young, so how did they educate you?

Guosheng: As far as I can remember things, I remember they told me that I am a little man (小小男子汉). My father told me that a good man needs to protect women, so my father and I need to love and protect my mum because we're men.

Huawen: Did he tell you what a good man looks like?

Guosheng: I think my father is a fine example of a good man. He told me that boys should be brave and generous and be chivalrous to girls. His enlightenment is helpful because my girlfriend evaluated me as a gentleman when we first met. Ha ha ha...

From the interviews with Yutong and Guosheng, we can see that family education has a profound effect on children's understanding of gender. In family education, children will be influenced by their parents' preconceived ideas about gender. So, although the young Chinese generation may have received equal investment and encouragement, gendered differences still remain, due to their parents' understandings of gender and gendered behaviours. The one-child policy did change some Chinese parents' understanding of women's gender identity to some extent. Yutong's parents regarded their daughter as a boy, leading Yutong to think that she is no different from boys. This has been a new experience for young Chinese women since the one-child policy and opening-up reform. For boys, the goal of becoming a '*shenshi*' (绅士; gentleman) is also an important point that reflects upon men's characters and class. Therefore, family education has become a vital aspect that affects young Chinese people's understanding of gender. In addition to their family education, school education is also an important influence on young people's views on gender.

### **School education as a motivation for changing**

Most of my female participants studied liberal arts (文科; wenke), and engaged in liberal arts work. In Chinese high school, before taking the college entrance examination (高考; gaokao), students must choose Arts or Science (文科或理科) and follow the corresponding curriculum. If a student chooses Arts, he/she needs to study geography, politics, and history, plus the compulsory courses such as Chinese, maths, and English. If a student chooses Science, he/she needs to learn physics, chemistry, and biology, plus the compulsory courses. The college entrance examination only tests students on the curriculum they have followed, and this limits candidates' selection of university; for example, an Arts candidate cannot choose Science subjects at university. In high schools, there is a universal gender imbalance in choosing subjects; the majority of female students follow the Arts curriculum, and Science is

male dominated. Although the Chinese Ministry of Education has tried multiple reforms to the entrance exam to improve this situation, this problem of imbalance still exists. One of the reasons for this is that compulsory education in China is gendered.

Ying is a secondary school teacher in Guangzhou teaching English, but she is dissatisfied with her job because the subject of English is not her ideal. Teaching is supposed to be a popular profession in China, but she told me that choosing to learn English at university might have been the wrong decision for her. During our discussion about women's carriages, Ying mentioned that sometimes she would choose to use women's carriages, while other times she might use mixed carriages. She was quite ambivalent about their introduction, however she had strong views about gender more broadly. For her men and women's differences in society were due to socialisation particularly within the family and at school. She had found society's expectations of her as a woman constraining:

Huawen: Being a teacher is regarded as a lofty job, so why don't you like it?

Ying: It's a long story. My parents wanted me to be a teacher all along, thinking that teaching is a steady job and good for girls, but you know, that's not my ambition.

Huawen: So what is your ambition?

Ying: I wanted to do archaeological work since I was a child. You can go to dig out the monuments, that's so cool. I read many archaeological books and [watched] movies, dreaming of being an archaeologist. However, my parents don't agree with me, because they considered that a girl should have a permanent steady occupation and made me study English. Not just them, but one of my teachers in high school said the same words, telling me there's no bright future for girls to study archaeological work. 'How many famous female archaeologists in Chinese history do you know? Very few', she said.

Looking back on it now, I think that's kind of gender discrimination.

Huawen: What kind of discrimination it is? Or, in other words, why do you think it's discrimination?

Ying: I remember in high school, when facing the situation of choosing Arts or Science subjects, my teacher had a one-to-one chat with me, she asked me about my ambition and said: 'women are more suitable for studying liberal Arts, while boys can do better in Science, so I suggest you choose an easier subject and do a relaxed job suitable for women in the future.' Therefore, in our high-school class, the majority of female teenagers were in the Arts class, and there was a more serious gender imbalance in the department of English at university. So I think their gendered prejudice against choosing the subject is a form of gender discrimination.

Huawen: What do you think about their opinions that a steady job is suitable for you, but archaeology is not?

Ying: Archaeological work would always require me to be away for a long time, which is dirty and hard. Therefore, they think it's not safe and not suitable for a marriage. When my husband and I met on a blind date (xiangqin; 相亲), the introducer, one of my mother's friends, said that I was a teacher, and my husband's family was very satisfied. Maybe most of them think that being a teacher means I can have more free time to take care of the family.

Huawen: At the beginning, you mentioned that choosing to be a teacher might have been the wrong decision for you. Why do you think so?

Ying: Even now, I still often dream of doing work at an archaeological site. If I miss it, that means I will miss it forever. But I tell my current students to choose the subject they like and pursue their dreams, don't let themselves have any regrets.

I expressed my regret about her experience, but it reminds me of the similar experiences of many of my female classmates in high school, who chose to study Arts because they were persuaded by their teachers or families that girls cannot do well at mathematics.<sup>16</sup> Under the influence of gender stereotypes in schools, the gendered differentiation in learning might then affect students' choices when selecting further subjects at university and in the workplace. Like Ying, whose dream was to become an archaeologist, and it is a pity that she did not succeed.

However, there are two main reasons for Ying's decision: one is because the gender expectations of her parents forced her to take up a female-gendered career. They thought that women should be engaged in a relatively easy and stable job, so that she can have free time to take care of her family. This embodies the traditional family structure, in which 'men rule the outside and women rule the inside'. The second influence that affected Ying's decisions came from her high-school teacher. During her time at high school, she received a strongly gendered education that restricted her professional choices. Her teacher told her that young women are more suited to studying liberal Arts, which means a certain degree of gender stereotyping from the school.

School education plays an important role in promoting individual socialisation, and an important aspect of students being socialised is the formation of gender roles (Adler, et al., 1992). Teachers play a vital role in the formation of students' gender roles, and teachers' gender stereotyped views of society may also become a model for students' gendered choices. Ying's story is regrettable, but she had realised that the education she received may constitute a form of gender discrimination, which illustrates that Chinese women's consciousness is changing and rising. As a teacher in compulsory

---

<sup>16</sup> In the Chinese College Entrance Examination, the Liberal Arts mathematics is different from the Science mathematics. In general, Liberal Arts mathematics is considered to be more basic and simpler.

school herself now, she is trying to build a degendered education for her students to enable them to avoid their own regrets caused by gender stereotypes, and this is a form of new feminist endeavour in China's education.

### **Social environmental factors as motivation**

Guangdong is deemed to be one of the most patriarchal areas in China, where 'men are superior, and women are inferior'. Although Guangdong has been developing rapidly in economic terms, traditional patriarchal views have limited women's possibilities and opportunities. The local concept in Guangdong regards women as a machine for giving birth to children. Even under the one-child policy, many families in Guangdong owned a family business, so they only needed to pay a penalty for having extra children, instead of the severe punishment faced in Northern China, if they had a second child or more. In traditional Guangdong thinking, a family has to have a boy to inherit the family property and continue the family line (家谱; jiapu). Therefore, women in Guangdong need to keep giving birth until they have a boy. However, this pressure has reduced somewhat since the one-child policy, with young women resisting and changing this phenomenon.

Honghong is my childhood friend and was educated at a famous university in Shenzhen. She is smart and highly educated and should have had a successful career. However, after she graduated from university, she immediately married a rich Guangdong man and gave birth to a girl, and has been staying at home to take care of her children. Now, she has a second baby, which is a boy, but her husband's family is still encouraging her to have a third baby in the future.

Huawen: In our childhood friends' eyes, how smart you are! Why don't you go to work, because you have a such good educational background?



Honghong: I want to, as well! Sometimes I see you guys post on social media, I really admire you guys very much, but taking care of my children is really hard and wastes energy, even if I hired a nanny to help me take care of the babies with me. I'm very conflicted because I don't want to miss any of my children's development.

Huawen: I heard that you gave birth to a second child, congratulations!

Honghong: Thank you! When I got married, my mother-in-law told me the tradition here is that a family must have at least one boy. And I told her I would only give birth to three, if all the babies were girls, then I wouldn't have the fourth baby. It's fortunate that my second child is a boy, but now brother [referring to the second child] is just one year old and my husband's family is making me consider having a third child, which really makes me feel broken. How could we have such rules in our hometown, every family has only one child!

Huawen: So are you considering giving birth to the third child?

Honghong: Not for the time being, it's not an easy job to bring up children. And I have given birth to a boy!

Honghong mentioned that she wants to work because she thinks she has enough knowledge and ability, but entering the workforce without any work experience might be affected by the responsibility of raising two children.

Siqiu is a local of Guangdong, and she mentioned similar views to me during our interview, saying that Guangdong Province is a place where men are preferred. But, unlike my friend Honghong, Siqiu has been trying to break away from this traditional patriarchal life. She is the eldest child in her family, and has a brother three years younger than her. She said that her parents favour her brother and hope that their son

will be admitted to a good university and get a good job, but their expectation for her is to marry a good rich man.

Huawen: I heard that patriarchy is a very serious problem in Guangdong Province. Is that true?

Siqiu: Yes, that is true. My parents had my brother when I was three years old. While I growing up, they kept telling me that I'm a 'big sister' (大姐姐) and I had to give priority to my brother. They often bought his favourite toys and snacks. Even sometimes when my brother and I had small conflicts, they also told me to learn to be self-effacing.

Huawen: How do you feel about such attitudes and behaviours?

Siqiu: I don't hate my parents or my brother, and still love them very much. I was just disgusted by such common traditional concepts, so I decided to move to Shenzhen a little further away from my hometown to start my own new life. Because I don't want to repeat the last generation's life like my parents.

Although Siqiu grew up in a place where patriarchal thoughts are taken more seriously, the unfair treatment of girls led her to generate a new female consciousness to try to change this life. Siqiu expressed that she sometimes would use women's carriages and believed that it has certain advantages. However, she approached the issue from the perspective of providing more breastfeeding spaces for women in public transportation, rather than viewing it as a matter of women needing protection. She told me that she does not want to marry a rich man without any emotional basis, but wants a relationship in which they love each other, and does not want the next generation to repeat her or her mother's unequal life. The patriarchal life in Guangdong Province seems oppressive to women; however, the women I interviewed had realised the reality of gender inequality in their local society, and were trying to

escape and change it. This is also a form of resistance to the patriarchal society, indicating their rising women's consciousness.

### **Male misogyny grows**

Today, with the rapid development of China's economy, hostility in gender relations continues to grow even while people enjoy the fruits of the economy. This is especially obvious on the Internet, which displays the continuous opposition of misogyny and misandry, and shows that people are more and more dissatisfied with the injustices brought about by gender restrictions. For example, in the discussion about the establishment of women's metro carriages in Chapter 4, I discussed some male participants' dissatisfaction with these women's carriages. They said that some male passengers had complained to the metro company because they were prevented from entering the women's carriages during peak hours, and the establishment of sex/gender-segregated spaces reflected the hostility of some men towards women. Especially with the development of feminism in China, and women's revenge against patriarchal concepts, some radical feminists' hostility towards men has gradually shaped online discourse about gender opposition. This gradually becomes daily language, increasing the impact of gender opposition.

In East Asian countries, where patriarchy is the framework, misogyny is prominent (Ueno, 2015). With the awakening of a feminist consciousness, some women actively participate in discussions about gender topics on the Internet. Gender topics are currently regarded as the passwords to get widely viewed. As long as a discussion of gender topics is involved, there will be no lack of views and attention. Some feminists attack netizens who articulate patriarchal concepts, which is in great contrast to the traditional gender image of Chinese women as 'docile and gentle'. The fierce words

of feminists have been unacceptable to some men, who think that ‘feminism is poisonous’ (女权有毒), and this has increased men’s misogyny.

Can you tell me what real feminism is? Why did Chinese feminism develop into what it is today? I support women’s struggle for legal rights, but why are some Chinese feminists, like, crazy? Whenever something about gender-related social news or issues [comes up], these ‘feminists’ don’t make sense at all and insult men like crazy. They’re too radical! [Laoda, a 26-year-old man]

This was a question posed by one of my male participants. I could tell from the way he asked it that he was confused by the concept of feminism, and was not asking in a mocking or hostile manner. On the one hand, some Chinese feminists’ fierce counterattacks have broken the male-dominated gender structure of the Internet. Chinese feminism is regarded as radical and aggressive, which is related to its current state on the Internet. On the other hand, before many men begin to understand the essence of feminism, they first accept the stigmatisation of feminism in China, which intensifies the gender antagonism on the Internet. In addition, popular gender discourse on the Internet is how young people explore their gender identity and gender relations, such as ‘how Chinese youth employ the internet for negotiating “modern” Chinese identities’ (Liu, F., 2011: 161). Below, I analyse how these gender discourses arouse and deepen gender hostility by analysing some popular words about gender mentioned by my participants that appear on the Internet.

‘Pu xin nan’ (普信男) is used to describe men who are ordinary but full of confidence. It is usually used to ridicule those ordinary men with ordinary looks, ordinary knowledge, ordinary work, and ordinary family conditions. However, such ‘ordinary men’ usually like to preach and judge women to show themselves as knowledgeable and masculine. Although a ‘pu xin nan’ likes to judge women against

high standards, he usually has very low standards for himself and does not have a clear understanding of his identity. The term 'pu xin nan' first appeared on the Internet and sometimes men also use the title to make jokes about themselves. However, on a comedy show that is popular in China, there is a female comedian who is good at creating comedy by discussing gender topics. When she mentioned 'pu xin nan' on the show, the term aroused opposition and resistance from male audiences, who thought that using the term slanders men (Cui, 2021). The fact that men can laugh at themselves by using the term 'pu xin nan' but cannot accept criticism from women reflects male dominance in the gender hierarchy and defends hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Afterwards, the phrase 'pu xin nü' (普信女) also appeared on the Internet, used to describe ordinary women who showed overconfidence, even conceit, and were extremely demanding of men's appearance, work, income, education, height, and other conditions. 'Pu xin nü' was also used on the Internet, mostly as a derogatory term against women by men.

The popularity of 'pu xin nan' and 'pu xin nü' on the Internet is not only a breakthrough in the gender structure of the Internet, but these phrases show that feminists are trying to deconstruct the male-dominant gendered discourse and trying to create a female-dominated discourse system on the Internet. Nevertheless, this approach to losing the female subject and discarding the original language of women in order to gain the right to speak has deepened and expanded the gender antagonism on the Internet.

There are certain differences in the criteria for judging men and women, and the offensive words used against women on the Internet have exposed the objectifying perspective on women that is prevalent in a patriarchal society. Taking 'pu xin nü' as an example, men usually evaluate women based on their appearance, such as height, weight, and beauty. However, the evaluation of men not only includes their

appearance, but also considers multiple criteria such as education, work, and savings. Due to the stereotyped gender role of men as breadwinners, lower-class men are more likely to be the objects of gender antagonism. And women who do not conform to the image of femininity in the male-dominated discourse system may also be evaluated differently. For example, ‘pu xin nü’ refers to those lower-class women with ordinary looks and ordinary figures who are likely to become the targets of gender antagonism. Another popular term on the Internet is ‘princess disease’ (gong zhu bing), describing a young woman who behaves arrogantly, likes to be self-centred, has a low sense of responsibility, and likes to order men to do things for her.

Nowadays many women have this ‘princess disease’ (公主病; gong zhu bing), they like to be self-centred, thinking that the whole world revolves around them [Luobo, a 28-year-old man].

This quote is from one of my male participants, who was talking about gender antagonism, which he believes is partly due to the ‘princess disease’ of some young women. This phrase ‘princess disease’ is usually not used to judge women’s appearance, but to criticise their behaviour, especially for the self-centred behaviour shown by lower-class young women, whom it is easier to label as displaying ‘princess disease’.

Regarding the connection between gender and social class, Wright (1992: 47) stated that ‘class structures are shaped by gender relations and gender shapes other class-related phenomena such as class consciousness and collective action’ (Wright, quoted in Aguilar et al., 2017:133). Lower-class women have staged a counterattack against patriarchal society, which is inconsistent with the traditional impression of submissive lower-class women, and is more likely to be opposed by hostile men. In addition,

misogyny does not only stem from men, but some women may also display a certain misogyny towards women, or a sense of self-loathing (Stalker, 2001).

I can accept men's criticism of women's rights, but I can't accept women's indifference to feminist activism [Xiaozhi, 19 years old].

This quote is the view of one of my female interviewees when talking about feminism. Some women's indifference to feminism is unacceptable to her. Women's misogyny is more complicated to analyse than that of men. For example, this female participant acquiesces to men's misogyny against women's consciousness. Nevertheless, women's misogyny destroys the concept of women's unity, highlights the contradictions between women, and also deepens the negative impression of women (Mavin, 2006). In contrast, in the gender discourse on the Internet, men show more solidarity, there is less evidence to show male misandry towards men, and more gender discourses are produced by women's misandry towards men.

## **Female misandry grows**

'Men are not good' (男人不行; Nan Ren Bu Xing) is a common Internet discourse commonly used by young Chinese women, usually referring to men who cannot meet their ideal requirements.

I don't understand why men must exist in women's lives. Women are much better than men, and women are more considerate and understand women [better] than men [Conghui, 25-year-old].

Conghui, a 25-year-old woman who lives in Shenzhen made the above statement. She went to France as an exchange student for a year during her fourth year of

undergraduate studies. She affirms the virtues of women, and thinks that women are better than men in some respects. The Chinese urban female youth of the Post-Mao generation have the same opportunities as men to receive higher education, and to be paid for work that breaks down the traditional gender role of women as serving husbands and children at home. Conghui, a member of the newer generation of Chinese women, believed she is no different from men at her age and even better than some men because of her brilliant education and background. However, on such basis, urban young women place more demands on men:

I don't need my boyfriend to make money to support me. I mean, I'll make money myself in the future, and my parents will also help me. I only wish he could be more considerate and truly understand me [Xuemei].

Xuemei, a 24-year-old, first-year PhD student at a university in Shenzhen, is very smart and was able to start her PhD in mathematics at the age of 24 years. She is not married, but said that she only hoped her boyfriend could understand her more and support her to chase her dreams. Once they have a certain economic basis, women's demands on male partners are more intangible and have no uniform standard. Women want men to be more romantic and considerate in their intimate relationships (Singh, 2013). This requirement is due to the fact that many urban women undertake the same social responsibilities as men, and more family responsibilities, and present more idealised requirements for male partners (Song and Hird, 2014). Even without the financial support of a male partner, single-child women have the support of their matriarchal family and the income from their work, so that their living and economic conditions will not be greatly affected if they do not marry. However, the gap between idealised requirements for men and reality has caused many urban women born under the one-child policy to complain and criticise men. Women's hostility towards men is having an impact on the original gender structure.



Recently, internet buzzwords such as ‘afraid of marriage daily’ (日常恐婚; Ri Chang Kong Hun), ‘fear of men’ (恐男; Kong Nan), and ‘daily misandry’ (日常厌男; Ri Chang Yan Nan) have become popular topics within the Chinese news and social media networks environment and have developed into daily language offline. These expressions were put forward by young Chinese women (usually under 40 years old) who were born under the one-child policy. Meanwhile, Chinese feminists are launching fierce attacks on men, using internet slang such as ‘male maggots’ (男蛆; Nan Qu) and ‘male grasshopper’ (蝈蝈; Guo Nan) to compare Chinese men to insects. This demeaning of men illustrates the co-optation of male language and behaviours that made women feel dissatisfied. Of particular note is the fact that these words demeaning to men refer specifically to Chinese men from the mainland, and do not include men from other countries, or even the men from Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan. For example, the noun ‘male grasshopper’ (蝈蝈; Guo Nan) has the same pronunciation as ‘domestic males’ (国男; Guo Nan), but adds the radical of bug (虫) in Chinese characters to emphasise a scathing satire on Chinese men.

Feminists regard this behaviour as a strike back against patriarchal society. Especially during the rapid development of the Internet, feminists have been able to exert a wider and faster influence upon each other, and simultaneously have formed a virtual alliance of misandry. Therefore, the Internet provides a relatively loose context for feminists today, although they are still monitored by the net police (Wallis, 2015). Even though the public is very cautious about their speech and comments, the collective voices on the Internet play an important role in various popular social events, particularly in relation to sexual assaults.

The #MeToo Movement arrived on Chinese university campuses in January 2018, before spreading more widely through Chinese society. A spontaneous social

movement of such breadth and depth had not been witnessed in China for decades (Lin and Yang, 2019). Activists in China have claimed that this movement has evolved into an awakening that has empowered young Chinese women (Hou, 2020). Exactly as the Chinese #MeToo Movement first started with online organisations, some female individuals and organisations have begun to use Internet platforms like Weibo to make their voices heard in order to ask for help. Most of these are victims of sexual violence. These social incidents of sexual violence were particularly prominent in 2019 and 2020 and, at the same time, this phenomenon has also drawn social attention and triggered debates on gender topics. Therefore, in the debate, controversies have influenced the public's viewpoints on gender. Certainly, women's changing concepts and behaviours did not just happen immediately as a result of various topical events, but they also reflect the multiple pressures women have been enduring for a long time. During my research interviews, I found that some female participants had changed their attitudes towards gender.

### **Changing gender relations among urban women**

Xiaoyi lives in an upper-middle-class family, had obtained a postgraduate degree in the UK, and did her PhD in her third year. She said that she was single without any anxiety, even though she was 27 years old, and joked about herself as a 'leftover-woman'. In China, the derogatory term 'leftover woman' or shengnü (剩女; Sheng nü) is widely used to banteringly describe an urban, professional female in her late twenties or older who is still single (Fincher, 2016). However, Xiaoyi seemed not to care about the age issue or her single status.

Xiaoyi: I don't think there's any problem with being a single woman. I'm fine even if I don't get married.

Huawen: Did your parents ever urge you to get married?

Xiaoyi: They once told me that I should try to meet some good guys and date them, but there's no need to do that.

Huawen: Why? Don't you want to have a relationship with a man?

Xiaoyi: I don't reject dating or getting married, but I reject the blind date (相亲). I will only marry a guy whom I love.

Huawen: So why do you reject the blind dates so strongly?

Xiaoyi: There's no need to be with someone who has no emotional foundation with me, rather just considering his money or a good life. I can buy my house and car by myself and with my family. In other words, what if I find a man who wants my money? [She was joking and smiling.]

These days, young Chinese women like Xiaoyi no longer fear being single; many of them have wealthy families and good jobs. Xiaoyi did not need a relationship to provide her with a better material life. Many educated, affluent women who were born under the one-child policy have similar feelings, and their birth families can support them so that they can have as good a life as their male peers (Cameron and Meng, 2013; Veeck et al., 2003). On the other hand, plenty of Chinese parents will exert all their energy to support their children's education, hoping they can get a higher academic degree and a good job (Jackson et al., 2013). Zhiying (25-year-old) has a similar background and experiences, but she expressed her unwillingness to get married, and even told me she might have gamophobia.

Huawen: Why don't you want to get married or be in a relationship?

Zhiying: Because I'm living well alone now, but I can't imagine what kind of experience it would be to get married.

Huawen: Is there anything wrong with marriage? Or what do you think marriage is like?

Zhiying: It's hard to say, you also know that there are too many negative news

reports about marriage, like several men killed their wives. I can't think of any benefits that marriage can bring me, men are so terrible.

However, many female participants said they did not reject marriage and also believed that women should marry at an appropriate age. Tiantian (25-year-old), another of my participants, told me that she had been on a blind date not long before, and that this was her first blind date arranged by her parents.

Tiantian: If all goes well, I think I may marry him soon. This guy works in the IT industry, all the conditions seem pretty good.

Huawen: Congratulations! What did you think of this blind date?

Tiantian: I don't reject blind dating because I'm actually, at this age, I should get married. My family has been urging me to get married for a long time.

This boy they introduced this time is also not bad, the only thing is that he's from a rural area, but I mean, he earns quite a substantial salary, and that's enough.

The market reforms have created new uncertainties about the current middle-aged generation's economic and social position. They have also brought new anxiety about their children's future happiness and security, particularly for those families raising highly educated daughters who have not married by their late twenties (Zhang and Sun, 2014). In China's big cities, middle-aged and elderly parents usually feel such anxiety about their children and themselves, so they try to plan parental matchmaking for their children. In contrast, Mengmeng had found love at university. Although she complained a lot about her boyfriend, she said she would get married the following year.

Mengmeng: I've been with him since we were at university. He has too many

shortcomings I can't stand, like little consideration, always ignoring my feelings when he's playing online games.

Huawen: So why would you still consider marrying him?

Mengmeng: Because we've met each other's families, and we're both 23 years old and have graduated, it's time to get married. Also, he's the first and last one who I'll have sex with, so I don't know what I would do if we don't get married. I hope he'll become mature and take on some male responsibilities after marriage.

Huawen: Like what responsibilities?

Mengmeng: Helping me and sharing some housework. If we have a baby in the future, I hope he can stop indulging in games.

Under traditional Chinese concepts, young women need to keep their virginity for their husbands until they get married, otherwise they will be considered dissolute sluts. Mengmeng was influenced by this traditional thinking, believing that if she broke up with her boyfriend after they had sex, that may make any later boyfriend or husband think she is dirty (不干净), which will affect her and her family's reputation. If the family knows that their daughter has had premarital sex, they will also think that the family's reputation is damaged. Therefore, in China, women's virginity is considered a vital thing for both the women themselves and their natal family, and having sex before marriage is a risk to their reputation. As Martin explained:

The superficial 'freedom' of premarital cohabitation actually seems to present a minefield of gendered danger, with feminine reputational damage lurking everywhere: the inadvisability of cohabiting then breaking up and the danger of damaging rumours. (Martin, 2018: 698)

Some scholars have noted that housework and raising children have become one of the major burdens for young working women. Because women spend more time doing housework than men, they are treated unfairly in the workplace, such as being demoted after giving birth and returning to the primary workplace, due to leaders considering that mothers usually spend a lot of time and energy caring for their families (Ji, et al., 2017). During their interviews, some female participants also expressed their dissatisfaction with the gendered distribution of housework.

Qiqi: It's very unfair! I mean, we women also work hard in the workplace to make money, why do men do less housework and become an 'emperor' after returning home, and we're cooking, washing, doing laundry?

Huawen: So may I ask, have you got married?

Qiqi: No, I don't even have a boyfriend yet. But I see too many men like this, my father never does housework at home. I won't get married unless my future husband would like to share the same housework with me equally.

This is an interesting phenomenon, as young women begin to realise that housework is not necessarily a responsibility and obligation that they must bear alone. This consciousness is also thought of as an improvement in women's status and the rise of women's awakening by young Chinese women. Nevertheless, not all female participants agree with that. Wenqi is one who thought that a woman should be a devoted wife. As she described it, and as the proverb says: 'A successful man has an excellent wife behind him', so women should do good housework to support their husbands in their careers, then successful men will not be distracted by the family work.

Huawen: Do you usually do housework by yourself at home?

Wenqi: I do the housework most of the time.

Huawen: Have you ever complained about that, or are you willing to take these on by yourself?

Wenqi: My husband and I just got married not long ago, but before we got married it was my job to do most the of housework. I think it's okay as long as he works hard.

Huawen: So do you go to work every day?

Wenqi: Yes, I work in a national institution.

Huawen: Will it be very hard and stressful for you to carry work and family burdens?

Wenqi: To be frank, there is indeed a certain pressure on me, but it's not as easy for women to get promoted as men in this society, so there's always a person who needs to sacrifice herself in a family.

Wenqi sacrifices herself in the family and still needs to go to work, but she clearly realises the gender inequality in the workplace, in which it is not as easy for women to get a promotion as it is for men. Hence, she is willing to take on more of the family responsibility so that her husband can focus more on his work to improve their family situation in the future. Wenqi's perception is consistent with the traditional family roles of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers. However, compared to traditional gender roles, the difference is that Wenqi still needs to go to work, but takes on more family responsibilities than her husband. This is due to the status quo of gender inequality in the workplace, and she clearly knows that she cannot change this, so she has chosen to bear the dual pressure of both family and work.

In my interviews, with the exception of the postgraduate students, my female participants all needed to get to work every day on time. Most of the participants had not found that the introduction of women's carriages had significantly eased their daily commutes, and for some travelling to work remained a stressful process

amongst their additional life pressures. For most of them, getting married had become a pressure from parents and traditional social demands. Even after marriage, they still needed to face the dual pressure of the workplace and housework. When young Chinese women have the same educational opportunities as men and need to work in the same way as men, their situation is different from that of past housewives. The benefits they need to get from marriage are not proportional to the effort they need to put in, which makes them question the necessity of marriage. Hence, the emotions of misandry and gamophobia represent young Chinese women's anxiety about their multiple burdens and gender inequalities, rather than a total hostility towards men.

### **Changing gender-role attitudes towards work and family among urban young men**

Fertility pressure is not only an invisible shackle for Chinese women, it also puts a certain amount of pressure on men. Being urged by their parents to marry and have children has become a kind of pressure faced by urban young men. The one-child policy has limited many Chinese families to having only one son, but the practice of passing on the family line through males is still deeply engrained in traditional Chinese culture. Hence, passing on the family surname to male family members is an important manifestation of the inheritance of the family. Dajiang is one of my male participants, whose surname Qiang is rare in China. Chinese men with a rare surname face particular fertility pressure from birth.

Dajiang: I'm 29 years old. My parents are urging me every day to get married. They want me to have a boy soon. I said I'm still young and want to focus on my work. My parents said I just need to have a son, and they could help me to raise the baby.

Huawen: Why do you think your parents are pushing you to get married and



have children so desperately?

Dajiang: Maybe to continue the family bloodline. They always say that I'm the only son, and our surname must be passed on.

In China, continuing the family bloodline is still a major purpose of marriage, especially for men, and it seems that passing on and maintaining the patrilineal family has become the responsibility of many Chinese men (Choi and Luo, 2016). Marrying and having a son has become an invisible pressure from parents felt by young men. China attaches great importance to surnames, especially rare surnames. Uncommon surnames usually have a long history. However, the one-child policy was an invisible blow to many families who were interested in passing on patrilineal surnames. If the only child was a girl, it meant the extinction of rare surnames; and if an only son is born, the pressure to pass on the surname transfers to that single son. Since the birth-control policy was adjusted, every Chinese family can now have up to three children. However, facing the economic pressure of parenting, and due to the changing gender ideology, some young people are faced with the entanglement and confusion of childbearing.

Harrison: My wife and I have been married for just two years and my daughter is almost one year old. But my parents keep asking when we're going to have another child.

Huawen: Your daughter is so young, why are your parents in such a hurry to get a second grandchild?

Harrison: I think they may want a grandson, because they told me that one son and one daughter are better. But the cost of raising children is too high, so having another child means reducing our current living standard. And I'm not so obsessed with wanting a boy, so having a boy or a girl is almost the same to me. Before my daughter was born, my wife and I just wanted to have a girl,

and girls are much better than boys!

Huawen: Then how are you going to respond to your parents?

Harrison: Procrastinate first, just say that my daughter is too young now.

From my conversation with Harrison (32-year-old), it can be seen that his desire to adhere to the traditional concept of having a son to carry on his family bloodline has been weakened. He had hoped to have a daughter before her birth, and he did not express an extreme desire to have a son. But he is still under pressure from his parents, who want him to have a son. In Chinese the character ‘好’ (good; *hao*) is composed of the Chinese characters ‘女’ (daughter; *nǚ*) and ‘子’ (son; *zi*). Traditional Chinese families believe that having a boy and girl means that the family can be good. However, Chinese urban youth, especially urban young men, do not pay as much attention to these traditional concepts as their parents did, believing that: ‘Both boys and girls are similar’. This gender concept proves that those in the younger generation have changed their gender relations and gender concepts. This is also a recognition of changes in the gender structure by the young generation. However, their gender perceptions can be influenced by pressure from parental traditions. Violating one’s parents’ will is usually considered unfilial (Hao, 2022), so Harrison did not directly refute his parents, but rather tried to avoid addressing their desire for a grandson.

In addition, facing high-intensity work pressure and work/family conflict is another of the main pressures faced by Chinese men. Some of my young male participants said that the focus of their lives should still be on work. They believe that work should be the foundation of the family, but they are always faced with high-intensity work pressure, which leads to them carrying a lot of pressure and facing contradictions between work and family. Benhao, my master’s classmate, is a 27-year-old, single outlander who is living in Shenzhen. He is currently working for a foreign company

as a media operator. He said that his work pressure is very high, and he has neither sufficient time nor enough financial resources to find a suitable partner.

Benhao: I came to Shenzhen after I graduated, and I've changed jobs several times. Because the competition pressure in Shenzhen is too great, my friends, including myself, have become accustomed to the life of 996 or 997. Almost every day, I open my eyes and have to go work. I don't get off work until 8 or 9 in the evening, and it's common to work overtime until 1 am in this company. I had a bad relationship with my ex-girlfriend and I broke up with her because I didn't have time to accompany her. I'm not looking for a girlfriend because I have no time to look after her. Besides, I don't have enough money to buy a flat to get married in Shenzhen.

Some businesses in China use a work schedule known as the '996 working hour system' (Bao, 2022). Under such a working mode, some young people spend most of their waking hours at the company. On the one hand, this high-pressure working mode squeezes the private time of many young people, and it also affects their intimate and gender relations. Women have higher ideal requirements for their partners these days, not only requiring a certain financial foundation but also hoping that their partners will be romantic and can spend time with them, while young men in big cities face a certain tension between work and intimacy. On the other hand, this is also related to men's traditional gender role, which sees owning a flat or house as a necessity for men to get married, and the pressure on men to buy a house has become a daily anxiety for them. This prevalent form of gender anxiety involves 'a terror of ...no longer being properly a man, of being a 'failed man'' (Butler, quoted in Yang, 2010: 557). However, living in a big city, the high-pressure work and high housing prices mean that many young men face a certain crisis of masculinity. Whether to have a family first and then start a career, or start a career before having a family has

become an issue faced by many young Chinese men when they move from their hometowns to big cities to work. For the sake of their gender role, and to highlight their successful masculinity (especially the familial masculinity), many young men choose to start their career before starting a family (Raymo et al., 2015). As Song and Bird stated, young Chinese men are under increased economic pressure to achieve the hetero-marital-repronormative ideal, which forces them to acquire a successful career before they start a family (Song and Bird, 2014).

In addition, some young men focus on work in order to pursue a better quality of life. They think that the meaning of their hard work is to improve the quality of life for the whole family and to have better living conditions. Zhongcheng, a 34-year-old, found a girlfriend after graduating with his master's degree and he plans to marry his fiancée soon, but he said that he has no time to worry about a series of matters related to getting married, and his fiancée is helping to manage these:

Zhongcheng: Although I think I'm still young and getting married is not my primary goal right now, I think I should give my girlfriend a home. After all, she's not young, and I don't want to delay her. But I have to work hard to make money so that we can live a good life. Recently, my fiancée has been busy with getting married. After all, she requires a high quality of life, and I must work hard to make money to meet that good quality of life.

According to Zhongcheng's description, his fiancée is a single child who grew up in Shenzhen, and her family has been in a good situation since she was a child. Therefore, she has been living a 'petty bourgeois life' (小资生活; Xiao Zi Sheng Huo), and Zhongcheng's goal is to maintain her original living standard after marriage, and he even expects to improve some of that quality of life. The post-Mao generation born in big cities has become the main group within the new middle class

(Sabet, 2011). They have inherited a certain economic foundation from their parents' generation and have higher education and high-income jobs. Even though urban young people enjoy a middle-class quality of life at a young age, they still need to face certain pressures at work to make money and maintain that good quality of life (Hird, 2009; Hird and Louie, 2016).

Even though, compared with their parents' generation, some Chinese young men have changed their attitudes towards gender discourse and gender structures, such as the traditional concept of childbearing, they still face a certain amount of pressure due to the traditional requirements of filial piety. In addition, the work/family relationship is still one of the main sources of stress for young men working hard in big cities, and it creates a certain pressure on men of different classes. While young men continue to face a certain crisis of masculinity, they will choose to focus on work and assume the traditional gender role of breadwinner. It was clear from my interviews that men were still expected to be breadwinners for the family, and while some of the men expressed dissatisfaction with these expectations, they continued to conform to societal expectations of masculinity. On scratching below the surface most of the men held quite traditional ideas on work and the gendered division of labour in the home, or at least were not willing to fundamentally challenge social expectations around gender or defy social and familial pressures. At their core, there was a belief that men and women were intrinsically different, with women weaker than men. Hence, most of the men saw women only carriages as a way of protecting women's safety.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have introduced different perspectives and discussions on various gender discourses described by my participants as the young generation in China. This chapter also demonstrates how the participants' views and experiences of

women's carriages in public transportation need to be considered within the context of their wider experiences of gendered relations and inequalities in China. Their perspectives on women's carriages inform and are informed by their broader gendered experiences, thus in my interviews with the participants they were all keen to talk more broadly about gender. The opening up of a discursive space within the interviews to talk about women's carriages in turn opened up a space to talk about gender in more social contexts. They showed special interest in gender topics, especially their concerns and doubts about Chinese feminism. The development of a stigmatised Chinese feminism has caused some controversy and gender antagonism. In addition, I have explored how culture, family, education, society, and other aspects impact upon my participants' gender identity cognition, which is based on the one-child policy. However, the male-dominated authority in China's patriarchal culture still affects many aspects of society. I highlighted the confusion of privileged single daughters under the one-child policy – who were given educational resources that previous generations did not have – when they discovered the gender inequalities in a working context and their continuing family responsibilities. Although some young men have changed their attitudes towards gender discourses, they still face dual pressures from work and family and traditionalised pressure from the gender role expected of them.

In addition, I have particularly emphasised the gender antagonism in the current gender discourse on the Internet, such as the development of misandry/misogyny towards men and women, which broke the structure of the male-dominated gender discourse online. These changes have gradually deepened the developing views of the younger generation in China on gender relations. It was clear from my interviews that many of my participants were caught between conforming to and resisting traditional views on gender. For many of my female participants women-only carriages were representative of traditional views on gender which saw women in need of protection,

and public space as first and foremost a male space; attitudes that they clearly resisted. The young women, in particular, had expectations of, and hopes for, greater gender equality in society, both in the workplace and at home, since their access to education encouraged by the Chinese state. The female participants, however, held hopes of an equality that did not necessitate initiatives such as women-only carriages but instead was built on women's equal and safe access to public spaces.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

As I write here, looking back over the whole research process, I can see that my interest in this topic started in 2017, when women's metro carriages were first launched in Guangdong Province. The introduction of women's metro carriages at that time sparked contentious discussions on social media that inspired me to begin my research journey. In 2019, I flew to Guangdong Province to conduct my fieldwork and met my 44 participants. Through conducting in-depth interviews with these participants, combined with my participant observation data, I have analysed the experiences of both women and men who use public transport. I have also identified in my research the ways in which experiences and perspectives on women's carriages in Guangdong province are linked to broader lived experiences of gender in Chinese patriarchal society.

During the nearly five-year process of this PhD, women's carriages in Guangdong have remained in operation, and some other Chinese cities have also raised proposals to establish women-oriented facilities within the public transportation system. Therefore, my research has ongoing relevance and makes an important contribution to the study of women-only transport, and how it relates to issues of sexual harassment and broader gendered inequalities in the Chinese context. While research on women-only transport (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013a; 2013b; Shah, 2018; Horri and Burgess, 2012; Tillous, 2020) and sexual harassment on public transport (Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022a, 2022b; Loukaitou-Sideris and Fink, 2008; Gardner et al., 2017) exists in other national contexts, my study is significant because research on such issues in China is limited (Wang, 2018; Luo and He, 2021).



Women's carriages are not just a Chinese phenomenon, but have a history of implementation around the world. Regarding the existing research on women's carriages, researchers have focused on the specific areas where women-only carriages operate and have carried out an expansion analysis of related topics based on each country's practical situation, including Japan, Mexico, Cairo, the UK, and other regions (Horri and Burgess, 2012; Dunkel-Graglia, 2013a; 2013b; Infante-Vargas and Boyer, 2022a; Abenzoza et al., 2019; Tillous, 2020; Newton, 2016; Zoido, 2015; Shah, 2018). Besides emphasising the issue of sexual harassment, addressing the relations between women's carriages and local social contexts has become the focus of some scholars' research; for example, analysing women's carriages and social class stratification, or women's carriages and local patriarchal structures (Horri and Burgess, 2012; Tillous, 2020). Nevertheless, in terms of the establishment and implementation of women's carriages in China, the research remains limited. There was a graduate thesis by Wang (2018) that discussed this topic in 2018 at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, written in traditional Chinese characters. Even though Wang and I have similar research topics, after comparison I found that we had adopted different research methods, and I obtained more diverse and comprehensive data. For example, Wang used a quantitative research method by distributing online surveys and the research target was mainly the carriages in Guangzhou; while I chose a qualitative research method to analyse the women's carriages in both Guangzhou and Shenzhen. I also took a feminist perspective by conducting semi-structured interviews with participants, and combining these with my participant observations. I have thus aimed to strengthen and extend the study of women's carriages in China by conducting a ground-breaking study on the topic, building on Wang's research, and similar research from elsewhere across the globe.

My thesis draws on extensive qualitative research – 44 interviews as well as participant observation on the trains (as a young female passenger myself). In chapter

3, I have described the qualitative methods that I used to dig deeper into the research data. I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with both male and female passengers who had used the Guangzhou or Shenzhen metro, and also with metro staff, additionally combined with my participant observation. As young women are more likely to become the targets of sexual harassment (Kearl, 2010), I limited the age to between 18 and 35 years for female participants and merely required male participants to be over 18 years of age. All the interviewees are adults. To search for participants, I adopted the method of snowballing, being introduced to potential participants by acquaintances, as well as posting notices on social media to find volunteers. Altogether, there were 20 male passengers and 20 female passengers, as well as four metro staff participating in the interviews, ensuring that I obtained the most comprehensive data possible. During the interviews, I adopted open-end questions to allow participants to express their opinions as much as possible. Hence, initially they focused on discussing their attitudes and opinions on women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Then I found that participants made broader comments on the issues of sexual harassment on public transport and followed this up with their opinions of gendered issues and topics in society at large. Participants' extension and discussion of gender issues helped to explain why women's metro carriages have received so much attention so that I started researching the causes of the societal controversy caused by women's carriages.

During the course of this PhD, my attitudes towards women's carriages have changed as my research progressed. As I worked through my thesis, I kept asking myself one question many times: 'Why did my attitudes keep changing?' The first time I learned about 'women's carriages' from Sina Weibo in the summer of 2017, my first reaction was to oppose their establishment, because 'women's carriages' seem to treat women as a special group in need of special care, and there were no corresponding 'male carriages'. Afterwards, as my enthusiasm for this topic grew, I discovered the deep

concerns of female passengers about their safety on public transport by reading their comments online, especially their fear of being sexually harassed in public. I was shocked, and my opinion started to change. I agreed that the carriages could provide some women with a certain sense of safety that is needed for travel. However, I changed my opinions again after I finished my fieldwork in Guangdong Province, where I saw the ineffective implementation of women's carriages, which were crowded with male passengers. I also saw how the carriages have become a political tool used by the government to promote the political pursuit of supposed socialist spiritual civilisation via this policy, without considering passengers' needs or safety issues. I also realised, from talking to my participants, that women's carriages have not solved the problem of sexual harassment against women on public transport, nor alleviated women's gender inferiority in public spaces. The various opinions expressed by participants on women's carriages are in stark contrast to the government's political slogans.

As the original policy proposed by the Guangdong policymaker suggested, setting up women's carriages is seen as a method to prevent women encountering sexual harassment on public transport, as well as a tool to promote the socialist spiritual civilisation of urban life. However, according to my research findings, there is a contradiction between these political goals and actual implementation. As my analysis demonstrates, the women's metro carriages are 'priority carriages for women' and are neither mandatory nor enforced, so male passengers can also choose to travel in them. Hence, women's carriages fundamentally do not address sexual harassment. On the other hand, according to my participants' discussion, the operation of women's priority carriages has led to some gender conflicts. Some female participants felt that the carriages reinforced gender stereotypes of women's inferiority, while some men felt that women's carriages were given to women as a privilege and that male passengers would be at a disadvantage on public transport because they may have to

waste more time than female passengers waiting for the metro. For example, during the morning and evening peak, the metro carriages are already too crowded to enter, which may cause male passengers to miss their train and be late for work because they cannot take the women's carriages and need to wait for the next train.

Furthermore, due to the unfriendly social environment towards trans people in Chinese society, manifested by a lack of awareness and misunderstandings regarding the trans community, the establishment of women-only/priority metro carriages did not take into consideration the needs of transwomen, trans men, or gender-fluid individuals. Consequently, these women-only/ priority carriages are solely based on the distinction of passengers by their assigned sex at birth.

As the government advocates, setting up women-only carriages was done not only to try to solve the issue of sexual harassment, but also as a means to advocate the value of socialist spiritual civilisation by claiming the point that men should be chivalrous and protect women. This also coincides with the fact that China's government often uses 'soft constraints' to control the public's behaviour (Wielander, 2018), allowing the public to maintain social order by focusing on and constraining their own moral behaviour. One of my male participants also mentioned that he considered women's carriages to be a manifestation of progressive civilisation in Shenzhen, because male behaviour of respecting and protecting women and showing chivalry towards them represents the high urban civilisation in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. However, this viewpoint was contested. Some female participants argued that they did not need the so-called protection from men in setting up women's carriages, because they believed that not harming women is the greatest kindness to women, and not treating women as special is true gender equality.

In Chapter 4, I explored the actual operation of women's carriages in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, as well as discussing my passengers' gendered perspectives on women's

carriages, drawing on both my participant observations and interview data. Compared to most regions that set up women's carriages on public transport, the greatest distinction is that women's carriages in Guangdong are priority carriages for women rather than women-only. In accordance with the name, the carriages in Shenzhen are called 'priority carriages for women' in English (女士优先车厢), while the name of women's carriages in Guangzhou seems, controversially, to be 'female carriages' (女士车厢). In terms of opening times, the carriages in Shenzhen are open all day, seven days a week, whilst the carriages in Guangzhou are only open during morning and evening peak hours. As for the location, women's carriages in Shenzhen operate in the first and last sections of all Shenzhen metro lines, while Guangzhou metro only operates women's carriages on Line 1 and Line 13. I also highlighted the announcements in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English to remind passengers of the establishment of women's carriages. And also, the use of pink, a typically feminised colour, with flower icons in women's carriages, which attracts female passengers' attention and is an index of sexual identity (Koller, 2008), excludes male passengers, and distinguishes these carriages from ordinary ones.

Despite the metro companies' attempts to promote women's carriages, I discovered that the carriages in both cities were crowded with male passengers, which led to a certain degree of gender antagonism between male and female passengers. One of my female participants believed that men should not enter women's carriages and squeeze together with female passengers. One of my male participants, however, asserted that because they only specify priority for women, men should be allowed to use women's priority carriages as well because there is no regulation that forbids them from doing so. Faced with the women's metro carriages, despite complaints from some passengers, my participants' first reaction to them was that the carriages are useless and ineffective.

Importantly, my research demonstrates that women's carriages in Guangdong have not fulfilled the purpose of preventing sexual harassment by forcing sex/gender segregation, as the proposal from the government intended. Because it took a top-down approach, did not consult with female passengers about what they want from public transport, and did not seek to educate men about sexual harassment on public transport (what it encompasses, how to tackle it, why it is wrong), the policy has failed to reduce sexual harassment on the trains, according to my participants. They told me that, because the current women's carriages are full of male passengers, which is not much different from other, regular carriages, they cannot prevent sexual harassment by sex segregation. In fact, it may actually increase the risk of sexual harassment for the female passengers in other carriages, because offenders may choose not to harass in women's carriages, but instead choose female passengers in ordinary carriages. Despite many participants believing that women's carriages cannot have any real impact, the carriages have not been cancelled and are still in operation today, again indicating the lack of engagement with passengers about policy formation and impact.

While some participants initially expressed their support for the setting up of women's carriages, they changed their minds after witnessing how little impact these carriages have. My participants shared their feelings of confusion about the aim of setting up the carriages. One female participant thought the carriages were a manifestation of political actions by the government wishing to convey a particular message, a so-called 'facial project' (面子工程).

To further explore the intentions behind the setting up of women's carriages, I interviewed two staff members working for Shenzhen Metro. They said that setting up women's carriages was based on the government's instructions, and they had encountered many difficulties in the practical implementation of the policy; for

example, constant complaints received from male passengers arguing that it was gender discrimination against men. Nonetheless, the metro company still has to insist on the implementation of the carriages' operation because of the top-down policy. Women's carriages seem to have become an exclusive product of the combination of bureaucratic and patriarchal structures in China, used to promote 'Socialist Values with Chinese Characteristics' (中国特色社会主义价值观), and to uphold the male-dominated gender order within China's patriarchal society. Confucianism plays a significant role in building a harmonious socialist society within the framework of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' (Solé-Farràs, 2008). The so-called 'harmonious society' (和谐社会) became the new ideological phrase of the Hu Jintao government in 2004 (Dynon, 2008), which requires the construction of a socialist civilisation as its foundation. From the personal aspect of spiritual civilisation, citizens are required to behave in a 'civilised manner' and to be a *suzhi* (quality) citizen (素质公民) at a moral level (Jacka, 2009; Tomba, 2009). As Gow's (2017) examination of the basic socialist values espoused by the CCP indicates, the well-known Confucian concepts have been reintroduced into the current state government to aid its acceptance by the public. According to the interpretation of the Guangdong government's proposal, women's carriages are the embodiment of individual and urban civilisation, which they achieve through promoting the harmonious ideology that men should protect and behave in a chivalrous manner towards women. The women's carriages demonstrate that the government is strengthening the stereotyped gender identities of patriarchal society by propagating 'civilised' ideology (and notions of women's vulnerability and need for protection), while ignoring women's safety considerations and their inferior status in public spaces, and, importantly, the issue of male violence against women. Public space is seen as a male-dominated sphere (Pain, 1991; Batul, 2021), and the sex-segregated space limits women's actions and reinforces male dominance (Cohen, 2010). Thus, to understand the introduction

and implementation of women's carriages in Guangdong, the analysis has to take into account China's political culture and its patriarchal underpinnings.

At first sight, setting up women's carriages seems to be a creative approach to solving sexual harassment on public transport, but it is rooted in benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1997), particularly in China, which has not yet made much of an impact on addressing sexual harassment. What my research has demonstrated, as discussed in chapter 5, is that sexual harassment against women by men is a problem on public transport, but that it is not confined just to public transport but is a wider societal issue. According to Valentine's (1989a: 389) theory of the geography of women's fear, the fear of male violence limits women's mobility to enter public spaces, and their avoidance of certain spaces fundamentally constructs a 'spatial expression of patriarchy' (Valentine, 1989a). Some of my male and female participants supported women's carriages because they had experienced sexual harassment or had witnessed it happening to other people on public transport.

In my research, I especially emphasised the research question: 'What are the characteristics of sexual harassment on public transport?' When defining the concept of sexual harassment, it is usually premised on the victim's will; for example, if a particular sexual behaviour makes the victim feel uncomfortable it should be considered sexual harassment (LaFree, 1981). However, through my interviews, I found that men and women have different gendered perspectives on sexual harassment behaviours. For example, one of my male participants thought that staring at women's bodies does not qualify as sexual harassment because he did not touch the victim. However, female participants told me that being stared at made them feel uncomfortable. In my discussion, I divided the forms of sexual harassment on public transport into physical and non-physical forms, both of which have a serious psychological impact on victims. In addition, I summarised the characteristics of



sexual harassment on public transport, demonstrating that the key factors enabling harassment were overcrowding within a large flow of passengers, and that most perpetrators were strangers to the victims.

Feminist research on sexual harassment in public contexts places the emphasis of research on recording and analysing women's experiences of being victims (Vera-Gray, 2016a; 2016b, 2018; Gardner, 1995). Such research analyses victims' experiences and describes their feelings of fear, as well as the severe impact of sexual harassment on female victims' daily routines. Boyer (2022: 399) stressed that 'sexual harassment can be conceptualized as an apparatus of capture through which certain bodies are fixed affectively, materially and discursively within culture logics of gender power, limiting what they can do and where and how they can move'. Consequently, a variety of negative feelings have been experienced by victims of sexual harassment in public places, which is a frequently occurring type of violence against women (Logan, 2015).

Nevertheless, when reviewing the research on sexual harassment in China, I found that most of it focuses on sexual harassment in law studies (Srivastava and Gu, 2009) and lacks feminist research methods such as analysing the experiences and feelings of victims in-depth. Therefore, in chapter 5, I extended the analysis of sexual harassment in China by analysing my participants' own experiences of and perspectives on sexual harassment on public transport. My research shows that the culture of 'fear of talking about sex' in China (Zhang et al., 2007a) led most female victims to have deep concerns about sexual harassment, but they were afraid of speaking out and losing 'face' (reputation; 面子) when they were harassed. According to the recollections of participants, they chose to move position or get out of the metro quickly when they encountered sexual harassment, instead of shouting loudly for help or accusing the perpetrators of criminal behaviour (Lorenz and Jacobsen, 2021). Through this thesis, I

hope to open up the opportunity for more research and dialogue on sexual harassment in Chinese society.

My research contributes to a growth in feminist politics in China and a growing discussion on issues of sexual violence. With the #MeToo movement arriving in China, the development of the Chinese feminist movement has accelerated (Lin and Yang, 2019). Increasing numbers of women began to support female victims after they learned about the #MeToo movement (Li et al., 2021). And with the ferment caused by some heated social events about sexual violence, Chinese feminist scholars have noticed and analysed the relations between the #MeToo movement and women's rising awareness of feminism (Yin and Sun, 2021; Lin and Yang, 2019). These discussions of the #MeToo movement are broad discourses around sexual assault and violence against women in China, rather than focusing on an analysis of sexual harassment on public transport. My research adds to these debates by highlighting women's perspectives and experiences of sexual harassment on public transport. Additionally, although feminist awareness in China is increasing, many women normalise sexual harassment to a certain extent because it is so commonplace. For example, some participants mentioned that they have been influenced by their education from parents, schools, and society that women need to be extra careful when going out alone. Thus, the victim-blaming culture means that women have to be vigilant about safety issues. Even if they oppose sexual harassment, they feel that they have to endure such issues by taking precautions to avoid being targeted.

My research also indicates that sexual harassment on public transport in China is not only perpetrated against women, although the bulk of the violence is perpetrated by men against women and feminised subjects. Two of my male participants narrated their experiences of being sexually harassed by an elderly woman and a man

respectively, which made these two male participants feel ashamed. They perceived sexual harassment against men as a thing that damaged their masculinity.

My research also analyses how Japanese pornographic culture may serve as a cultural influence on sexual harassment on public transport within the Chinese social context of banning pornographic culture. Japanese AV has a great influence and popularity in East Asia. Japanese pornographic culture shoots adult videos with different themes depending on where it is set. Among these themes, '*tram chikan*' (电车痴汉) depicts offenders sexually harassing and assaulting women on public transport. Some of my male participants believed that sexual harassment on public transport might be copycat behaviour on the theme of '*tram chikan*' in Japanese adult pornographic videos, suggesting that engaging in sexual harassment would be a stimulating sexual behaviour for the offenders. And, because of the Japanese cultural influence, the female participants made certain predictions about middle-aged men and took precautions against them, because offenders in Japanese AV are usually middle-aged men. In the interviews, female participants said that they were willing to provide some help to female victims because they are more sympathetic to women, while men only said that they might help women they did not know depending on the situation, due to men's psychology of self-preservation.

My interviews with both female and male participants and discussions about the women-only carriages enabled further discussions, not only on issues of sexual harassment but also gender issues more broadly. Discussing women-only transport acted as a catalyst for exploring how they experienced gender in their everyday lives. Thus, my interviews further enabled an exploration of the intersections of gender, age (most participants were aged 18–35 years), and urban living in contemporary Chinese society.

Thus, in Chapter 6, I expanded the analysis of the interviewees' discourses on gendered spaces beyond the confines of public transport. By discussing their perspectives on various gender-related topics, I was able to explore wider context in which their attitudes towards women-only/priority carriages and sexual harassment in public transport were formed. My research explored these broader discussions about gender topics such as gender identity, gender roles, and gender inequality among the young Chinese generation, especially the changing gender relations among the young generation of Chinese born under the one-child policy. My young interviewees were particularly interested in gender topics because of their ambivalence and the contradictions they saw between retraditionalised and detraditionalised gender roles and gender identity. Chinese feminism has developed rapidly on the Internet, but has faced stigmatisation, and the young generation discussed their opinions on gender inequality and changing gender relations, which are accompanied by gender antagonism on the Internet. The popular buzzwords about gender antagonism have gradually become daily expressions commonly used by young Chinese. Nevertheless, these gender antagonisms reveal the pressure being brought to bear on the young generation of Chinese under the gender discourse structure dominated by patriarchy. I discussed the various impacts of the factors forming the young generation's changing opinions on gender discourse: film and television work, family education, school education, and the social environment.

Growing up under the influence of the one-child policy and changing political-economic contexts, my participants revealed changing gender perspectives on career, family, and intimate relations in comparison with previous Chinese generations. With the reform of China's free-market economy and the promulgation of population-control policies, the young Chinese generation's growth has been affected by the concept of pursuing individual success under the influence of western culture after the reform and opening up and expansion of the free-market economy.

Young Chinese women have more opportunities to access higher education and white-collar jobs than their parents' generation (Liu, F., 2008a; Liu, J., 2008; Xie, K., 2020). Most of my female participants were able to access higher education and job opportunities similar to their male counterparts of similar ages and to find decent and stable jobs. Some female participants also held more idealised requirements for their partners, such as being able to understand and support their own pursuits, rather than simply asking men to fulfil gendered breadwinner roles. As single privileged daughters, they have support from their matriarchal families and their own career pursuits, so they raise more doubts about the traditional gender roles of wives and mothers.

However, whether in the workplace where they are faced by gendered inequality treatment, or in the family, they still face contradictions and struggles due to the requirements of traditional gender roles to be a good wife, a good mother, and a good daughter. These conflicting roles have become a self-contradiction among young Chinese women. One of my female participants said that, because of the underlying gender inequality rules in workplaces, she could not gain access to the same opportunities for promotion as her male colleagues, so she had taken on more family responsibilities, to allow her husband to focus more on his work. Another female interviewee explained that she had not encountered any gender inequality since she was a child, until after she started work, when she discovered the difference between herself and her male colleagues. Regardless of ability, her male colleagues could gain more advantages because they did not need to deal with the pressure of childbirth.

It is not only young women who face ambivalence, but Chinese young men also face dual pressure from family and the workplace (Zhao, K., et al., 2019). Facing a crisis of masculinity, Chinese young men have a generation-specific masculinity which Cao

describes in her research as ‘elastic masculinity’, reflecting the struggles young Chinese men face within their multi-layered social environment (Cao, S., 2021). My young male participants described their pursuit of work and gender roles as a breadwinner. Some of them said that they would consider getting married only after they had attained a certain level of achievement in their job because they believed that the prerequisite for men to get married is to have bought a house or apartment. However, facing the high-pressure work system known as ‘996’ or ‘997’, the young generation does not have enough time to spend with their partners, so they are under pressure from work and from the traditional requirements of their parents to get married. Even the married men among my participants said that they face a certain amount of pressure due to the traditional filial piety to have a son, even though they have changed their attitudes towards gender structures and did not express any extreme desire to have a son. Hence, the work-to-family relationship is still one of the main sources of stress for young men working hard in big cities, and it creates significant pressure on men of different classes.

Even though the young generation has more opportunities to pursue individual success under the wave of reform and opening up, they grew up under traditional Confucian ideology from the patriarchal society and family. Dealing with the contradictions between pursuing self-pleasure and self-sacrifice, they hold a distinctive viewpoint on gender and gender relations (Liu, F., 2011). As one of them, I can empathise with participants that this generation is constantly living in confusion with self-reflection. Each born as a single child, this generation confronts the high-pressure work mechanisms and adjustments in birth-control policies, such as the promulgation of the three-child policy. In the midst of this, the young Chinese generation seeks a comfortable lifestyle under multiple gendered pressures. I have focused on my participants’ standpoints on gendered discourse, emphasising their gender perspectives and ambivalence about family, work, intimate relations, etc., and

have discussed the sources of stress. Additionally, the young generation's interest in gendered topics shows a rising feminist awareness, and because of this increased awareness, they can notice more gendered conflicts in both life and society.

## **Future Research**

My research draws on extensive qualitative data – 44 interviews, plus participant observations. However, there are certain limitations to this research. Firstly, considering that female passengers are the main potential target victims of sexual harassment on public transport, I set the age range of female participants as between 18 and 35 years. However, there was no upper age limit for male participants, and I only required them to be above 18 years old. This was due to the practicalities of recruitment. Because the participants mainly participated in the interviews through the introduction of my acquaintances through snowballing. My focus is therefore on the younger generation, and I am aware that older women (and men) may experience sexual harassment on public transport as well. Thus, while my research importantly captures the experiences of urban, mainly middle-class, younger-generation commuters, further research that includes other groups of passengers would be useful. Secondly, this research topic is mainly aimed at the women's carriages operating in Guangdong Province, since, at the time when I was conducting my research, there were no women's metro carriages in other cities in China. However, according to news reports, some other Chinese cities have considered the proposal of opening women's carriages in the future, so this research is time- and locality-specific. Going forward, it would be useful to further examine other areas in China that have proposed women-only carriages in order to explore the reasons for and against their implementation. In doing so, a more comparative regional perspective on women and public transport could be developed. In addition, considering the scale of the present

thesis, when I did the fieldwork and adopted participant observation, I was limited in the routes and times that I could travel – I did not travel all carriages, on all routes at all times, to make more comparisons across women-only and mixed carriages. In future research, there is scope to undertake even more participant observation across a range of public transport options. Considering that my participants did not mention trans people and that the focus of my research on women-only/ priority carriages primarily revolve around the distinction based on biological sex between men and women, my thesis does not extensively discuss whether the trans community can use women carriages or their perspectives on such gendered spaces. However, as the activities of trans individuals in public spaces are an important area of current research and considering the lack of consideration for this community in Chinese policies, I intend to expand this topic in future research to explore the current status and needs of the trans community regarding the use of public spaces in China.

### **Policy Recommendations**

At a time in China where there seems to be a move towards more sex segregation in public spaces – for example, with more and more women’s security channels at airports and proposals for more women’s carriages, I hope that this thesis can pave the way for future research on female use of transportation systems in China, sexual harassment on public transport, and young people’s changing attitudes to related gendered discourse, especially given the limited extent of existing research on related topics, both in China and around the world. When discussing the implementation of women’s metro carriages and the issue of sexual harassment on public transport, the Chinese authorities did not consider women’s unequal status in public spaces, or the geography of fear. On the contrary, they used propaganda discourses of spiritual civilisation construction to strengthen the male-dominated gender discourses within the patriarchal Chinese society.



From my research I thus make a number of policy recommendations: Firstly, policymakers need to consult more with passengers, and women who use public transport in particular, to have a bottom up approach to policy making that enables women's experiences of sexual harassment on public transport to feed into the formation of policy; Secondly, it is crucial for the government to look at data and research on sexual harassment when formulating policy. And there needs to be more transparency on the data on reported cases of sexual harassment; Thirdly, policymakers need to think of sexual harassment not just as a "women's problem" and not just focus on what women have to do to change behaviour to reduce sexual harassment but also look at the perpetrators of sexual harassment and violence and ensure that men are aware of what constitutes inappropriate and illegal behaviour; Finally, as for the group of LGBTQ+, trans, and genderfluid passengers need to also be incorporated into public policy initiatives on sexual harassment on public transport.

The above recommendations are essential to address women's concerns about safety in public spaces fundamentally, rather than merely relying on the establishment of sex-segregated spaces that physically separate men and women. Effectively addressing the issue of sexual harassment should be a top priority for relevant authorities but it is important that authorities consult with women in their decision-making to ensure that policies meet the needs of women. My research has shown that a lack of consultation on women-only carriages with women transport users meant that their specific needs were not sufficiently addressed.

From the younger generation's high interest in gender topics and their different views on women's carriages, it can be seen that this generation, especially the women, are changing their ideas about gender. Their rising awareness of gender inequality, as well as their criticisms of and resistance to patriarchal concepts, indicate a dawn in

this struggle against the rising power of a patriarchal authoritarian state. Despite this struggle being bottom-up and difficult, I still have confidence that more young Chinese people will become conscious of sexual harassment in public places and more will become resistant to gender inequity as we continue to work on feminist geography and gender research in China.

## Appendix

### Appendix A Research information sheet for passengers taking

#### Guangzhou/Shenzhen Subway

**1. Research project title:**

The women-only subway carriages in China

**2. Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**3. Who is conducting the research?**

The research is being organised by Huawen Cui, PhD candidate in the Centre for Women's Studies in The University of York, UK.

**4. What is the purpose of the study?**

In 2017 summer, the first women-only subway carriages were set up in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. When they began to operate, the public not only from Guangdong province but also the whole of China paid huge attention to it, even some western mainstream media like The New York Times reported on the carriages. There were always two opposite attitudes from passengers, support and oppose. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the passengers who are taking the Guangzhou and Shenzhen subway and their actual daily experience and attitudes during taking subways. By focusing particularly on passengers who use women-only carriages (both men and women) I intend to find out how their opinions on the women-only carriages' reasons for establishment, practicality, convenience, design and using experiences. As many media reported, there were also some male passengers using the women-only carriages in the subway, so their opinions are important for me as well. In addition, as some women and men are against the existence of women-only carriages, so I would like to listen to their ideas about taking the normal mixed carriages in the subway.

**5. What will participation involve?**

If you decide to take part in the research I will interview you at a time that is convenient for you and conduct the interview in a public café or restaurant where there is a private room available. The interview will take approximately

one hour. It will be a conversation between you and the researcher, me, which is intended as an opportunity for you to express your life experience as a passenger member who uses the women-only carriages or mixed subway carriages in Guangzhou/Shenzhen. I intend to invite about 36 passengers in total to talk about their experiences like ‘what kind of subway carriages would you like to choose’, ‘what is your personal attitudes towards the women-only subway carriages’, ‘talk about some sexual harassment issues you experienced or witnessed in subway’ and so on. If you agree, the interview will be tape recorded, and later transcribed into text form. All data will be stored securely.

**6. Why have I been invited?**

You are being invited to take part in this study, as this study is intended to explore the experiences and attitudes of passengers (men/women) who take women-only subway carriages or mixed subway carriages in Guangzhou/Shenzhen.

**7. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide. I will explain the study in detail and then ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. If you do not want to sign the form, you may choose to give your consent verbally. You can refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview or withdraw up to six months after the interview, without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study any information that you have given me will be destroyed.

**8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

**9. What will happen to the interview data?**

The information you provide in the interview will be transcribed into Chinese. Parts of my field-notes and short parts of the interview transcripts will be translated into English and the data will be used for the researcher’s PhD thesis and related academic publications. I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity in my research. Your names will be anonymised and any other details that identify you will be removed or changed. Your comments will be quoted, but you will remain anonymous. All the data will be stored safely, and only my supervisor and I can see the original data. If you agree, I will archive my field-notes and transcripts in the UK data archive after I complete my research. You would be very welcome to a copy of the final report and related publications. My research has been reviewed and approved by the Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology (ELMPS) Ethics Committee, University of York. If you are concerned with any ethical issues in my study, please email the ELMPS Ethics Committee or my supervisor.

**10. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved by the ELMPS Ethics Committee in the University of York. The contact information for Chair of the ELMPS is: Prof Tony Royle, University of York, York, YO10 5DD

**11. What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?**

I will offer some free coffee or tea during the interview and a small gift like biscuits made in the U.K. will be as a thankful gift. It is hoped that this work will help to explore the understanding of gendered space that you are facing in the current situation.

The interview will take up will take some of your time. I will try to reduce inconvenience by arranging a time and place that suits you.

**12. Contact for further information**

If you wish to obtain further information about the project, please contact the researcher. You can also contact the researcher’s supervisor or contact the ELMPS Ethics Committee about the ethical issues, University of York.

I sincerely invite you to participate in my research on women-only subway carriages in China. If you have any questions about my project before, during or after my research, please feel free to contact me. Your participation is much appreciated and thank you very much for your cooperation.

**Contact Details:**

Researcher	Supervisor	Chair of ELMPS
Name: Huawen Cui Address: Flat 18, Manor Court, UK Email: <a href="mailto:hc1270@york.ac.uk">hc1270@york.ac.uk</a> Tel: +44 7926921204	Name: Prof Stevi Jackson Address: Centre for Women’s Studies, University of York, UK Email: <a href="mailto:stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk">stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk</a>	Name: Prof Tony Royle Email: <a href="mailto:tony.royle@york.ac.uk">tony.royle@york.ac.uk</a>

## Some supports of helplines and websites

### 1. The NGOCN official website ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))

The NGOCN website belongs to the public welfare internet platform whose aim is to provide public information and communication services to people who care about the public interest on the basis of the internet to promote social development. On NGOCN official website ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net)), there are some specific reports about against sexual harassment, especially focused on the issues of sexual harassment at public transportations in Guangzhou from 2016 until now.

### 2. Women's Federation portal website

"Guangzhou Women's Network" website ([www.gzwoman.org.cn](http://www.gzwoman.org.cn)) is a non-profit website sponsored by the Guangzhou Women's Federation;

"Shenzhen Women's Network" website ([www.szwoman.org.cn](http://www.szwoman.org.cn))

### 3. Psychological assistance resources (both are free):

Guangzhou psychological assistance hotline: **020-81899120; 020-12320-5;**

Shenzhen psychological assistance hotline: **0755-25629459.**

### 4. the contact information of the subway company:

Guangzhou subway: 020-96891, [96891@gzmtr.com](mailto:96891@gzmtr.com);

Shenzhen subway: 88960600, [szmcservice@szmco.com](mailto:szmcservice@szmco.com)

# 采访信息表

## 致 乘坐广州/深圳市地铁的乘客

**1. 研究课题：**

关于中国女性地铁车厢的设立调查

**2. 诚挚邀请：**

我诚挚地邀请您参与到我的研究访谈，在您考虑同意参访之前，我会提供一些您有必要了解的相关信息。请仔细阅读您是否愿意参加访谈，如果您有疑问请随时向我提出。感谢您的参与。

**3. 谁在进行此项研究：**

该研究是由正在英国约克大学女性研究中心攻读博士学位的学生崔华文的博士课题。

**4. 研究此课题的目的何在：**

2016年夏天，第一批女性专用地铁车厢在广州和深圳开通。在开放时间，不仅受到来自广东省群众的关注，而且整个中国都在非常关注这个话题，甚至一些西方主流媒体，例如《纽约时报》也报道了中国女性车厢的设立。根据媒体报道，乘客一般持支持和反对这两种截然相反的态度。因此，本研究旨在调查乘坐广州和深圳地铁的乘客以及他们在乘坐地铁时的真实日常体验和态度。特别通过了解那些乘坐女性车厢的乘客，我打算了解他们对女性车厢的建立，实用性，便利性，设计和使用经验的看法与理由。正如许多媒体报道的那样，也有一些男性乘客使用女性专用地铁车厢，所以他们的意见对我来说也很重要。另外，一些女性和男性对女性专用车厢持反对态度，我想通过此课题来了解他们选择乘坐地铁混合车厢的看法。

**5. 参加此研究意味着什么：**

如果您决定参加，那么研究者将在您方便的时间，并在有隔断或是私人空间的公共咖啡馆或餐厅和您进行面谈采访。采访大约需要一个小时，旨在让您有机会表达作为乘客在广州/深圳乘坐女性专用车厢/混合地铁车厢的日常生活经历。我打算总共邀请约36名乘客谈谈他们的经历，例如“您会想选择什么类型的地铁车厢”，“您对女性专用地铁车厢的个人看法”，“是否有遇到或是经历过性骚扰问题”等等。如果您同意的话，面试将会被录音，然后转录成文本形式，并保证所有数据都将安全存储。

**6. 为什么我被邀请参加研究？**

您被邀请参加这项研究，因为这项研究想要探究那些在广州/深圳市乘坐女性专用地铁车厢或者是混合地铁车厢的乘客，以及他们对女性专用车厢设立的态度，另外还有一些关于性别空间的问题，所以您很适合该课题的研究。

**7. 我是否必须参加：**

您并非必须参加。我会为您讲解访谈信息的相关内容。如果您同意，我会请您签署一份同意表格表示您同意访谈。如果您不愿意签署文件，我们可以采取口头录音的方式。您可以拒绝回答访谈中的任何问题，或者在接受访谈后的六个月里无条件退

出。如果您选择退出，所有您提供的相关数据都会被销毁。

**8. 本次参加是匿名的吗？**

所有采集的数据都会经过保密处理。在以后的报告中，您的个人信息不会被识别出来。

**9. 采访数据的用途：**

您在采访中所提供的信息将被转录为中文。我在采访中所做的的笔记内容和访谈记录也将被翻译成英文，采访数据将用于研究人员的博士论文和相关的学术出版物。我将确保研究全程中的机密性和匿名性，您的姓名将被匿名，并且我将删除或更改您的任何其他详细信息。您所做的评论将被引用，但会将保持匿名。所有的采访数据都将被安全存储，只有我的主管和我才能看到原始数据。如果您同意，我将在完成研究后把我的采访记录和结果归档到英国数据档案中。如果您希望，将会给您发送最终论文和相关出版物的副本。这项研究已经通过约克大学经济学，法学，管理，政治和社会学（ELMPS）伦理委员会的审查和批准。如果您继续关注我的研究中任何道德问题，请发送电子邮件给 ELMPS 道德委员会主席或我的主管。

**10. 谁负责此项目的伦理评审：**

这项研究需要通过约克大学研究审查协会的批准方可进行，委员会主席是：Tony Royle 教授，联系地址是：英国约克大学， 邮编 YO10 5DD。

**11. 参加此项目会有哪些影响：**

虽然参与者在采访过程中没有直接报酬，但我会访谈期间提供一些免费的咖啡或茶，希望这项研究可以有助于探索当前形势下的性别空间的一些理解。面试将占用你的一些时间。我会尝试通过安排适合您的时间和地点来减少不便。

**12. 了解更多相关信息：**

如果您想获取该研究的进一步相关资料，请您联系项目的研究者，或者可以联系其导师。关于伦理审查问题，可以联系其伦理审查部门主席。

我非常感激您能参与到这次关于中国女性地铁车厢的研究当中，如果您在研究的过程当中有任何问题想要咨询，请随时联系我。非常感谢您的参与和您的合作。

**附加：**

**联系方式**

研究人：	研究导师	ELMPS 主席
姓名：崔华文 地址：Flat 18, Manor Court, UK Email: <a href="mailto:hc1270@york.ac.uk">hc1270@york.ac.uk</a> Tel: +44 7926921204	姓名: Prof Stevi Jackson 地址: Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, UK Email: <a href="mailto:stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk">stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk</a>	姓名: Prof Tony Royle Email: <a href="mailto:tony.royle@york.ac.uk">tony.royle@york.ac.uk</a>



## 供参考的帮助热线

1. NGOCN 官方网站 ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))  
NGOCN 属于公益互联网平台, 旨在为关注互联网的公共利益的人们提供公共信息和通信服务, 促进社会发展。在 NGOCN 官方网站中 ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))
2. 广州和深圳妇女协会官方网站  
广州 ([www.gzwoman.org.cn](http://www.gzwoman.org.cn)); 深圳 ([www.szwoman.org.cn](http://www.szwoman.org.cn))
3. 广州和深圳心理求助热线:  
广州热线: 020-81899120; 020-12320-5; 深圳: 0755-25629459.
4. 广州和深圳市地铁公司:  
广州: 020-96891, [96891@gzmtr.com](mailto:96891@gzmtr.com);  
深圳: 88960600, [szmcservice@szmcob.com](mailto:szmcservice@szmcob.com)

## **Appendix B Research information sheet for platform staff in subway**

### **1. Research project title:**

The women-only subway carriages in China

### **2. Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

### **3. Who is conducting the research?**

The research is being organised by Huawen Cui, PhD candidate in the Centre for Women's Studies in The University of York, UK.

### **4. What is the purpose of the study?**

In 2017 summer, the first women-only subway carriages were set up in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. When they began to operate, the public not only from Guangdong province but also the whole of China paid huge attention to it, even some western mainstream media like The New York Times reported on the carriages. There were always two opposite attitudes from passengers, support and oppose. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the subway staffs who are working on the platform in Guangzhou and Shenzhen and their actual work experience and attitudes during guiding women to take the carriages. As many media reported, there were some male passengers rushing in the women-only carriages. By focusing particularly on subway platform staffs, I intend to find out how their opinions on the women-only carriages' working experiences, working demands, and the proportion of different gender who take the carriages, some problems when they work meet.

### **5. What will participation involve?**

If you decide to take part this research, I will interview you at a time that is convenient for you and conduct the interview in a public café or a restaurant where there is a private room available. The interview will take approximately one hour. It will be a conversation between you and the researcher, me, which is intended as an opportunity for you to express your work experience as a subway staff member who guides female passengers to take the women-only carriages. I intend to invite about 2 passengers in total to talk about their experiences like 'How do you look at the women-only carriages, 'what is your working experience towards the women-only subway carriages', 'talk about some working requirements when you guide in subway', 'how do you treat

and reply the phenomenon that men rush in women-only carriages' and so on. If you agree, the interview will be tape recorded, and later transcribed into text form. All data will be stored securely.

**6. Why have I been invited?**

You are being invited to take part in this study, as this study want to explore the views and working experiences of subway staffs who work on the platform and guide passengers to take the women-only carriages in Guangzhou/Shenzhen, with some questions about the phenomenon that men rushing into women's carriages. You fit into this category.

**7. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide. I will explain the study in detail and then ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. If you do not want to sign the form, you may choose to give your consent verbally. You can refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview or withdraw up to six months after the interview, without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study any information that you have given me will be destroyed.

**8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

**9. What will happen to the interview data?**

The information you provide in the interview will be transcribed into Chinese. Parts of my field-notes and short parts of the interview transcripts will be translated into English and the data will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis and related academic publications. I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity in my research. Your names will be anonymised and any other details that identify you will be removed or changed. Your comment will be quoted, but you will remain anonymous. All the data will be stored safely, and only my supervisor and I can see the original data. If you agree, I will archive my field-notes and transcripts in the UK data archive after I complete my research. You would be very welcome to a copy of the final report and related publications. My research has been reviewed and approved by the Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology (ELMPS) Ethics Committee, University of York. If you are concerned with any ethical issues in my study, please email the ELMPS Ethics Committee or my supervisor.

**10. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved by the ELMPS Ethics Committee in the University of York. The contact information for Chair of the ELMPS is: Prof Tony Royle, University of York, York, YO10 5DD

**11. What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?**

I will offer some free coffee or tea during the interview and a small gift like biscuits made in the U.K. will be as a thankful gift, it is hoped that this work

will help to explore the current operational situation of women-only carriages in China and some existing issues of the carriages' establishment. The interview will take up will take some of your time. I will try to reduce inconvenience by arranging a time and place that suits you.

**12. Contact for further information**

If you wish to obtain further information about the project, please contact the researcher. You can also contact the researcher's supervisor or contact the ELMPS Ethics Committee about the ethical issues, University of York.

I sincerely invite you to participate in my research on women-only subway carriages in China. If you have any questions about my project before, during or after my research, please feel free to contact me. Your participation is much appreciated and thank you very much for your cooperation.

**Contact Details:**

Researcher	Supervisor	Chair of ELMPS
Name: Huawen Cui Address: Flat 18, Manor Court, UK Email: <a href="mailto:hc1270@york.ac.uk">hc1270@york.ac.uk</a> Tel: +44 7926921204	Name: Prof Stevi Jackson Address: Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, UK Email: <a href="mailto:stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk">stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk</a>	Name: Prof Tony Royle Email: <a href="mailto:tony.royle@york.ac.uk">tony.royle@york.ac.uk</a>

## Some supports of helplines and websites

### 1. The NGOCN official website ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))

The NGOCN website belongs to the public welfare internet platform whose aim is to provide public information and communication services to people who care about the public interest on the basis of the internet to promote social development. On NGOCN official website ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net)), there are some specific reports about against sexual harassment, especially focused on the issues of sexual harassment at public transportations in Guangzhou from 2016 until now.

### 2. Women's Federation portal website

"Guangzhou Women's Network" website ([www.gzwoman.org.cn](http://www.gzwoman.org.cn)) is a non-profit website sponsored by the Guangzhou Women's Federation;

"Shenzhen Women's Network" website ([www.szwoman.org.cn](http://www.szwoman.org.cn))

### 3. Psychological assistance resources (both are free):

Guangzhou psychological assistance hotline: **020-81899120; 020-12320-5;**

Shenzhen psychological assistance hotline: **0755-25629459.**

### 4. the contact information of the subway company:

Guangzhou subway: 020-96891, [96891@gzmtr.com](mailto:96891@gzmtr.com);

Shenzhen subway: 88960600, [szmcservice@szmcob.com](mailto:szmcservice@szmcob.com)

## 采访信息表

### 致 广州/深圳市地铁女性车厢的工作人员

**1. 研究课题：**

关于中国女性地铁车厢的设立调查

**2. 诚挚邀请：**

我诚挚地邀请您参与到我的研究访谈，在您考虑同意参访之前，我会提供一些您有必要了解的相关信息。请仔细阅读您是否愿意参加访谈，如果您有疑问请随时向我提出。感谢您的参与。

**3. 谁在进行此项研究：**

该研究是由正在英国约克大学女性研究中心攻读博士学位的学生崔华文的博士课题。

**4. 研究此课题的目的何在：**

2016年夏天，第一批女性专用地铁车厢在广州和深圳开通。在开放时间，不仅受到来自广东省群众的关注，而且整个中国都在非常关注这个话题，甚至一些西方主流媒体，例如《纽约时报》也报道了中国女性车厢的设立。根据媒体报道，乘客一般持支持和反对这两种截然相反的态度。因此，本研究旨在调查在广州和深圳地铁站台的工作人员以及他们在引导女性乘坐女性车厢时的真实的工作经历和看法。正如许多媒体报道的那样，有一些男性乘客也会乘坐女性车厢。通过对地铁站台的工作人员的采访，我打算了解他们对女性车厢的工作体验，工作要求，乘客的不同性别比例，工作遇到的问题的一些独特看法。

**5. 参加此研究意味着什么：**

如果您决定参加，那么研究者将在您方便的时间，并在有隔断或是私人空间的公共咖啡馆或餐厅和您进行面谈采访。采访大约需要一个小时，旨在让您作为地铁工作人员的身份，来介绍一下您在指引乘客乘坐女性车厢时的工作经历。我打算邀请大约2名工作人员来谈谈他们的经历，例如关于“你如何看待女性专用车厢的设立”，“你在指引乘客使用女性专用车厢时的工作体验是什么”，“谈谈你们的一些工作要求”，“你如何看待和处理男乘客挤入女性车厢的现象”等等。如果您同意的话，面试将会被录音，然后转录成文本形式，并保证所有数据都将安全存储。

**6. 为什么我被邀请参加研究？**

您被邀请参加这项研究，是因为这项研究想要通过采访在广州/深圳地铁站台上引导女乘客使用女性专用车厢的工作人员，来了解他们在引导乘坐女性车厢的工作经验，并了解关于男乘客挤进并使用女性车厢的现状和存在的问题，所以您很适合该课题的研究。

**7. 我是否必须参加：**

您并非必须参加。我会为您讲解访谈信息的相关内容。如果您同意，我会请您签署一份同意表格表示您同意访谈。如果您不愿意签署文件，我们可以采取口头录音的方式。您可以拒绝回答访谈中的任何问题，或者在接受访谈后的六个月里无条件退

出。如果您选择退出，所有您提供的相关数据都会被销毁。

**8. 本次参加是匿名的吗？**

所有采集的数据都会经过保密处理。在以后的报告中，您的个人信息不会被识别出来。

**9. 采访数据的用途：**

您在采访中所提供的信息将被转录为中文。我在采访中所做的的笔记内容和访谈记录也将被翻译成英文，采访数据将用于研究人员的博士论文和相关的学术出版物。我将确保研究全程中的机密性和匿名性，您的姓名将被匿名，并且我将删除或更改您的任何其他详细信息。您所做的评论将被引用，但会将保持匿名。所有的采访数据都将被安全存储，只有我的主管和我才能看到原始数据。如果您同意，我将在完成研究后把我的采访记录和结果归档到英国数据档案中。如果您希望，将会给您发送最终论文和相关出版物的副本。这项研究已经通过约克大学经济学，法学，管理，政治和社会学（ELMPS）伦理委员会的审查和批准。如果您继续关注我的研究中任何道德问题，请发送电子邮件给 ELMPS 道德委员会主席或我的主管。

**10. 谁负责此项目的伦理评审：**

这项研究需要通过约克大学研究审查协会的批准方可进行，委员会主席是：Tony Royle 教授，联系地址是：英国约克大学， 邮编 YO10 5DD。

**11. 参加此项目会有哪些影响：**

虽然参与者在采访过程中没有直接报酬，但我会访谈期间提供一些免费的咖啡或茶，希望这项研究可以有助于探索当前形势下的性别空间的一些理解。面试将占用你的一些时间。我会尝试通过安排适合您的时间和地点来减少不便。

**12. 了解更多相关信息：**

如果您想获取该研究的进一步相关资料，请您联系项目的研究者，或者可以联系其导师。关于伦理审查问题，可以联系其伦理审查部门主席。

我非常感激您能参与到这次关于中国女性地铁车厢的研究当中，如果您在研究的过程当中有任何问题想要咨询，请随时联系我。非常感谢您的参与和您的合作。

附加：

### 联系方式

研究人：	研究导师	ELMPS 主席
姓名：崔华文 地址：Flat 18, Manor Court, UK Email： <a href="mailto:hc1270@york.ac.uk">hc1270@york.ac.uk</a> Tel: +44 7926921204	姓名: Prof Stevi Jackson 地址: Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, UK Email： <a href="mailto:stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk">stevi.jackson@york.ac.uk</a>	姓名: Prof Tony Royle Email： <a href="mailto:tony.royle@york.ac.uk">tony.royle@york.ac.uk</a>

供参考的帮助热线

1. NGOCN 官方网站 ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))  
NGOCN 属于公益互联网平台，旨在为关注互联网的公共利益的人们提供公共信息和通信服务，促进社会发展。在 NGOCN 官方网站中 ([www.ngocn.net](http://www.ngocn.net))
2. 广州和深圳妇女协会官方网站  
广州 ([www.gzwoman.org.cn](http://www.gzwoman.org.cn)); 深圳 ([www.szwoman.org.cn](http://www.szwoman.org.cn))
3. 广州和深圳心理求助热线：  
广州热线：020-81899120; 020-12320-5; 深圳: 0755-25629459.
4. 广州和深圳市地铁公司：  
广州：020-96891, [96891@gzmtr.com](mailto:96891@gzmtr.com);



## Appendix C Consent form for participants

### Consent forms for interview

Research project: **Female space on public transport: Case study of women's metro carriages in Guangdong Province, China**

Research: Huawen Cui

PhD in Centre for Women's Studies

The University of York

This form is for you to state whether or not you agree to take part in the study. Please read and answer every question. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

1. Have you read and understood the project information sheet about the study? Yes  No
2. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the study? Yes  No
3. Do you understand that the information you provide will be held in confidence by the researcher? Yes  No
4. Do you understand that the information you provide may be used for PhD research and future publications? Yes  No
5. Do you understand that you may withdraw from the study for any reason up until 6 months after the interview? Yes  No
6. Do you agree to take part in the study? Yes  No
7. If yes, do you agree to your interviews being recorded? Yes  No   
(You may take part in the study without agreeing to this).
8. Do you agree to allow the researcher to archive your data in the UK Data Archive? Yes  No
9. Do you understand the researcher will anonymise your name and disguise your personal information in her thesis and future publications? Yes  No

Your name (in Block Letters):

---

Your signature:

---

Your contact details:

---

The researcher's name:

---

Date:

---

# 伦理和同意表格

**研究课题：** 关于中国女性地铁车厢的设立调查

**研究者：** 崔华文， 女性研究中心， 英国约克大学

在这份同意表格里，我会解释您所提供的信息将以何种方式被我的研究所采用。我也会列举出您在我整个研究过程中所享有的权利。如果有任何疑问，请您随时向我提出。

1. 我已经阅读并了解这项研究的相关信息。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
2. 我被给予了询问相关问题的机会。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
3. 我知道我所提供的信息将被应用到此项研究中，且会保证匿名及信息保密。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
4. 我同意将我的信息以匿名的形式应用在研究者的博士论文当中和在其他出版物和演讲当中。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
5. 我认识到我的参与是自愿的，并且我有权利在接受采访的六个月内无理由退出。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
6. 我同意参加这项研究。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
7. 如果同意，您是否愿意接受您的采访被录音？  
(您可以参加采访但是选择不被录音)  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
8. 我同意研究者将与我的采访数据信息归档到英国数据档案中。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_
9. 我明白研究者在其博士论文和未来相关的出版物中保证我的个人信息匿名并进行信息保密。  
是 \_\_\_ 否\_\_\_

您的姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

您的签名： \_\_\_\_\_

您的联系方式： \_\_\_\_\_

研究者姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

日期： \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D Summary of Participant Information

Name (Pseudonym)	Personal Information				
	Age	Gender	Educational level	Frequency of using city metro	Frequency of using women's carriages
Fanshu	47	male	Master	Once a week	rarely
Benhao	27	male	Bachelor	everyday	never
Xuemei	24	female	PhD	Three times a week	usually
Conghui	25	female	Master	everyday	used to often
Honghong	26	female	Master	Once a month	rarely
Yutong	26	female	Bachelor	everyday	hard to say
Laoda	26	male	Master	Everyday	rarely
Zhongcheng	34	male	Bachelor	Occasionally	used to never
Harrison	32	male	Bachelor	everyday	only with friends
Wei	31	male	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Yiwen	22	female	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Wenqi	25	female	Bachelor	weekend	barely
Shiyu	26	female	Bachelor	everyday	not often
Sizhi	27	male	Bachelor	often	hard to say
Yin	23	female	Master	often	never
Zhoucheng	29	male	Bachelor	weekdays	always
Siqiu	24	female	College	frequently	sometimes
Xiaozhi	19	female	Bachelor	weekend	often
Shutiao	27	male	Master	frequently	use frequently
Jiaqi	24	male	Master	everyday	never
Mengmeng	23	female	Master	everyday	usually

Ailin	23	female	Master	Twice a week	never
Qiqi	23	female	Master	Three times per week	several times in total
Yuanshan	24	male	Master	once a week	once
Luobo	28	male	PhD	everyday	never
Tingting	21	female	Bachelor	everyday	often
Xiaodai	21	female	Bachelor	everyday	several times
Ying	30	female	Bachelor	everyday	several times
Xiaoyi	27	female	PhD	occasionally	never
Qingjie	28	male	Bachelor	everyday	often
Song	26	male	Bachelor	everyday	few
Yanzi	27	female	Bachelor	Often	sometimes
Dajiang	29	male	Bachelor	Once a month	never
Xiaodan	27	female	Master	everyday	occasionally
Sam	24	male	College	Metro staff	work
Luca	28	female	Bachelor	Metro staff	work
Qianxun	27	male	Master	everyday	used frequently
Zhiying	25	female	Master	everyday	rarely
Guosheng	30	male	Bachelor	frequently	never
tianyu	27	male	Master	often	twice only
zhongshan	27	male	Master	everyday	often
wuge	36	male	Bachelor	everyday	not noticed
linju	19	male	College	everyday	never
Tiantian	25	female	Master	everyday	often

## Appendix E Glossary of Key Terms and phrases

安全手册 Safety Knowledge Handbook

八零后 post-80s generation

痴汉 Chikan; sexual harasser, also features in Japanese pornography

痴汉文化 Chikan Culture; the culture of sexual harassment

传宗接代 have a son to continue the family line

单位 work unit

妇女能顶半边天 Women hold up half the sky

公主病 princess disease

关系 personal connections; personal networks

广东政治协商委员会 Guangdong Province Political Consultative Conference

和谐社会 harmonious society

家谱 family line

九零后 post-90s generation

君子 (Confucian) gentleman

恐婚 afraid of marriage

恐男 fear of men

礼 rituals

面子 Face; Reputation

面子工程 facial project

男主外，女主内 Men rule the outside and women rule the inside

男尊女卑 men are superior and women are inferior

女权癌 feminist cancer

女权婊 feminist whores

女拳 female boxing (feminism); 女拳手 female boxers (feminists)

女性安检通道 Female security check channel

女性车厢 Women's metro carriages/ Female Carriages

女性优先车厢 Priority Carriages for Women  
普信男 an ordinary man but full of confidence; 普信女 an ordinary woman but full of confidence  
谦让 Chivalrous  
人民日报 People's Daily  
日本成人电影 Japanese A.V.  
色狼 sexual harasser  
社会风气 social morality  
社会主义精神文明建设 socialist spiritual civilization  
绅士 (western) gentleman  
深漂 people working but not born in Shenzhen  
剩女 leftover woman  
素质 quality; 高素质 high quality  
素质公民 quality citizen  
文明 civilisation  
咸猪手 male sexual harassers  
小资生活 petty bourgeois life  
新浪微博 Sina Weibo  
性骚扰 sexual harassment  
厌男 misandry  
厌女 misogyny  
养儿防老 raise a son to look after someone's parents in their old age  
中国共产党 Chinese Communist Party (CCP)  
中国全国妇联 All-China Women's Federation(ACWF)  
中国人民政治协商会议 Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference  
中国特色社会主义价值观 socialist values with Chinese Characteristics  
中华田园女权 Chinese country feminism; Chinese mongrel feminism

## Bibliography

Abenzoza, R.F., Romero-Torres, J., Cats, O. and Susilo, Y.O., 2019. User experiences and perceptions of women-only transport services in Mexico. In *Gendering Smart Mobilities* (pp. 188-209). Routledge.

Abenzoza, RF., Romero-Torres, J. and Cats, O., 2019. User experiences and perceptions of women-only transport services in Mexico. In *Gendering Smart Mobilities*: 188-209. Routledge: Abingdon, UK; New York, USA.

Abernethy, S., 2015. 'Sending females by rail': the history of women-only carriages. *History Today*. 28 August 2015. Available at: <https://www.historytoday.com/sending-females-rail-history-women-only-carriages>[Accessed 23 January 2020]

ACFTU, 2020. Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of Maternal and Infant Facilities (关于加快推进母婴设施建设的指导意见). *All-China Federation of Trade Unions* 中华全国总工会, 18 December 2020. Available at: [https://www.acftu.org/fwzd/axmys\\_0390/xwzn/zcwj\\_10143/202012/t20201218\\_749174.html?7OkeOa4k=qAcfqAqNt19Nt19NtQdi.7cT5Nqz68EemHr16O6\\_NGqqqqqqqqqqqqqtA](https://www.acftu.org/fwzd/axmys_0390/xwzn/zcwj_10143/202012/t20201218_749174.html?7OkeOa4k=qAcfqAqNt19Nt19NtQdi.7cT5Nqz68EemHr16O6_NGqqqqqqqqqqqqqtA) [Accessed 14 February 2022]

Acker, J., 1989. The problem with patriarchy. *Sociology*, 23(2), pp.235-240.

Adams, J.W., Kottke, J.L. and Padgitt, J.S., 1983. Sexual harassment of university students. *Journal of College Student Personnel*.

Adiv, N., 2017. On being groped and staying quiet. Or, what kind of place an airplane can be. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 24(5), pp.621-627.

Adler, P.A., Kless, S.J. and Adler, P., 1992. Socialization to gender roles: Popularity among elementary school boys and girls. *Sociology of education*, pp.169-187.

Aguilar, O., Pérez, P., Ananías, R., Mora, C. and Blanco, O., 2017. The intersection between class and gender and its impact on the quality of employment in Chile. *COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN*, p.131.

Alhojailan, M.I., 2012. Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West east journal of social sciences*, 1(1), pp.39-47.

Anagnost, A., 2004. The corporeal politics of quality (suzhi). *Public culture*, 16(2), pp.189-208.

Arjmand, R., 2016. *Public urban space, gender and segregation: Women-only urban parks in suIran*. Routledge.

Armstrong, E.A., Gleckman-Krut, M. and Johnson, L., 2018. Silence, power, and inequality: An intersectional approach to sexual violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44(1), pp.99-122.

Avina, C. and O'Donohue, W., 2002. Sexual harassment and PTSD: Is sexual harassment diagnosable trauma?. *Journal of Traumatic Stress: Official Publication of The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies*, 15(1), pp.69-75.

Bachok, S., Osman, M.M., Murad, M. and Ibrahim, M., 2014. An assessment of commuters' perceptions of safety and comfort levels of 'Women-Only Coac



h': the case study of KTM Komuter Malaysia. *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 20, pp.197-205.

Back, L., 2007. *The art of listening*. Berg.

Baidu, 2019. Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China(中华人民共和国宪法). 6 September 2019. Available at:<https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/497098462253921884.html> [Accessed 24 April 2021]

Baker, C.N., 2007. The emergence of organized feminist resistance to sexual harassment in the United States in the 1970s. *Journal of Women's History*, 19(3), pp.161-184.

Banister, J., 1987. *China's changing population*. Stanford University Press.

Bannister, J. and Fyfe, N., 2001. Introduction: Fear and the city. *Urban studies*, 38(5-6), pp.807-813.

Bao, X., 2022. *The Striving Trap: Chinese 996 Work Culture, Online and Offline Perspectives* (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University).

Barak, A., 2005. Sexual harassment on the Internet. *Social Science Computer Review*, 23(1), pp.77-92.

Bartling, C.A. and Eisenman, R., 1993. Sexual harassment proclivities in men and women. *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 31(3), pp.189-192.

Basile, K.C., Smith, S.G., Breiding, M., Black, M.C. and Mahendra, R.R., 201

4. Sexual violence surveillance: Uniform definitions and recommended data elements. Version 2.0.

Bastomski, S. and Smith, P., 2017. Gender, fear, and public places: How negative encounters with strangers harm women. *Sex Roles*, 76(1), pp.73-88.

Basu, S., Zuo, X., Lou, C., Acharya, R. and Lundgren, R., 2017. Learning to be gendered: Gender socialization in early adolescence among urban poor in Delhi, India, and Shanghai, China. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(4), pp. S24-S29.

Bates, L., 2016. *Everyday sexism: The project that inspired a worldwide movement*. Macmillan.

Batul, Z., 2021. Gender Politics and Public Sphere. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 56(16), pp.53.

Bazeley, P., and Jackson, K., 2013. *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Los Angeles; London: Sage Publication.

Beijing.gov.cn, 2022. Guidelines for Laws, Regulations and Policy Documents on Protection of Labor Rights and Interests of Female Employees (女职工劳动权益维护法律法规政策文件指引). March 2022. Available at:<http://rsj.beijing.gov.cn/xxgk/zfxxgk/fdzdggk/xgfggk/202203/P020220314506700776368.pdf> [Accessed 19 September 2022]

Beiner, T.M., 2007. Sexy dressing revisited: Does target dress play in a part in sexual harassment cases. *Duke J. Gender L. & Pol'y*, 14, p.125.

Bendixen, M. and Kennair, L.E.O., 2017. Advances in the understanding of same-sex and opposite-sex sexual harassment. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 38 (5), pp.583-591.

Berdahl, J.L., Magley, V.J. and Waldo, C.R., 1996. The sexual harassment of men?: Exploring the concept with theory and data. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20(4), pp.527-547.

Berdahl, J.L., Magley, V.J. and Waldo, C.R., 1996. The sexual harassment of men?: Exploring the concept with theory and data. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20(4), pp.527-547.

Bernard, H. R., 2002. *Research Methods in Anthropology: qualitative and quantitative methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Walnut creek, California: AltaMira Press.

Bettcher, T.M., 2013. Trans women and the meaning of 'woman'.

Betts, N.D. and Newman, G.C., 1982. Defining the issue: Sexual harassment in college and university life. *Contemporary education*, 54(1), p.48.

Bondi, L., 2005. Gender and the reality of cities: Embodied identities, social relations and performativities.

Boyer, K., 2022. Sexual harassment and the right to everyday life. *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(2), pp. 398-415.

Brady, A.M. and Juntao, W., 2009. China's strengthened new order and the rol

e of propaganda. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(62), pp.767-788.

Brady, A.M., 2009. *Marketing dictatorship: Propaganda and thought work in contemporary China*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Brannick, T., and Coghlan, D., 2007. In defence of being 'native': the case of insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10 (1), pp. 59-74.

Bray, D., 2005. *Social space and governance in urban China: The danwei system from origins to reform*. Stanford University Press.

Bronner, G., Peretz, C. and Ehrenfeld, M., 2003. Sexual harassment of nurses and nursing students. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 42(6), pp.637-644.

Brown, K. and Bērziņa-Čerenkova, U.A., 2018. Ideology in the era of Xi Jinping. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 23(3), pp.323-339.

Browne, K., 2009. Womyn's separatist spaces: Rethinking spaces of difference and exclusion. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34(4), pp.541-556.

Brownmiller, S. and Alexander, D., 1992. From Carmita Wood to Anita Hill. *Mss., January/February*, 71, pp.1469-70.

Buschmeyer, A. and Lengersdorf, D., 2016. The differentiation of masculinity as a challenge for the concept of hegemonic masculinity. *Norma*, 11(3), pp.190-207.

Cambridge Dictionary, n.d. Gentleman. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gentleman> [Accessed 24 October 2022]

Cambridge Dictionary, n.d. Intrusion. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intrusion>[Accessed 26 January 2022]

Cameron, L. and Meng, X., 2014. China's one child policy. In *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics (online edition)*. Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.

Can, T., 1994. Sexual harassment in China. *Chinese Education & Society*, 27(4), pp.39-46.

Cao, S., 2021. *Chinese men's practices of intimacy, embodiment and kinship: Crafting elastic masculinity*. Policy Press.

Cao, Y., and Deng, Q., 2017. Guangdong media: Over 70% of netizens agree with the trial of women's carriages on the Guangzhou-Shenzhen Metro. (广东媒体: 广深地铁试点女性车厢, 超七成网友表示赞成). *The Paper News 澎湃新闻*. 27 June 2017. Available at: [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1718639](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1718639) [Accessed 26 September 2018]

Carrico, K., 2017. Eliminating Spiritual Pollution: A Genealogy of Closed Political Thought in China's Era of Opening. *The China Journal*, 78(1), pp.100-119.

Ceccato, V., 2017. Women's victimisation and safety in transit environments. *Crime prevention and community safety*, 19(3), pp.163-167.

Chan, K.L., 2009. Sexual violence against women and children in Chinese societies. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 10(1), pp.69-85.

Chen, B. and Anderson, V.N., 2017. Chinese college students' gender self-esteem and trans prejudice. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 18(1), pp.66-78.

Chen, D.陈东林, 2000. "Mao Zedong's New Theory of "Class Struggle" and the Causes and Characteristics of Cultural Revolution" (毛泽东的新“阶级斗争”论断与“文化大革命”的起因和特点). *Chinese Journal of Research on the History of the Communist Party of China (中国党史研究)*.

Chen, J., Dunne, M.P. and Han, P., 2004. Child sexual abuse in China: a study of adolescents in four provinces. *Child abuse & neglect*, 28(11), pp.1171-1186.

Chen, J., Xin, T., Gaoshan, J., Li, Q., Zou, K., Tan, S., Cheng, Y., Liu, Y., Chen, J., Wang, H. and Mu, Y., 2019. The association between work related factors and breastfeeding practices among Chinese working mothers: a mixed-method approach. *International breastfeeding journal*, 14(1), pp.1-13.

Chin, T., 2018. *Lost and Found in the Field: Methodology and Research Process. Everyday gender at Work in Taiwan.* Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 33-79.

China.com, 2015. Foreign media: It is unrealistic for CPPCC members to build women's carriages in Beijing subway to prevent harassment (外媒：政协委员所提北京地铁建女性车厢防骚扰不现实). 30 January 2015. Available at:<https://news.china.com/social/1007/20150130/19264849.html>[Accessed 17 January 2018]

Choi, S.Y. and Luo, M., 2016. Performative family: Homosexuality, marriage and intergenerational dynamics in China. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 67(2), pp.260-280.

Chowdhury, R. and McFarlane, C., 2022. The crowd and citylife: Materiality, negotiation and inclusivity at Tokyo's train stations. *Urban Studies*, 59(7), pp.1353-1371.

Chu, K.K., 2022. Power of the eyes: deterring sexual harassment in Tokyo subways using images of watchful eyes. *Behavioural Public Policy*, 6(4), pp.674-685.

Clark, K., 2015. *Civilisation*. Hachette UK.

Clarke, L., 2007. Sexual harassment law in the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union: Discriminatory wrongs and dignitary harms. *Common Law World Review*, 36(2), pp.79-105.

Cohen, D.S., 2010. Keeping men "Men" and women down: Sex segregation, anti-essentialism, and masculinity. *Harv. JL & Gender*, 33, pp.509-554.

Cohen, D.S., 2010. Keeping Men Men and Women Down: Sex Segregation, Anti-Essentialism, and Masculinity. *Harv. JL & Gender*, 33, p.509.

Coles, T., 2009. Negotiating the field of masculinity: The production and reproduction of multiple dominant masculinities. *Men and masculinities*, 12(1), pp.30-44.

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, J.W., 2005. Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & society*, 19(6), pp.829-859.

Coppola, P. and Silvestri, F., 2021. Gender inequality in safety and security perceptions in railway stations. *Sustainability*, 13(7), p.4007.

Coster, S., Estes, S.B. and Mueller, C.W., 1999. Routine activities and sexual harassment in the workplace. *Work and Occupations*, 26(1), pp.21-49.

Cotterill, P., 1992. Interviewing women: issues of friendship, vulnerability, and power. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15 (5-6), pp. 593-606.

Cozens, P., Neale, R., Whitaker, J. and Hillier, D., 2003. Investigating personal safety at railway stations using "virtual reality" technology. *Facilities*.

Cpcnews, 2014. Consolidate the value foundation of the basic national policy of equality between men and women (夯实男女平等基本国策的价值观基础) . Cpcnews.cn 中国共产党新闻网, 11 October 2014. Available at:<http://theory.people.com.cn/big5/n/2014/1011/c40531-25809824.html>[Accessed 06 November 2021]

Cresswell, T., 2010. Towards a politics of mobility. *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 28(1), pp.17-31.

Croll, E., 1995. *Changing Identities of Chinese Women*. Hong Kong University Press.

Croll, E., Kane, P. and Davin, D. eds., 1985. *China's one-child family policy*. S



pringer.

Crosthwaite, J. and Priest, G., 1996. The definition of sexual harassment. *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, 74(1), pp.66-82.

Crouch, M., 2009. Sexual harassment in public places. *Social Philosophy Today*, 25, pp.137-148.

Cui, H., 2021. Chinese Feminist Comedy? An exploration of the opportunities and challenges faced by female stand-up comedians in China. *Cultivate*, 3, pp. 16-23.

[CYOL.com](http://www.cyol.com), 中国青年报, 2015. 53.4% of the respondents had encountered sexual harassment on the bus or subway. (53.4%受访者曾在公交车或地铁上遭遇性骚扰). 25 June 2015. Available at: [http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-06/25/nw.D110000zgqnb\\_20150625\\_2-07.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-06/25/nw.D110000zgqnb_20150625_2-07.htm)[Accessed 03 March 2019]

Davidson, C., 2009. Transcription: imperatives for qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8 (2), pp. 35-52.

Davies, M., 2002. Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 7(3), pp.203-214.

Davin, D., 1985. The single-child family policy in the countryside. In *China's one-child family policy* (pp. 37-82). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Davis, D., 1993. The harm that has no name: Street harassment, embodiment, and African American women. *Ucla Women's LJ*, 4, p.133.

Davis, K.M., 1993. Reading, Writing, and Sexual Harassment: Finding a Constitutional Remedy When Schools Fail to Address Peer Abuse. *Ind. LJ*, 69, p.1123.

Delbosc, A. and Currie, G., 2012. Modelling the causes and impacts of personal safety perceptions on public transport ridership. *Transport Policy*, 24, pp.302-309.

Dhillon, M., and Bakaya, S., 2014. Street harassment: a qualitative study of the experiences of young women in Delhi. *Sage Open*, 4(3), pp.1-11.

Diamond, M. and Uchiyama, A., 1999. Pornography, rape, and sex crimes in Japan. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*.

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E. L., Kippen, S. and Liamputtong, P., 2007. 'Doing sensitive research: what challenges do qualitative researchers face', *qualitative research*, (7): pp. 327-353.

D-maps.com, n.d. Available at: [https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num\\_car=21013&lang=zh](https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=21013&lang=zh)

Doan, P.L., 2010. The tyranny of gendered spaces—reflections from beyond the gender dichotomy. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 17(5), pp.635-654.

Dotson, J., 2011. *The Confucian revival in the propaganda narratives of the Chinese government*. US-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Dougherty, D., 2001. Sexual harassment as [dys] functional process: A feminist

standpoint analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 29(4), pp.372-402.

Duncan, N., 1996. Renegotiating gender and sexuality in public and private spaces. In *BodySpace*. Routledge. pp.135-152.

Dunckel-Graglia, 2013a. Women-only Transportation: How “Pink” Public Transportation Changes Public Perception of Women’s Mobility. *Journal of Public Transportation*, 16(2), pp.85-105.

Dunckel-Graglia, 2013b. ‘Pink transportation’ in Mexico City: reclaiming urban spaces through collective action against gender-based violence. *Gender & Development*, 21(2), pp.265-276.

Dwyer, S. C. and Buckle, J. L., 2009. The space between: on being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), pp. 54-63.

Dynon, N., 2008. " Four Civilizations" and the evolution of post-Mao Chinese socialist ideology. *The China Journal*, (60), pp.83-109.

Dziech, B.W. and Weiner, L., 1990. *The lecherous professor: Sexual harassment on campus*. University of Illinois Press.

Ebrey, P.B. ed., 2009. *Chinese civilization: A sourcebook*. Simon and Schuster.

Ekore, J.O., 2012. Gender differences in perception of sexual harassment among university students. *Gender and Behaviour*, 10(1), pp.4358-4369.

Elias, J. and Beasley, C., 2009. Hegemonic masculinity and globalization: 'Trans national business masculinities' and beyond. *Globalizations*, 6(2), pp.281-296.

Elias, N. (1994) *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: Blackwell

Elsheshtawy, Y., 2012. Urban (Im) mobility: public encounters in Dubai. In *Urban theory beyond the west*. Routledge. pp. 230-247.

Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D. and Steinmetz, A., 1991. *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*. London: Falmer Press.

Ephemeral New York, 2010. When subway cars almost became women-only. 29 December 2010. Available at: <https://ephemeralnewyork.wordpress.com/2010/12/29/when-subway-cars-almost-became-women-only/> [Accessed 24 05 2018]

Esacove, A.W., 1998. A diminishing of self: Women's experiences of unwanted sexual attention. *Health Care for Women International*, 19(3), pp.181-192.

Evans, H., 1992. Monogamy and female sexuality in the People's Republic of China. *Women in the face of change: the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China*, pp.147-163.

Evans, H., 2008. *The subject of gender: daughters and mothers in urban China*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Evans, H., 2011. The gender of communication: changing expectations of mothers and daughters in urban China. In: *Gender in flux: agency and its limits in*

contemporary China: The China Quarterly Special Issues New Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 164-184.

Fairchild, K. and Rudman, L.A., 2008. Everyday stranger harassment and women's objectification. *Social Justice Research*, 21(3), pp.338-357.

Fairchild, K.M., 2007. *Everyday stranger harassment: Frequency and consequences* (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University-Graduate School-New Brunswick).

Fang, X., Li, X., Yang, H., Hong, Y., Zhao, R., Dong, B., Liu, W., Zhou, Y., Liang, S. and Stanton, B., 2007. Profile of female sex workers in a Chinese county: does it differ by where they came from and where they work?. *World health & population*, 9(1), p.46.

Fasting, K., Brackenridge, C. and Walseth, K., 2002. Consequences of sexual harassment in sport for female athletes. *Journal of sexual aggression*, 8(2), pp.37-48.

Feng, C., 2017. The NGO Law in China and its Impact on Overseas funded NGOs. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 9 (3), pp.95-105.

Fileborn, B., 2013. Conceptual understandings and prevalence of sexual harassment and street harassment.

Fincher, L.H., 2016. *Leftover women: The resurgence of gender inequality in China*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Fincher, L.H., 2018. *Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China*. Verso: Verso Books Press.
- Fitzgerald, L.F. and Ormerod, A.J., 1991. Perceptions of sexual harassment: The influence of gender and academic context. *Psychology of women quarterly*, 15 (2), pp.281-294.
- Fitzgerald, L.F., 1990. Sexual harassment: The definition and measurement of a construct. *Ivory tower: Sexual harassment on campus*, 21(22), pp.24-30.
- Fitzgerald, L.F., 1990. Sexual harassment: The definition and measurement of a construct. *Ivory tower: Sexual harassment on campus*, 21(22), pp.24-30.
- Fitzgerald, L.F., 1993. Sexual harassment: Violence against women in the work place. *American Psychologist*, 48(10), p.1070.
- Fitzgerald, L.F., Magley, V.J., Drasgow, F. and Waldo, C.R., 1999. Measuring sexual harassment in the military: the sexual experiences questionnaire (SEQ—DoD). *Military Psychology*, 11(3), pp.243-263.
- Fitzgerald, L.F., Swan, S. and Magley, V.J., 1997. But was it really sexual harassment?: Legal, behavioral, and psychological definitions of the workplace victimization of women.
- Fong, V.L., 2002. China's one-child policy and the empowerment of urban daughters. *American anthropologist*, 104(4), pp.1098-1109.
- Fou, 否否桑, 2022. [Sina Weibo] 27 November of blog. Available at:<https://m>.

[weibo.cn/2598610870/4840543047390051](https://weibo.cn/2598610870/4840543047390051) [Accessed 10 December 2022]

Franke, K.M., 1996. What's wrong with sexual harassment. *Stan. L. Rev.*, 49, p. 691.

Freedman, A., 2002. Commuting gazes: Schoolgirls, salarymen, and electric trains in Tokyo. *The Journal of Transport History*, 23(1), pp.23-36.

Fu, D., 2017. "Disguised Collective Action in China." *Comparative Political Studies*, 50 (4): 499–527.

Galdi, S., Maass, A. and Cadinu, M., 2014. Objectifying media: Their effect on gender role norms and sexual harassment of women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38(3), pp.398-413.

Gallop, J., 1997. *Feminist accused of sexual harassment*. Duke University Press.

Gardner, C.B., 1980. Passing by: Street remarks, address rights, and the urban female. *Sociological inquiry*, 50(3-4), pp.328-356.

Gardner, C.B., 1995. *Passing by: Gender and public harassment*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Gardner, N., Cui, J., and Coiacetto, E., 2017. Harassment on public transport and its impacts on women's travel behaviour. *Australian Planner*, 54(1), pp.8-15.

Gardner, S. and Johnson, P.R., 2001. Sexual harassment in healthcare: Strategies for employers. *Hospital topics*, 79(4), pp.5-11.

Garrett, A. and Hassan, N., 2019, August. Understanding the silence of sexual harassment victims through the # whyididntreport movement. In *Proceedings of the 2019 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*. pp. 649-652.

gdszx.gov.cn.,2017. Should the subway have women-only carriages? In response to the proposal of "female-only carriages in the subway" proposed by the members of the Provincial Political Consultative Conference, the reporter of "Nandu Immediately Asked" went to Guangzhou and Shenzhen for investigation with the Provincial Political Consultative Conference Research Group (地铁要不要设女性专用车厢? 针对省政协委员提出“地铁设女性专用车厢”提案,“南都马上问”记者随省政协调研组赴广深调研). 08 June 2017. Available at:[https://www.gdszx.gov.cn/mtjj/content/post\\_12847.html](https://www.gdszx.gov.cn/mtjj/content/post_12847.html)[Accessed 17 September 2018].

Gekoski, A., Gray, J.M., Adler, J.R. and Horvath, M.A., 2017. The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment and assault against women and girls on public transport: an international review. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*.

Gekoski, A., Gray, J.M., Horvath, M.A., Edwards, S., Emirali, A. and Adler, J.R., 2015. 'What works' in reducing sexual harassment and sexual offences on public transport nationally and internationally: a rapid evidence assessment.

Giddens, A., 2013. *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ginting, R., Gelgel, N.M. and Apriani, K., 2022, August. Feminism and the W



omen's Carriage of the KRL Jabodetabek. In *Proceedings of the 6th Batusangka International Conference, BIC 2021, 11-12 October, 2021, Batusangkar-West Sumatra, Indonesia*.

Glick, P. and Fiske, S.T., 1997. Hostile and benevolent sexism: Measuring ambivalent sexist attitudes toward women. *Psychology of women quarterly*, 21(1), pp. 119-135.

Glick, P. and Fiske, S.T., 2001. An ambivalent alliance: Hostile and benevolent sexism as complementary justifications for gender inequality. *American psychologist*, 56(2), p.109.

Gomez, I., Leguizamon, M., and Zdanowicz, C., 2018. Sexual assault survivors are reclaiming the words used to discredit them: 'What were you wearing?' CNN, 16 April 2018. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/16/health/what-were-you-wearing-exhibit-trnd/index.html> [Accessed 05 September 2020].

Goodwin, D., Pope, C., Mort, M. and Smith, A., 2003. 'Ethics and ethnography: and experiential account', *Qualitative Health Research* (7): pp. 567-77.

Gov.cn., 2018. Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 中华人民共和国宪法. www. Gov.cn, 中华人民共和国中央人民政府. 22 March 2018. Available at:[http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content\\_5276318.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm) [Accessed 24 April 2021]

Gow, M., 2017. The core socialist values of the Chinese dream: Towards a Chinese integral state. *Critical Asian Studies*, 49(1), pp.92-116.

Graham-Harrison, E., 2015. Women-only Carriages around the world: do they work? The Guardian., 26 August 2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/26/women-only-train-carriages-around-the-world-jeremy-corbyn> [Accessed 11 July 2023]

Greenhalgh, S. and Winckler, E.A., 2005. *Governing China's population: From Leninist to neoliberal biopolitics*. Stanford University Press.

Greenhalgh, S., 2003. Science, modernity, and the making of China's one-child policy. *Population and Development Review*, 29(2), pp.163-196.

Grieco, A., 1987. Scope and nature of sexual harassment in nursing.

Guo, Y., 2010. China's celebrity mothers: female virtues, patriotism and social harmony. *Celebrity in China*, 1, p.45.

Gutek, B.A. and Done, R.S., 2001. Sexual harassment.

Halse, C., and Honey, A., 2005. Unravelling ethics: Illuminating the moral dilemmas of research ethics. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30 (4), pp.2142-2161.

Hambleton, A., 2016. When women watch: The subversive potential of female-friendly pornography in Japan. *Porn Studies*, 3(4), pp.427-442.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P., 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Routledge: Abingdon.

Han, M.韩妹, 2012. 84.1% of the respondents called for the establishment of special breastfeeding rooms in public places (84.1% 受访者呼吁公共场所设立专门哺乳室). CYOL 中国青年报, 07 August 2012. Available at: [http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2012-08/07/nw.D110000zgqnb\\_20120807\\_1-07.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2012-08/07/nw.D110000zgqnb_20120807_1-07.htm) [Accessed 13 July 2021]

Han, X., 2018. Searching for an online space for feminism? The Chinese feminist group Gender Watch Women's Voice and its changing approaches to online misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18 (4), pp.734-749.

Hanser, A. and Li, J.C., 2015. Opting out? Gated consumption, infant formula and China's affluent urban consumers. *The China Journal*, (74), pp.110-128.

Hao, H., 2022. The Life Wisdom of Chinese Traditional Filial Piety. *Philosophy*, 12(6), pp.310-321.

Hart, R., 1979. *Children's experience of place*. Irvington.

Harvey, D., 2015. Women-only train carriages, good or bad idea? *BBC News*. 06 August 2015. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-34063227> [Accessed 26 February 2021]

Heise, L.L., Raikes, A., Watts, C.H. and Zwi, A.B., 1994. Violence against women: a neglected public health issue in less developed countries. *Social science & medicine*, 39(9), pp.1165-1179.

Hershatter, G., 2000. Local meanings of gender and work in rural Shaanxi in t

he 1950s. *Re-drawing boundaries: Work, households, and gender in China*, pp.79-96.

Hershatter, G., 2007. Women in China's long twentieth century. In *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century*. University of California Press.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. and Leavy, P.L., 2007. *Feminist research practice: A Primer*. London: Sage.

Hill, C. and Kearl, H., 2011. *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. American Association of University Women. 1111 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Hill, C. and Silva, E., 2005. *Drawing the line: sexual harassment on campus*. American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1111 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Hird, D. and Louie, K., 2016. Making class and gender. *Changing Chinese masculinities: From imperial pillars of state to global real men, 1*, pp.137-156.

Hird, D., 2009. *White-collar men and masculinities in contemporary urban China* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Westminster).

Hird, D., 2017. In league with gentlemen: Junzi masculinity and the Chinese nation in cultural nationalist discourses. *Asia Pacific Perspectives*, 15(1): pp.1-42.

Hlavka, H.R., 2017. Speaking of stigma and the silence of shame: Young men and sexual victimization. *Men and Masculinities*, 20(4), pp.482-505.

Ho, P., Jackson, S., Cao, S. and Kwok, C., 2018. Sex with Chinese Characteristics: Sexuality Research in/ on 21<sup>st</sup> Century China. *The Journal of Sex Research*. 55(4-5): pp. 486-521.

Holland, J. and Ramazanoglu, C., 1994. Coming to conclusions: power and interpretation in researching young women's sexuality. In: Maynard, M and Purvis, J. (Eds). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 125-148.

Honig, E., 2002. Chapter9: Maoist Mappings of Gender: Reassessing the Red Guards. *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press. pp.255-268.

Hood, C., 1996. Changing perceptions of public space on the New York rapid transit system. *Journal of Urban History*, 22(3), pp.308-331.

Horri, M. and Burgess, A., 2012. Constructing sexual risk: 'Chikan', collapsing male authority and the emergence of women-only train carriages in Japan. *Health, Risk & Society*, 14(1): 41-55.

Hou, L., 2020. Rewriting "the personal is political": young women's digital activism and new feminist politics in China. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 21(3), pp.337-355.

Howell, J., 1996. The struggle for survival: Prospects for the Women's Federation in Post-Mao China. *World Development*, 24(1), pp.129-143.

Hsu, H.P., 2010. How does fear of sexual harassment on transit affect women's use of transit?. *Women's Issues in Transportation*, p.85.

Hu, Y. and Scott, J., 2016. Family and gender values in China: Generational, geographic, and gender differences. *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(9), pp.1267-1293.

Hu, Y. and Shi, X., 2020. The impact of China's one-child policy on intergenerational and gender relations. *Contemporary Social Science*, 15(3), pp.360-377.

Hu, Y., 2018. Patriarchal hierarchy? Gender, children's housework time, and family structure in post-reform China. *Chinese Sociological Review*, 50(3), pp.310-338.

Hu, Yinbin, 2017. Setting up of women's carriages reflected humanistic care (光明日报: 设置女性车厢彰显人文关怀). *People.cn*. 12 June 2017. Available at: <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0612/c1003-29332593.html> [Accessed 30 August 2020].

Huang, W., Lei, X. and Sun, A., 2021. Fertility Restrictions and Life Cycle Outcomes: Evidence from the One-Child Policy in China. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 103(4), pp.694-710.

Huang, Y. and Pan, S., 2009. 'Research ethics in social surveys in China: reflections and methodological'. *China Social Science*. (2), pp.149-162.

Hubbard, G., Bachett-Miburn, K. and Kemmer, D., 2001. 'Working with emotion: Issues for the researcher in fieldwork and teamwork'. *Social Research Methodology*, 4 (2), pp. 119-37.

Hubbert, J., 2019. *China in the world: An anthropology of Confucius Institutes, soft power, and globalization*. University of Hawaii Press.

Humanrights.cn, 2020. Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors (中华人民共和国未成年人保护法). 7 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.humanrights.cn/html/wxzl/5/5/2020/1207/55408.html> [Accessed 19 September 2022]

Infante-Vargas, D. and Boyer, K., 2022a. Gender-based violence against women users of public transport in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 31 (2), pp.216-230.

Infante-Vargas, D. and Boyer, K., 2022b. 'Do you really want to keep going with this?': reporting gender-based violence in public transportation in Saltillo, Mexico. *Gender, Place & Culture*:1-20.

Ishii, K., Numazaki, M. and Tado'oka, Y., 2019. The effect of pink/blue clothing on implicit and explicit gender-related self-cognition and attitudes among men. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 61(2), pp.123-132.

Jacka, T., 2009. Cultivating citizens: Suzhi (quality) discourse in the PRC. *positions: asia critique*, 17(3), pp.523-535.

Jackson, A.A., 1986. *London's Metropolitan Railway*.

Jackson, S. and Liu, J., J. (Eds). *East Asian sexualities*. London: Zed Books. p p.85–103.

Jackson, S., Ho, P. S. Y. and Na, J. N., 2016. Interviewing across cultures: talking to mothers and daughters in Hong Kong and Britain. In: Griffin. G. (Ed). *Cross-cultural interviewing: feminist experiences and reflections*. Routledge: Oxon. pp. 30-43.

Jackson, S., Ho, P. S. Y. and Na, J. N., 2017. A table of two societies: The doing of qualitative comparative research in Hong Kong and Britain. *Methodological innovations*, 10 (2), pp.1-12.

Jackson, S., Ho, P.S.Y. and Na, J.N., 2013. Reshaping tradition? Women negotiating the boundaries of tradition and modernity in Hong Kong and British families. *The Sociological Review*, 61(4), pp.667-687.

Jackson, S., Liu, J. and Woo, J. eds., 2009. *East Asian sexualities: modernity, gender and new sexual cultures*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Jacobs, K., 2014. Internationalizing porn studies. *Porn Studies*, 1(1-2), pp.114-119.

Jayarathne, T.E., and Stewart, A. J., 2008. Quantitative and qualitative methods in the social sciences. Current feminist issues and practical strategies. In A. M. Jaggar (eds). *Just methods: An interdisciplinary feminist reader*. Boulder, Co: Paradigm Publishers. pp. 44-57.



Jeffreys, S., 2018. *The Lesbian Revolution: Lesbian Feminism in the UK 1970–1990*. Routledge.

Ji, Y., Wu, X., Sun, S. and He, G., 2017. Unequal care, unequal work: Toward a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in post-reform urban China. *Sex Roles*, 77(11), pp.765-778.

Jia, I. 佳 ic, 2021. [Sina Weibo] 12 December of blog. Available at:<https://m.weibo.cn/6123216573/4713553876222399> [Accessed 18 March 2022]

Jiemian News 界面新闻, 2017. The Shenzhen Metro will set up women's carriages. Su Zhongyang, member of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference: The starting point is caring, not gender discrimination (深圳地铁将设女性车厢, 广东省政协委员苏忠阳: 出发点是关爱无关性别歧视). 16 June 2017. Available at:<https://www.jiemian.com/article/1402255.html?spm=smc.content.content.1.1545955200137ZF7ZGW1> [Accessed 18, September 2018]

Jiemian News, 2019. How to persuade men to leave may become a problem in Shenzhen's planned "Women's Priority Car" in peak hours. (深圳拟地铁高峰“女士优先车厢”男性限乘, 如何劝离或成难题). 11 September 2019. Available at:<https://www.jiemian.com/article/3495784.html> [Accessed 03 November 2021]

Jin, C., 2014. *Education, Media and Sexuality Health Services for Girls and Women: 20 Years Experience of China's Policy and Practice*. Paths International Ltd.

Jing-Schmidt, Z., and Peng, X.J., 2018. 'The sluttified sex: Verbal misogyny reflects and reinforces gender order in wireless China', *Language in Society*. pp. 47: 385-408.

Joffe, H. and Yardley, L., 2004. Content and thematic analysis. In: Marks, D. F. and Yardley, L. (Eds). *Research methods for clinical and health psychology*. London: Sage. pp.56–68.

Johnson, A.G., 2004. Patriarchy, the system. *Women's lives: Multicultural perspectives*, 3, pp.25-32.

Johnson, K., et al., 1998. Infant abandonment and adoption in China. *Population and Development Review*, pp.469-510.

Johnson, K.A. 1983. *Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China*. Chicago: *University of Chicago Press*.

Jonas, A.E., 1994. The scale politics of spialiality. *Environment and planning d: society and space*, 12(3), pp.257-264.

Joyce, C., 2015. Persistent gropers force Japan to introduce women-only carriages. *The Telegraph*. 15 May 2015. Available at:<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/1490059/Persistent-groppers-force-Japan-to-introduce-women-only-carriages.html>[Accessed 03 March 2018].

Judd, E.R., 2002. *The Chinese women's movement between state and market*. Stanford University Press.

Junhe, 2020. A Brief Comment on the Prohibition of Sexual Harassment in the

Personal Rights of the Civil Code, (简评《民法典》人格权编之禁止性骚扰规定). 30 August 2020. Available at: <http://www.junhe.com/law-reviews/1291> [Accessed 24 April 2021].

Kabat-Farr, D. and Crumley, E.T., 2019. Sexual harassment in healthcare: a psychological perspective. *Online J Issues Nurs*, 24(1), pp.1-12.

Kane, P., 1985. The single-child family policy in the cities. In *China's one-child family policy* (pp. 83-113). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Kapila, P., 2017. Theoretical Perspectives to Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 6 (9), pp.32-35.

Katz, R.C., Hannon, R. and Whitten, L., 1996. Effects of gender and situation on the perception of sexual harassment. *Sex Roles*, 34(1), pp.35-42.

Kaufman, J., 2012. The global women's movement and Chinese women's rights. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21(76), pp.585-602.

Kaufman, J., 2019. Mindset Matters: Film and Television Can Shape The Perception of Disability And Redefine Culture Norms In Business And Society. *Forbes: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*, 25 November 2019. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonathankaufman/2019/11/25/mindset-matters-film-and-television-can-shape-the-perception-of-disability-and-redefine-cultural-norms-in-business-and-society/?sh=74e69adf6fe5> [Accessed 25 September 2020].

Kaygan, P., Kaygan, H. and Keysan, A., 2022. Gendered interactions mediated

by design: Sexual harassment in public transport. *Design and Culture*.

Kazue, M., 2016. The 'comfort women' issue and the embedded culture of sexual violence in contemporary Japan. *Current Sociology*, 64(4), pp.620-636.

Keane, M., 1998. Television and moral development in China. *Asian Studies Review*, 22(4), pp.475-503.

Kearl, H., 2010. *Stop street harassment: Making public places safe and welcoming for women*. ABC-CLIO.

Kelly, A., 2014. Safe Cities for Women: From reality to rights. *Dublin: Action Aid*.

Kelly, J., 2015. The era of 'ladies only' train compartments. 26 August 2015. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34061094> [Accessed 28 Feb 2021].

Kelly, L., 2013. *Surviving sexual violence*. John Wiley & Sons.

Killias, M. and Clerici, C., 2000. Different measures of vulnerability in their relation to different dimensions of fear of crime. *British journal of criminology*, 40(3), pp.437-450.

King, G., Pan, J. and Roberts, M.E., 2013. How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American political science Review*, 107(2), pp.326-343.

King, R.E., 2023. NYC Had Women-Only Subway Cars for Less Than a Year. Jalopnik, 4 January 2023. Available at: <https://jalopnik.com/nyc-had-women-only-subway-cars-for-less-than-a-year-1849950754> [Accessed 11 July 2023]

Kirchhoff, G.F., Morosawa, H., Barkhuizen, J., Bussinger, C., Sutseyo, H. and Bey, J.F., 2007. The Asian Passengers' Safety Study of sexual molestation on t rains and buses: the Indonesian pilot study. *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, 20(4), pp.1-13.

Kissling, E.A., 1991. Street harassment: The language of sexual terrorism. *Discourse & Society*, 2(4), pp.451-460.

Kissling, E.A., 1996. Bleeding out loud: Communication about menstruation. *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(4), pp.481-504.

Klein, L.B. and Martin, S.L., 2021. Sexual harassment of college and university students: a systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(4), pp.777-792.

Koller, V., 2008. 'Not just a colour': pink as a gender and sexuality marker in visual communication. *Visual communication*, 7(4), pp.395-423.

Kvale, s. and Brinkmann, S., 2009. Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. Los Angeles: Sage. pp.70.

Kvale, S., 1996. Interviews-an introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Lackey, D., 1990. Sexual harassment in sport. *Physical Educator*, 47(2), p.22.
- LaFree, G.D., 1981. Official reactions to social problems: Police decisions in sexual assault cases. *Social problems*, 28(5), pp.582-594.
- Lane, J., Gover, A.R. and Dahod, S., 2009. Fear of violent crime among men and women on campus: The impact of perceived risk and fear of sexual assault. *Violence and victims*, 24(2), pp.172-192.
- Larkin, J. and Popaleni, K., 1994. Heterosexual courtship violence and sexual harassment: The private and public control of young women. *Feminism & Psychology*, 4(2), pp.213-227.
- Larsen, R., 2000. Ryousai Kenbo Revisited: The Future of Gender Equality in Japan After the 1997 Equal Employment Opportunity Law. *Hastings Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.*, 24, p.189.
- Larsen, S.E. and Fitzgerald, L.F., 2011. PTSD symptoms and sexual harassment: The role of attributions and perceived control. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(13), pp.2555-2567.
- Law, W., 2006. Citizenship, citizenship education, and the state in China in a global age. *Cambridge journal of education*, 36(4), pp.597-628.
- Lawford-Smith, H., 2021. Women-only spaces and the right to exclude.
- Lee, A., 2017. Gender, everyday mobility, and mass transit in urban Asia. *Mobility in History*, 8(1), pp.85-94.

Lee, K.Y., Reis, H.T. and Rogge, R.D., 2020. Seeing the world in pink and blue: Developing and exploring a new measure of essentialistic thinking about gender. *Sex Roles*, 83(11), pp.685-705.

Lee, V.E., Croninger, R.G., Linn, E. and Chen, X., 1996. The culture of sexual harassment in secondary schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(2), pp.383-417.

Letherby, G., 2013. 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in Practice', in G. Letherby, J. Scott and M. Williams (eds). *Objectivity and Subjectivity in Social Science*. London: Sage.

Letherby, G., 2015. Gender-sensitive methodologies. In: Robinson, V., and Richardson, D (eds). *Introducing Gender & Women's Studies 4<sup>th</sup> edition*. Palgrave. pp. 76-95.

Leung, A.S., 2003. Feminism in transition: Chinese culture, ideology and the development of the women's movement in China. *Asia Pacific journal of management*, 20(3), pp.359-374.

Lewis, R., Sharp, E., Remnant, J. and Redpath, R., 2015. 'Safe spaces': experiences of feminist women-only space. *Sociological Research Online*, 20(4), pp.105-118.

Li, G., 2011, July. Study of the Contribution of Deng Xiaoping's Educational Theory to the Development of Chinese Education. In *2011 International Conference*

ce on Control, Automation and Systems Engineering (CASE) (pp. 1-4). IEEE.

Li, J. and Li, X., 2017. Media as a core political resource: The young feminist movements in China. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 10(1), pp.54-71.

Li, J.李菁, 2020. Shanghai issued anti-sexual harassment manuals at 57 subway stations, reminding victims not to remain silent (上海在 57 个地铁站发放防性骚扰手册, 提醒被侵害者不要沉默). The Paper News, 20 April 2020. Available at:[https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_7055313](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_7055313) [Accessed 23 May 2021]

Li, M.N., Zhou, X., Cao, W. and Tang, K., 2022. Sexual assault and harassment (SAH) victimization disparities between sexual minority and heterosexual Chinese youth. *Journal of Social Issues*.

Li, P., Cho, H., Qin, Y. and Chen, A., 2021. # MeToo as a connective movement: examining the frames adopted in the anti-sexual harassment movement in China. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(5), pp.1030-1049.

Li, P., Cho, H., Qin, Y. and Chen, A., 2021. # MeToo as a connective movement: examining the frames adopted in the anti-sexual harassment movement in China. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(5), pp.1030-1049.

Li, x., 李小粥, 2022. [Sina Weibo] 02 January of blog. Available at:<https://m.weibo.cn/6191604322/4721331159696041> [Accessed 18 March 2022].

Lin, Z. and Yang, L., 2019. 'Me too!': individual empowerment of disabled women in the # MeToo movement in China. *Disability & Society*, 34(5): 842-847.



Lin, Z. and Yang, L., 2019. Individual and collective empowerment: Women's voices in the # MeToo movement in China. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(1), pp.117-131.

Ling, Q. and Liao, S., 2020. Intellectuals debate # MeToo in China: Legitimizing feminist activism, challenging gendered myths, and reclaiming feminism. *Journal of Communication*, 70(6), pp.895-916.

Littlejohn, L.J., 2017. Confucianism: How analects promoted patriarchy and influenced the subordination of women in East Asia.

Liu, F., 2008a. Constructing the autonomous middle-class self in today's China: the case of young-adult only-children university students. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 11(2), pp.193–212. doi:10.1080/13676260701800746.

Liu, F., 2008b. Negotiating the filial self: Young-adult only-children and intergenerational relationships in China. *Young*, 16 (4), pp.409–430.

Liu, F., 2011. *Urban youth in China: Modernity, the Internet and the self*. Routledge.

Liu, F., 2014. From degendering to (re) gendering the self: Chinese youth negotiating modern womanhood. *Gender and Education*, 26(1), pp.18-34.

Liu, F., 2019. Chinese young men's construction of exemplary masculinity: The hegemony of chengong. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(2), pp.294-316.

Liu, J., 2006. Researching Chinese women's lives: 'insider' research and life history interviewing. *Oral History*, 34 (1), pp.43-52.

Liu, J., 2007. *Gender and work in urban China: women workers of the unlucky generation*. Routledge: London.

Liu, J., 2008. Sexualized Labour?'White-collar Beauties' in Provincial China. p.85-103.

Liu, Q., 2018. The effect of dedicated exit on the evacuation of heterogeneous pedestrians. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, 506, pp.305-323.

Liu, T., 2008. "Cyberactivism in the Women's Movement" In *Chinese Women and the Cyberspace*, edited by Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce. Amsterdam: *Amsterdam University Press*. pp. 95-116.

Liu, T.Q. and Stening, B.W., 2016. The contextualization and de-contextualization of Confucian morality: Making Confucianism relevant to China's contemporary challenges in business ethics. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 33(3), p.821-841.

Liu, Y., 2016. *Higher education, meritocracy and inequality in China*. Springer.

Liu, Y., 2021. As the two-child policy beckons: Work-family conflicts, gender strategies and self-worth among women from the first one-child generation in c

ontemporary China. *Work, Employment and Society*, p.09500170211016944.

Logan, L.S., 2015. Street harassment: Current and promising avenues for researchers and activists. *Sociology Compass*, 9(3), pp.196-211.

Lopez, G.I., Figueroa, M., Connor, S.E. and Maliski, S.L., 2008. Translation barriers in conducting qualitative research with Spanish speakers. *Qualitative health research*, 18(12), pp.1729-1737.

Lord, T.L., 2009. *The relationship of gender-based public harassment to body image, self-esteem, and avoidance behavior* (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania).

Lorenz, K. and Jacobsen, C., 2021. Sexual Violence Survivors' Experiences with the Police and Willingness to Report Future Victimization. *Women & Criminal Justice*, pp.1-23.

Louie, K., 2014. *Chinese masculinities in a globalizing world*. Routledge.

Loukaitou-Sideris, A. and Fink, C., 2009. Addressing women's fear of victimization in transportation settings: A survey of US transit agencies. *Urban affairs review*, 44(4), pp.554-587.

Loukaitou-Sideris, A.L., 2008. How safe is the ride? Evaluation of design and policy responses to women's fear of victimization and crime.

Lubitow, A., Carathers, J., Kelly, M., and et al., 2017. Transmobilities: mobility, harassment, and violence experienced by transgender and gender nonconforming public transit riders in Portland, Oregon. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(10),

pp.1398-1418.

Luo, S. and He, S., 2021. Understanding gender difference in perceptions toward transit services across space and time: A social media mining approach. *Transport Policy*, 111, pp.63-73.

Ma, G., Yang, C., Qin, Z. and Guo, M., 2021, December. Hegemonic Masculinity in East Asia: China, South Korea and Japan. In *2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)*. Atlantis Press. pp. 2405-2410.

Mackay, F., 2015. Radical feminism. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 32(7-8), pp.332-336.

MacKinnon, C.A., 1979. *Sexual harassment of working women: A case of sex discrimination* (Vol. 19). Yale University Press.

Macmillan, R., Nierobisz, A. and Welsh, S., 2000. Experiencing the streets: Harassment and perceptions of safety among women. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 37(3), pp.306-322.

Madan, M. and Nalla, M.K., 2016. Sexual harassment in public spaces: Examining gender differences in perceived seriousness and victimization. *International criminal justice review*, 26(2), pp.80-97.

Martin, F., 2018. Overseas study as zone of suspension: Chinese students renegotiating youth, gender, and intimacy. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 39(6), pp. 688-703.

- Mason, J., 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Publications. PP.79-81.
- Massey, D., 1992. "The politics of spatiality". *New Left Review*, 196, pp.65-88.
- Mavin, S., 2006. Venus envy 2: Sisterhood, queen bees and female misogyny in management. *Women in Management Review*.
- Maynard, M., 1994. Methods, practice and epistemology: the debate about feminism and research. In: Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (Eds). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 10-26.
- Maypole, D.E. and Skaine, R., 1983. Sexual harassment in the workplace. *Social Work*, 28(5), pp.385-390.
- McConnell, E.A., Odahl-Ruan, C.A., Kozlowski, C., Shattell, M. and Todd, N. R., 2016. Trans women and Michfest: An ethnophenomenology of attendees' experiences. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 20(1), pp.8-28.
- McCracken, G., 1988. *The long interview* (Vol. 13). Sage.
- McDonald, P., 2012. Workplace sexual harassment 30 years on: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(1), pp.1-17.
- McDowell, L., 1996. Spatializing feminism. *BodySpace: Destablising Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, pp.28-44.
- Mellgren, C., Andersson, M. and Ivert, A.K., 2018. "It happens all the time":

Women's experiences and normalization of sexual harassment in public space. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 28(4), pp.262-281.

Mitra, S., 1996. Comeback of Hundred Flowers in Chinese Literature: 1976-1989. *The Triangle India-Nepal-China: A Study of Treaty Relations*, p.379.

Moser, C.O., 2004. Urban violence and insecurity: an introductory roadmap. *Environment and urbanization*, 16(2), pp.3-16.

Mrozik, A., 2019. Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964. *Aspasia*, 13, pp.236-241.

Mulder, R., Pouwelse, M., Lodewijkx, H., Bos, A.E. and Van Dam, K., 2016. Predictors of antisocial and prosocial behaviour of bystanders in workplace mobbing. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 26(3), pp.207-220.

Munford, R. and Waters, M., 2014. Feminism and popular culture. In *Feminism and Popular Culture*. Rutgers University Press.

Murdoch, M. and Nichol, M.D., 1995. Violence and with sexual harassment while in the military. *Arch Fam Med*, 4, pp.411-418.

Nachescu, V., 2009. Radical feminism and the nation: History and space in the political imagination of second-wave feminism. *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 3(1), pp.29-59.

Narayanan, Y., 2020. Violence against women in moving transportation in Indian cities: reconceptualising gendered transport policy. In *Engendering Cities*. Routledge.

ledge. pp. 58-70.

Navarrete-Hernandez, P., Vetro, A. and Concha, P., 2021. Building safer public spaces: Exploring gender difference in the perception of safety in public space through urban design interventions. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 214, p.104180.

NBC News, 2022. Chinese court dismisses TV intern's #MeToo cases appeal. *NBC News*, 11 August 2022. Available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-metoo-zhou-xiaoxuan-zhu-jun-cctv-rcna42587>[Accessed 09 October 2022]

Neupane, G. and Chesney-Lind, M., 2014. Violence against women on public transport in Nepal: Sexual harassment and the spatial expression of male privilege. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 38(1), p.p.23-38.

New York Times, 2018. China's Women-only subway Cars, where men rush in. *New York Times*, 06 March 2018. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/business/china-women-only-subway-cars.html>[Accessed 09 July 2019].

Newton, A., 2016. Why we shouldn't dismiss the idea of women-only carriage s. *The Conversation*.

Nielsen, L.B., 2000. Situating legal consciousness: Experiences and attitudes of ordinary citizens about law and street harassment. *Law & Soc'y Rev.*, 34, p.1055.

Nwccw.gov.cn., 2021. Full text of "Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2021-2030)" (《中国妇女发展纲要 (2021-2030 年)》全文). 27 September

r 2021. Available at: [https://www.nwccw.gov.cn/2021-09/27/content\\_295246.htm](https://www.nwccw.gov.cn/2021-09/27/content_295246.htm) [Accessed, 12 June 2022]

O'Donohue, W., Downs, K. and Yeater, E.A., 1998. Sexual harassment: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 3(2), pp.111-128.

Oakley, A., 1981. *Subject Women*. Oxford: Martin Robertson.

Oakley, A., 2000. *Experiments in knowing: gender and method in the social science*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Oakley, A., 2013. Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In: Roberts, H. (eds). *Doing feminist research*. London and New York: Routledge. pp.20-61.

O'Donohue, W. and Bowers, A.H., 2006. Pathways to false allegations of sexual harassment. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, 3(1), pp.47-74.

Osman, S.L., 2004. Victim resistance: Theory and data on understanding perceptions of sexual harassment. *Sex Roles*, 50(3), pp.267-275.

Osmond, J. and Woodcock, A., 2015, April. Are our streets safe enough for female users? How everyday harassment affects mobility. In *Contemporary ergonomics and human factors 2015: proceedings of the international conference on ergonomics & human factors*. Taylor & Francis, London.



Outten, H.R., Lee, T. and Lawrence, M.E., 2019. Heterosexual women's support for trans-inclusive bathroom legislation depends on the degree to which they perceive trans women as a threat. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 22 (8), pp.1094-1108.

Pain, R., 1991. Space, sexual violence and social control: integrating geographical and feminist analyses of women's fear of crime. *Progress in human geography*, 15(4), pp.415-431.

Pain, R.H., 1997. Social geographies of women's fear of crime. *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers*, pp.231-244.

Pan and Huang 潘绥铭, 黄盈盈, 2013. Investigation evidence of sexual harassment in China in the 21st century: discourse intervention and subject construction (21 世纪中国的性骚扰的调查实证: 话语介入与主体建构之悖). *Exploration and contention*(探索与争鸣), 7, pp.58-62.

Pantazis, C., 2000. 'Fear of crime', vulnerability and poverty. *British journal of criminology*, 40(3), pp.414-436.

Parish, W.L. and Busse, S., 2000. "Gender and Work." In Tang and Parish. pp. 209-231.

Parish, W.L., Das, A. and Laumann, E.O., 2006. Sexual harassment of women in urban China. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 35(4), pp.411-425.

Park, S. and Lunt, N., 2015. Confucianism and qualitative interviewing: working seoul to soul. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16 (2). Doi: 10.17169/fqs-16.2.2166.

Phipps, A., 2020. *Me, not you: The trouble with mainstream feminism*. Manchester: *Manchester University Press*.

Phoenix, A., 1995. 'Practising feminist research: the intersection of gender and race in the research process', in: M. Marynard and J. Purvie (eds.). *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Pina, A., Gannon, T.A. and Saunders, B., 2009. An overview of the literature on sexual harassment: Perpetrator, theory, and treatment issues. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 14(2), pp.126-138.

Pirkle, C., Soundardjee, R. and Stella, A., 2007. Female sex workers in China: vectors of disease. *Sexually transmitted diseases*, pp.695-703.

Policy, R.G.T., 2020. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MOVING TRANSPORTATION IN INDIAN CITIES. *Engendering Cities: Designing Sustainable Urban Spaces for All*.

Pomerleau, A., Bolduc, D., Malcuit, G. and Cossette, L., 1990. Pink or blue: Environmental gender stereotypes in the first two years of life. *Sex roles*, 22(5), pp.359-367.

Powell, A. and Henry, N., 2017. Sexual violence and harassment in the digital era. In *The Palgrave handbook of Australian and New Zealand criminology, crime and justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. pp. 205-220.

Powell, G.N., 1986. Effects of sex role identity and sex on definitions of sexual harassment. *Sex Roles*, 14(1), pp.9-19.

Prabowo, H., Rebeca, A., Salve, H.R., Fatimah, F.F., Chrisnatalia, M., Prabawati, I.N. and Handayani, N.S., 2020. The Women-only Passenger Carriage: Is It Helpful?. *Psychological Research on Urban Society*, 3(1), p.10.

Prazniak, R., 2016. Feminist Humanism: Socialism and Neofeminism in the Writings of Zhang Jie. In *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*. Routledge. pp. 269-293.

Proudman, C., 2018. Feminism and the Labour Left: a perfect political union?. *Renewal: a Journal of Social Democracy*, 26(1), pp.62-77.

Purves, L., 2015. Women-only train carriages? Libby Purves says it's the most retrograde idea imaginable...and we need more battleaxes like HER to keep rail travel safe. Mail Online, 27 August 2015. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3212158/Women-carriages-retrograde-idea-imaginable-need-battleaxes-like-trains-safe.html> [Accessed 10 July 2023]

pwccw.gd.gov.cn, 2017. Guangzhou Metro takes the lead in piloting women's carriages (广州地铁率先试点女性车厢). 15 July 2017. Available at: [http://www.pwccw.gd.gov.cn/xw2017/content/post\\_15961.html](http://www.pwccw.gd.gov.cn/xw2017/content/post_15961.html) [Accessed 09 July 2019]

qq.news 腾讯新闻, 2020. Attributing the sexual assault of women to "self-inflicted factors" is questioned, China Academy of Art: is investigating(将女生受性侵归咎于“自身因素”引质疑, 中国美院: 正调查). 24 September 2020. Available at: <https://view.inews.qq.com/a/20200924A0DMO900> [Accessed 18 May 2021]

Quinones, L.M., 2020. Sexual harassment in public transport in Bogotá. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, (139), pp.54-69.

Rahman, M.S.U., 2010. Bus service for 'Women only' in Dhaka city: An investigation. *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners ISSN*, 2075, p.9363.

Raymo, J.M., Park, H., Xie, Y. and Yeung, W.J.J., 2015. Marriage and family in East Asia: Continuity and change. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, p.471.

Reilly, M.E., Lott, B. and Gallogly, S.M., 1986. Sexual harassment of university students. *Sex Roles*, 15(7), pp.333-358.

Reinharz, S. and Chase, S. E., 2002. Interviewing women. In Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds). *Handbook of Interview research: context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp.221-238.

Reinharz, S., 1992. *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reynolds, E., 2016. Women-only 'pink carriages' idea for Aussie trains causes controversy. *News.com.au*, 6 April 2016.

Available at: <https://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/womenonly-pink-carriages-idea-for-aussie-trains-causes-controversy/news-story/8377482b8b705dd2854a51d0eb0b7847> [Accessed 23 December 2019]

Richman, J.A., Rospenda, K.M., Nawyn, S.J., Flaherty, J.A., Fendrich, M., Drum, M.L. and Johnson, T.P., 1999. Sexual harassment and generalized workplace

abuse among university employees: prevalence and mental health correlates. *American journal of public Health*, 89(3), pp.358-363.

Robbins, I., Bender, M.P. and Finnis, S.J., 1997. Sexual harassment in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 25(1), pp.163-169.

Roberts, T.A., Goldenberg, J.L., Power, C. and Pyszczynski, T., 2002. "Feminine protection": The effects of menstruation on attitudes towards women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(2), pp.131-139.

Rodriguez, O.R., 2008. Mexico City Rolls Out Women-Only Buses. *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Roestone Collective, 2014. Safe space: Towards a reconceptualization. *Antipode*, 46(5), pp.1346-1365.

Roiphe, K., 1993. The morning after: Sex, fear, and feminism.

Rosewarne, L., 2007. Pin-ups in public space: Sexist outdoor advertising as sexual harassment. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30(4), pp. 313-325.

Ross, C.E. and Jang, S.J., 2000. Neighborhood disorder, fear, and mistrust: The buffering role of social ties with neighbors. *American journal of community psychology*, 28(4), pp.401-420.

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin. I., S., 2011. Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data. In: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Ryan-Flood, R., and Gill, R., 2010. Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process, feminist reflections. Introduction: Routledge, (1), pp.1-11.
- Sabet, D., 2011. Confucian or Communist, Post - Mao or Postmodern? Exploring the Narrative Identity Resources of Shanghai's Post - 80s Generation. *Symbolic Interaction*, 34(4), pp.536-551.
- Samuels, H., 2003, September. Sexual harassment in the workplace: A feminist analysis of recent developments in the UK. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(5), pp.467-482.
- Schneider, K.T., Swan, S. and Fitzgerald, L.F., 1997. Job-related and psychological effects of sexual harassment in the workplace: empirical evidence from two organizations. *Journal of applied Psychology*, 82(3), p.401.
- Schulz, A.J., Israel, B.A., Zimmerman, M.A. and Checkoway, B.N., 1995. Empowerment as a multi-level construct: perceived control at the individual, organizational and community levels. *Health Education Research*, 10(3), pp.309-327.
- Sepper, E. and Dinner, D., 2019. Sex in Public. *Yale LJ*, 129, p.78.
- Shah, S., 2018. Women-only Transport. A 'Solution' to What End? *Sustainable Transport*. December 2018. Available at: <https://www.itdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Women-only-Transport.pdf> [Accessed 23 June 2022]
- Shahrokni, N., 2014. The Mothers' Paradise: Women-only parks and the dynamics of state power in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 10(3), pp.87-108.

Shambaugh, D., 2007. China's propaganda system: Institutions, processes and efficacy. *Critical Readings on the Communist Party of China*, (4), pp.713-751.

Shenzhen Metro 2017 Annual Reports, 深圳地铁 2017 年度报告, 2017.

Shenzhen Metro Social Responsibility Report 深圳地铁社会责任报告, 2017.

Sheridan, M., 1976. Young women leaders in China. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2(1), pp.59-88.

Shibata, S., 2020. Are women-only cars (WOC) a solution to groping? A survey among college students in Tokyo/Kanagawa, Japan. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 44(4), pp.293-305.

Siebritz, E., 2008. Why we need women-only spaces. *Sister Namibia*, 20(3), p.28.

Sina 新浪, 2019. The establishment of women-first carriages in the subway has attracted heated discussions among netizens. If there is no salty pig hand, is it still necessary to set it up? (地铁设女性优先车厢引网友热议, 要是没有咸猪手, 还用得着设置吗). 17 September 2019. Available at:[https://k.sina.com.cn/article\\_2183237177\\_82218e39001001lwg.html](https://k.sina.com.cn/article_2183237177_82218e39001001lwg.html) [Accessed 31 Dec 2019].

Singh, S., 2013. Women want love, men want wives: The discourse of romantic love in young adults' future marriage goals. *Agenda*, 27(2), pp.22-29.

Smith, D., 1988. *The everyday world as problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. pp.19.

Smith, M.J. and Clarke, R.V., 2000. Crime and public transport. *Crime and Justice*, 27, pp.169-233.

Smith, M.J., 2008. Addressing the security needs of women passengers on public transport. *Security Journal*, 21(1), pp.117-133.

Snyder, C.K. and Wolff, C.S., 2019. The perfect misogynist storm and the electromagnetic shape of feminism: Weathering Brazil's political crisis. *Journal of international women's studies*, 20(8), pp.87-109.

Sogou.com, n.d. women's carriages (女性车厢). Available at: <https://baike.sogou.com/v606138.htm> [Accessed 24 September 2022].

Sohu News 搜狐新闻, 2020. Young women are sexually assaulted because of "love to dress up"? How many "confusing remarks" are there in the university student handbook? (女生被性侵是因“爱打扮”? 大学生手册中的“迷惑言论”还有多少?). 26 September 2020. Available at: [https://www.sohu.com/a/421071347\\_9944060](https://www.sohu.com/a/421071347_9944060)[Accessed 18 May 2021].

Sohu News, 2021. The promised women's carriages are full of men (说好的女性车厢, 还不是满车大汉). 07 May 2021. Available at:[https://www.sohu.com/a/465115386\\_260616](https://www.sohu.com/a/465115386_260616) [Accessed 03 November 2021].

Solé-Farràs, J., 2008. Harmony in contemporary new Confucianism and in socialism with Chinese characteristics. *China Media Research*, 4(4), pp.14-24.



Song, G. and Hird, D., 2014. Men and masculinities in contemporary China. In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China*. Brill.

Song, Y. and Bian, Y., 2014. Gender differences in the use of health care in China: cross-sectional analysis. *International journal for equity in health*, 13(1), pp.1-6.

Spain, D., 2016. Constructive feminism. In *Constructive Feminism*. Cornell University Press.

Sparks, C. and Reading, A., 1994. Understanding media change in east central Europe. *Media, culture & society*, 16(2), pp.243-270.

Sprague, J., 2005. Feminist methodologies for Critical Researchers. CA: Altamira Press.

Srivastava, D.K. and Gu, M., 2009. Law and policy issues on sexual harassment in China: Comparative perspectives. *Or. Rev. Int'l L.*, 11, p.43.

Srivastava, S., 2012. Masculinity and its role in gender-based violence in public spaces. L. Prabhu, & S. Pilot, *Fear that Stalks: Gender Based Violence in Public Spaces*, pp.13-50.

Stalker, J., 2001. Misogyny, women, and obstacles to tertiary education: A vile situation. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(4), pp.288-305.

Standing, K., 1998. 'Writing the voices of the less powerful: research on lone mothers', in: J. Ribbens and R. Edwards (eds). *Feminist dilemmas in Qualitative Research: Public Knowledge and Private Lives*. London: Thousand Oaks.

Stanko, E.A., 1987. Typical violence, normal precaution: Men, women and interpersonal violence in England, Wales, Scotland and the USA. In *Women, violence and social control*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. pp.122-134.

Stanko, E.A., 1995. Women, crime, and fear. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 539(1), pp.46-58.

Stein, N., 1995. Sexual harassment in school: The public performance of gendered violence. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65(2), pp.145-163.

Steinhauer, I., 2016. Sex and sexual education in China: Traditional values and social implications.

Sudbeck, K., 2012. The effects of China's one-child policy: the significance for Chinese women.

Tan, J., 2017. Digital masquerading: Feminist media activism in China. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 13(2), pp.171-186.

Tang, C.S.K., Yik, M.S., Cheung, F., Choi, P.K. and Au, K.C., 1996. Sexual harassment of Chinese college students. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 25(2), pp.201-215.

Tang, W. and Parish, W.L. and eds. 2000. *Chinese Urban Life under Reform*:

The Changing Social Contract. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tangri, S.S., Burt, M.R. and Johnson, L.B., 1982. Sexual harassment at work: Three explanatory models. *Journal of social Issues*, 38(4), pp.33-54.

Tatum, M., 2021. China's three-child policy. *The Lancet*, 397(10291), p.2238.

Temple, B. and Young, A., 2004. Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative research*, 4(2), pp.161-178.

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2017. Members call for women's carriages to be set up in the Guangzhou Metro, and the subway company: will conduct in-depth studies on the feasibility (委员吁在广州地铁设女性车厢, 地铁公司: 将深入研究可行性). The Paper. Cn 澎湃新闻, 09 June 2017. Available at: [https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1704666](https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1704666)[Accessed 01 March 2019]

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2019. The Shenzhen Metro tried out "different temperatures in the same car", setting up "strong cold" and "weak cold" cars. (深圳地铁试行“同车不同温” 设“强冷”和“弱冷”车厢). 27 December 2019. Available at: [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_5358605](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_5358605)[Accessed 24 March 2020]

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2020a. Public welfare publicity for rights protection: women's safety starts with self-protection (维权公益宣传: 女性安全从自我保护开始). 27 March 2020. Available at: [https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_6720725](https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_6720725)[Accessed 18 May 2021]

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2020b. 数说公共交通性骚扰: 3796 次遭遇, 同一种

困境. 03 August 2020. Available at:[https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_8551583](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_8551583)[Accessed 18 July 2022]

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2020c. Young women are sexually assaulted because of "love to dress up"? Zhejiang will revise the safety knowledge handbook for university students. (女生被性侵是因“爱打扮”? 浙江将修改大学生安全知识读本). 25 September 2020. Available at: [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_9329256](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_9329256)[Accessed 18 May 2021]

The Paper News 澎湃新闻, 2020d. Tsinghua Senior Female Student Wrongly Accused Her Junior Student of Sexual Harassment? College response: The two have reconciled (清华学姐错告学弟性骚扰? 学院回应: 俩人已和解). The Paper News, 20 November 2020. Available at:[https://m.thepaper.cn/wifiKey\\_detail.jsp?contentid=10069866&from=wifiKey#](https://m.thepaper.cn/wifiKey_detail.jsp?contentid=10069866&from=wifiKey#)[Accessed 23 January 2021]

Thogersen, S., 2000. Cultural life and cultural control in rural China: where is the Party?. *The China Journal*, (44), pp.129-141.

Thompson, B., 2002. Multiracial feminism: Recasting the chronology of second wave feminism. *Feminist studies*, 28(2), pp.337-360.

Thompson, D.M., 1994. The woman in the street: Reclaiming the public space from sexual harassment. *Yale JL & Feminism*, 6, p.313.

Thorne, B., 2008. 'You Still taking notes? Fieldwork and problems of informed consent', in: A.M. Jaggar (ed.) *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. London: Paradigm Publishers. Pp. 461.

Three Obediences and Four Virtues (三从四德), n.d. Wikipedia. Available at:[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Obediences\\_and\\_Four\\_Virtues](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Obediences_and_Four_Virtues) [Accessed 11 January 2022]

Till, F.J., 1980. *Sexual harassment: A report on the sexual harassment of students*. US Department of Education.

Tillous, M., 2020. Women, (railway) class and the state: an analysis of two controversies surrounding women-only metro carriages (Cairo- São Paulo). *Gender, Place & Culture*, 27(8), pp.1155-1175.

Tomba, L., 2009. Of quality, harmony, and community: Civilization and the middle class in urban China. *positions: east asia cultures critique*, 17(3), pp.591-616.

Tran, M., 2015. Combatting gender privilege and recognizing a woman's right to privacy in public spaces: Arguments to criminalize catcalling and creepshots. *Hastings Women's LJ*, 26, p.185.

Tsui, M. and Rich, L., 2002. The only child and educational opportunity for girls in urban China. *Gender & Society*, 16(1), pp.74-92.

Tu, W.J., Zeng, X. and Liu, Q., 2022. Aging tsunami coming: the main findings from China's seventh national population census. *Aging Clinical and Experimental Research*, 34(5), pp.1159-1163.

Turnbull, K.F., 2014. International Conference Highlights Women's Issues in Transportation. *TR News*, pp.293.

Ueno, C., 2015. *Misogyny (The Feeling of Disgust against Females in Japan)*. Chinese Edition. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. *Shanghai Sanlian Culture Publishing House*.

Valentine, G., 1989a. The geography of women's fear. *Area*, pp.385-390.

Valentine, G., 1989b. *Women's fear of male violence in public space: a spatial expression of patriarchy* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Reading).

Valentine, G., 1990. Women's fear and the design of public space. *Built Environment (1978-)*, pp.288-303.

Valentine, G., 1992. Images of danger: women's sources of information about the spatial distribution of male violence. *Area*, pp.22-29.

Valentine-French, S. and Radtke, H.L., 1989. Attributions of responsibility for an incident of sexual harassment in a university setting. *Sex Roles*, 21(7), pp.545-555.

van Geel, A., 2016. Separate or together? Women-only public spaces and participation of Saudi women in the public domain in Saudi Arabia. *Contemporary Islam*, 10(3), pp.357-378.

Van Ham, M. and Clark, W.A., 2009. Neighbourhood mobility in context: household moves and changing neighbourhoods in the Netherlands. *Environment and Planning A*, 41(6), pp.1442-1459.

Van Zoonen, L., 2002. Gendering the Internet: Claims, controversies and culture

es. *European Journal of Communication*, 17(1), pp.5-23.

Vanier, C. and d'Arbois de Jubainville, H., 2017. Feeling unsafe in public transportation: A profile analysis of female users in the Parisian region. *Crime prevention and community safety*, 19(3), pp.251-263.

Veeck, A., Flurry, L. and Jiang, N., 2003. Equal dreams: The one child policy and the consumption of education in urban China. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 6(1), pp.81-94.

Vera-Gray, F. and Kelly, L., 2020. Contested gendered space: Public sexual harassment and women's safety work. In *Crime and Fear in Public Places*. Routledge. pp.217-231.

Vera-Gray, F., 2016a. *Men's intrusion, women's embodiment: A critical analysis of street harassment*. Routledge.

Vera-Gray, F., 2016b. Men's stranger intrusions: Rethinking Street harassment. Pergamon. In *Women's Studies International Forum* ,58, pp. 9-17.

Vera-Gray, F., 2018. *The right amount of panic: How women trade freedom for safety*. Policy press.

Wallis, C., 2015. Gender and China's online censorship protest culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 15(2), pp.223-238.

Wang, M., 2021. An Analysis of Mao Zedong's Design of Goals and Choice in Modernization Policies. In *The History and Logic of Modern Chinese Politics*.

Springer: Singapore. pp.193-208.

Wang, X., Chui, W.H. and Wang, Y., 2022. Perception of gender equality matters: Targets' responses to workplace sexual harassment in Chinese metropolises. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 37(13-14), pp.NP11933-NP11963.

Wang, Y. and Zhang, Y., 2022. "As Good as a Boy" But Still a Girl: Gender Equity Within the Context of China's One-Child Policy. *SAGE Open*, 12(1).

Wang, Y.X.王藝璇, 2018. Don't let the "female carriage" disappear into "misunderstanding"—A preliminary study on the gender mentality of Guangzhou female carriages. 別讓「女性車廂」消失於「誤解」之中 ——關於廣州女性車廂成效的兩性心態初探. Available at:[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjAx\\_L\\_v5\\_8AhUTSMAKHfYfgAqMQFnoECBAQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.polyu.edu.hk%2Fcc%2F-%2Fmedia%2Fdepartment%2Fcc%2Fcontent%2Fstudy%2Fmaster-of-arts-ma%2Fdissertations%2F2017-18%2F06.pdf%3Fla%3Dtc%26hash%3DF2A8979C4BD243FCEFB8F0D4051C170E&usg=AOvVaw1kxm3Rp0fpa7TeBGRacxrU](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjAx_L_v5_8AhUTSMAKHfYfgAqMQFnoECBAQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.polyu.edu.hk%2Fcc%2F-%2Fmedia%2Fdepartment%2Fcc%2Fcontent%2Fstudy%2Fmaster-of-arts-ma%2Fdissertations%2F2017-18%2F06.pdf%3Fla%3Dtc%26hash%3DF2A8979C4BD243FCEFB8F0D4051C170E&usg=AOvVaw1kxm3Rp0fpa7TeBGRacxrU)[Accessed 24 Jan 2022]

Wang, Z., 2005. "State Feminism"? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China. *Feminist Studies*, 31 (3), pp.519-551.

Wang, Z., 2017. *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964*. Univ of California Press.

Warr, M., 1985. Fear of rape among urban women. *Social problems*, 32(3), pp.238-250.



Weber, I., 2002. Shanghai baby: Negotiating youth self-identity in urban China. *Social Identities*, 8(2), pp.347-368.

Wei, W., 2011. Putting the Family First: Chinese Wives' Stories of Migration to Britain.

Wesselmann, E.D. and Kelly, J.R., 2010. Cat-calls and culpability: Investigating the frequency and functions of stranger harassment. *Sex roles*, 63(7), pp.451-462.

West, R.L., 1987. The difference in women's hedonic lives: A phenomenological critique of feminist legal theory. *Wis. Women's LJ*, 3, p.81.

Westbrook, L. and Schilt, K., 2014. Doing gender, determining gender: Transgender people, gender panics, and the maintenance of the sex/gender/sexuality system. *Gender & society*, 28(1), pp.32-57.

White, T., 1994. Two kinds of production: The evolution of China's family planning policy in the 1980s. *Population and Development Review*, 20, pp.137-158.

Whitzman, C., 2013. Women's safety and everyday mobility. In *Building Inclusive Cities*. Routledge. pp. 51-68.

WHO, 2019. Violence against women. Available at: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women#tab=tab_1) [Accessed 16 October 2022]

Wielander, G., 2018. Happiness in Chinese Socialist Discourse. *Chinese Discourses on Happiness*, p.25.

Williams, C.L., Giuffre, P.A. and Dellinger, K., 1999. Sexuality in the workplace: Organizational control, sexual harassment, and the pursuit of pleasure. *Annual review of sociology*, pp.73-93.

Willness, C.R., Steel, P. and Lee, K., 2007. A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment. *Personnel psychology*, 60(1), pp.127-162.

Wilson, E. and Little, D.E., 2008. The solo female travel experience: Exploring the 'geography of women's fear'. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 11(2), pp.167-186.

Wise, S. and Stanley, L., 1987. *Georgie Porgie: Sexual harassment in everyday life*. Pandora Press.

Wong, H.W. and Yau, H.Y., 2017. *The Japanese adult video industry*. Routledge.

Worley, W., 2019. German rail operator denies claims women-only train carriages are response to Cologne sex attacks. 29 March 2019. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/german-rail-operator-mitteldeutsche-regiobahn-womenonly-train-carriages-cologne-sex-attacks-a6957446.html>[Accessed 16 May 2021]

Wright, Erik Olin, 1985. *The Comparative Study of Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Public Use Codebook*, Anne Arbor, Michigan, InterUniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Wu, A.X. and Dong, Y., 2019. What is made-in-China feminism (s)? Gender discontent and class friction in post-socialist China. *Critical Asian Studies*, 51(4), pp.471-492.

Wu, S., Zhu, W., Li, H., Lin, S., Chai, W. and Wang, X., 2012. Workplace violence and influencing factors among medical professionals in China. *American journal of industrial medicine*, 55(11), pp.1000-1008.

Wudunn, S., 1995. On Tokyo's Packed Trains, Molesters Are Brazen. The New York Times. 17 December 1995. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/12/17/world/on-tokyo-s-packed-trains-molesters-are-brazen.html> [Accessed 12 November 2021]

Xie, K., 2021. *Embodying middle class gender aspirations: Perspectives from China's privileged young women*. Springer Nature.

Xie, S., 2021. The Effect of # MeToo on Gender-Related Shareholder Activism.

Xie, Z., 2020. China's historical evolution of environmental protection along with the forty years' reform and opening-up. *Environmental Science and Ecotechnology*, 1, p.100001.

Xu, K. and Tan, Y., 2020. "Let feminists tell me my fault" a study of the discourse strategies of sexual harassment suspects. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(5), pp.623-638.

Yang, G., 2008. Being and value: From the perspective of Chinese-Western comparative philosophy. *Philosophy East and West*, pp.267-282.

Yang, G., 2009. *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online*. New York: *Columbia University Press*.

Yang, G., 2014. Internet activism & the party-state in China. *Daedalus*, 143(2), pp.110-123.

Yang, J., 2010. The crisis of masculinity: Class, gender, and kindly power in post - Mao China. *American Ethnologist*, 37(3), pp.550-562.

Yang, J., 2022. The Making of "Woman": The Evolution of Chinese State Feminism (s) Under Three Chinese Leaders. *Embodied: The Stanford Undergraduate Journal of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*, 1(1).

Yang, R., 1997. Red Guards had no Sex. *Spider Eaters: A Memoir*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. pp. 135-136.

Yang, W. and Yan, F., 2017. The annihilation of femininity in Mao's China: Gender inequality of sent-down youth during the Cultural Revolution. *China Information*, 31(1), pp.63-83.

Ye, S., 2021. The Drama of Chinese Feminism: Neoliberal Agency, Post-Socialist Coloniality, and Post-Cold War Transnational Feminist Praxis. *Feminist Studies*, 47(3), pp.783-812.

Yin, S. and Sun, Y., 2021. Intersectional digital feminism: assessing the participation politics and impact of the MeToo movement in China. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(7), pp.1176-1192.

Yingchun, J., 2017. A mosaic temporality: New dynamics of the gender and marriage system in contemporary urban China. *Temporalités. Revue de sciences sociales et humaines*, (26).

Yue, M., 1999. From gender erasure to gender difference: State feminism, consumer sexuality, and women's public sphere in China. *Spaces of their own: Women's public sphere in transnational China*, 4, p.35.

Zeng, J., 2020. # MeToo as connective action: A study of the anti-sexual violence and anti-sexual harassment campaign on Chinese social media in 2018. *Journalism practice*, 14(2), pp.171-190.

Zeng, L.N., Zong, Q.Q., Zhang, J.W., Lu, L., An, F.R., Ng, C.H., Ungvari, G. S., Yang, F.Y., Cheung, T., Chen, L. and Xiang, Y.T., 2019. Prevalence of sexual harassment of nurses and nursing students in China: a meta-analysis of observational studies. *International journal of biological sciences*, 15(4), p.749.

Zeng, Y. and Hesketh, T., 2016. The effects of China's universal two-child policy. *The Lancet*, 388(10054), pp.1930-1938.

Zhang, C.Y., 2014. Deconstructing national and transnational hypermasculine hegemony in neoliberal China. *Feminist Studies*, 40(1), pp.13-38.

Zhang, J. and Sun, P., 2014. 5 “When Are You Going to Get Married?” Parental Matchmaking and Middle-Class Women in Contemporary Urban China. In *Wives, husbands, and lovers*. Stanford University Press. pp.118-144.

Zhang, J., 2017. The evolution of China's one-child policy and its effects on f

amily outcomes. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(1), pp.141-60.

Zhang, L. and Ding, W., 2018. The Evolution of Chinese Danwei System and Its Influence on Plot Development: The Case of Nanjing. In *Proceedings of the XXV ISUF International Conference. Siberian Federal University, Institute of Architecture and Design*. pp. 319-331.

Zhang, L., Li, X. and Shah, I.H., 2007a. Where do Chinese adolescents obtain knowledge of sex? Implications for sex education in China. *Health Education*.

Zhang, L., Li, X., Shah, I.H., Baldwin, W. and Stanton, B., 2007b. Parent-adolescent sex communication in China. *The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care*, 12(2), pp.138-147.

Zhang, Y. and Goza, F.W., 2006. Who will care for the elderly in China?: A review of the problems caused by China's one-child policy and their potential solutions. *Journal of aging studies*, 20(2): 151-164.

Zhang, Y., 2022. 别把“女士优先”仅仅挂在墙上. *People's Daily Digital Communication* 人民日报数字传播, 13 January 2022. Available at: [https://k.sina.com.cn/article\\_7517400647\\_1c0126e4705902du6w.html](https://k.sina.com.cn/article_7517400647_1c0126e4705902du6w.html) [Accessed 06 July 2022]

Zhao, K., Zhang, M. and Foley, S., 2019. Testing two mechanisms linking work-to-family conflict to individual consequences: do gender and gender role orientation make a difference?. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(6), pp.988-1009.

Zhao, Wanxi 赵皖西 2019. Just because I'm a woman, I'm even more against

women's carriages (“就因为我是女性，我更加要反对女性车厢”). 20 September 2019. Available at:[https://k.sina.com.cn/article\\_1653689003\\_62914aab01900ixea.html](https://k.sina.com.cn/article_1653689003_62914aab01900ixea.html)[Accessed 31 Dec 2019]

Zheng, L., 2013. Social media in Chinese government: Drivers, challenges and capabilities. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), pp.369-376.

Zheng, W. and Zhang, Y., 2010. Global concepts, local practices: Chinese feminism since the fourth UN conference on women. *Feminist Studies*, 36(1), pp.40-70.

Zheng, W. and Zhang, Y., 2010. Global concepts, local practices: Chinese feminism since the fourth UN conference on women. *Feminist Studies*, 36(1), pp.40-70.

Zheng, W., 2003. Gender, employment and women's resistance. *In Chinese society*. Routledge. pp. 176-204.

Zhihu 知乎, 2021. Guidelines for Responding to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Avoid Pitfalls in the Workplace (职场性骚扰应对指南-职场避坑). Zhuanlan Zhihu. 01 November 2021. Available at: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/427691614>[Accessed 05 March 2022]

Zhihu.com 知乎, 2017. How serious is sexual harassment on public transport? Latest report: Nearly half of women in Shenzhen have been sexually harassed. (公共交通性骚扰多严重? 最新报告: 深圳近一半女性遭性骚扰). 28 December 2017. Available at: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/32458577>[Accessed 01 July 2019]

Zhong, X., 2010. 13. Women Can Hold Up Half The Sky. In *Words and Their Stories* (pp. 227-247). Brill.

Zhou, Y., Liu, T., Yan, Y. and Paul, B., 2021. Pornography use, two forms of dehumanization, and sexual aggression: Attitudes vs. behaviors. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 47(6), pp.571-590.

Zhu, C., Yan, L., Wang, Y., Ji, S., Zhang, Y. and Zhang, J., 2022. Fertility intention and related factors for having a second or third child among childbearing couples in shanghai, China. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10.

Zoido, P., 2015. Jeremy Corbyn's 'women only carriages' proposal shows an alarming lack of understanding of the real causes of harassment. *Democratic Audit UK*.

Zoido-Oses, P., 2015. Female-only carriages: Corbyn's proposal shows an alarming lack of understanding of the real causes of harassment. *British Politics and Policy at LSE*.