Power/knowledge, Visibility & Heterosexuality:

the lives of White teachers working in English-medium international schools in East & Southeast Asia

Christopher Bellamy

Thesis submitted to Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2024

Acknowledgements

Carrie and Andrew, my supervisors. Thank you for your encouragement, advice and patience. I could not have asked for more.

Carrie, your continued support over a much longer period of time has meant a lot to me.

My brilliant and always patient Mum and Dad. Whatever I do, wherever I go, I know I always have your support. Thank you.

My equally brilliant and patient brother, Jonathan.

I'm fortunate to have worked for two very supportive headteachers whilst also working on this thesis. Sonya and Mark. Thank you.

My friends and colleagues, especially the people I met in Taiwan, and the people who supported me when I came back "home." Shannen, you've kept me going.

Abstract

This thesis is about the life experiences of White, Western, heterosexual teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia. It explores ways of living Whiteness and ways of living heterosexuality in this context, and how this is different for White men and White women. It considers how international mobility, place and presence shape and reshape teachers' identities. It examines the ways in which localised power-inflected discourses constitute White, heterosexual subjectivities.

The research involved a series of one-off interviews with thirteen teachers from the UK, Europe, the USA and New Zealand: nine men and four women. The semi-structured interviews covered their reasons for teaching overseas and why in East/Southeast Asia, and the social positioning of White, Western teachers in international school communities in the region. Combining the work of Goffman (1959) and Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988), the analysis is focused on the ways in which discourses of 'race', gender, sexuality and sex interact in the relations of power and knowledge in this context, and in the performance of the teachers' identities. I use a Goffmanian toolkit to examine the experiences of the participants through a Foucauldian lens. The analysis sets out to problematise the identities available to the participants, and others like them. This rather unusual application of different theories, which are not *always* complementary, to study the life experiences of a little researched group of people, is what makes this thesis unique. The aim is to seek a better understanding of the situation by considering the power-relations upon which categories of gender and sexual identities in this context are dependent, and how these ideas are regulated.

This thesis highlights the need for White, Western, heterosexual teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia to be reflexive and to consider the ways in which normative ideas about gender, heterosexuality and Whiteness in this context affect their sense of self. This is recommended as a starting point for teachers to confront some of the dominant ideologies in this and other similar contexts, both at school and in their own lives. Similarly, international school leaders are encouraged to acknowledge the challenges to teachers' identities in this context, and for this to be reflected in schools' approaches to the induction of new teachers and in teachers' continuing professional development.

Contents

Chapter 4

Methodology

Chapter 5

Performing the Role of a 'Good Westerner': Being an international school teacher in East and Southeast Asia

Chapter 6

'Doing Man': The social position of heterosexual White men in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia

Chapter 7

(In)visibility: the social position of heterosexual White women in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Chapter 1

An introduction and notes on terminology

This thesis is about international school teachers' ways of living Whiteness and ways of living heterosexuality in East and Southeast Asia. It relies on a series of semi-structured interviews with heterosexual White, Western teachers working in English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia: nine men and four women from the UK, Europe, the USA and New Zealand. The interviews were carried out between April and June 2021. My interest in doing this work was based on my personal experience as a White gay man living and working in Taiwan. From 2017 to 2022, I worked as a senior leader in an international school in Taipei.

After moving to Taiwan, I became aware of the ways in which White men living in East and Southeast Asia, regardless of their sexuality, risk being stereotyped as having a particular sexual interest in Asian women and/or men. This has to do with various cultural scripts concerning the sexual promiscuity of White men in East and Southeast Asia, and the Asian fetish of some White men, colloquially referred to as 'yellow fever' (Chou and Taylor, 2018; Jackson, 2000; Stanley, 2012; Zheng, 2016). At the same time, however, the social arrangements in this context are advantageous for some White men. White men in the region are likely to experience particular benefits due to their (cultural) Whiteness. This includes possessing increased sexual capital (relative to being in their home countries or elsewhere in the West) and, consequently, increased confidence. This is what Stanley (2012) refers to as

'the superhero phenomenon'; it is located in the social construction of White, Western masculinity in this context.

The problem of 'racial' fetishisation affects White women in East and Southeast Asia too, but for opposite reasons. This is because it is difficult for White women, regardless of their sexuality, to locate themselves within the culturally circulating narratives of stereotypical masculinity/femininity, sexual worth and 'racialised' desire (Chesnut, 2020; Lan, 2011). I became concerned about how these ideas might impinge on the lives of White, Western teachers in the region, and the concomitant issues for the recruitment and retention of teachers, especially White women. This is because there is an uneven distribution of power which favours White, Western men.

There is a small body of work about TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in Asia which addresses similar concerns (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Chesnut, 2020; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Stanley, 2012). However, the analytical themes explored in this thesis are largely absent from the literature on international schools/teachers in Asia (which is reviewed in the next chapter), and we could benefit from knowing more about the situation. This is because the rapid growth of the international school market globally, but particularly in Asia, has meant it is now easier for Western teachers to work there (Brummitt and Keeling, 2013; Bunnell, 2016; 2019; Burke, 2017; Hrycak, 2015; Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Lee and Wright, 2016; Machin, 2017; Rey, Bolay and Gez, 2020; Savva, 2015, 2017). However, we have limited knowledge about the teachers who choose to work in international schools and how international mobility, place and presence

shape and reshape teachers' identities – the processes and outcomes of their relocation (Bailey and Cooker, 2019; Gibson and Bailey, 2023). This is the focus of my investigation.

To make sense of what follows, it is important for me, at the very start, to provide some further biographical information of my own. In this chapter, I will also provide notes explaining some of the terminology I have used in this thesis, as well as a summary of my research questions.

Working in Taiwan was my first experience of teaching outside of the UK, where I had worked continuously in secondary schools since finishing my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) in Drama in 2003. In the summer of 2022, I moved back to the UK, returning to work at my previous school in London. This was, in part, due to the global pandemic, and my father's ill health. The travel restrictions had made it very difficult for me to see my family throughout this time. However, I did not intend for my return to the UK to be permanent (whatever *permanent* is) because I still wanted to work overseas again at some point if the right opportunity were to come up. In 2024, I successfully applied for a leadership position at a school in Bangkok, Thailand.

When the pandemic started, Taiwan adopted a 'zero-Covid' approach. On 19th March 2020, Taiwan effectively closed its borders (the majority of foreign nationals were barred from entering). In the period of time that followed, Taiwan avoided lockdowns similar to those in the UK, although there were, at times, other preventative measures (e.g., a mask mandate, and restrictions on large gatherings), and the island's approach was frequently

hailed as a global success.[1] In July 2020, I received approval for my research from the College Research Ethics Committee.

I had several reasons for originally wanting to move to Taiwan, not least of all the opportunity to travel and see more of the world, which was halted due to the pandemic. I also found the experience of working in the UK increasingly tiring and I wanted a change. In December 2016, I visited Taiwan on holiday, and found that it was somewhere I believed I would feel happy to live. Not long afterwards, the job was advertised with similar leadership responsibilities to those I had in the UK. The serendipitous nature of all of this seems to be characteristic of my career recently. For example, I was similarly fortunate to land a job at my old school in London, right at the time I was planning to leave Taiwan.

My initial reasons for relocating to Asia were similar to some of those discussed by my participants. We also shared similar experiences of living and working there. These similarities are consistent with the findings of Hrycak's research:

"The most positive characteristics of teaching overseas, according to those already there, were the financial aspect of their role[2], closely followed by the ability to travel. Having good students and supportive parents was next, followed by experiencing a new country or culture, a better standard of living and improved weather. To a lesser extent, the perceived positives included the chance to work with international children and colleagues, the sense of freedom and trust they felt in international

---

[1] 'How Taiwan is containing coronavirus – despite diplomatic isolation by China' – https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/13/how-taiwan-is-containing-coronavirus-despite-diplomatic-isolation-by-china [accessed 17.03.24]

[2] Teachers in premium international schools may receive higher salaries than teachers in UK state schools and/or other benefits, e.g., a relocation allowance; an accommodation allowance; private health insurance; school fees for dependent children; a lower cost of living.

schools, and the lighter workload compared with teaching in their home country. Teachers also spoke of personal development opportunities and the chance to work with like-minded people. Less frequent responses included good resources, smaller classes, a good education for their own children, supportive managers, holidays, the chance to learn a new language and the opportunity to be part of an expatriate community." (Hrycak, 2015, p. 33).

Hrycak's summary is useful for understanding the attitudes and values of my participants, and others like them, including myself. For my participants, the advantages of the expatriate lifestyle seemed to outweigh any disadvantages.

In relation to this, it is important for me to be clear that 'expatriate' is a contested term (see, e.g., Kunz 2016; 2020) and whilst it is not my intention to debate "how racialisation works in and through [categories of migration]" (Kunz, 2020, p. 2156), its usage in this thesis is deliberate when referring to the privileged lifestyle of many international school teachers relative to other migrant workers in East and Southeast Asia (e.g., social welfare/domestic workers and industrial workers).

In addition, in the context of my research, 'White' is the most salient identifier in terms of the social construction of seeing 'race' and so, for this reason, I have capitalised the term to indicate that it is more than just an adjective and refers to a performative identity (Dyer, 1997). I will develop this idea in Chapters 3 and 5. Also, 'Westerner' usually denotes Whiteness in this context (see, e.g., Stanley, 2012), and 'White' and 'Western' were used interchangeably by my participants to refer to themselves and others, although this is obviously complex and contentious. All of the participants in my study identified as White,

but they were from different cultural origins. Similarly, my participants' schools were in a diverse range of countries, with different histories, politics, cultures, cultural sensitivities, languages and religions. However, despite the fact that East and Southeast Asia is not a monolithic market for private, English-medium ('international') education, there were enough similarities in my participants' experiences and the type of school they worked for (the expectations of them, etc.) to group them together by region. Grouping them together was important to reduce the risk of individual participants and schools being identified.

Finally on terminology: throughout this thesis, the word 'race' is placed between inverted commas to signify that the concept has no biological foundation (i.e., as a taxonomic category), but the word still has meaning in social contexts. Scientifically, the idea of 'race' is redundant, presupposing immutable characteristics that do not exist. However, in relation to the way we see people (Alcoff, 2006), 'race' is, of course, socially, culturally, historically, and politically very significant.

My research questions are set out in Chapter 4, in the introduction to my methodology. To understand my research questions requires knowledge of some of the different theories that I have utilised in my analysis, particularly the ideas of Foucault. My theoretical framework, which combines Foucault and Goffman, is explained in Chapter 3. However, to summarise, my research questions are to do with the possibilities and impossibilities for teachers' lives in this context: how they are able to understand themselves and how they are likely to be understood by others. I examine the ways in which international school teachers are likely to be 'racialised' as White, focusing specifically on the intersection of 'race' and gender, and stereotypical expectations of (heterosexual) masculinity and femininity.

The demand for English-medium education in Asia means that "the [international school] industry … is enjoying gold rush market conditions." (Machin, 2017, p. 131). I will discuss this in the next chapter. However, for context, in 2017, Machin wrote:

> "Exemplifying the rate of regional growth, at the turn of the century Hong Kong had 92 internationals schools and now has 176; Thailand had less than a dozen, today 181." (Machin, 2017, p. 131).

Even so, there has been very little research problematising some of the issues for international school teachers' lived identities, particularly concerning 'race' (Bailey and Cooker, 2019; Gardner McTaggart, 2021; Gibson and Bailey, 2023). This will be the focus of my analysis in Chapter 5 when I consider how institutional pressures and societal norms/expectations in this context shape the epistemological and ontological possibilities for teachers' personal and professional 'racialised' selves. In Chapters 6 and 7, I will consider how this is different for White men and White women. In particular, I will analyse the effects of some of the problematic stereotypes of White men in this context, and stereotypes of 'interracial' intimacies. However, to be clear, what I have not done in this thesis, and nor did I intend to do, is to attempt a genealogy of 'racialised' sexual desire in this context (or even to debate whether or not particular sexual practices/preferences are morally problematic). This would have required specific and detailed discussions of local histories. Instead, I have considered some of the difficulties that 'racial' fetishisation creates for my participants' identities, and the role that 'racial' fetishisation plays in "a pernicious system" of 'racial' social meanings (Zheng, 2016, p. 401).

Chapter 2

Literature Review: English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia

Introduction

In this chapter, I will review some of the literature on international schools and English-medium education in East and Southeast Asia. I will focus specifically on the ideas and themes that are most relevant to this thesis: the expansion of the international school sector in Asia; the privileging of (cultural) Whiteness in the type of international school communities my participants belonged to; and the motivations of teachers who choose to work in international schools. In relation to the final point, Bailey and Cooker (2019), for example, state that the growing number of teachers working in international schools globally indicates an urgent need for further research in order to understand their different motivations. They explain: "teachers cannot simply be seen as teachers who happen to be working elsewhere" (Bailey and Cooker, 2019, p. 129). However, one of the biggest challenges for researchers in the field of international schools continues to be the rapid growth of the sector, resulting in a proliferation of different types of international school:

> "January 2023 data released by ISC Research shows that 6.5 million children between the ages of 3 and 18 are currently enrolled at international schools around the world: a 53% growth in the market since 2013 … The ISC Research data from January [2023]

indicates there are now 13,190 international schools where English is one of the languages of learning … The ISC Research data shows that South-Eastern Asia has experienced a 23% growth in the enrolment of students in its international schools over the last five years. During that same time, the number of international schools in the sub-region increased from 1,600 to 1,940." (https://iscresearch.com/the-new-international-school-data-for-2023 [accessed 17.03.24]).

Such schools are often unique to their geographical context and established to satisfy local demands, defying traditional methods of classification (Bunnell, 2019). In addition, whilst there are different accrediting bodies (e.g., CIS, COBIS), and some schools belong to well-established private education companies (e.g., Nord Anglia, GEMS), the sector is largely unregulated (Bunnell, 2016). The overarching purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to provide a nuanced understanding of the type of international school and their communities (primarily the teachers but also other actors) that are the focus of this investigation.

Hayden and Thompson's (2013) Typology of International Schools

The most influential typology of international schools was produced by Hayden and Thompson (2013), and it is widely referred to in the literature on international schools (see, e.g., Bailey and Cooker's (2019) study of the motivation of teachers who work in international schools, which is discussed later in this chapter). However, the authors themselves have since acknowledged that their typology may no longer be fit for purpose, such is the rate of the international school market's evolution and growth (Hayden and Thompson, 2018).

Type A schools are *traditional* international schools whose reason for existence is first and foremost to cater for expatriate children away from home, although they may still accept local students if local regulations allow them to.

Type B schools are *ideological* international schools which exist to break down social and cultural barriers by educating children and young people from different parts of the world together (e.g., United World Colleges).

Type C schools are *non-traditional* international schools which primarily cater to the elite of the host country by providing an alternative to the national education system, most commonly English-medium education (e.g., offering an American or British style curriculum, or International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes).

The recent expansion of the international schools market in Asia, which I will go on to discuss, means that the distinction between Type A and Type C schools is arguably less relevant now. When choosing a school, there are likely to be different considerations for parents, both local and expatriate parents, than whether or not the school was originally intended to serve any particular group of students, for example: the curriculum; who the teachers and leaders are, and where they are from (Gibson and Bailey, 2023); the facilities; class sizes; support for progression to higher education and university destinations (Lee and Wright, 2016). And, even in situations where local law restricts access to international education for local students (Kim and Mobrand, 2019), the regulations can often be circumvented if families have the resources to acquire passports from other countries, colloquially referred to as 'convenience passports'. This was my experience in Taiwan.

For these reasons, scholarly attempts to define the term 'international school' after Hayden and Thompson (2013) have been necessarily broad. Bunnell (2019), for example, coined the term GEMIS – *Globalised English Medium of Instruction Schools* – to generically group a certain type of international school, "schools with a global outlook located mainly outside an English-speaking country delivering a non-national curriculum at least partly in English." (Bunnell, 2019, p. 1). He uses the term in recognition of the fact that the schools, "are 'global in outlook', not merely global in location." (Bunnell, 2019, p. 2). However, Gardner McTaggart argues that definitions similar to this one privilege Whiteness:

> "This globalised neoliberal dominion is as privileged as it is turgid, as powerful as it is opaque; and … international schools play an increasing role in a process of globalising, white, cultural replication." (Gardner McTaggart, 2021 p. 2).

To understand Gardner McTaggart's argument, it is necessary to make clear that it is the dominance of the English language globally, as well as other factors associated with globalisation, that have contributed to the growth of the international schools market, especially in Asia and the Middle East (Brummitt and Keeling, 2013; Lee and Wright, 2016; Machin, 2017; Kim and Mobrand, 2019). International schools in Asia are an imprint of colonialism (Burke, 2017; Gibson and Bailey, 2023). Consequently, it has become easier for White, Western teachers to make choices about where they work and for how long (Burke, 2017; Hrycak, 2015; Rey, Bolay and Gez, 2020; Savva, 2015, 2017).

In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss some of the reasons behind the expansion of the international school sector in Asia. In the third and fourth sections, I will discuss the privileging of Whiteness in international schools in Asia, and issues to do with

(in)equality of access to these schools. In the final section, I will provide some statistics about the people who work in international schools and consider their motivation for doing so, as well as some of the challenges they are likely to face.

The expansion of the international school sector in Asia

The expansion of the international school sector in Asia has been driven by market demand (Machin, 2017). The visibility and desirability of international schools means that more and more families want to access them (Kim and Mobrand, 2019), and attendance is seen as a way of improving their child/ren's likelihood of being admitted to an elite university abroad (Lee and Wright, 2016):

> "international schools in Asia have become desirable to families well beyond those they were initially intended to serve. While international schools once mainly existed as community services for expatriate populations, they now are revenue-oriented institutions for climbing global education hierarchies. Local parents seek access to international schools for their children. In China and Malaysia, international schools have been seen as more desirable than ordinary schools (South China Morning Post, 7 Sept. 2015)." (Kim and Mobrand, 2019, p. 3-4).

Families from high socio-economic backgrounds are able to "draw upon financial capital to provide their children with superior opportunities to gain admission to elite higher education institutions worldwide." (Lee and Wright, 2016, p. 131). Therefore, whilst elite international schools in the region, especially those offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma

Programme (IBDP), might claim to inculcate in their students the knowledge, skills and values necessary to participate in and serve diverse communities globally (Lee and Wright, 2016), their reason for existence is premised on a hyper-individualistic vision of students' success, specifically progression to higher education at similarly elite institutions abroad. For example, Bittencourt and Willets (2018), discussing the somewhat different context of American International Schools in South America, draw attention to the competing discourses and political tensions to do with ideological internationalism and market-driven multinationalism. This contradiction sits alongside the ways in which the norms of 'internationalism' in the context of my research are often synonymous with Whiteness (Gardner McTaggart, 2021). However, correlations are implicit (e.g., in the ways that many premium international schools are structured and staffed), rather than explicit, "with [White 'racial'] advantage removed from ideology or critical review." (Gardner McTaggart, 2021, p. 17). I will return to this idea in the next section of this chapter, and in Chapter 5, problematising the dramatic dominance of White teachers in my participants' schools.

International schools in East and Southeast Asia do not all share the same characteristics. The growing demand for an English-medium education in the region, and indeed globally, has led to the creation of different types of private, fee-paying international schools, with different approaches to education (Bunnell, 2019). Attempting to typify international schools in the region is, therefore, difficult, and as Bunnell and Gardner McTaggart explain, "as with elite private national schools, there is no set model for an 'international school', beyond notions of distinction." (Bunnell and Gardner McTaggart, 2022, p. 2). However, by their very name, international schools make themselves distinct. The word 'international' is used to distinguish 'international' schools from other schools locally –

schools which offer the country's national curriculum, taught in the local language. Nonetheless, it is important for me to be clear that it is not my intention to problematise the different models of international school, for example, by critically evaluating the curricula on offer. Instead, what I will begin to do in this chapter, drawing on the literature, is to problematise notions of 'premium-ness' and 'elite-ness' in relation to the types of school my participants worked in (whilst they have subtly different connotations, the words can be used interchangeably). This is not only important in order to be able to problematise the forms of identity available to White teachers in this context, but also because, as Machin explains:

> "International schools may not be competing against each other for numbers, but they are competing with each other for legitimacy, for primacy of educational might and for the benefits of prestige. That is, in the (current [2017]) gold rush environment of international schooling there is competition, but that competition is not primarily economic." (Machin, 2017, p. 143).

The economic issues are also of less interest to me, but Machin's (2017) point is relevant in order to understand and appreciate the characteristics of my participants' schools, and the complex field of power/knowledge relationships in and around their school communities (Foucault, 1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988). This has implications for the forms of identity available to my participants, and I will explain why when I set out my theoretical framework in the next chapter.

In spite of Machin's (2017) point that competitiveness, at least between elite or premium international schools, may not be primarily economic, different types of international schools in East and Southeast Asia, especially in China (Poole and Bunnell, 2023),

cater to different levels of parental ability, and employer ability, to pay[3]. This was envisaged by Hayden and Thompson in 2013 in what they described as the 'hotel chain' metaphor:

> "This metaphor is based upon an assumption that continued extensive growth in the sector will be accompanied by increased availability of choice in curriculum programmes designed to be international in focus, thus leading to enhanced competition in the international school marketplace." (Hayden and Thompson, 2013, p. 18).

The 'hotel chain' metaphor is particularly useful for my analysis (more useful than other anecdotal ways of classifying schools, e.g., tiering, which I will discuss later) because of the implication that the education offered by schools *at the top end* is not only expensive, but also a *luxury* product – desirable and exclusive. This was the case for my participants' schools and was reflected in, amongst other things, the teachers' qualifications (they had all trained to teach in their home countries); their levels of experience; the resources available to them; and their pay. Their schools styled themselves as either British or American 'international' schools, making clear their approach to education, and the curricula were delivered in English.

The ability to pay high fees is one of the main selection criteria for local national students attending premium international schools in Asia (Kim and Mobrand, 2019). Similarly, the remuneration package offered to teachers distinguishes premium international schools from other educational institutions. However, as Machin explained in 2017, the value of these schools could eventually decline as supply increases in some countries:

---

[3] The situation for international schools in China (and Hong Kong) is different to some other Asian countries and the situation is evolving. This has to do with wider educational reforms and domestic politics.

"Price becomes increasingly important, customers become fickle, and profitability gets squeezed. The emotive nature of schooling may protect against this to some degree – education is more than a commodity purchase – but that does not make schools immune." (Machin, 2017, p. 143).

As I have said, I am less concerned about these issues (profitability, etc.) than I am about the perceptions of the expatriate teachers who work in the schools, and what these perceptions might have to do with the economic aspect. My interest is to do with the ways in which the teachers in my study know themselves and how they are known by others. For example, some of the participants in my study spoke about local perceptions of how wealthy they are, commenting that their pay was significantly in excess of the average local salary, and considerably higher than they might earn teaching in state schools in their home countries.

The privileging of Whiteness in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia

Using a postcolonial lens to study international schools in Malaysia, a former British colony, Gibson and Bailey argue that the school sites are 'racialised': "for example in their staffing structures and how they market themselves." (Gibson and Bailey, 2023, p. 406). However, the Malaysian context is distinct because "citizens are required to categorise themselves at birth into racial groups, Malays, Chinese, Indians and 'others'." (Gibson and Bailey, 2023, p. 406). The authors explain:

"International schools in Malaysia are part of a complex racial based schooling system that is a legacy of its colonial past. Different races attend different types of school and have different funding arrangements replicating social divisions in the country. Paradoxically, despite the commitment to equality that powered the origins of the international school movement, international schools are now embedded in an educational system whose day-to-day operations are constructed around racial division." (Gibson and Bailey, 2023, p. 415).

Gibson and Bailey (2023) highlight their participants' concern that their schools showed 'a disproportionate number of white staff faces' on their websites and in other marketing materials. The schools' marketing drew attention to the high percentage of staff that is British, serving as a proxy for Whiteness. Nonetheless, despite the specificities of the Malaysian context, the paradox of this model of international education is not unique. The word 'international' in the context of schooling implies that students will learn to value a diversity of thoughts and ideas, as well as suggesting the interconnectedness of people as part of a global community, thereby dismantling rather than maintaining 'racial' privilege:

"the arena displays a strong mission promising to deliver the skills, knowledge, and attributes connected with 'international mindedness', such as intercultural respect and open-mindedness." (Bunnell and Gardner McTaggart, 2022, p. 2).

However, in the context of my research, the idea of 'internationalism' is implicitly White (Gardner McTaggart, 2021). For example, in the same way that the use of 'British' or 'American' to identify an 'international' school can be understood as proxies for Whiteness, so too can the use of the English language for instruction (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021).

Discourses about international schools are far from neutral, and English-medium instruction and Western educational philosophies are frequently substituted for 'internationalism' (Gardner McTaggart, 2021). Bunnell and Gardner McTaggart (2022), for example, discuss the ways in which advertisements for international school leaders in the global field of premium international schools appear to discriminate in favour of 'English-speaking Anglo-Saxon educators from Britain and North America'. They explain how schools "replicate discourses of injustice within their operating structures and staffing." (Bunnell and Gardner McTaggart, 2022, p. 2). I will discuss these ideas further in Chapters 3 and 5, drawing on Foucault's understanding of power (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988); however, the important point for now is that discourses about international schools globally, not only in Asian countries, invariably privilege White, Western ways of thinking and doing. Consequently, if the discourses remain critically unchallenged, this creates problems for the identities of all White, Western teachers working in English-medium international schools.

To understand the relationship between English and Whiteness in the context of my research, the literature on TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in Asia is particularly useful to mention here, although the educational context is different. The research indicates that in East Asia, when being taught English as a foreign language, Whiteness, and more often White masculinity, is treated as the norm (Appleby, 2013; Chesnut, 2020; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Stanley, 2012). Piller and Takahashi (2006), for example, examine the ways in which the desirable characteristics of English language teachers in Japan are presented in terms of gender, 'race' *and* looks. For the Japanese women learning English who were interviewed for their study, White was "the most desirable racial identity of their interlocutors" (Piller and Takahashi, 2006, p. 75):

"White men are often associated with sophistication, sensitivity, and refinement. They are portrayed as handsome, often with blond hair and blue eyes, well-educated, well-dressed, understated and kind, not so different from the ways in which Hollywood stars and Western musicians are represented in the same [local] media." (Piller and Takahashi, 2006, p. 65 – 66).

Physical attractiveness is unlikely to be as important in establishing the credibility of teachers in premium English-medium international schools in the region, although Whiteness may be. That is to say, in the context of my research, White men are unlikely to be fetishised by school owners/operators, school leaders, children and parents in the same way as the English language teachers in Japan in Piller and Takahashi's (2006) study. However, I do not have data to test this. Nonetheless, the TESOL literature is useful for this thesis for two reasons. First of all, for exemplifying the normative link between Whiteness and English in this context. Secondly, for understanding the social construction of White masculinity, particularly the elevated sexual appeal of heterosexual White men in East and Southeast Asia (Stanley, 2012). I will discuss this further in Chapters 6 and 7.

The explicit connection that is made between 'race' and language in some of the TESOL literature is often less obvious in the literature on international schools. Research in the field, including work on language acquisition, is largely practice-based (Budrow and Tarc, 2018), although Crisfield, for example, has highlighted the potential consequences of the privileging of English in international schools:

"There is a clear notion of *privilege* in international education, both in the opportunities afforded by a more international educational experience, and by the opportunity to study in English. In the global quest for earlier English (and a 'native

speaker' competency), parents choose to pay for a prestigious English-language education as a perceived means of improving their children's future opportunities, but this choice can also bring with it significant linguistic, academic and cultural consequences." (Crisfield, 2023, p. 16-17).

However, in spite of these concerns, the demand for English will not go away, and some parents are unlikely to be willing, "to challenge the perceived wisdom that more English, earlier, is what is right for all children." (Crisfield, 2023, p. 2023). Indeed, such is the demand in Asia, parents who are already paying for English language tuition outside of school (e.g., in 'cram schools'[4]) may decide that an English-medium international school is, overall, a 'better' option. Kim and Mobrand explain:

"International schools … offer an attractive alternative to the cram school lifestyle that afflicts much of the region … Relative to these costs, international school fees may be only marginally higher and international schools bring the benefit of reducing stress." (Kim and Mobrand, 2019. P. 4).

The demand for international schools in Asia is very much connected to the desire for English and, in the context of my research, there is not only a normative link between English and Whiteness, but English language competency is also connected to social status.

---

[4] 'Cram schools' is the colloquial name for educational organisations that arrange after school classes providing support for students with standardised tests and school/college entrance exams, as well as English language instruction. Asian parents often spend huge amounts of money on cram schools – see, e.g.: *'Vietnamese Parents Spend Huge Money on Students' Cram Schools'* – https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnamese-parents-spend-huge-money-on-students-cram-schools-649124.html [accessed 17.03.24].

The problem of elitism

Bunnell writes that there is a "large underbelly of 'non-premium' [international] schools [in China], which defy clear classification, some offering a fusion of different curricula." (Bunnell 2019, p. 6). He continues that many of these schools operate in 'tier-2' cities in China, although as Poole (2020b) explains, there are similar schools in all of the major cities in China. Poole (2020b) argues that Bunnell's (2019) description is overly general and pejorative. Nevertheless, of greater concern to me is Bunnell's (2019) assertion that by integrating different curricula in a bilingual model of education, presumably with more locally hired (non-White) teachers than in premium schools, the 'non-premium' schools are revealing their intended attraction to a 'localised middle-class' (Bunnell, 2019). If that is the case, it follows that a premium international education, taught predominantly in English, and by White, Western teachers, is out of reach for many families, and only accessible to the wealthiest.

Evaluating the social consequences of wealthy local families in Asia choosing to send their children to international schools, Kim and Mobrand ask these questions:

"Will, for example, the Vietnamese elite of the near future read and speak Vietnamese? Will they be closer to Vietnamese culture or to a 'global' elite consumer culture? Will they move abroad, or will they become an elite within Vietnam that is culturally and socially remote from the rest of society?" (Kim and Mobrand, 2019, p. 12).

The authors go on to question the impact on local educational systems. For example, they ask whether or not there will be enough pressure to maintain and improve standards for ordinary citizens if the elite are opting out of local educational systems in Asia. These are important

considerations, and the reverse impact is equally important, although for different reasons. For example, some researchers (e.g., Hrycak, 2015; Bailey and Cooker, 2019) have also considered the impact of the international relocation of locally trained teachers on the schools/systems they are leaving behind (i.e., the problem for governments to do with the recruitment and retention of teachers):

> "As the demand for teachers grows globally, the classroom for which trainee teachers are being prepared may no longer be at home, but may increasingly be anywhere in the world." (Hrycak, 2015, p. 38).

These concerns are necessary for me to mention, however, they are not the focus of my analysis. Nevertheless, Kim and Mobrand's (2019) hypothetical questions undergird the significance of 'race' in discussions about international schools in East and Southeast Asia, and the issues surrounding White privilege. If we avoid the topic of 'race', White privilege in international schools could potentially remain invisible, and this is precisely what enables Whiteness to be "a location of structural advantage, of race privilege" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1). And yet, this is another paradox. In some aspects of their daily lives, away from the school site, the male participants in my study in particular felt visible because of their 'racialised' gender identity and because of the ways in which they might be negatively stereotyped (e.g., as sexually promiscuous, desiring Asian women). For them, their Whiteness was not 'always-and-only' privileging (Moosavi, 2022), and I will return to these ideas in Chapters 3 and 5. In particular, in Chapter 3, I will set out a Foucauldian critique of Whiteness Studies and problematise scholarly attempts to theorise White privilege.

The problem of elitism is intensified by the 'tiering' of international schools, which was anticipated by Hayden and Thompson (2013) with their 'hotel chain' metaphor. Bunnell writes that the idea of there being different 'tiers' of school emerged anecdotally but is now "universally recognised and well-recognised, although still undertheorised." (Bunnell, 2019, p. 69). There is no standardised system for deciding which tier a school belongs to, and the factors that may be used for designation are subjective (this is certainly apparent in some of the lively debates on the International Schools Review (ISR) website[5]). However, Tier 1 schools are generally thought to be those that are not solely driven by profit and which recruit internationally qualified and experienced teachers, amongst other things. To illustrate the idea, Bunnell uses the example of international schools in the Philippines:

> "The dominance of the 'non-premium' sector in nations such as the Philippines does seem to indicate the emergence of a tiering of schools, in practice. It is no surprise therefore that the labelling of schools as 'Tier-1' has emerged as a popular discourse as schools and educators start to differentiate (and disassociate themselves) between the 'sectors'." (Bunnell, 2019, p. 69).

The 'non-premium' or lower tier schools that Bunnell (2019) refers to are those that exist simply to make money, and he goes on to argue that an *academic* definition of an 'international school' would place the curriculum and administration style at the forefront. Whilst this is uncontroversial, it leaves open the possibility that the 'tiering' of schools could also be to do with Western versus non-Western pedagogies and/or Western versus non-

---

[5] The International Schools Review website allows people to post anonymous reviews of schools and school leaders. There are also discussion forums. To read reviews requires an annual (paid for) membership, however, anyone can write and submit a review. The reviews do not appear to be verified or moderated and, in my experience, teachers are usually careful about how much they read into the reviews.

Western styles of leadership. In addition, if 'premium' or 'tier 1' schools exist in the social imaginary in this context, then so too must 'premium' teachers. To gain employment in 'premium' international schools, teachers usually require qualifications gained in the West, although not necessarily extensive teaching experience in the West (Bunnell and Garnder McTaggart, 2022; Poole, 2020a). It is also highly likely that leadership positions – the most visible positions – will be occupied by White, Western men (CIS, 2021), suggesting that gender identity can be as significant as 'race'.

Who are the people working in international schools, and what is their motivation?

A 2021 report on diversity by The Council of International Schools (CIS) used a survey to collect data from board members, leadership teams, heads of schools, and teachers in international schools around the world about their gender, nationality and ethnicity. The report includes only global statistics; however, given the growth of the market in Asia, it is not surprising that the majority of schools that submitted a complete or partial response to its survey were located in Asia (58% of member schools). The statistics do not entirely mirror what the participants in my study said about their schools, however, they are useful to mention, particularly concerning the dominance of White men in leadership positions in international schools:

A head of school is three times more likely to be male than female, and the most represented nationalities among school leaders are United States of America (51%),

United Kingdom (17%), and Canada (13%). Only every 8th head of school is from a Non-Western country. The head of school is also 5.3 times more likely to be white than of any other ethnicity. However, a teacher is 1.6 times more likely to be female than male. The most represented nationalities of teachers are United States of America (30%), Canada (16%) and United Kingdom (12%). There are 2.2 times more teachers from Western than from Non-Western countries, although there is a similar number of white and non-white teachers. (CIS, 2021).

I did not ask for quantitative data from my participants about their schools. However, for reasons that I will explain in Chapters 6 and 7, there was a perception that male teachers were more likely than female teachers to stay working at their schools. My participants also told me that the teachers in their schools were predominantly White, which is consistent with Gibson and Bailey's (2023) study of international schools in Malaysia.

There are many overlapping reasons why Western teachers might choose to work abroad (the ability to travel, better pay and living standards, the weather, etc.). Indeed, for many teachers, like me, who were trained and have taught in the UK, working overseas in international schools is now seen as a normalised career option, or teachers are at least aware of the different options available to them overseas (Hrycak, 2015). However, teachers in international schools come from a wide range of backgrounds, with different levels of commitment to the profession (e.g., this could be related to their qualifications), and with different attitudes towards what it means to be an international school teacher (Bailey and Cooker, 2019; Poole and Bunnell, 2023). Bailey and Cooker (2019) connect the motivation of international school teachers to Hayden and Thompson's (2013) typology of international schools:

Type A Teachers are itinerant teachers who are likely to see their job as supporting travel and mobility – both their own mobile lifestyle, but also supporting the mobile lifestyles of other expatriates.

Type B Teachers are likely to see their jobs in ideological terms. They characterise themselves as being 'open minded' and 'international', which is central to their role as teachers.

Type C Teachers are teachers who feel connected to their location (e.g., because of personal interest).

Even though some of the teachers in my study had met their partners or spouses locally, which meant they had a different relationship to their host country to other teachers in their schools, they are, overall, closest to Type B. For example, they often spoke about wanting to experience another culture, and what they might learn from the experience. However, none of them spoke about wanting "to make a difference to students' lives: to change the world in global, ideological ways" (Bailey and Cooker, 2019, p. 136). Their motivation for teaching overseas was connected to their own personal interests and life satisfaction.

However, whilst there is a small but growing body of research about teachers who have chosen to work in international schools, and what their experiences are, the conclusions are generally not specific to particular countries or regions, except when they have to do with the socio-economic differences between the Global North and Global South (e.g., Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015). Areas of research have included the difficulties teachers may experience in adapting to living and working (teaching) in new and unfamiliar contexts, and their shifting

identities in international school communities – their social position (Bailey, 2015; Deveney, 2007; Halicioglu, 2015; Roskell, 2013; Savva, 2015; Savva, 2017; Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015; Tarc, Mishra Tarc and Wu, 2019). This includes studies of teachers in East and Southeast Asia. Deveney's (2007) research, for example, involved teachers in an international school in Thailand, however, there is very little engagement with the specificities of the Thai context, and the study aims to extrapolate ideas that are likely to be relevant in a variety of international school settings. Deveney (2007) discusses the ways in which teachers can be more effective in culturally diverse classrooms, facilitating multiple forms of participation and different ways to negotiate meaning ('culturally responsive teaching'). Similarly, in Roskell's (2013) study of British teachers' experience of cross-cultural transition working in Southeast Asia, and in Bailey's (2015) study of the professional identity of expatriate teachers in Malaysia, the main emphasis is on the way in which the emerging themes can be incorporated into the experiences of international school teachers more widely.

Another area of the research that is relevant to my study is about expatriate teachers being vulnerable to increased scrutiny in ways they would not be at home (Halicioglu, 2015; Savva, 2017). For example, White teachers in East and Southeast Asia may be scrutinised because they are visibly different to the majority culture, and this was a data point in Savva's research: "White educators [in China] found themselves struggling with looking different" (Savva, 2017, p. 584). In addition, researchers have considered the precarity of international school teachers' lives and careers in relation to the terms and conditions of their employment (Bunnell, 2016; Bunnell and Poole, 2021; Rey, Bolay and Gez, 2020):

"[teachers] are often locked into a precarious system that offers little employee protection and formal retirement plans and is sometimes characterised by summary dismissals and continuous relocations. Flirting with lifestyle migration and with the expatriate life of multinational corporations and international organisations, whose employees' children they often teach, international teachers' actual situation is substantially less certain than that of these other expat groups" (Rey, Bolay and Gez, 2020, p. 370).

The issues to do with job (in)security, and some of the negative experiences described by Bunnell – "arrests without evidence, dismissal without reason, deportation without warning and working abroad with passport withheld" (Bunnell, 2016, p. 546) – did not seem to concern my participants, and this was most likely due to the type of schools they worked in, as well as their own good character. However, they did talk about the professional consequences of falling foul of the expectations of them away from the school site.

I will discuss these issues in Chapter 5 and argue that the expectations of White, Western teachers in this context to behave a certain way (i.e., so as not to bring their schools into disrepute) are, at least to some extent, 'racialised' expectations. In the next chapter, I will explain the theories that I am using in order to understand some of the challenges to White teachers' identities in this context.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain my theoretical framework and lay the foundations for my data analysis. In particular, I will trace a connection between the ideas of Canadian-born sociologist Erving Goffman and French philosopher Michel Foucault whose concepts and theories underpin my work. This rather unusual application of different theories, which are not *always* complementary, to study the life experiences of a little researched group of people, is what makes this thesis unique. I will use a Goffmanian toolkit to examine the experiences of my participants through a Foucauldian lens. Of course, I will introduce some other significant perspectives too. However, the overarching purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how combining Goffman and Foucault will enable me to articulate an understanding of the ways in which discourses of 'race', gender, sexuality and sex interact in the relations of power and knowledge in my research setting, and in the performance of teachers' identities.

Goffman's (1959) earliest work, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', is foundational for any research concerned with the notion of performance *in* and *of* everyday life (Richards, 2001). I will use Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of social life as a way of

understanding some of the issues for teachers' lives in this context. At the same time, I will draw on the ideas of Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988) to examine the microphysics of power – the distribution of power and the intersections of power-relations – which regulate teachers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in this context. My aim is to examine the cultural dynamics which constrain and limit the ways in which the teachers' performances can be received and understood (i.e., problematising the identities available to them), and to consider the impact of processes of performance on their social relationships.

Alongside Goffman and Foucault, I am indebted to two authors, Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017), for articulating a connection between Goffman and Foucault. They are not alone in doing this (e.g., Battershill, 1990; Burns, 1992; Jenkins, 2008; Hancock and Garner, 2011); however, Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) have proven most useful by identifying the ways in which Goffman can be used to clarify Foucault's ideas:

"Foucault proposed his various ideas of a structure that determines discourse and action from the top down. Goffman gave us the local incidents and idiosyncrasies that lead us from the bottom up." (Hacking, 2004, p. 288).

I will develop these ideas in subsequent sections of this chapter. However, in short, Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) have done the groundwork for me by explaining how the approaches of Goffman and Foucault can be used to complement one another: their methodologies shown to be mutually reinforcing, and in a way that has proven particularly meaningful for my research purposes.

Goffman's sociology/social psychology and the philosophy of Foucault are fundamentally different, and this is important to make clear. Combining Goffman and Foucault, it would be easy to get caught-up in a meta-theoretical mess, particularly in relation to postmodern concerns to do with individual agency, subjectivity, representation, and meaning-making. For example, the notion of 'performance' (or 'presentation' or 'role-playing') is, to some extent, philosophically and psychologically contentious insofar as it suggests some kind of creative enterprise requiring both freedom and initiative on the part of the acting subject – ideas that have been developed by Butler (1990; 1993; 2004), building on Foucault. Equally, the notion of performance "[prejudges] in advance the actor's psychology, i.e., his [sic] intentions." (Miller, 1984, p. 146). Nonetheless, whilst it is important to be attentive to these concerns, and they are necessarily complicated, Hacking (2004) is useful for proposing a way forward for thinking about Goffman in relation to Foucault that is not so complicated:

> "Foucault gave us ways in which to understand what is said, can be said, what is possible, what is meaningful – as well as how it lies apart from the unthinkable and indecipherable. He gave us no idea of how, in everyday life, one comes to incorporate those possibilities and impossibilities as part of oneself. We have to go to Goffman to begin to think about that." (Hacking, 2004, p. 300).

Principally, Goffman provides us with a set of tools for reading and interpreting bodily performances, at the same time opening up the possibility that readings of gender, sexuality and 'race' will always be selective based on one's own experiences – the expectations we ourselves feel subjected to – and the assumptions made about what is 'normal' or 'natural'. Employing Goffman's dramaturgical model of social life, I will analyse the ways in which expected patterns of behaviour are established and carried out in this context (i.e., as an

ongoing and cyclical process of rehearsal/performance), and consider the role of the audience in monitoring each other's social performances (i.e., with regard to the implications).

In the first section of my theoretical framework, I will briefly discuss some of the concerns that have already been identified in the literature to do with researching teachers' lives (the concerns which are most relevant to this thesis). In the second section, I will draw on Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) to trace a connection between Goffman and Foucault, focusing specifically on the meanings and effects of discourse, and networks of power/knowledge, as well as questions to do with (sexual) morality and the performative nature of teachers' professional identities. In the third section, I will explain how I will use my theoretical framework ideas to problematise the social construction of Whiteness and heterosexual masculinities and femininities in the context of my research. Finally, drawing on the work of Judith Butler (1990; 1993; 2004) and Chris Shilling (1993; 2008), I will explain how I will use my theoretical framework to write about social performance and the construction of embodied identities.

Researching teachers' lives

Hacking's (2004) paper is about what can be gained from combining Foucault's genealogies with the sociology of Goffman "to better understand the ways in which the actual and possible lives of individuals are constituted" (Hacking, 2004, p. 288). Hacking's inquiry question is the starting point for my investigation:

"How is the space of possible and actual action determined not just by physical and social barriers and opportunities, but also by the ways in which we conceptualise and realise who we are and what we may be, in this here and now?" (Hacking, 2004, p. 287).

The ways in which the teachers in my study see themselves is inextricably linked to how they may be seen by others and, in particular, how they might be 'racialised' as White. However, the concomitant social, cultural and institutional (dis)advantages of Whiteness in this context are likely to be different depending on a person's perceived gender identity.

In relation to understanding the issues for teachers' lived identities, these concerns are not new, and although very little has been written about the lives of international school teachers in East and Southeast Asia (Bailey, 2015; Deveney, 2007; Gibson and Bailey, 2023; Roskell, 2013), my research does not exist in a vacuum. Tamboukou's (1999; 2000) work, for example, has been helpful to me for mapping the discourses and patterns of social relations which, since the nineteenth century, have interacted in the identities of White, Western female teachers. Tamboukou's (1999; 2000) concern is how women negotiate their private and public subject positions, and it will be important for me to consider the polyvalent character of these various discourses within the unique context of my research setting. This will be my focus in Chapter 7. Similarly, the life history method is well-established in British educational research. For example, in their study, 'RE teachers do get drunk you know', Sikes and Everington investigate what it was like to take on the identity of an RE (Religious Education)[6] teacher in the UK at the turn of the millennium. They write:

---

[6] RE was, and still is, a compulsory, but low-status subject in non-denominational state schools in the UK, focused on world religions and issues to do with morality, ethics, and spirituality.

"Occupying and living a particular social role and taking on a particular identity – in this case, that of RE teacher – is the not the same as being seen to do so, and there is often a gap between public perceptions and individual experiences." (Sikes and Everington, 2004, p. 22).

This has serious implications for my research. Whilst I must acknowledge the importance of subjective interpretations of experience, sociocultural norms will always determine the extent to which an individual's interpretation of identity is recognised within a society. For this reason, Sikes and Everington conclude that to achieve personal and social comfort, "we have to find some way of being who and what we want to be *in the circumstances that prevail* [my emphasis]." (Sikes and Everington, 2004, p. 22).

It was important for me to understand how the teachers in this context reconcile their social roles/expectations and their subjective experiences, especially in terms of the ways of living Whiteness and the ways of living heterosexuality, and how this reconciliation intersects with discourses concerning masculinity and femininity. In particular, I will focus on how ideas about 'race', gender and sexuality influence the teachers' sense of self. I will investigate the power-relations upon which categories of 'racial'/gender/sexual identity are dependent in this context, and how these identities are regulated. This is particularly important for teachers. This is because schools are heavily circumscribed spaces and the different identities available to teachers are not free-floating (Goodson, 2008).

In order to appreciate the possibilities for teachers' identities, Goodson argues that we need to understand:

"the patterns of social relations, interactions and constructions in which [teachers' lives] are embedded." (Goodson, 2008, p. 54).

In relation to this, Hacking suggests that the works of Goffman and Foucault are, for investigative purposes, "curiously complementary" (Hacking, 2004, p. 287). However, it is important to make clear that although I use some of the same approaches of the life history method (e.g., Acker, 1989; Ball and Goodson eds., 1985; Goodson, 1980; 2001; 2008; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985; Sikes and Everington, 2001; Sikes and Everington, 2004; Woods, 1985, 1993), I am not a life historian. The one-off conversations I had with my participants were, overall, rooted to the situation they were in at the time, although the participants frequently volunteered additional biographical information to make sense of their decision to live and work in East or Southeast Asia. As Woods explains, this inevitably means a "large measure of inference about people's constructions of meanings" (Woods, 1985, p. 13). Accepting this possibility is very much a strength of my analysis because, as I will argue, drawing on Foucault and Butler, my participants' ways of doing, and ways of being, will *always* be discursively constituted. Sikes and Everington explain:

"As social beings we constantly story our lives, but in different ways and using different words in order to fit specific contexts, purposes and audiences. There can never be *the* definitive story. Alternative tellings are always possible, depending on the perspectives, values and motivations of the storyteller. And interpretations and stories may change as different details are remembered or forgotten and as different perspectives are taken and new information is acquired." (Sikes and Everington, 2001, p. 14).

This is fundamental to my analytical position. I will unpack these ideas in the following sections of this chapter, however, they have to do with the way people are constituted – how they define themselves and how they are understood by others. As Hacking (2004) has noted, this was of interest to both Foucault and Goffman, although they each thought about it in very different ways.

Between Goffman and Foucault

For Foucault, all social practice is discursive, and Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) argue that combining the work of Goffman and Foucault is most useful, and productive, when attempting to demonstrate this:

"Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true." (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

This is particularly important for my analysis in relation to the ways in which White, Western teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia might be understood by others, as well as how they interpret themselves. This is because, as Butler writes: "the terms by which we are recognized as humans are socially articulated and changeable" (Butler, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, in this section of my theoretical framework, I will draw on Hacking

(2004) and Leib (2017) to trace a connection between Goffman and Foucault, focusing specifically on the meanings and effects of discourse; networks of power/knowledge; the disciplining of the body and the internalisation of the gaze. After this, I will make a connection that is not discussed by Hacking (2004) or Leib (2017), but which is very significant for my analysis and has to do with the maintenance of moral standards in the performance of teachers' identities.

i.   The meanings and effects of discourse

Goffman (1959) does not explicitly write about the meanings and effects of discourse. However, it can be argued that his analytical approach sets out to make visible the operations of discourse at a micro-level (Hacking 2004; Leib 2017). Hacking, for example, writes that Goffman's work provides "an understanding of how … forms of discourse become part of the lives of ordinary people." (Hacking, 2004, p. 278). Goffman achieves this in his analyses by making visible the social technologies (the processes of social control and/or containment that interested Foucault) which might otherwise remain hidden (Hacking, 2004). Discourses function as "shortcut paths into ideas which convey messages" (Carabine, 2001, p. 269) and, in Goffman's (1959) work, this is particularly the case in relation to 'expressions given off' by social actors as opposed to 'expressions given'. The 'expressions given off' are the assumptions that are made by audiences based on inference, over the which actors have less control. This is especially pertinent for this thesis when it has to do with the actors' perceived gender and/or sexual and/or 'racial' identities because – *to some extent* – they are powerless to control the audience's response (i.e., they still have power, including the possibility of resistance, but their power is lessened). The implication of this for my analysis is twofold.

Firstly, I need to interrogate *what* messages are conveyed, deliberately or otherwise by the actors, although this is, of course, necessarily problematic if our imaginings of self/others are hinged on gender and/or sexual and/or 'racial' stereotypes (i.e., when the interpretive resources available constitute particular ideological practices). Secondly, I need to examine the distribution of power and the power outcomes.

Foucault's understanding of power is removed from agency and structure; it is embodied but it cannot be enacted. Macey, for example, writes:

"Power [according to Foucault] is not located in a single place or vested in a single authority. It is not an 'object' that can be held, and nor is it something that can be seized, as the revolutionary-insurrectionary tradition would have it. Power consists, rather, of multiple networks and relations of force that are always open to conflict and negotiations, but rarely to resolution. To that extent, it is not something that can be escaped, even though it can always be resisted. Nor is power a purely negative or repressive force. It can also be a force that creates its subjects, who may rebel and react against it. " (Macey, 2009, p. 196).

Similarly, Blain and Diskin-Holdaway writing about 'racial' discourses, explain: "Foucault understands discourses of race as always being in formation, *without a fixed or clear direction of domination* [my emphasis]." (Blain and Diskin-Holdaway, 2023, p. 622). This is because:

"Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also

undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (Foucault, 1976, p. 100 – 101).

I will return to ideas about 'race' in the next section. However, the salient point for now is that in any given context, discourses arise out of the network of power-relations – they are not 'owned' by individuals – and, as Foucault shows us in his genealogies, they make appeals to 'truth' in order to gain authority and legitimisation:

> "in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation and circulation of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth." (Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

For this reason, Foucault argues, the formation of discourses and the production of knowledge should not be analysed in relation to how consciously the process is perceived, from an ideological standpoint, but instead "in terms of tactics and strategies of power." (Foucault, 1980. P, 77). In other words, we need to interrogate what is gained, and by whom, and what is made possible as a result. In the context of my research, this means to critically examine how 'racialised' and gendered/sexual hierarchies can be shown to operate. The questions to be asked are: *What are the rules of performance governing social interactions and how are these rules negotiated? Who controls (but does not own) the localised power-*

inflected discourses, the effects of which determine what is and is not possible for the lives of

my research participants: the possibilities that form their potentialities?

Hacking (2004), unlike Leib (2017), does not write explicitly about forms of power, or the effects of power, which must necessarily be considered in relation to any attempt at Foucauldian discourse analysis. However, this is clearly intentional. Following Goffman (1959), social reality can be understood as 'staged': "a series of carefully constructed performances, executed by teams of skilled actors and tailored towards different audiences." (Scott, 2012, p. 260). These ongoing negotiations (actors, roles, audiences) call to mind Foucault's understanding of power as, "a certain type of relation between individuals." (Foucault, 1988, p. 83). However, this could also lead to a misinterpretation of Foucault inasmuch as Foucault is referring to the historicity of the relations and the claims to knowledge (the formation of discourses). Goffman's (1959) work demonstrates very little interest in the structural or causal origins of social action (Richards, 2001), instead analysing the tactical manoeuvres (the various strategies of self-presentation) that are deployed by social actors to achieve their ends *in that moment in time*. Nonetheless, whilst Foucault is clear that power must be studied in its micro-manifestations, this is not something he actually does himself, and so we can turn to Goffman (Leib, 2017).

Foucault's genealogies provide us with a lens through which to read discourse. Goffman's dramaturgical model of social life, in spite of what is missing (e.g., any real sense of the wider social, cultural, historical and political implications of his analyses), gives us the tools with which we can analyse the meanings and effects of discourse. In doing so, we are better able to understand the role that discourse plays in producing networks of

power/knowledge. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I will identify the forms of localised discourse, or knowledge claims, that circulate around heterosexual White teachers' identities in this context, and examine the various cultural scripts and the localised discourses of power which threaten the intelligibility of their performances and inevitably create problems for their identities.

ii.   Networks of power/knowledge

According to Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988), there is never any field of knowledge without a field of power that is simultaneously involved: power/knowledge is a term used by Foucault to show how power and knowledge are mutually implicative. Foucault explains how power is constituted through various forms of knowledge, and also that knowledge is bound up with power, so it can never be neutral. The way in which knowledge is produced has to do with the relations of power:

> "there is no power relation without any correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations." (Foucault, 1977, p. 27).

Power and knowledge are not separable, but rather as Butler explains, "[they] work together to establish a set of subtle and explicit criteria for thinking the world" (Butler, 2004, p. 27). They work together to create a *knowable reality*, and so the different ways in which we know ourselves, and are known by others, immediately places us in a complex field of power/knowledge relationships. This has implications for the forms of identity available to us in different contexts – *who and what we can be* (see, e.g., Sikes and Everington, 2004;

Paechter, 2007) – and it is extremely important for understanding the experiences of the participants in my study.

Furthermore, in relation to masculinities and femininities, Butler (2004) writes:

"Terms such as "masculine" and "feminine" are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending on geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom and for what purpose." (Butler, 2004, p. 10).

Our identities, including our gender identity, are not static. For example, in Chapter 6, I will consider the ways in which Occidentalist constructions of heterosexual masculinity could be advantageous for heterosexual White men who choose to live and work in the region, especially those who might not ordinarily be the recipients of (sexual) attention or flattery in their home countries (see, e.g., Appleby 2012; 2013; Stanley, 2012). I will lay the foundation for this aspect of my data analysis in the next section; however, when conceptualised along these lines, the most important point is that power is a strategy rather than a possession:

"power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society." (Foucault, 1978, p. 93).

The Foucauldian understanding of how power functions is as a series of relations or events, woven into the fabric of everyday life, and it functions at the level of the body:

"But in thinking about the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives." (Foucault, 1980, p. 39).

Consequently, to understand the ways in which meaning is negotiated through social interactions, and the ways in which knowledge of oneself, and others, is situated and framed, we must, first of all, examine the power dynamics – the distribution of power and the intersections of power-relations – which enable and constrain particular subjectivities:

"All social arenas are threaded through with multiple power relations, and educational institutions are no exception. These power relations are composed of and organized by the relationships between individuals and social groups on the basis of many interweaving factors: age, race, gender, social position, etc." (Paechter, 2000, p. 15).

Secondly, we must identify the sociocultural norms which shape the possibilities for knowledge in any given context (the given circumstances for the actor and their role), and critically examine the appeals to 'truth' made in the legitimisation of discourses. This is because, as Foucault explains, to speak the 'truth' about oneself means to be "constituted as a subject across a number of power relations" (Foucault, 1988, p. 39) – power that is exerted on the individual and which they exert on others.

According to Foucault, no relationships are free from power, and the relations of power can never be equal. Therefore, whilst everyone has access to mobilising power, this is not all to the same extent: "power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations." (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). For White teachers in East and

Southeast Asia, the functioning of power is contingent on various factors, for example, the (dis)privileging of 'racialised' bodies in this context, (see, e.g., Lan, 2011; Moosavi, 2022) and the idealisation of White heterosexual masculinity (see, e.g., Appleby 2012; 2013; Kelsky, 2001; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2012). As Paechter explains, power is, in this sense, fluid, and moves between relational structures:

"[Foucault's] understanding of power regards it as something that, rather than residing in individuals or institutions, permeates society in a complex, interweaving and capillary manner, through human interactions, institutional relations, and spatial configurations." (Paechter, 2007, p.17).

Power is not, therefore, imposed from above, but rather from below:

"One must … conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting that is from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been – and continue to be – invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended, etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination." (Foucault, 1980, p. 99).

In this formulation, as Paechter comments, "[power] becomes distributed, built into the minutiae of human relations, the assumptions of our discourses, the development of our bodies and the fabric of our buildings." (Paechter, 2000, p. 16). Similarly, Allen concludes: "If power works on and through people … rather than over them, then arguably it can only really be mapped as a spatio-temporal arrangement." (Allen, 2003, p. 69). For example, in her book examining children's understanding of gender and their performance of gender difference,

Paechter explores the construction of gendered identities in children's outdoor play spaces. She focuses on four key aspects: "if they play, what they play, where they play and how they play." (Paechter, 2007, p. 98). In my data analysis, I will focus on these aspects in the more adult context of teachers' lives. The school playground provides a useful comparison for understanding the ways in which, away from the classroom, the participants in my study construct their identities. This is particularly the case in relation to romance and dating, and the available forms of masculinity and femininity, which is, in part, the focus of my analysis in Chapters 6 and 7. This is because, as Paechter explains, "children's communities of masculinity and femininity practice operate within a spatial context" (Paechter, 2007, p. 108). Paechter's (2007) analysis shows that when particular forms of masculinity and femininity dominate the spaces available for social interaction, which appeared to be similar in my research setting, the range of possibilities for how a person can think about themselves (and how they are likely to be thought about by others) will always be limited.

In my data analysis, I will also problematise the relations of power and privilege in this context, or what Butler terms the "overlapping articulations of power" (Butler, 1994, p. 5). By situating the power dynamics and making them visible, it is my intention to show the geography of power – how power is affected by place and presence (Allen, 2003). Explaining how power is built into space, Paechter writes:

"What forms of identity can be taken up and maintained in any particular setting will depend, in part, on the spatial arrangements in that setting, and how they support or undermine particular power/knowledge formations." (Paechter, 2007, p. 108).

In relation to this, Goffman's detailed concerns regarding all aspects of social performance (one's voice and movement, one's co-performers or teammates, the stage setting, backstage, the props) is where Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) agree that his approach is most useful in relation to Foucault: Goffman's analysis of the infinitesimal aspects of social interaction – *the minutiae of human relations* (Paechter, 2000). However, Goffman and Paechter are writing about social settings on a small scale. The focus of my analysis is different and my research methods did not include observation. Nevertheless, my interest is in how the teachers in my study have accommodated to the teacher role (Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985) in the broadest sense, encompassing all aspects of their lives, and so this obviously involved discussions about the meanings that are made in their social interactions. Crucially, this had to do with the way the teachers themselves experienced and understood these interactions.

iii.   The disciplining of the body and the internalisation of the gaze

It is important to note that in their comparisons, both Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017) lean more on 'Asylums', a collection of essays published in 1961, rather than the individual concepts/conventions that are more specifically laid out by Goffman in 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'. However, as Hacking explains: "it is often the early steps that count for most" (Hacking, 2004, p. 290). In 'Asylums', Goffman analyses life inside encompassing and closed communities (e.g., nursing homes, mental hospitals, concentration camps and jails), which he defines as 'total institutions':

"[places] of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life." (Goffman, 1961, p. 11).

The ritual function of 'total institutions' depends on the 'characters' adjusting (or being adjusted) to their 'roles', and then tacitly agreeing "to continue the fiction." (Goffman, 1961, p. 96). This necessarily involves an element of fear and so, for this reason, some international school communities can be likened to 'total institutions'. This is important for my analysis. For example, if teachers live and/or socialise in close quarters with colleagues and/or the families they serve, it is conceivable that the teachers' apprehensiveness about being seen to 'break the rules' (i.e., behaving in a way thought to be incompatible with their role) will be intensified. To add an additional layer of concern, international school teachers' right to live in their host countries is often connected to their employment status (unless, for example, they are married to a host country national), and so, as I explained in the previous chapter, the stakes are higher for them than in some other contexts:

"international schools have emerged as a viable career choice for professional educators, providing an exciting and enjoyable lifestyle and teaching environment for many people … Yet, at the same time, teaching abroad is a precarious situation with considerable risks and pitfalls." (Bunnell, 2016, p. 544-545).

Nonetheless, it is important not to overplay this issue. It did not appear to be of concern to my participants, and not all international schools are the same. Instead, the salient point is that the 'encompassing tendencies' of the expatriate lifestyle are very possibly, at least for some teachers, an exaggerated reflection of the process of social control that is "in effect in all organized society." (Goffman, 1961, p. 43). For this reason, Leib (2017) notes that Foucault

commented favourably on Goffman's analyses in 'Asylums', which Leib mentions at the beginning of his paper. From there, Leib rephrases the sentiment of Hacking's (2004) paper, writing that "Goffman's ethnographic analyses provide an instance of what Foucault calls a "micro-physics of power," specifically in the context of a disciplinary mode of power" (Leib, 2017, p. 190). Leib even goes as far as to suggest that we should think of Goffman as a 'Foucauldian microphysicist' of discipline.

The Foucauldian ideas that Leib (2017) writes about – the disciplining of the body and the internalisation of the gaze – are certainly important to me, and combining the approaches of Goffman and Foucault in my analysis will enable me to explore the dynamic positioning of the various actors in the international school space and the power-relations that exist between them. Foucault, for example, describing the effect of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, explains the potential for 'inmates' to be induced into "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." (Foucault, 1977, p. 201). The design of the Panopticon enabled a large number of prisoners to be observed by a single (unseen) guard from a central observation post, encircled by cells, without the prisoners knowing for certain whether or not they were being watched, which led to the prisoners policing their own behaviour.

The heightened sense of 'racial' visibility experienced by White expatriates in many communities/locations in East and Southeast Asia (Chesnut, 2020; Lundström, 2014; Savva, 2017) functions, in the Foucauldian sense, as an exercise of control, and invites comparison with other scenarios. For example, the ways in which White expatriates experience visibility in my research setting, at least in *some* social situations, and especially for international

school teachers, is very similar to the experiences of trainee priests in a theological college studied by Welland (2001). Drawing on Foucault, Welland writes about the demands on the trainee priests imposed by the need for discipline, regulation, and obligation, and concludes:

> "The enclosed and bounded nature of the training environment rendered them very visible and vulnerable to the appraisal of others living in the community [including those who were responsible for assessing student suitability for ordination and ministry]." (Welland, 2001, p. 128).

Welland focuses on the surveillance of students in the chapel during worship and suggests that being watched leads to a fear of being criticised for an "incorrect use of the body" (Welland, 2001, p. 29). The training requirements for priests are not dissimilar for many professional expatriates, whose relocation will involve some sort of cross-cultural orientation, partly so they are aware of local norms. For the teachers in my study, this was organised by their schools. They were reminded of their dual roles as both 'guests' in their host countries, and as teachers, and the concomitant obligation to perform their roles with a degree of cultural sensitivity. For example, several of my participants spoke about the need to distance themselves from Western tourists whose behaviour sometimes led to a poor reputation. They understood that the way international school teachers go about their lives is likely to be similarly scrutinised by others locally (i.e., regarding their suitability for the job). Indeed, one of my participants went so far as to compare the obligations of being a teacher to the obligations of the priesthood. I will discuss his comments in Chapter 5.

I will return to some of these ideas shortly specifically in relation to standards of sexual morality. However, the salient point for now is that Foucault's work is vitally important for

explaining the development of various technologies of power, the functioning of which produces embodied subjects, connecting them to institutions:

> "the economic changes of the eighteenth century made it necessary to ensure the circulation of effects of power through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions. By such means power, even when faced with a ruling multiplicity of men, could be as efficacious as if it were being exercised over a single one." (Foucault, 1980, pp. 151-152).

Foucault's interest was in the complex field of power-relations that permeated the type of institutions that Goffman (1961) wrote about in 'Asylums', and "the kind of knowledge that institutions like prisons and mental hospitals employ in various way to bring about the subjection of the body of the inmate." (Leib, 2017, p. 190). This is what Foucault calls the "political technology of the body" (Foucault, 1977, p. 26):

> "What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a micro-physics of power, whose field of validity is situated in a sense between these great functionings and the bodies themselves [of the inmates, the patients, the guards, the doctors, and so on] with their materiality and their forces." (Foucault, 1977, p. 26).

I will develop these ideas in the penultimate section of this chapter when I write more about theories of performance.

**iv.   The maintenance of moral standards in the performance of teachers'
professional identities**

To conclude this section of my theoretical framework, I will make one final connection between Goffman and Foucault. These ideas are not mentioned by Hacking (2004) or Leib (2017), but they are particularly important in relation to my research: standards of (sexual) morality and the performative nature of teachers' professional identities. Goffman writes:

"The cultural and dramaturgical perspectives intersect most clearly in regard to the maintenance of moral standards." (Goffman, 1959, p. 234).

Here, Goffman's concerns are to do with social mobility and the pressure of performing multiple roles: "presenting one version of events to the audience while simultaneously contradicting it with information conveyed to one another" (Scott, 2012, p. 261). Goffman is concerned about the potential risks involved in maintaining a successful 'front' in more than one team, and negotiating unanticipated situations. However, whilst Goffman (1959) is alert to the dramaturgical danger involved when social actors move within and between social strata, it is clearly not his intention to critically examine the distribution of power and the intersections of power-relations. For this, we need Foucault.

Foucault's historical excavations (1978; 1985; 1986) are vital for this study to understand how sex and sexuality have been constituted as moral domains and how sexual desire has been pathologised:

"Since the eighteenth century, sex has not ceased to produce a kind of generalized discursive erethism. And these discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very spaces and as the means of its exercise. Incitements to speak were orchestrated from all quarters, apparatuses everywhere for listening and recording, procedures for observing, questioning and formulating. Sex was driven out of hiding and constrained to lead a discursive existence." (Foucault, 1978, pp. 32-33).

According to Foucault, standards of sexual morality are always "tailored to one's way of life." (Foucault, 1985, p. 60). For example, in my analysis, it will be important for me to consider the ways in which the moral foundations of teacher professionalism limit the autonomy of teachers, restricting their identities and weighing heavily on their social relationships.

The discourse of teacher professionalism entails the performance of 'professional' identities which, historically at least, and especially for gay and lesbian teachers, has been fraught with problems. Schools are heavily circumscribed and policed spaces; spaces that are traditionally "structured in inequality" (Epstein and Johnson, 1998, p. 133). However, this is particularly salient in some international school communities for two reasons. Firstly, due to the possibility of local feelings of mistrust and hostility towards Western migrants (e.g., due to conflicting values and different sociocultural norms) which make White teachers in this context both visible and vulnerable to discrimination (see, e.g., Savva, 2017). Secondly, because in some, but certainly not all, international school communities in East and Southeast Asia, the different performance 'regions' – front, backstage, and outside – are less bounded (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, the occasions for potential disappointment and disillusionment over one another's performances, or 'communication out of character' (Goffman, 1959), are more frequent, and I will develop these ideas throughout my analysis.

By delineating different performance regions, Goffman gives us a lexicon for thinking about spatial configurations (Leib, 2017). For example, when international school teachers live in close proximity to school families and other teachers (who are likely to send their own children to the school), the social actors are hardly ever 'off', and so there are more occasions for misadventure and performances failing (Goffman, 1959). The potential role conflict for international schools teachers who, by virtue of their profession, are likely to be held accountable for their private lives in ways that other expatriates are not, is under explored in the existing literature. However, the reasoning for a higher level of accountability is straightforward. Firstly, when teachers are seen to behave in ways that are thought to be incompatible with their professional identity, it undermines their authority in the classroom. Secondly, when this is to do with sexual/ised behaviour that is considered deviant, the moral panic centred on the paedophile means there is increased sensitivity surrounding adults who have chosen to work with children and young people (Sikes, 2008a; 2010).

Sexual promiscuity, paying for sex, age gap relationships, and 'interracial' relationships, all of which seem to be features of the expatriate lifestyle for at least some heterosexual White men in East and Southeast Asia (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Scuzzarello, 2020; Stanley, 2012), are less likely to cause problems for certain groups. That is to say, although problematical, questions about morality, legality and/or the abuse of one's perceived status are likely to prove less consequential, personally and/or professionally, for non-teaching expatriates. However, when this concerns teachers, especially in the types of school communities that my participants belonged to, and if played out in front of an audience, it is impossible not to imagine a certain degree of moral panic, whether or not the concerns are warranted (i.e., whether or not the person's presence in the

school community represents a risk to children and young people). Following Foucault, this is because the issues for teachers to do with sex and sexuality are partly to do with 'integrity' and the notion of 'being in control'. Foucault explains how, in Christian thought, for example, "non pollution is the sign of holiness" (Foucault, 1988, p. 238). In Greek antiquity, an exemplary individual was the master of himself and others: "self-control is integrated in the practice of controlling others." (Foucault, 1988, p. 258). In this way, as Hacking explains, Foucault shows how "historical settings work on people to form their potentialities" (Hacking, 2004, p. 288). However, what Foucault does not do is to analyse how this happens in daily life, and this is where we can turn to Goffman.

For Goffman (1959; 1961), the potential for one to be 'punished' for deviating from sociocultural norms is a genuine concern. Whilst he does not really problematise the notion of agency, or challenge social orthodoxy, he is clear about the impact of societal expectations (sociocultural norms) on the way a person chooses to live their life:

> "The individual may privately maintain standards of behaviour which he [sic] does not personally believe in, maintaining these standards because of a lively belief that an unseen audience is present who will punish deviations from these standards. In other words, an individual may be his own audience or may imagine an audience to be present." (Goffman, 1959, p. 87).

This is very clearly the Panopticon effect described by Foucault (1977) and so, in this sense, Goffman prefigures Foucault. Goffman is also clear about the inherent dangers when the success of an individual performance depends on the cooperation of others. For example:

"Some scenes occur when team-mates can no longer countenance each other's inept performance and blurt out immediate public criticism of the very individuals with whom they ought to be in dramaturgical cooperation." (Goffman, 1959, p. 205).

The implication of this for my analysis is the need for the teachers to present a united image. However, in some situations at least, the imperative for social actors to maintain a consistent, "perfectly homogenous performance" (Goffman, 1959, p. 64), has the potential to be repressive. This has to do with maintaining a successfully convincing performance in circumstances that are beyond our control; circumstances that are socially constructed and 'not of our making' (Butler, 2004). It is what Goffman refers to as 'the bureaucratisation of the spirit'. When 'dramaturgical cooperation' is required by team-mates, the actors must "be unanimous in the positions they take" (Goffman, 1959, p. 93). This is so as to maintain a 'good showing' for all involved.

However, as Goffman also writes, "any member of the team has the power to give the show away or to disrupt it by inappropriate conduct." (Goffman, 1959, p. 88). In this sense, there is the potential for international schools' reputations only to be as good as their most problematic teacher.

Problematising the social construction of Whiteness and White heterosexual masculinity and femininity in this context

Before building on Goffman's (1959) ideas to explain the ways in which I will utilise theories of performance to understand the experiences of my participants, I will explain, in this section, how the ideas I have already set out undergird my philosophical approach to writing about Whiteness in the context of my research. In particular, I will explain how White women in this context, arguably more so than White men, are likely to experience challenges to their gender and sexual identities (see, e.g., Chesnut, 2020). However, I am also mindful of the potential criticisms of using Western discourses and a Western theoretical framework to analyse the experiences of my participants, especially in relation to the philosophy of Foucault (e.g., the danger that I might over-evaluate, and overcapitalise on, the problems to do with the fetishisation of bodies). I will address these concerns in my methodology (Chapter 4) when I write about reflexively adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality.

i.   **A Foucauldian critique of Whiteness Studies**

As a gay, White researcher taking both Whiteness and heterosexuality as objects of study, one might assume that my aim is to disrupt the idea that they are 'normative' (invisible but not unmarked) categories relative to which all other identities must be framed and understood. This is a central tenet of Whiteness Studies (e.g., Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Hill, 1997; McIntosh, 1989; Roediger, 1991). For example, Frankenberg argues that:

"Naming whiteness and white people helps dislodge the claims of both to rightful dominance." (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 234).

However, in my research setting, there are some problems with this. In this context, White is an already visible identity. Admittedly, for *some* White people at least, this might be disconcerting because, as Lundström explains, the social actors in this context are "deprived of a normative and structurally invisible position." (Lundström, 2014, p.6). Whiteness is not the 'racial' norm. Moreover, however, there is a tendency in discussions about White privilege to assume that power has a centre; that it is a top-down repressive force (McWhorter, 2005). My standpoint is different; my theoretical debt is to Foucault, who conversely argues that:

"We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals." In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belongs of this production." (Foucault, 1977, p. 183).

Foucault made very few comments about 'race' which only relatively recently have begun to be explored (Binkley, 2016). Nonetheless, his interest in the history of medical, scientific and institutional discourses, and his work on subjectivization and ways of knowing others and knowing the world based on a schema of perceived difference (and moral worth), can be used to understand the principles of 'racial' separation and division in a similar way to categories of gender and sexual identities (McWhorter, 2005). Indeed, as McWhorter argues, Whiteness Studies, which aims to make it difficult for White people to continue to function unthinkingly in a social system that privileges Whiteness, would be more successful "if it took Foucault's analytics of power and account of normalization seriously." (McWhorter, 2005, p. 544).

McWhorter uses the example of Peggy McIntosh's (1989) oft-cited article, 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack'. McIntosh made popular the notion of White privilege, arguing that it is like a set of tools which White people can use to their advantage. Making these tools visible results in White people being more accountable for their privilege in ways that, historically, they have not been accountable (i.e., they have not been taught to recognise their own privilege):

> "In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant, and destructive." (McIntosh, 1989, p. 3).

However, as McWhorter explains, conceptualising identity as a resource (re)produces inequality:

> "By holding on to a conception of power that insists upon the primacy of a sovereign subject and uncritically deploys economic metaphors of possession and distribution, Whiteness Studies impedes its own efforts to account for the political production of racial subjects and works against its own explicitly stated agenda, i.e., dethroning white subjectivity." (McWhorter, 2005, p. 544).

The traditional, juridical model of power, which assumes pre-existent subjectivity, is unhelpful and it certainly will not work for my analysis. In addition, unlike the early scholars of Whiteness Studies, which began in the United States, my interest is in how Whiteness functions in the non-White geography of East and Southeast Asia (where Whiteness is not the

'racial' norm). More specifically, I am interested in how these ideas apply to the lives of international school teachers in the region – how localised discourses of power can be shown to condition individual performances in this setting. In relation to this, Moosavi (2022) is useful for challenging the assumption that Whiteness is 'always-and-only' privileging. He writes about his own experiences as a mixed-race academic working in East Asian universities. He notes that postcolonial perceptions of Whiteness are not static, and that 'racial' hierarchies operate in intricate, complex ways. Moosavi's (2022) scholarship has also been useful to me for highlighting some of the more recent literature examining Whiteness beyond Western contexts, which I have utilised in my analysis. This includes the experiences of White migrants in Hong Kong (Leonard, 2010); Taiwan (Lan, 2011); Singapore (Lundström, 2014); and Thailand (Maher and Lafferty, 2014).

Moosavi (2022) makes no mention of Foucault. Nonetheless, my argument is that the intricacies of Whiteness and White privilege that Moosavi writes about can be best understood by employing Foucault's understanding of power. I also believe in order to examine the relations of power as an effect of the perceived differences between people, Goffman's work is useful.

Analyses of Goffman's understanding of 'racial' difference focus on his later work. Rosino, for example, drawing on Goffman's (1983) posthumously published essay 'The Interaction Order', writes:

"Performances of self within social interactions predicated on cultural schemas of difference, moral worth, and group position have played a fundamental and

foundational role in the establishment and temporal and spatial spread of racialized institutional and social structures." (Rosino, 2017, p. 159).

However, in 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', Goffman conceptualises 'race' as a 'sign vehicle', and although this idea is not developed, it draws attention to the ways in which the meanings attributed to bodily performances are socially constructed. Put another way, according to Foucault, the body is directly involved in a political field, and "power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it; mark it; train it [etc.]" (Foucault, 1977, p. 25). The way in which we give meaning to the symbolic expressions of the body – accepting and ascribing value to an actor's performance, or rejecting and/or discrediting it – is always dependent on a complex field of power/knowledge relationships. Therefore, in my analysis, I will consider how White subjectivities are constituted in this context, and examine the social effects. I will consider how 'racialised' gender and (hetero)sexual subjectivities are formed within the localised networks of power/knowledge – the unwritten rules which govern the everyday lives of the teachers in my study and others like them, and on which performances of self are predicated.

ii.   'Racialised' understandings of masculinity and femininity

Lan's (2011) paper, researching the position of Western migrants living and working in Taiwan, draws attention to the conflation of Whiteness and masculinity under the Occidentalist gaze. White men in Asia, as Lan and others have noted, frequently experience increased popularity when seeking romantic or sexual encounters with Asian women, relative to being in their home countries. In part, this has to do with the ways in which White men are

stereotyped as being somehow more sophisticated than Asian men, wealthier, more worldly-wise and better lovers (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Kelsky, 2001; Lan, 2011; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2012). Connell, calling for a more global understanding of the world gender order, suggests that this has to do with the way in which gender relations are unevenly linked on a global scale:

> "The culture and institutions of the North Atlantic countries are hegemonic within the emergent world system. This is crucial for understanding the kinds of masculinities produced within it." (Connell, 1998, p. 9).

Connell goes on to give the example of masculine dress, noting that "almost every political leader in the world now wears the uniform of the Western business executive." (Connell, 1998, p. 11). Connell argues that in the same way that the imperial social order has created a hierarchy of 'races', there is a global hierarchy of masculinities. In relation to this, the legacy of Western imperialism, particularly the idealisation of sexual discovery in Asian countries by Western men (Woan, 2008), and the way Asians have been gendered as feminine in Western discourses, which means that they are sexually available (Said, 1978; Zheng, 2016), is undoubtedly of concern for my analysis.

However, as I explained in the introduction to this thesis, it is not my intention to complete a genealogy of sexual desire in this context. Instead, it is important to state plainly, as I did in the introduction, that there is an uneven distribution of power which favours White, Western men. This is regardless of sexuality, although as Woan explains:

> "the Western world's desire for imperialistic domination over Asia relates to its desire for sexual domination over Asian women." (Woan, 2008, p. 301).

In this sense, an Asian body that is fetishised by a White man carries dual significance as being both privileged, if the dynamics of power are wanted, and exploited, bearing the legacy of Western imperialism. Or, put another way, to be both the object of desire, and the welcome recipient of desire, creates a situation in which power is fluid. This is because, as Eng-Beng Lim explains, writing about emasculating stereotypes of Asian men:

> "The deviance of Asian gender and sexuality has to do … with its 'estrangement' from white norms or as a form of reaction formation against racialized oppression." (Eng-Beng Lim, 2014, p. 31).

Eng-Beng Lim's (2014) interest is in the homoerotics of Orientalism. Nonetheless, regardless of sexual orientation, when representations of Asian gender/sexuality are juxtaposed with White norms, this creates a space for identity formation which is fraught with problems. For White men in the region, the ways in which they are likely to experience the effects of the social construction of White masculinity are complicated. To understand why this is, Stanley's (2012) paper examining the lives of heterosexual men from the UK, the US and Canada, working in Shanghai as English language teachers at a university, is particularly useful. Stanley adopts the phrase 'the superhero phenomenon' to describe the elevated sexual appeal of White, Western men in China (i.e., relative to the attention they might receive from women in their home countries). Furthermore, rather than attempt to explain the causes of the phenomenon, which may be impossible to pinpoint with any degree of certainty, Stanley's focus, like mine, is on the experiences of the men themselves.

The idea that Western men are 'racier' than traditional Chinese men (i.e., more sexually open) was mentioned by several participants in Stanley's study, and she comments that this was "often framed as an attack on Chinese masculinity and/or Chinese women's ostensible sexual passivity." (Stanley, 2012, p. 221). Stanley continues to say that whilst Occidentalist constructions of masculinity *appear* to work in Western men's favour, there are some negative consequences. First of all, the assumptions that are likely to be made about them (e.g., as being sexually promiscuous, and fetishising Asian women), and secondly:

"this may also result in them making evaluations of Chinese men and women's sexualities as deficient … This appears to be both informed by, and in turn reify, participants' Orientalist framing of the feminization of the East and its penetration by the West." (Stanley, 2012, p. 221).

This is important for my analysis because even though the idealisation of White masculinity is likely to benefit White men in other areas of life, including employment opportunities (e.g., being favoured for leadership positions), 'the superhero phenomenon' appeared to have more negative than positive outcomes for the men in Stanley's study. This is because of the identities attributed to them by inference – how they were 'racialised' as White.

None of the men in my study spoke about themselves as being sexually promiscuous, or fetishising Asian women, or as feeling superior to Asian men. However, in Chapter 6, I will consider whether or not similar discourses create problems for their identities. For example, whilst the situation for White men in international schools in the region may well be advantageous, their ability to control how they might be interpreted by others is somewhat limited, no matter what their sexual proclivities. Stanley concludes:

"The Western men in this study are expected, and pressured, to behave according to a model of masculinity based … on Occidentalist Chinese constructions of *what Western men are like*. Thus even though most of them disapprove of the behaviours sanctioned by this model, they perform, to a greater or lesser extent, the roles expected of them. The 'gaze' both of Chinese women and of their Western peers forces them to stage an 'authenticity' that is attributed rather than appropriated, and to commoditize themselves in the process. But they struggle with the morality and congruity of their actions, responding in different ways to the enforced dualism of their identities. They are supposed to be Superman, but secretly they may feel they are Clark Kent." (Stanley, 2012, p. 227).

The men in my study did not indicate feeling similarly pressurised to conform to similar stereotypes, which is unsurprising given their role. Nonetheless, the salient point for my analysis is that the way White, Western men in this context think about and also enact their 'racial' difference is socially conditioned, and has to do with localised discourses of White masculinity. This is because, as Alcoff (2006) explains, the way we see 'race' is not a 'natural' process, but a socio-historic and socio-psychic process.

The same 'racial' position that valorises heterosexual White men in this context (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Chesnut, 2020; Kelsky, 2001; Lan, 2011; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2012) disadvantages heterosexual White women. Lan, for example, is particularly interesting *and unusual* for her somewhat frank discussion of White femininity in East Asia:

"the association with feminism and sexual liberation in the West makes white women unsuitable wives and daughters-in-law compared to local norms of domesticised femininity." (Lan, 2011, p. 1687).

The expectations of how women should perform their social role (e.g., they must be willing to maintain the status quo) can also be shown to do with physical characteristics. Chesnut (2020), for example, examines the experiences of women who travelled to South Korea as English language teachers, and the unexpected and unfamiliar meanings that were attributed to their bodies and dress. In particular, Chesnut highlights aspects of the women's sized bodies relative to Korean women:

> "These experiences include the difficulties some foreign women faced shopping for clothes in Korea given the smaller sized clothes often available in stores; feelings of isolation that arose from being a foreign woman working primarily with foreign men within some contexts; experiences in which race and ethnicity were ascribed to teachers in unexpected ways which also created uncertainty regarding gendered identities; and experiences regarding romantic desire and romantic relationships which positioned these teachers in unexpected and sometimes uncomfortable ways." (Chesnut, 2020, p. 195).

White women are generally thought to be physically different from Asian women, who are stereotypically smaller and have softer facial features, and so the intersection of 'race' and gender in this context creates stereotypical expectations of femininity that many White women are physically unable and/or unwilling to perform. For example, in Chapter 7, I will consider the ways in which some White women in this context might feel excluded from heterosexuality (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994) because their physical presence violates localised gender-stereotypical expectations of femininity (Chesnut, 2020; Lan, 2011). However, the relations of power and privilege are complex, and this certainly does not mean that heterosexual White women do not experience any benefits associated with Whiteness, rather they enact and deal with their privilege in different ways (Scuzzarello, 2020). I will

explore this idea in greater depth in Chapter 7, and consider the potential for White women to find the situation both restrictive *and* liberating (i.e., if their bodies are not regarded in the same way as White men/Asian women).

To conclude this section, the most important point for me to make now is simply that the situation creates different challenges for men and for women (Lan, 2011; Scuzzarello, 2020). At the same time, I must make clear that my focus on heterosexuality was somewhat accidental. I will discuss the reasons for this in Chapter 4. However, whilst writing about the social construction of heterosexuality is not new (e.g., Appleby, 2013; Jackson, 1999; Kitzinger, Wilkinson and Perkins, 1992; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994), there is still a great deal of purchase in Jackson's (1999) claim that "heterosexuals do not generally expect to be asked to explain themselves" (Jackson, 1999, p. 2-3). Heterosexual identities are rarely interrogated in the same way as other sexual identities (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994).

Social performance and the construction of embodied identities

In 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', Goffman explains how, in some situations, social actors, depending on their level of competence, can choose to underplay or minimise factors about themselves that are incompatible with the role they are playing in order to maintain a successful social front, both individually and in teams. In other words, he asserts that we present images of how we want to be seen in relation to others (the performative nature of identity), "making ourselves visible to others ideally under controlled circumstances" (Leib, 2017, p. 198). However, this is arguably less straightforward when it has to do with

physical characteristics such as skin colour or facial features. Nonetheless, as Kunz explains, writing about privileged mobilities (migrants who are privileged by citizenship, class, or 'race'): "the functioning of Whiteness differs by context." (Kunz, 2016, p. 95). For example, White people in expatriate communities in East and Southeast Asia can choose to put themselves in social situations where they are more or less 'racially' visible (e.g., distinctions of 'race' may or may not fade within the social milieu of the international school setting), thereby increasing or decreasing the social value that can be extracted from their 'racial' identity.

However, in relation to the body as a site of identity performance, this creates various problems. The problems are to do with the ways in which culturally sanctioned visual norms of appearance regulate embodied activities – the discourses which control the meanings and pleasures of the body – and the fact that categories of 'racial', gender and sexual identity are unstable. Fiske (1989), for example, writes:

"though the body may appear to be where we are most individual, it is also the material form of the body politic, the class body, the racial body, and the body of gender. The struggle of control over the meanings and pleasures (and therefore the behaviours of the body) is crucial because the body is where the social is most convincingly represented as the individual and where politics can best disguise itself as human nature." (Fiske 1989, p. 70).

In this section of my theoretical framework, I will problematise the body as a site of identity performance, particularly by drawing on Chris Shilling's (1993; 2008) work. However, first of all, it is necessary to discuss the definition and role of the audience in Goffman's work. I will build on Goffman's ideas in 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' to explain the ways in

which theatre and performance metaphors can be used to describe the experiences of my participants, although it is important to be clear that the terminology deployed by Goffman is limited to the conventions, practices and traditions of Western drama and theatre (Richards, 2001).

i.   Audiences

A 'performance', by definition, requires an 'audience', even when the audience is the self. As Butler writes: "One is always "doing" with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary." (Butler, 2004, p. 1). The actor and the audience (whether present or not) are jointly involved in the process of meaning-making and so the performance becomes a 'site of negotiation', "[owing] more to context and to the dynamics of reception than to the specific activities of the performer." (Carlson, 1996, p. 18). In relation to this, and as I have discussed, one of Goffman's concerns throughout 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' is with the maintenance of moral standards and the imperative for societal expectations (sociocultural norms) to be incorporated into an actor's performance, even if this causes feelings of personal discomfort. It is also possible, when performances are conceptualised in these terms, for an individual to be "engaged in performance without being aware of it" (Carlson, 1996, p. 38). I will develop these ideas shortly; however, as Miller explains:

> "Even if the actor's performance is rehearsed imaginatively in advance and the actor enters the scene of his [sic] self-presentation conscious of the impression he wants to make, this consciousness may conceivably drop out of the picture during the performance. But it is no less of a performance on that account as literal stage acting demonstrates. What *is* a necessary condition of social acting, however, is the actor's

intention to appear in a particular, socially recognizable way." (Miller, 1984, pp. 142-143).

This is a significant theme in 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' and, as Carlson explains, Goffman's overall emphasis is more "toward[s] the audience – how social performance is recognized by society and how it functions within society." (Carlson, 1996, p. 38). For example, in their essay about sexual orientation and teacher identity in public schools in the United States, Greteman and Socol write about schools as 'theatres of education'. In their context, they identify three audiences: students, who are 'flanked' by parents, and the local community. They explain how each audience is ""responsible" in different and complex ways, for how the show goes, what is gained, what is lost, who lives, who laughs, and inevitably what can be "done" in the world." (Greteman and Socol, 2020, p. 11). This is undoubtedly very much the same in the context of my research; indeed, the different and diverse power-relations mean that the problems for teachers in this context are amplified.

Actors in social settings, depending on their level of competency, will attempt, consciously or unwittingly, to control the audience's response to some extent (Goffman, 1959). However, as Goffman explains, this is sometimes an elaborate and risky endeavour:

"The whole machinery of self-production is cumbersome … and sometimes breaks down, exposing its separate components: back region control; team collusion; audience tact and so forth." (Goffman, 1959, p. 249).

Audiences have a choice to accept or to reject the authenticity of an actor's performance (e.g., if appearance and manner contradict each other); to give their approval or their disapproval;

to exercise tact in order to protect the actor in the event of an apparent *faux pas*; to respond in a way that is either expected by the actor or unexpected (Goffman, 1959). In addition, the acceptance of an actor's performance is always contingent on the audience members' knowledge and understanding of the conventions being deployed by the actors, as well as their memories of other similar scenarios. This is because we naturally evaluate the situations and people we come into contact with based on our existing knowledge – the 'frames' (Goffman, 1974) that we use to define situations for ourselves and others:

"When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or bring into play information about him already possessed." (Goffman, 1959, p. 13).

However, this is, of course, problematic if the information that an audience already possesses conveys stereotypical meanings to do with 'race' and/or gender and/or sexuality, even if some members of the audience would not personally endorse them. The more something is 'known' – or at least popularly believed – about a situation, the more difficult it is for the cast of characters to be viewed any differently:

"We live and work in particular social and historical contexts involving particular possibilities and constraints, and we occupy a range of social positions, each carrying particular identities, roles, rules and experiences. Thus we are subject to certain expectations and are perceived and treated in particular ways by other people." (Sikes and Everington, 2004, p. 24).

Following Goffman, audience expectations mean that, in many instances, we are required to adapt our behaviour, or calibrate our performance, even if doing so involves personal

discomfort. We must learn to present ourselves differently for different audiences in order to establish our legitimacy ('impression management': Goffman, 1959). This was certainly the case for some of the Western men in Stanley's (2012) study, who wanted to be accepted among their peers. Alan, for example, a twenty-three year old British teacher at the university in Shanghai, spoke in a focus group interview with other men about his experiences of casually dating Chinese women, and Stanley comments:

> "Alan's discourse is complex. On the one hand, he resists the insincerity of the 'groundwork' required to have casual sex with Chinese women and says he feels uncomfortable about deceiving those who are 'too innocent'. On the other hand, Alan's discourse is framed in terms of 'nailing birds' and describing women who have casual sex as 'sluts', and he presents his unwillingness to occupy the Western-man-in-Shanghai role as 'too much effort' rather than as morally wrong." (Stanley, 2012, p. 223).

In the context of premium international schools in East and Southeast Asia, the teachers working there also need to carefully manage the impressions they create of and for themselves and others. This is obviously not the same as Alan's story (i.e., the teachers in my study did not feel compelled to have casual sex with local women in order to 'fit in'), however, it is problematic for a number of similar reasons.

In Goffman's dramaturgical model of social life, performers and audience become one and the same, and so the choices we make about our performances will always be influenced by the values and perceptions of our co-performers (teammates). As Goffman explains, the definition of the situation projected by one actor in the scene is usually "an integral part of a projection that is fostered and sustained by the intimate cooperation of more than one

participant." (Goffman, 1959, p. 83). This means that we are always involved in monitoring both our own and others' performances with regard to the implications. Writing about gender identity, West and Zimmerman explain thus:

> "Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society." (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126).

In this way, our identities can be understood as what we 'do' in interaction with others (e.g., *doing international school teacher, or doing masculinity/femininity/heterosexuality*). The same reasoning can be applied to the way in which identities are 'racialised' (e.g., the social construction of Whiteness) and so, as Paechter (2007) argues, to understand the 'legitimate' ways of being in different contexts, we need to look to Foucault to uncover how power/knowledge relations operate in those contexts.

Goffman's perspective on this is also enlightening and, to some extent, more practical and immediately useful than Foucault's. According to Goffman (1959), social actors must work together in 'teams' to ensure the show runs smoothly, supporting each other to look good, making sure their masks don't slip. The actors must work together to project a definition of the situation they are in. However, Goffman does not discuss the extent to which the definition might have been agreed upon by all of the actors and the problems this creates for identity (e.g., as in Alan's story in Stanley's (2012) paper). To better understand these issues, we can use Butler (1990; 1993; 2004), which I will do in the next section.

Towards the end of 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', Goffman writes about the arts of impression management, "[bringing] together what has been said or implied about the attributes that are required of a performer for the work of successfully staging a character." (Goffman, 1959, p. 203). Here, Goffman's writing is very didactic. For example, he writes about the importance of dramaturgical loyalty to the team; not exploiting one's presence, or 'stealing the show', as it were; being disciplined about one's performance – "the management of one's face and voice" (Goffman, 1959, p. 211); and, lastly, the importance of dramaturgical circumspection – being prudent about when to relax one's performance. He also suggests that social actors should be prepared to take hints from their audience(s) if it is indicated they find the performance in some way unacceptable. However, to talk about what is and is not acceptable in relation to an actor's bodily performance – what is classified as credible, non-credible, competent or incompetent, especially when it has to do with 'race', gender and sexuality – is problematic.

ii.   Problematising the body as a site of identity performance

After Goffman, a considerable amount of work has been done to problematise the body as a site of identity performance, and any discussions on this topic must, of course, mention Butler. However, whilst Butler's work is relevant to my study, there is a need to proceed cautiously when making connections. The approaches of Goffman and Butler are most definitely not the same, and Butler's theoretical debt is to Foucault. In 'Gender Trouble', Butler's (1990) interest is in gender performance and the way that normative expectations of gender are internalised, drawing attention to our inclusion in the illusion of the gender core (i.e., we are not aware we are performing):

"The foundationalist reasoning of identity politics tends to assume that an identity must first be in place in order for political interests to be elaborated and, subsequently, political action to be taken. My argument is that there need not be a "doer behind the deed," but that the "doer" is variably constructed in and through the deed." (Butler, 1990, p. 181).

According to Butler, gender performance is not a natural extension of our bodies, but it is a product of our experience and an operation in meaning-making. Butler explains how gender identities are actualised through the repetition of certain bodily performances ('stylised acts'). The origins of these actions/conventions can never be located in one singular person/event, which strengthens them further, and so the meanings attributed to embodied social performances are not given, but (re)produced (i.e., gender identities, and also 'racial' identities, are discursively constituted within specific institutional/cultural contexts):

"What I call my "own" gender appears perhaps at times as something that I author or, indeed, own. But the terms that make up one's own gender are, from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author (and that radically contests the notion of authorship itself)." (Butler, 2004, p. 1).

In Butler's work, as in Foucault's, we are able to see the ways in which various discourses have systematically taken control over the meanings of the body. Goffman, by comparison, "is led to underestimate the importance of his view of the body for the more macro-structural problems of sociology." (Shilling, 1993, p. 77). However, this strengthens the argument for combining their philosophical and sociological approaches. Taking a lead from Foucault and Butler, the important questions to be asked must necessarily focus on the regulatory powers that restrict the actor's field of improvisation. This is imperative because, as Butler writes:

"If I am always constituted by norms that are not of my making, then I have to understand the ways that constitution takes place." (Butler, 2004, p. 15).

For teachers in the context of my research, developing an understanding of the ways in which normative ideas about gender, sexuality, and Whiteness affect their sense of self – being reflexive about their identities – will certainly be important.

However, whilst Butler's ideas have implications for my study, there is also a need to exercise caution. Shilling, for example, argues:

"concern should … be extended towards those structuralist/post-structuralist analysts who conceptualise social actors as passive bodily canvases on which ideologies, sexual matrixes, micro-powers or governmental strategies are inscribed. Approaches such as these engage in forms of conflationism which rob humans of any genuinely creative, socially agentic capacities." (Shilling, 2008, p. 125).

Shilling makes important points, although I believe his words should be read as a caution to researchers like me in the application of Butlerian philosophy, rather than they are to be read as a criticism of Butler. Neither Butler nor Foucault use their theoretical standpoints to analyse the details of everyday life. Therefore, taking inspiration from Shilling (1993; 2008), as well as Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017), my theoretical approach will combine the ideas of Goffman with Foucault as well as Butler in order to better understand the body as a site of identity performance, tracing a connection between their ideas and drawing the boundaries.

Shilling emphasises correlations in the works of Goffman and Foucault insofar as, for both of them, "the significance of the body is determined by sources" (Shilling, 1993, p. 77).

For Goffman, this has to do with the metaphors of theatre and performance, and a vocabulary of outward, physical (and vocal) expression (or 'body idiom': Goffman, 1963). For Foucault and Butler, this has to do with discourses. Shilling also argues that Goffman's analytical approach is important for understanding how social actors 'control and monitor' their bodily performances, writing:

"Goffman takes much more seriously than Foucault the idea that the body is a physical component of human agents." (Shilling, 1993, p. 77).

Indeed, it could be argued that, as a precursor to Foucault and Butler, Goffman's (1959) semiotics of everyday performance enables us to think more coherently about the idea of the body as a text.

Nevertheless, whilst Goffman is clear about the impact of societal expectations on the way a person chooses to live their life (expectations which depend on their social role) and, simultaneously, their bodily performances, he makes little attempt to challenge this in the ways that Foucault and Butler have done. As Shilling explains: "[In Goffman's work] there is a view of the body as a material property of individuals … the body is associated with the exercise of human agency." (Shilling, 1993, p. 72). Except for some out-of-kilter remarks made in the conclusions to 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', it is very obviously not Goffman's intention that his work should be used to destabilise identity categories or to challenge social orthodoxy. In some sense, he gets close to these ideas when he refers to individuals 'creating a scene', and later, 'moments of crisis' (when even the audience might

choose to 'collude' with the performer to 'help him/her out'). However, overall, Goffman (1959) seems to disapprove of potential disruptors:

> "there are situations, often called 'scenes', in which an individual acts in such a way as to destroy or seriously threaten the polite appearance of consensus, and while he may not act simply in order to create such dissonance, he acts with the knowledge that this kind of dissonance is likely to result. The common-sense phrase, 'creating a scene', is apt, because, in effect, a new scene is created by such disruptions." (Goffman, 1959, p. 205).

The tone of Goffman's writing here means that his remarks in the conclusions, cited below, stand out. However, as others have suggested, the sharp turn in his thinking at the end of the book means that Goffman could perhaps be read as a 'prefiguration' of Butler (Richards, 2001), or as an 'opening into engagement' with the work of Butler (Hancock and Garner, 2011), even though Butler (1990; 1993; 2004) makes no mention of Goffman's work:

> "[the] self does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his [sic] action. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation – this self – is a *product* of a scene that comes off, and is not a *cause* of it." (Goffman, 1959, pp. 244-245).

Reading this, we can begin to understand the ways in which social performances have the potential to be both reificative (when audience expectations in response to the setting, one's role and one's physical appearance are internalised) *and* participative, even if the role options are limited. It could also be argued that Goffman, Foucault and Butler share similar concerns in relation to the idea of there being a 'normative order of things' (Hancock and Garner, 2011),

as well as, I would argue, the existence of regulatory practices in societies. Goffman (1959; 1961) lays them out, showing how they work on individuals (Hacking, 2004), and whilst he does not explicitly contest them, there are times when he gets close. For example, when he writes about actors cooperating in teams to control the definition of the situation they are in, he suggests that teammates are one another's accomplices, secretly deceiving the audience(s):

"Since we all participate in teams we must all carry within ourselves something of the sweet guilt of conspirators. And since each team is engaged in maintaining the stability of some definitions of the situation, concealing or playing down certain facts in order to do this, we can expect the performer to live out his conspiratorial career in some furtiveness." (Goffman, 1959, p. 108).

This is useful in relation to understanding the performative nature of teachers' identities, highlighting the gap between public perceptions of a person and their individual experiences (see, e.g., Sikes and Everington, 2004).

However, as I have noted, drawing on Shilling (1993; 2008), it is important to state plainly that any attempt to delineate the ways in which bodies are culturally mapped (a textual reading of the body) creates problems that must not be overlooked. This is because to say that our embodied actions are determined by linguistic categories means to ignore the realities of lived experience (e.g., one's personal sensuality). Shilling, for example, in his critique of the Foucauldian concept of the discursive body, writes:

"the body is dissolved as a causal phenomenon in the determining power of discourse … The body is affected by discourse, but [in Foucault's work] we get little sense of the body reacting back and affecting discourse." (Shilling, 1993, p. 71).

In response to post-structuralist concerns about how bodies are controlled by discourses – and where this leaves Goffman – Shilling (1993; 2008) argues that the body should be treated as more than a "theoretical space" (Shilling, 1993, p. 63). Following a similar path to Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017), Shilling proposes that we look to Goffman for a more complete understanding of what it means to be an embodied human being:

"in Goffman's work [the body is] a resource which both requires and enables people to manage their movements and appearances." (Shilling, 1993, p. 72).

For this reason, I believe there is a strong argument that Goffman and Foucault are well-suited for my analytical purpose and sufficiently complementary of one another to warrant, even demand, using them both.

Conclusions

The paradigm of Western theatre used by Goffman – the expectations for expressive coherence and unified action, and the fragility of all of this in relation to social performances – is very relevant to my investigation:

"From the beginning [Goffman] used the metaphor of theatre to suggest that here are actors (agents) who maintain roles and play out the social relations according to rather precise rules of staging. Thus the role of the waitress is altogether different from when she is in the kitchen – or at home with her parents, or out with her friends or courting. This translates into facial expressions, way of talking, words used, gestures. Throughout Goffman's work the idea of *role* is central. But it is not that of an essential person who plays various roles. The roles are not gliding surfaces that conceal the true person. The roles become aspects of the person, some more owned, some more resented, but always an evolving side of what the person is." (Hacking, 2004, p. 290).

The latter point – the extent to which roles are accepted, owned and/or resented – is particularly salient for the teachers in my study. Firstly, because I am interested in the ways in which identities are constituted through processes of performance (i.e., the ways in which we 'make ourselves visible' through our embodied interactions with the environment and with others: Goffman, 1959; Leib, 2017). Secondly, because I am interested in the politics of experience – the given circumstances for the actor and his or her role; the relations between actors and audiences; the power-dynamics involved; and the effects of power. In relation to these concerns, there is much to be gained from adopting a Goffmanian analytical approach:

"Both verbal and non-verbal behaviour, according to Goffman, are syntactical in character, and are produced and interpreted according to contextually determined rules [or norms]. Goffman developed a spatialised vocabulary to demonstrate the syntax of non-verbal behaviour, based on the interconnection of region and role. He wanted to show that the main goal of an actor or team of actors engaged in social interaction is to control the 'definition of the situation' by means of performance." (Richards, 2001, p. 61).

In Richards' (2001) explanation, we get a sense of how social actors are able to determine what it means to 'be' (the question of identity). As Goffman himself writes:

> "the object of a performer is to sustain a particular definition of the situation, this representing, as it were, his [sic] claim as to what reality is." (Goffman, 1959, p. 90).

However, what is missing from Richards' explanation and, to a large extent, from Goffman's work, is the fact that the extent to which an individual is able to control 'the definition of the situation' by means of performance will always be contingent on the wider power-relations and networks of power/knowledge. To understand this, we need to look to Foucault.

Goffman (1959) does write about power and strategy. For example, he refers to the idea of dramatic dominance in a scene, and he is clear that being the dominant actor in the scene does not necessarily mean having other types of power and authority, that is to say if the person who is visibly leading is merely a figurehead, or is strategically positioned to conceal 'the power behind the front' (Goffman, 1959). However, whilst this is a somewhat nuanced argument, Goffman's understanding of power is fundamentally different to Foucault's understanding of power, and this is important to re-emphasise. According to Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988), power is not something that can be possessed; instead, the relations of power are an effect of the differences between people, constituting individuals as subjects and producing knowledge. In addition, Foucault sees subjectivation as a process, which is ongoing:

"I will call subjectivization the procedure by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more precisely, of a subjectivity which is of course only one of the given possibilities of organisation of a self-consciousness." (Foucault, 1988, p. 253).

For this reason, it is vitally important to consider the ways in which mobility, place and presence shape and reshape international school teachers' identities. This will be the main focus of my data analysis – ways of living Whiteness and ways of living heterosexuality in this context, and how this is different for White men and White women. In particular, in Chapter 5, I will consider how my participants' description of their experiences could be seen as an attempt, or strategy, to legitimise their privileged position in their host countries. Before that, however, I will explain my methodology and methods.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

This is a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. The thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams (video calls) with White teachers working in seven different English-medium international schools in five countries: three in East Asia and two in Southeast Asia. There were enough similarities in terms of the participants' experiences and the type of school they worked for to group the schools and countries together by region, although as I discussed in Chapter 1, this was also important to minimise the risk of the teachers and their schools being identified. The participants were nine men and four women from the UK, Europe, the USA and New Zealand. The interviews were carried out between April and June 2021 during the pandemic.

In this chapter, I will discuss my research design; the ethical principles that underpinned my research; adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality; and some of the issues to do with researching in familiar settings. I will recount how this study was done: setting up the project; entering the field; analysing the data; and the decisions that were made systematically along the way, reflecting on my own subjectivities. In doing this work, I

will continue to make links to my theoretical framework drawing on Goffman's dramaturgical model of social life and Foucault's understanding of power.

As the author of this study – a single gay White man, working as a senior leader in an international school in Taiwan at the time the research was carried out (and very soon to be returning to the region to work in a similar school in Thailand) – it is, of course, necessary for me to problematise my own identity and to be reflexive. I will be clear about what I have done with the data and why, as well as critically evaluating my own impact on the research content and findings. This is important because, as Paechter explains:

"Methodological openness makes it possible for the research community to untangle researcher effects (which are not just about the researcher's actions, avoidable or otherwise, but also concern such inescapables as the gender, race and class of researcher and participants) in the comparison of studies." (Paechter, 1996 pp. 81-82).

That being the case, I will consider my role in the stories that have been created.

Throughout the process of writing my thesis, I was cognisant of my role in the field and the danger, therefore, of being over cautious in my analysis, or of being overly defensive. I will return to these points later; however, finding the right balance was challenging. In the data analysis, I will not disclose *everything* I felt personally, and neither will I engage in the type of stringent self-criticism that Paechter (1996) refers to, to achieve the unattainable goal of *methodological perfection*. Nevertheless, it is, of course, necessary, to some extent, to write myself into the research process, and I will do this throughout this chapter.

I will also problematise the idea of the research interview as a performance, and the opportunity that was created for my participants to create particular identities for themselves (Sikes, 2000). I will consider the possibility my participants may have intentionally misled me, or deliberately told lies, and the impact of this on the plausibility of my conclusions. Utilising Goffman (1959), as well as Sikes (2000) and Woods (1985), I will explain the importance of being explicitly tentative about questions to do with 'truth' and 'reality', and consider the relationship between methodology and epistemology in the context of my research:

> "The purpose of qualitative interviewing is often not so much 'truth' telling as it is story re-presenting. Storytelling is, essentially, a creative process and the extent to which many researchers offer reflexive accounts of their involvement at all stages of their research, including the extent to which they are telling their own story, seems to indicate an acute awareness of the problematic nature of 'truth'." (Sikes, 2000, p. 267).

I will also consider some of the problems to do with having power/knowledge, 'race', gender and (hetero)sexuality as research interests.

The final important point to mention, at the very beginning of this chapter, is that even though all the participants in my study identified as heterosexual, this was not initially what I intended, and it is impossible to speculate why this might have been. The invitation email (Appendix B) and the Participant Information Sheet (PIS, Appendix C) were sent to multiple heads of school in the region, who were asked to forward the email to their teachers, some of whom then forwarded it to other teachers they knew. The broader aims of the project were stated in a way that my participants could understand:

"The project will explore the social positioning of teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia and the ways in which teachers negotiate their identities, focusing on issues to do with race, gender and sexuality."

I also made connections with people through my colleagues in Taiwan (colleagues who had worked in other countries). I was initially concerned that this might make some of the interviews stilted. In the context of a research interview, it is inevitable that talking to a relative stranger will affect the behaviour of participants (Paechter, 1998), and perhaps even more so when there are mutual connections. Nonetheless, this was generally not the case, and to write more about this risks identifying them.

It was a conscious decision on my part, after discussion with my supervisors, not to attempt to recruit additional non-heterosexual participants. Later in this chapter, when I write about reflexively adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality, I will explain why. The exact number of interviews to be conducted was left fairly open at the start of the project, and by continuing to be reflexive, this also allowed my analytical focus to change somewhat as the data was being collected. It enabled me to feel more confident that, in my analysis, I would be able to address the initial research questions convincingly, albeit with a narrower focus than I initially intended. For various reasons, I was also not worried about the relatively small size of the dataset. I will write more about this when I explain my approach to undertaking the analysis; however, the dataset was small enough to allow me to focus on individual stories, but large enough to allow me to make connections and comparisons.

My research questions, now slightly revised to indicate that all of the participants in my study identified as heterosexual, were:

- Within the context of English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia, what are the power-relations upon which categories of gender and (hetero)sexual identity are dependent, and how are these identities regulated?

- What problems does this create for the gender and (hetero)sexual identities of White teachers in this context, and what are the social consequences?

- What forms of discourse circulate around White teachers' identities in this context?

- How do discourses of 'race', gender, (hetero)sexuality and sex interact in the relations of power and knowledge in this context, and in the performance of White teachers' identities?

Background: The effects of the Covid-19 global pandemic

At the time of the interviews, the teachers' schools were in different situations, either teaching online (at home in their host countries) or in-person at school with restrictions. However, for all of them, their lives had been disrupted by the pandemic in significant ways. For many international school teachers, the effects of the pandemic were far-reaching, especially for those living and working in countries which initially adopted 'zero-Covid' policies, closing borders and imposing strict travel restrictions. This was my experience in Taiwan. However, the pandemic was not a major topic in the interviews because it was not particularly pertinent to the themes of my study. I was very clear (to myself, and sometimes to the participants) that I did not want the spectre of Covid-19 to be hanging over this study, so to

speak. To illustrate their points, the teachers usually spoke about the time before the pandemic.

Nonetheless, even though the focus of my research was specifically relevant to the time before the pandemic, when teachers in this context had more freedom to socialise, it is important to at least acknowledge the potential effects of the pandemic on the participants – the ways in which the teachers' lives had changed – as well as how I was feeling at the time, thereby enabling more reflexive analysis. For example, the pandemic is significant in relation to my research design insofar as, by this point, teachers were well-used to online video calls: digital technologies had become a fundamental part of every teacher's arsenal and video calls had become part of daily life. To some extent, this renders the literature that already existed on remote interviewing obsolete. I was not at all concerned about the potential for this particular mode of interview to, "downplay the interaction as a research encounter." (Weller, 2017, p. 622). I will discuss this briefly in the next section although, of course, regardless of the pandemic, online interviewing was the only option available for me to connect with the participants in different countries. My research design was based on purely practical constraints.

Doing the research was a welcome distraction during a challenging period of time in my own life. For various reasons (e.g., the enforced physical separation from my family, which was a result of the pandemic), I had chosen not to stay in Taiwan. It was my intention to move closer to home, albeit with the intention of doing so only temporarily. For the same reason (a welcome distraction), it is quite possible that the teachers were also glad to talk about themes unrelated to the pandemic, possibly being more open, although no one explicitly said this. It

was also a conscious decision on my part to wait longer than I would otherwise have done before beginning the analysis of the data, allowing time to contextualise my feelings and to be more reflexive. This proved to be an important *self-protective strategy* (see, e.g., Poole, Giles and Moore, 2004). In relation to this, it is important to be clear that although I did not expect the interviews to be distressing for my participants, I was sensitive to the fact they might have been. The topics had the potential to cause some level of personal discomfort and this became clear to me in the way the participants sometimes used humour as a strategy to downplay their concerns about how they might be interpreted by others. For example, when describing the stereotype of White men in his host country, and the associations with sex tourism, Michael[7] said: "I've pretty much turned into [the stereotype] now. Beer belly, bad shirt." Similarly, Tina, describing the stereotypes of White women in comparison to localised norms of femininity, said: "we're quite loud."

Given my own involvement in the field, and the ways in which the issues at hand had affected me, socially and emotionally, the period of time between completing the interviews and beginning the analysis was important (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This created space for me to process my own feelings about the data, as well as, more importantly, to identify and reflect on my own personal prejudices. In some ways, it could be argued the temporal dimension enabled me to become 'wiser' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This was something I discussed with my supervisors, and I will write more about the importance of the relationship with my supervisors when I discuss the data analysis.

---

[7] All names are pseudonyms agreed by the participants.

Getting started and entering the field

The invitation email contained the link to the secure online survey (Appendix D) which was used to identify participants and to gather contextual data. The information that was provided in response to the survey questions helped to ensure that time was not wasted in the interviews (e.g., prior to the interviews I was able to create thumbnail sketches of the participants) as well as helping to identify themes I may not have considered (i.e., themes that had not been anticipated prior to the survey based on my experience in the field and from reviewing the literature). This was particularly the case in Sarah's response to the survey. She wrote: "I feel extremely privileged being a White woman in [this country]." I had, of course, anticipated issues to do with 'race' privilege, but the dominant discourses surrounding idealised notions of heterosexual masculinity/femininity in this context can be shown, in various ways, to discredit White femininity (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Chesnut, 2020; Kelsky, 2001; Lan, 2011; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2012). For this reason, Sarah's understanding of the ways in which her White femininity was, at least to some extent, advantageous, became an important data point, which I will discuss in Chapter 7. The survey was also initially intended to ensure that I had a range of participants (gender, sexuality); however, it did not transpire like that. All of the participants identified as heterosexual.

The interviews with participants who had accepted an invitation were conducted online using Microsoft Teams (video calls, cameras on) and they lasted between approximately thirty and sixty minutes. Participants were fully informed before the project began about why the project was being conducted and what their participation would involve.

This was done through the invitation email and the PIS (Participant Information Sheet). The PIS informed them about the themes of the project, what data would be collected, and what would be done with the data during and after the project, as well as my duty to disclose any child protection and/or safeguarding concerns to the relevant law enforcement agencies in accordance with international standards (International Taskforce on Child Protection). Fully informed consent for the online survey was collected on the landing page. Fully informed consent for the interviews (including consent for audio recording) was given via a consent form (Appendix E) collected through a secure file transfer system. The PIS explained that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants could withdraw their data from the project, without prejudice, within five weeks of the interview taking place. The interview transcripts were shared with all of the participants within two weeks of each interview taking place along with a debrief sheet (Appendix F) which included links to organisations offering virtual counselling (in case the participants were upset by anything that was discussed during the interviews).

Thirty people responded to my survey, twenty-three of whom agreed to be contacted for an interview: nine women and fourteen men. Of these twenty-three, two of the men identified as gay and one of the women identified as queer; the others identified as heterosexual. All twenty-three were contacted for an interview: five of the women responded to the invitation but the queer woman did not show up or respond to follow-up emails. Ten of the men responded to the invitation. One of the gay men did not respond to the invitation and the other gay man did not show up for the interview or respond to follow-up emails.

The eligibility criteria for the study were that participants must be teachers in English-medium international schools in countries in East or Southeast Asia, they must identify as White, and they must not have any family connection to their host country, unless they met their partner/spouse whilst in the country. I made one exception to this: a male teacher from the UK, Gareth. He had met his partner in the Middle East before they both went to her home country. The reason I made this exception is twofold. Firstly, because he expressed a genuine interest to be involved in the study and indicated in the survey response that he hoped his situation would not prevent him from taking part. Secondly, because he met his partner outside of his home country and in a place where there was a large population of Southeast Asian expatriates. His partner did not work in a school and I thought his perspective could be useful. It was also explained that participants must have no formal connection to the school where I was employed at the time of the interviews. Participants were reminded of this at the start of the interviews. If it was likely this could compromise the research relationship in the future, they were reminded that they could withdraw without prejudice. Two of the participants were known to me before the project, but to give further details risks identifying them. We did not have a close relationship and so I did not deem this to be problematic.

As I have already mentioned, the participants worked in seven schools in five countries: three in East Asia and two in Southeast Asia (see Appendix A for biographical details). I was deliberately cautious in my approach to anonymisation, referring to regions rather than countries. I removed personal identifiers as far as possible without compromising the integrity of the data, although it is impossible to be certain that interview responses will not be traced back to the participants. (This includes the possibility they might choose to identify themselves to other people.) Nevertheless, I took reasonable steps to try to preserve their

anonymity, and the participants had the opportunity to read the edited transcripts. The was important in the context of my research, and the values/principles that underpin my research: protecting privacy and minimising harm (BERA, 2018). I was also somewhat guarded when talking to others about the research (Israel, 2002; Mattley, 1997; Poole, Giles and Moore, 2004). This was important both for my participants and for myself. For example, I was conscious of the ways in which my research agenda might be misinterpreted by others. I will develop some of these ideas later when I write about reflexively adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality and problematise my dual role in the field (i.e., as a senior leader in an international school in the region and as an academic researcher). However, as Portelli explains, "the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are called for to protect participants." (Portelli, 2008, p. 88).

From the outset, I was concerned about the potentially sensitive nature of my research. In relation to this, Poole, Giles and Moore (2004), was particularly useful for their review of the literature on researching sensitive issues and their summary of strategies to ease the impact of negative effects on researchers. Their concern is primarily the emotional impact of carrying out socially sensitive research. However, their suggestions are equally useful when the concerns are more to do with *political* sensitivities, not least the importance of regular self-reflection on the research process, and the opportunity to discuss the interviews with my supervisors. I will write more about this when I give further consideration to the ethical concerns of this project.

To set up the interviews, the participants were asked to inform me of their preferred days and times in the late afternoon or evening. Once a mutually convenient time had been

arranged, an invitation was sent with the link for MS Teams. I made sure that I was at home when doing the interviews, in my study, using a desktop computer. I lived alone for the period that I was doing the interviews, and there were no distractions. The room was quite bare and so I was not worried about blurring the background. I dressed casually, usually in a t-shirt. My participants also had choices over how to mediate themselves on screen. For example, they were sitting in front of a blank wall, or in front of a wall of books, or in the living room with a dog playing. However, how much thought went into this is unclear. For teachers used to teaching online from home, a blank wall is likely to have been required by school protocol.

The interviews were one-off. There was little opportunity for connections to develop. However, before I started recording the interviews, I made sure there were some friendly and supportive interchanges (Weller, 2017), which most often focused on the situation in the participants' school regarding the pandemic. This helped to build rapport and, as Brinkmann and Kvale explain, the first few minutes of an interview often prove to be decisive:

> "The interviewees will want to have a grasp of the interviewer before they allow themselves to talk freely and expose their experiences and feelings to a stranger. A good contact is established by attentive listening, with the interviewer showing interest, understanding, and respect for what the subject says, and with the interviewer at ease and clear about what he or she wants to know." (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, p. 154).

The pandemic was a good place to start. It was a shared experience and helped me to connect with the participants; we were very likely to understand what each other was struggling with in our schools, and in a wider context.

I am reluctant to spend time pondering the benefits and disadvantages of online interviewing because, as I have already mentioned, my design was based on purely practical constraints. However, I do want to acknowledge the findings of Jenner and Myers (2019), whose work identifies that, contrary to some concerns, video conferencing provides more convenience and comfort for the interviewees, which does not necessarily lead to over-disclosure (e.g., due to the 'seductive' nature of interviewing: Kvale, 1996) and which has very little impact on rapport. Jenner and Myers (2019) conclude that privacy, rather than the medium used, is what matters most for collecting high-quality data. In this case, the fact that video conferencing allowed participants to select a location where they felt secure helped to avoid, to some degree, "the pressure of presence" (Weller 2017, p. 619).

Except for Tina, a teacher from Europe working in East Asia, the participants were at home for the interviews. Tina was in a hotel room (on holiday) and had initially forgotten about the interview. Interestingly, she was arguably the person who was most candid throughout the interview, especially when talking about perceived 'racial' differences (i.e., she seemed to worry less about potentially offending people), although there are other possible factors to explain this. For example, she was the only participant for whom English was not her first language. She was also involved in an 'interracial' relationship with a Black Caribbean man whom she had met locally, and they were engaged to be married. Nonetheless, once the teachers gained a clearer view of what the research was about, all but one of them needed little prompting (Woods, 1985). The themes appeared to resonate with them.

One important aspect of online video conferencing to note, however, is vulnerability. Conducting the interviews, I felt vulnerable in my dual position as a senior leader in an

international school in the region and as an academic researcher, as well as in the context of the online interview and being able to see myself on the screen whilst talking. Being able to see myself heightened my concern to avoid potential disappointment and disillusionment over my own performance, or what Goffman (1959) refers to as 'communication out of character'. Therefore, despite the potential benefits for my participants, the lack of physical copresence is also one of the drawbacks of online interviewing. Deakin and Wakefield (2014), for example, considering the performative nature of interviews, identify the possibility that conversations are stilted when video is used. This is in addition to other technical issues such as when the screen froze, moments were lost, and I needed to ask for things to be repeated.

The planning and process of the interviews

The interview process was, of course, more complicated than simply asking questions to collect data. In this section, I will provide a fuller description of how I thought about the interviews, and some justification for using this method. Qualitative interviews are rarely, if ever, a neutral way of collecting data. Instead, as Holstein and Gubrium explain, it is more effective to conceptualise this type of interviewing "as a social encounter in which knowledge is actively constructed" (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p. 141). Similarly, drawing on Goffman and the concepts underpinning my theoretical framework, it is possible to read the interview exchange as a theatrical performance. The participants and I were co-constructing knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004) at the same time as playing our roles: interviewer and interviewee.

I am deeply implicated in the data that has been collected. The participants' self-presentations were influenced by me and the way they responded to who I am. For example, it is possible *in some ways* the participants thought of me as 'one of them'. I will write more about my insider status in subsequent sections of this chapter. At the same time, however, the interviews were guided by me, and so, in this context, the term 'interview dialogue' is probably a misnomer (Kvale 1996; 2006). Woods (1985), for example, explains how conversational interviews in life history research are, sometimes, akin to participant observation; however, whilst this is appealing, it does not apply in this context. There was a conversational style to the interviews, but they were not really a 'mutual endeavour'. Nonetheless, the participants had agency in relation to how they represented themselves. They chose how to represent themselves through their location/setting, their physical appearance/costume, as well as what they chose to say *and* not say when responding to questions. And so, whilst there were asymmetries of power in the researcher/participant relationship, overstating positions of power would be a misstep in my analysis.

In the same way that the interviews were guided by me, the interpretation of the data is my own, and I will discuss my impact on the research content and findings in greater depth in subsequent sections of this chapter. However, whilst it would be very serious if I had deliberately mispresented the participants' responses (e.g., by taking them out of context), or if I made misleading claims about the data generally, the context of the interview itself is not a distortion (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). Instead, the interviews were "a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge." (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p. 141). Knowledge was actively constructed in the interviews; the participants were actively and communicatively involved in making meaning (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004).

Online interviewing was the most practical way for me to understand the experiences of teachers in this context, and to address my research questions. I was able to connect with teachers in a range of different countries from my home in Taiwan. In addition, my knowledge of the field and the preparatory exploration I had done (e.g., my literature review) meant I was already familiar the areas of focus, and so I was able to conduct the interviews confidently. The areas of focus were:

- The teachers' reasons for working overseas, and why in East/Southeast Asia.

- The social positioning of teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia.

- The interleaving of social relationships and ways of negotiating identity.

- The intersection of 'race', gender and (hetero)sexuality.

The interviews were semi-structured. To prepare for the interviews, I had scripted some questions relating to the different areas of focus. For example: How would you describe your school community – the people and the place? Which groups of people do you most frequently socialise with and why? However, whilst this helped to focus my thinking, I rarely used the exact same questions; instead, in the interviews, I followed the participants.

At the start of the interviews, I usually asked some questions to check what the participants had told me in the survey. For example:

CB   So, you're in [city], and is this the first time you've worked outside of the UK?

Adam   Yeah. This is the first time I've worked overseas. I worked in London before that. First time living outside and working outside.

CB   You've been there for three years?

Adam   This will be my third year now, yeah.

CB   So what was it that made you decide to leave the UK and head to [city]?

Adam   It's a bit of a complicated story…

Adam went on to tell me the story. It was to do with a relationship with a local woman (they met in the UK) which did not last very long after he arrived there. We returned to his relationship history later in the interview, once we had a rapport, and it generated some important data about the issues for White men involved in 'interracial' relationships in this context and the identities that might be attributed to them.

In the interviews, I asked short, clear questions. I tried to let people think and did not worry too much about any pauses. The women tended to give more concise answers, but my questioning elicited some quite long answers from both the men and the women. The participants were willing to talk to me and, as I have already said, the themes appeared to resonate with them; they rarely needed prompting. For example, when I spoke to Tina about the perception that it's easier for single men to live and work in the region than single women, she first went on to say that it's not a perception, in her opinion, rather it's "true", before commenting: "Me and my female friends have often had this conversation." In some ways, there was a sense that the interview had enabled what was previously 'backstage' chatter to move to a 'front' region (Goffman, 1959). Tina seemed to appreciate the opportunity to publicise her thoughts; it was almost as if she had been waiting for the opportunity.

I listened attentively, but I did not challenge everything that was said to me. I asked for clarification about some points, but I was conscious of not being seen to impose meaning on what was said. This is something I found difficult and my excitement in generating the data was tempered by feelings of guilt, a concern that is echoed by Etherington:

"As I listened to some of these stories with my "researcher" ears, I became uncomfortable when I realized I was thinking this is really good stuff! For some researchers, this sense of excitement when they obtain data from people is often in stark contrast with their ethics about 'using' people for research purposes." (Etherington, 1996, p. 346).

It was also something I did *not* get right at the beginning, and it was important that I continued to reflect on the interviews in between each one. For example, Freddie, whose interview I did first, spoke about the ways in which aspects of the lifestyle vary country to country (he had experience of living/working in several countries in East and Southeast Asia). I asked him if he thought people who have lived and worked in particular countries develop unrealistic expectations. He hesitated and so I interjected: "It's a privileged lifestyle is what I'm saying." I was more alert to the possibility of doing this in subsequent interviews.

Nevertheless, I do not believe I was 'using' people. It was not my intention to catch anyone out, so to speak, but to try to understand their experiences. After Foucault, the interviews are best represented as a reciprocal circulation of power mobilisations and resistances:

"By looking at power as a system of small, local relationships it becomes possible to see not only that all actors in a situation have access to a variety of local power, but also that all are capable of corresponding micro-resistances." (Paechter, 1998, p. 100).

This includes the potential for the participants to lead *me* during the interviews, and the possibility that I was deliberately deceived (see, e.g., Paechter, 1998; Sikes, 2000). I will return to this point in the next section.

The interviews varied in length between thirty and sixty minutes. I did not think about timing during the interviews (what mattered was the quality of the data) and I did not force the conversations. I felt comfortable when they came to a natural end.

Data analysis

To enable audiences to appropriately interpret and contextualise my findings, it is necessary to provide further information about exactly how the analysis was performed, as well as my epistemological position, which I will do in this section. I have tried to avoid presenting too much of the analysis in this section, but some examples are necessary to demonstrate the active process by which I have extracted themes from the data. As I have said, many of the themes in this study were anticipated prior to the initial survey and to the interviews. This was based on my own experience in the field and from the literature, which in turn informed my initial research questions. However, the questions were sufficiently broad to allow themes to be derived from the data (e.g., by identifying the forms of discourse

circulating around White teachers' identities in this context). When carrying out the data analysis, themes I had not anticipated, and unique individual perspectives, emerged.

Throughout all stages, I embraced the uncertainties and ambiguities of the creative, analytical process. I was particularly mindful of not using the interview questions as themes, which would have weakened my analysis:

"Novice researchers often make the mistake of introducing templates or schemas too early, and often according to the interview questions they ask. The result of reorganizing interview transcripts into categories determined by the interview questions is an endless and frustrating analytic go-around." (Marhsall, Rossman and Blanco, 2022, p. 236).

For example, there was conflict between some of the reasons the teachers gave for wanting to live overseas (e.g., to experience another culture and/or to challenge themselves, using words such as 'risk' and/or 'adventure') and how they described their experiences (e.g., they saw it as an adventure and yet they were well supported by their schools after their arrival).

After transcribing the interviews myself, which was the first step in my data analysis (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007), I actively read over the transcripts multiple times (over a period of eighteen months after finishing the interviews) *before* I began coding them. This increased my familiarity with the entirety of the data, and the stories I might want to tell about the data, enabling progressively more focused analysis. I chose to annotate the transcripts on paper because I found I was more engaged with the process than using a software package, which, for me, risked becoming a mindless clicking exercise. I underlined the text and wrote in

between the lines and in the margins. It was a multi-layered process and meanings evolved (Braun and Clark, 2022).

Annotating the transcripts and then continuously regrouping the codes into the different themes I had constructed, adding notes and page numbers (showing where the data was tagged) to more and more sheets of paper, was time consuming. It was also, to some extent wasteful (of paper). However, it was manageable given the size of my dataset and, whilst it was an untidy process, it was productive. Marhsall, Rossman and Blanco explain:

"For researchers relying on immersion strategies, this phase of data analysis is the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, creative, and fun. Data immersion should be generative, rather than constraining." (Marhsall, Rossman and Blanco, 2022, p. 236).

For example, several of the participants indicated a desire for 'change' in their lives as a reason for relocating; however, there was a haphazard approach to where in the world they might end up. 'Job search' was a sub-code of 'change'.

I also underlined and annotated other aspects of the teachers' experiences which appeared to be consequential, making notes as I did so, for example, references to consuming alcohol (I wrote alcohol in the margin). The references fell into two distinct categories: localised attitudes towards the behaviour of other White, Westerners (e.g., tourists), and the reputation management of teachers and schools. This also related to a broader theme: the moral foundation of teacher professionalism. Other aspects of my analysis were similarly straightforward, for example, identifying the ways in which the teachers were supported by their schools on arrival in their host countries and through induction. I listed these points

separately. However, my concern throughout this process was to do with the originality of my thesis and so, at the same time, it was necessary to reevaluate aspects of my theoretical framework. For this reason, the data analysis was a cyclic process; it was an ongoing cycle of theorisation, and theory emerged as important in relation to the data.

In addition, whilst pulling out common aspects of the participants' experiences was a relatively straightforward task, I remained cognisant of the fact there could be other, conflicting readings of the same text. When writing up my analysis, it was, of course, necessary for me to consider the partiality of my own perspective, and I will return to this idea when I write about the issues to do with researching in familiar settings.

I returned to the transcripts many, many times, each time widening the scope of my lens. There was overlap between codes/themes, which is unsurprising given the size of my dataset, and so I developed more generic codes, for example, the intercultural dimension of the teachers' experiences and the teachers' freedom to travel, which was a result of their economic and social privilege. These codes covered multiple aspects of the data and were added to earlier annotations. They also helped me to go beyond the surface level of the data.

The intercultural dimension of the teachers' experiences was discussed in various ways as a lifestyle benefit, a challenge to overcome, and as a reason for relocating in the first place. This also helped me to extract another important theme to do with the participants' understanding of teacher professionalism in this context. The teachers tended to downplay their decision to live/work in East and Southeast Asia. Instead, it was a combination of circumstances that had taken them there, and their ability to find a way through the situation

and adjust to different conditions (without claiming to 'belong' where they were) was presented as an important attribute of teachers in this context. The freedom to travel was similarly complex. Like most themes, this had a 'racialised' gendered dimension, as well as something that was seen as a lifestyle benefit and an indicator of the teachers' privilege *regardless* of gender.

The notes that I made when doing the analysis were later incorporated into my data analysis chapters, and it is important to be clear that I did not conceptualise a clear break between finishing 'the analysis' and writing the manuscript. The writing was an extension of the creative, analytical process and, as Minkin explains, there is a "two-way interaction between continuously developed knowledge and continuously developed text." (Minkin, 1997, p. 178). Producing the manuscript is a significant aspect of the analytical process (Kiger and Varpio, 2020); however, to preserve the integrity of my work, there is a need to reemphasise my position, and state plainly that what I have presented is an interpretation. For this reason, my intention has been to write clearly and concisely about how I have interpreted the data, the application of different theoretical perspectives, and why I believe these things are important. I have also endeavoured to make sure that the justification for the themes I have selected is similarly clear, concise *and* logical (Kiger and Varpio, 2020) in the hope that my writing is relatable and resonates with my audience.

As I have previously mentioned, the dataset was small enough to allow me to focus on individual stories, but large enough to allow me to make connections and comparisons. This is something I remained conscious of throughout the analytical process, including the potential for personal stories to make my analysis richer. For this reason, I decided to explore

the idiosyncratic relationship between individual participants and the wider social context (e.g., the different stories told by Marie and Sarah helped me to consider the (in)visibility of White women in this context in a way I had not anticipated). My own knowledge and experience of the field was useful here, as well as drawing from other literature in the field, which I will go on to discuss. From a more traditional standpoint, this might raise some questions about my analysis (e.g., to do with the 'reliability' of my findings); however, I make no claims to have written a definitive account.

The recurrence of some ideas (e.g., the problematic stereotypes of White, Western men in this context) meant I was relatively unconcerned whether or not certain themes reflected the entirety of the data. However, it was, of course, necessary to connect themes to the participants' biographies (e.g., their age, gender identity, and how long they had been overseas) to understand how ideas may have been spoken about differently (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Holstein and Gubrium, 2004; Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Sikes, 2000):

"The analytic objective is not merely to describe the situated production of talk, but to show how what is being said relates to the experiences and lives being studied in the circumstances at hand." (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p. 156).

Even still, my method of analysis enabled me to identify themes that are important to this study regardless of how frequently they appeared, and, as I have said, to focus on individual stories. This is made clear in the chapters that follow in relation to some aspects of the data, particularly in Chapter 7, where I focus very much on Sarah's interview responses, who was the only single female participant in this study. There are also some themes in the data I have not presented in this thesis; for example, where the teachers lived (the location of their

accommodation) and why. It would be very difficult for me to make meaningful conclusions about where the teachers lived without describing their cities. I had previously visited some but not all the cities, although I knew enough from stories from friends and colleagues to have a good sense of the teachers' situations. Nonetheless, it was very important that I did not reveal the participants' locations to minimise the risk of the data being traced back to them (this is also why I did not use photo elicitation).

This kind of transparency is important for readers to understand how the analysis has been done (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Sikes, 2000). It is also important in relation to my own epistemological position insofar as I do not claim to present actual reality/realities (if that were ever possible). Instead, from a dramaturgical perspective, and as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, what my analysis provides for my audience is versions, or re-presentations, of my participants' stories, which are themselves subjectively perceived 'realities' (Sikes, 2000; Woods, 1985). Holstein and Gubrium explain:

"Writing up findings from interview data is itself an analytically active enterprise … Reports do not so much summarize and organize what interview participants have said, as they "de-construct" participants' talk to show the reader both the *hows* and *whats* of narratives of lived experience." (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p. 156).

However, this is, of course, complicated by the possibility that my participants may have deliberately misled me and/or told lies, and I will return to this point at the end of this section.

Returning to my research questions, I organised the data to focus more explicitly on themes relevant to the social construction of White, heterosexual masculinity in this context,

and to the social construction of White, heterosexual femininity. This was done through my initial planning and drafting of Chapters 6 and 7, although there are overlapping themes, which meant it was not straightforward. In addition, the fact that I did not write all three data chapters in the order they are presented inevitably meant there was a considerable amount of editing to do later. Nevertheless, planning Chapters 6 and 7 first (before Chapter 5) helped me to connect with the core narrative of this thesis: the ways in which the experiences of the participants were different depending on their perceived gender identity. In addition, by not attempting to do this too soon, I had allowed time for my analytical insights to develop (Braun and Clark, 2022).

At the same time as analysing the data, I continued to read around the emerging themes, which is how the idea of 'being a good Westerner' came about (Chapter 5), an idea that I have borrowed from Scuzzarello's (2020) study of older White migrants from Western nation states who have settled in Thailand after retirement. The participants in Scuzzarello's (2020) study used various strategies of self-presentation to attempt to legitimise their privileged position in their host countries, and, in my analysis, I have compared the ways in which my participants appeared to be doing something similar. In Chapter 5, I have organised the data in relation to the teachers' own understanding of what it means to be both culturally and professionally competent in this context (i.e., their definition of being a 'good Westerner' when applied to international school teachers). This helped me to make sense of the ways in which the teachers appeared to legitimise their privileged position in their host countries by referring to various personal qualities and attributes which meant they were 'up to the job'.

At a micro level, attempting a diagrammatic representation of the themes was an unsurprisingly messy task and it would be impossible for me, at this stage in my thesis, if at all, to visually show the relationship between the data and what I will go on to argue about the data. More importantly, the conclusions that readers could make right now (i.e., at this point of reading my thesis) are potentially unwarranted. For example, whilst some of the themes are relatively uncontroversial, the gendered 'racialisation' of various actors (but usually Asian women and White men) was an important theme in the data and has *the potential* to be controversial. It was a common feature in some of the participants' accounts, characteristic of their perceptions of others in this context, particularly in relation to 'interracial' intimacies. However, without attempting to right a possible wrong, it is important to emphasise that the participants' descriptions of White, Westerners in this context (including themselves) were, oftentimes, as uncritical as their descriptions of Asian men and women. The language used was equally problematic, and I do not believe anyone took part in the project to propagate racist views. In Chapter 7, I will explain why.

To identify ways in which discourses of 'race', gender, (hetero)sexuality and sex interact in the relations of power and knowledge in this context, I chose the most useful interview responses for this purpose – responses that were sometimes surprising, but which provided the most insight. The research questions guided my analysis. However, whilst it was necessary to uncover some of the problematic assumptions in the participants' descriptions, I took care to write a balanced commentary and not be unfairly critical of them. This guided me through all aspects of the data analysis. I will consider this idea further when I write more about the ethical considerations of this project, and when I consider some of the methodological issues involved in studying the intersection of 'race', gender and

heterosexuality in this context. However, it was a difficult balancing act, and something that I did not carry off at first, particularly in relation to my analysis of Sarah's talk about the problems she experienced dating in this context. This is where I relied most of all on discussions with my supervisors. This ongoing dialogue was vitally important for many reasons, not least to make sure I was adequately aware of, and then subsequently addressed, my own assumptions underlying the analysis (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

The supervision process and my supervisors' critical comments helped to ensure that my interpretations were convincing. I stayed critical of myself in relation to the social, cultural and structural context in which this knowledge about international school teachers' identities has been produced. I was committed to the view that what my participants said during the interviews was situational and indexical (Sikes, 2000), which has necessarily entailed, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explain, 'playing devil's advocate' towards my own findings. However, a potential problem for my analysis, which is important for me to discuss here, is that even though the teachers may well have told the truth as they perceived it, "it may not actually represent what they felt or believed at the time." (Woods, 1985, p. 17). For example, it is impossible for me to know if the teachers were trying to impress me (Sikes, 2000). When describing the benefits of living and working in their host countries, and especially when this had to do with the intercultural dimension of their experiences, it is very likely they were performing their version of being a 'good Westerner' (Scuzzarello, 2020), an idea that I will develop and argue in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, this does not weaken my analysis; instead, accepting this as a possibility is an important part of unearthing the plot that is, in fact, *central* to my analysis. A more serious concern is the possibility the participants were using the interviews for 'cover' (Sikes, 2000) – in other words, to disassociate themselves from certain

problematic stereotypes. For example, the stock characters in this setting include Western

men who are involved in exploitative sexual relationships and men who are paedophiles (Cho,

1997; Curley, 2014; Montgomery, 2007; Rafferty, 2007; Woan, 2008; Zheng, 2016).

Whether or not participants tell the 'truth' is, of course, a problem for all qualitative

researchers (Sikes, 2000), but what is of particular consequence for this thesis is what this has

to do with the moral foundations of teacher professionalism (i.e., the expectations of teachers

to behave a certain way by virtue of their profession). Indeed, rather pertinently for this thesis,

Woods (1985), considering the effects of questions to do with morality on qualitative research

(life history) involving teachers, cites Goffman:

> "Given the stage that any person has reached in a career, one typically finds that he
> [sic] constructs an image of his life course – past, present and future – which selects,
> abstracts, and distorts in such a way as to provide him with a view of himself that he
> can usefully expound in current situations." (Goffman, 1961, p. 139).

The context of the interviews, including my insider status, which I will discuss in greater depth

in subsequent sections of this chapter, inevitably meant that the teachers would have been

concerned, at least to some extent, to stage a successful performance of themselves. Goffman

explains:

> "The self … as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location,
> whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect
> arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial
> concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited." (Goffman, 1959, p. 245).

Similarly, Sikes draws attention to the performative nature of qualitative interviewing. She explains that the interview is an opportunity for participants to create an identity for themselves, and so:

"Given this chance, the likelihood is that the majority will be keen to present themselves in what they believe will be seen as a favourable light." (Sikes, 2000, p. 264).

For these reasons, what is important for my study is not necessarily whether the participants have deliberately misled me and/or told lies (although this would, of course, be very important if they were abusing children), but more so acknowledging the possibility they *could* have lied, and being cognisant of *why* they might want to lie (i.e., what they stand to gain). Nevertheless, I must accept that this leaves some of my conclusions more open-ended than people might prefer and, therefore, less satisfying, although they provide an invitation to debate (Sikes, 2000).

To conclude this section, it is important to be clear that it is not my intention to discredit the teachers in my study and others like them. Instead, to shore up the data, and to provide 'methodological substance' (Sikes, 2000), the most useful strategy has been for me to contextualise the data in the wider social picture by triangulation (Sikes, 2000). In my analysis, I have made use of other data from the literature about the experiences of White, Western expatriates in East and Southeast Asia (e.g., the retirees in Scuzzarello's (2020) study). This has enabled me to show the ways in my participants *may* have articulated their experiences differently *because* they are teachers.

However, what I have been unable to do, and which goes beyond the scope of the research, is to 'fact check' the participants' stories by speaking to others involved. This would also have been potentially unethical (Sikes, 2000). For example, it would have been difficult for me to ask the men's partners if they suspected the men of infidelity (none of the men had told me they were in an open relationship). Similarly, if their partners were Asian, it would have been equally inappropriate for me to ask them if they thought the men had a 'racial' fetish, or if they themselves had a sexual preference for White men above other 'races'. However, given the problems that were often discussed for single White women in this context, it made sense for me, in Chapter 7, to give prominence to Sarah's story, thereby testing some of the observations about single White women that were made by the other participants. I will discuss some of these issues further in the next section of this chapter.

Ethical considerations

In this section, I will bring together some of the points I have already mentioned (both in this chapter and earlier) about the ethical considerations involved in this project. I will focus specifically on the sensitivity concerns surrounding my analysis. The most important point to reemphasise is that I have not ignored some of the 'irresolvable tensions' in the participants' interview responses (BERA, 2018). Rather, I have thought carefully about how to maximise the benefits of my research (e.g., by uncovering some of the problematic assumptions in the interviews), whilst at the same time minimising risk or harm to the participants (BERA, 2018).

When I wrote about getting started and entering the field, I explained the ways in which I had been transparent with the participants about what their participation would involve. I am confident they were able to give informed consent (however, as I will go on to explain, I must accept the possibility they may not agree with my interpretations). The documentation about the project and the survey questions (Appendices B, C and D) gave a clear idea about what I was investigating, in language the participants were likely to understand. I do not believe anyone was deceived. Furthermore, the edited interview transcripts (with personal identifiers removed as far as possible) were shared with the participants, and only one requested information to be redacted, which was duly done. I took steps to conceal the participants' locations, and, throughout my thesis, I have referred to regions rather than countries (problematised in Chapter 1). None of them were in Taiwan. If I had interviewed participants locally, I would have needed to acknowledge this, going to even greater lengths to disguise the participants and the schools, which would have been problematic for my analysis, and potentially impossible.

It had been made clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw their data from the project, without prejudice, within five weeks of the interviews taking place. I was also clear about my own role in the field, and I reiterated where I was working at the start of the interviews, again giving the option for participants to withdraw from the project if this might compromise the research relationship in the future. (Of course, it is entirely possible that I might, at some point in the future, work with the participants in a professional capacity, although regardless of this, the social/political context of my research will have affected what they chose to say, and not say, during the interviews. I do not believe this is concerning.)

I did not involve the participants in the outcomes of the research, for example, by eliciting feedback on my thesis. This would have required a larger commitment on their part, although that alone is an insufficient reason not to ask them. From a methodological point of view, the greater concern is that the participants' views could have changed over time. They may no longer agree with what they said or may not agree with my interpretations. However, as Braun and Clark (2022) explain, participant validation is not a universally applicable method of quality assurance. My supervisors have supported me to reflect on the analysis throughout the research process. They have been my critical friends, particularly in relation to the sensitivity concerns. I have also used other research in the field to support my analysis of the various themes. There is no singular reality or 'truth', and there can be different ways of reading the same text; however, I do not believe I have been unfairly critical of the participants, and my interpretations are defensible. I have been sensitive to the substance of the interview responses and offered one way of thinking about them.

To conclude this section, I will consider the ethical concerns relating to the sensitive nature of the topics being discussed. My interest in the performance of gender and (hetero)sexuality is not, in and of itself, problematic. However, my role in the field, and the context itself, makes all of this somewhat murkier. Lee and Renzetti, for example, explain that the sensitivities of one's research interests are emergent:

"In other words, the sensitive character of a piece of research seemingly inheres less in the topic itself and more in the relationship between the topic and the social context within which the research is conducted." (Lee and Renzetti, 1990, p. 512).

The sensitivities of my research are not solely to do with the topic of sex/sexuality per se; rather, they are more to do with the complex networks of social relationships that exist within international school communities.

As I have discussed, problematic stereotypes (e.g., to do with 'interracial' intimacies in this context) were pervasive in the participants' interpretations. In relation to this, it is impossible to know what, if any, assumptions were made about me: how my researcher body was read and interpreted by the participants. The questions I asked were not specifically to do with sexual behaviours or, indeed, anything else which could potentially be viewed as controversial in relation to teachers. *Especially* given my role, that would have been unethical. However, simply by discussing and writing about issues to do with 'race', gender and sexuality, there is a real and ever-present danger that inferences were and/or will be made about my own sexual proclivities. I cannot escape from this because, as Brewis writes, discussing questions to do with the presence of the author in research about sex and organisation, "it is impossible to enter the research context 'unmarked' [e.g., by 'race', gender and/or sexuality]" (Brewis, 2005, p. 498). Brewis continues:

> "Male academics [researching sex might] find that their authorship is sexualized by others … that they are understood as deploying their research to convey a fascination with sex and a desire for sexual attention." (Brewis, 2005, pp. 501-502).

However, it is highly unlikely the participants thought that I was flirting with them (Gailey and Prohaska, 2011). Nevertheless, the likelihood of being stigmatized for studying particular topics is a concern for all academics involved in socially sensitive research, particularly when

it is to do with human sexuality (Lee and Renzetti, 1990; Poole, Giles and Moore, 2004; Brewis 2005; Gailey and Prohaska, 2011).

For me, as both a researcher *and* a teacher (senior leader), the challenges involved in writing about 'race', gender and sexuality in this context have proven much greater than they might have for someone else who is less involved. Therefore, it was important that I was very clear to the participants about my research interests at the outset. It also meant the need for tactful questioning. Finally, it necessitated careful attention to the way I have written up my findings. I may never know whether my participants disagree with my findings, approve of them, or are ambivalent; however, I have endeavoured to present the findings in a way least likely to cause irreparable harm to them (i.e., with analytical skill and sensitivity).

Reflexively adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality

In this section, I will explain how this study came to be, in part, about White *heterosexual* experience. After doing this, I will discuss some of the issues to do with researching in familiar settings and consider to what extent it is necessary to problematise my own impact on the research content and findings. In both sections, I will describe the ways in which my personal feelings, experiences and understandings have informed the objectives of the project, affecting the design, process and outcomes. In doing all of this, I will outline some of the things which troubled me throughout the interview process – the intellectual and emotional uncertainties – and defend the choices I have made.

Acknowledging my feelings, doubts, and insecurities, and their impact on my research design, is vitally important for two reasons. Firstly, following Peshkin, it is important so that I can demonstrate the ways in which my own subjectivities not only shaped my initial interest in the study, but also the things I became aware of during the research process: "the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings" (Peshkin, 1998, p. 18). Secondly, it is important to contextualise how my own assumptions and values may have subconsciously driven the interviews. Kannen, for example, writes:

"we must never become complacent in our expectations, interpretations, and feelings during the interviewing process, as they can impact the resulting research as much, if not more, than some of the interviews themselves." (Kannen, 2013, p. 186).

Understanding oneself is a critical aspect of qualitative research, particularly in relation to the things we pay attention to and the things we might fail to notice, and so what matters most is honesty, especially in relation to those aspects of the research which might cause personal discomfort and when one's own feelings are complicated. For this reason, it is entirely necessary that I should put myself under the lens; it would be irresponsible for me not to.

As I explained in Chapter 1, my initial interest in this study was based on my personal experience as a White gay man living and working in East Asia. In particular, I was concerned about the association of countries in the region with sex trade and sex tourism (see, e.g., Seabrook, 1996); the Asian fetish of some White men, colloquially referred to as 'yellow fever' (Chou and Taylor, 2018; Jackson, 2000; Zheng, 2016); the various cultural scripts concerning the sexual promiscuity of White men in East and Southeast Asia; and how this meant I might be interpreted by others. I was concerned about the intense power of stereotyping in this

context and the problems this creates for teachers' lives, as well as it being an issue for the recruitment and retention of teachers in international schools in the region, especially White women. This has to do with "the combustible and recombinant reaction of race with gender that produces sexualized racial stereotypes and racialized gender stereotypes" (Cho, 1997, p. 182), and the assumption that "only individuals of a particular kind are likely to be found in a given social setting" (Goffman, 1959, p. 13). For example, in my interview with David, a British teacher working in a school in a popular resort location in Southeast Asia, we discussed the associated lifestyle and the perceived difficulties for (heterosexual) White women in relation to dating. Talking about the gender imbalance amongst the overseas teaching staff in his school, he explained that single women often did not choose to stay there long because of the perceived difficulties in forming intimate relationships, which was not a problem for single men. I will discuss these ideas further in Chapters 6 and 7.

I was open about my sexuality during some of the interviews, although I did not disclose personal information, and I soon realised there was probably more to gain by focusing my attention on heterosexual relationships, rather than attempting to problematise my own experiences as a gay man as well. Put simply, it was one less thing for me to worry about, and so for this reason, it became the intent of my study to understand 'others' in my world better: to train my gaze as a gay man on heterosexual relationships.

On reflection, I felt relieved not to be interviewing any gay men and then actively chose not to recruit additional participants, thereby potentially avoiding an even more "self-conscious approach to authorship and audience." (Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont, 2003, p. 177). For example, I realised I would have felt uncomfortable reciprocating information with

other gay men, particularly in my position, opening up the possibility of talking about boyfriend troubles and sexual relationships. In some ways, this is counter to narratives of queer theory on 'finding ways of being together' (Vicars, 2008). However, I believe this strengthens my thesis. The absence of gay men in this study took away the possibility I might inadvertently say too much about myself during the interviews; it removed that pressure (Sikes, 2000). None of my participants indicated feeling particularly anxious, as I have at times, about "embodying a [sometimes] stigmatised identity" as a gay man (Vicars, 2008, p.98), except Sarah. Sarah was single at the time of her interview and felt she was at a disadvantage in relation to finding a male partner in her host country because she is a White woman.

Acknowledging all of this – declaring my positionality – is essential. Indeed, it would be morally reprehensible of me not to do so. As the interviews went on, I soon realised that the important questions for me, as researcher, were about how I could best 'employ my positionality' – a gay man researching the life experiences of heterosexual teachers – in order to amplify "how the formation of subjectivities and practices of self are discursively constituted in communities of practice and within relations of power." (Vicars, 2008, p. 107). Put simply, the queering of identities has to do with resisting networks of power/knowledge whose function is to normalise identity categories (McWhorter, 2012). Therefore, the overarching aim of my analysis became to examine the ways in which localised power-inflected discourses constitute White, *heterosexual* subjectivities in a process of social control.

Even as a novice researcher, and right from the start, I was keenly aware of the need to be mindful of my subjectivities 'in process' (Peshkin, 1998): how my own orientation towards the emerging ideas shaped my inquiry whilst doing the research – the moments of

doubt and uncertainty, and the ways in which I felt vulnerable – rather than thinking about this retrospectively in my data analysis. Through ongoing reflection, I was able to keep a sense of perspective and to be productive. I was sensitive to the data and, at the same time, creative. As Strauss and Corbin explain:

"Concepts and design must be allowed to emerge from the data." (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 34).

From a methodological standpoint, this is vitally important to understand why my attention and focus shifted.

Researching in a familiar setting

Researching one's own context is, as Dickson explains, "not for the faint-hearted." (Dickson, 2008, p. 122). However, unlike Dickson's (2008) research, this study was not specifically about the organisation I was employed in at the time. Nonetheless, I felt part of the wider 'team' (Goffman, 1959) of international school teachers in East and Southeast Asia – a wider professional network. I was also, for some of time, part of a different team, working as a senior leader in a UK state school, managing a very different set of challenges.

At points throughout the project, and for various reasons, as I will go on to explain, I experienced intensities of emotion (Dickson, 2008), and my decision to return to the UK, albeit with the view of doing so only temporarily, complicated the situation for me personally.

I was reflexively trying to analyse my own values at the same time as critically examining the values of my participants (Dickson, 2008). In addition, being an 'insider' to the population I was studying has potential costs that extend beyond the psychic and social levels, and which could impinge on my career. For this reason, the costs involved in doing the research, personally and professionally, for me *and* my participants, demanded careful consideration.

In the previous section, I was clear about how my interest in this project developed, and it is incontrovertible that the things that interest us in life will influence our academic pursuits. Put simply, I would not have been able to complete this project if I wasn't interested in the themes. However, this has necessarily involved making myself feel uncomfortable, and whilst, for example, I have continued to reflect on what might have changed about my professional identity (i.e., as a senior leader working in a fee-paying international school with predominantly children of the wealthy local elite), I have been reticent to write about it.

I never felt drawn to teaching; instead, it was something I ended up doing after graduating. It seemed like a sensible, safe choice after completing a drama degree. It also turned out to be something I loved and was good at. I don't ever remember mapping out a career for myself, but I have worked hard, done my best, and put myself forward for opportunities. I have never been contented to sit still (physically and metaphorically). I like to be busy, and my motivation is always to know the students and do my best for them, regardless of the context. Right now, I am excited about the opportunity to live and work in another country once again, and where (in the world) my career might take me in the future. I feel guilty about this only sometimes, although this is as much to do with being far away from my family as it is to do with the type of school and the concomitant lifestyle benefits.

The production of knowledge, and the quest for 'truth', involves a multiplicity of power-relations (Paechter, 1996; 1998) and there is a danger of people trying to make sense of who *I* am more than considering the relevance of my research for others like my participants. This has continued to preoccupy my thoughts about the project, and I am mindful of the fact that my subjectivities must not be worn as 'a badge of honour' (Peshkin, 1998). Of course, the impact of my own biography on the direction of the research is significant; however, this will not be, and nor should it be, a piece of confessional writing. In other words, whilst an element of 'self-exploration' is necessary (see, e.g., Ely et al, 1991), it just must not be allowed to take over.

In Chapter 2, I wrote about some of the potential problems associated with the model of international school my participants and I have worked in, although they are far more complex than there is scope for me to evaluate here. I also mentioned the problems created by the expansion of the international school sector for the countries in which teachers working there were trained to teach. These problems are important to acknowledge, but at the same time, this is a study about people who are teachers (teachers in international schools), rather than it being a study about the teaching profession. The interviews focused on the social context of the teachers' work, and whilst 'race' privilege was a concern (I will discuss the dramatic dominance of White teachers in the teachers' schools in Chapter 5), we did not talk about this in relation to curriculum design or the practice of teaching, for example. We also did not discuss issues to do with the recruitment, training and retention of teachers in the UK or in the other countries my participants were from.

I accept the possibility that this might be unpalatable for some people, but it is better to be honest about all of this, and about my own feelings and interests. Being aware of the similarities and the differences between myself and the participants means I cannot make claims to neutrality. Indeed, there were times when I had to consider if my own sensitivity to the situation led to a greater degree of scepticism about my participants' desires and motivations than was warranted. However, qualitative research yields findings which can never be understood in completely neutral terms, but which are coloured by knowledge and experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Ely et al, 1991). For this reason, there is nothing to be gained by being defensive (Tierney, 1998), and so I have chosen to keep the sense of the affective there throughout this thesis, and to write (at least a little bit) more about myself here. It is also important to state plainly my belief in the feminist argument that reasoning cannot be divorced from feelings. Ely at al, for example, write:

"qualitative research is not the methodology of choice for researchers who wish to remain dispassionate observers" (Ely et al, 1991, p. 131).

It is, of course, important for me to acknowledge that I am aware of my implication in the data. Gillies and Alldred (2012), for example, conclude:

"to ensure sensitivity to the heterogeneity of experience and power, there is a responsibility to place ourselves in the picture that we are 'describing', thereby revealing the partiality of our own perspective." (Gillies and Alldred, 2012, p. 48).

However, I will not go as far as to say that I should be considered part of the data.

My feelings have continued to be complicated, particularly around the time of my return to the UK, and so for this reason, as I have already discussed, it was necessary for me to take time to do the analysis. However, perhaps most importantly, it was necessary for me to set boundaries around when, with who, where and how much I was willing to talk about the project (Israel, 2002; Mattley, 1997; Poole, Giles and Moore, 2004). To safeguard me and my participants, I thought very carefully about the potential for others within the field to react negatively to my research interests (Dickson, 2008), and/or for the aims of the project to be misunderstood. For this reason, setting boundaries around the project was an important step to reduce the possibility of me, my participants, and my work being stigmatised and/or trivialised (Portelli, 2008).

Throughout the interview process, I remained very conscious of my role in the field and some of the tensions created by my own identity. However, whilst defining my insider status is problematic, I remain unapologetic about the potential benefits of my insider knowledge. As Sikes and Potts explain, I was "less likely to be affected by outsider's arrogance where researchers fail to understand what they observe." (Sikes and Potts, 2008, p. 177). My knowledge and expertise were important. I had shared frames of meaning with my participants, widening the scope of my lens. I was dealing with familiar terrain; I understood the language used; and, perhaps most importantly, I was empathetic. My insider credentials gave me credibility and so it is likely the participants were less suspicious of me. This was useful for rapport-building. I was also not a *complete* insider. To some extent, I could be described as what Patricia Hill Collins (1986) refers to as 'the outsider within'. For example, I do not identify as heterosexual, I do not have children, and none of my participants were in the same country as me. In addition, although I was somewhat of an insider at the time of the

interviews, living and working in Taiwan, I was less of an insider when I completed the analysis and finalised the manuscript, back in the UK.

What are some of the methodological issues involved in studying the intersection of 'race', gender and (hetero)sexuality in this context?

In this section, I will address some of the methodological issues surrounding my research questions and the application of my theoretical framework.

Foucault's historical excavations (1978; 1985; 1986) help us to understand the conditions of possibility – the rules that constrain how people think – and so, from a queer theoretical standpoint, Foucault, and subsequently Butler, have "extended the terms by which heterosexuality can be understood through [their] discursive analysis of heterosexuality as an effect of historical and cultural construction" (Carroll, 2012, p. 2). In particular, Foucault gives us an understanding of the ways in which modern discourses on sex and sexuality have established heterosexual relationships as the unassailable norm. However, methodologically, my reliance on Foucault raises some interesting questions. The questions are first of all to do with whether or not my own interest in the sexual promiscuity of some heterosexual White men in East and Southeast Asia – which is only one part of my study – does, in actuality, perpetuate the problems that concerned Foucault:

"the West has managed … to bring us almost entirely – our bodies, our minds, our individuality, our history – under the sway of a logic of concupiscence and desire'. (Foucault, 1978, p. 78).

The modern preoccupation with understanding one another in terms of sexuality is, of course, problematic and one of two important concerns that need to be acknowledged at this stage (see, e.g., Green (2010) for a discussion of the ways in which Foucault's work on disciplinary power may in fact expand the possibilities of the self). The second concern has to do with conceptualising this thesis within a framework of Western discourses.

As I have already said, when starting this project, I was concerned with the potential blurring of the lines between my personal and professional lives. This included how others might attempt to create a particular identity for me, attributing various kinds of meaning to my own interest in doing this research, based on their need to know *me* in terms of my own gender/sexual identity. In addition to this, I was mindful that – because of my theoretical framework – I might over-evaluate, and over-capitalise on, the problems to do with the fetishisation of bodies, as well as being attuned to the ways in which my participants may or may not do this. The Orientalist overtones of much Western thinking with regards to sexuality in this context are impossible to ignore (Said, 1978; Foster, 2004). Said, for example, refers to the "feminine penetrability" of the Orient that is apparent in much Western literature about the East, reflecting a singularly "male conception of the world" (Said, 1978, pp. 6-7). Similarly, problematising Foucault's influence in relation to understanding histories of sexuality, Chiang, in his introduction to a volume of essays about China, explains:

"the concept of sexuality as a Western invention continues to haunt the investigative thinking of Chinese historians on matters relating to erotic pleasure, sexual practices, and the body." (Chiang, 2018, p. 4).

However, even though Chiang goes on to emphasise the usefulness of Foucault's work for denaturalising sexual binaries that are similarly immutable and fixed in the Chinese context, this still does not solve the problems surrounding the dominance of Western discourses/ideologies in discussions about 'racialised' desire. For example, in the same volume of essays, Zhang's research about penis size and Chinese male sexual inadequacy reveals consensus amongst the participants that "the Western male sexual body was superior to that of the Chinese male." (Zhang, 2018, p. 177). Zhang attributes the concern with penis size, in part, due to China's self-repositioning on the global stage, and so whilst some of his political and economic arguments are less relevant to this investigation, he poses an important question with regards to 'racialised' desire – "the worship of the Western phallus" (Zhang, 2018, p. 181) – and the attraction of Chinese women to Western men:

"How can we separate cosmopolitan desire as an oppositional agenda and social critique of one's own society from colonial desire informed by Western hegemonic understanding of the body?" (Zhang, 2018, p. 181).

The participants in Zhang's research were all Chinese (male and female); my research participants are all White Westerners. However, the thrust of the question is equally important and something which has continued to concern me in relation to the sexual attention that I received from some men in Taiwan, as well as the problems for my

participants (i.e., when the focus of the interviews had to do with stereotypical understandings of 'interracial' relationships, gender and sexuality).

Nonetheless, 'race', gender and sexuality are all part of a bigger picture, and there was a danger in my approach to the interviewing and subsequent analysis that the idiosyncrasies and uniqueness of the teachers' own life experiences were lost or overlooked. Theories of the self are not reducible to theories about 'racial' and/or gender and/or sexual identities, but still the concerns I have mentioned must be acknowledged. Gillies and Alldred, for example, write:

"Exposing the political project we as researchers are engaged in clarifies our objectives, attempts to account for personal understandings and assumptions, and ultimately provides the only justifications we can for our judgements about the representations or interventions we make." (Gillies and Alldred, 2012, p. 57).

In other words, the concerns I have identified do not demolish my analysis of the data, but instead there must be some conditions, or rather caveats, relating to how my arguments can and should be used by others. One final concern of mine was whether I might be seen to be privileging White heterosexual experience, although this is easier to rebut. Ultimately, this study became about ways of living Whiteness and ways of living heterosexuality in the context of my research setting, and how this is different for White men and White women. These are valid questions.

Conclusions

Qualitative research is a fragmentary science, further complicated by the need for researchers to be flexible: creative and responsive to the emerging data. It is not easy for the researcher to escape their own feelings, especially if the researcher is already involved in the field – a process which demands introspection. This is because, as Williams and May explain, "our biographies are not an individual creation, but a result of a complex history of interaction with the physical and social worlds." (Williams and May, 1996, p. 118). The research can never be completely separated from the researcher's identity, and even less so when the terrain is familiar (Ely et al, 1991). For this reason, reflexivity was important in order to preserve the integrity of my research. This is so the audience is aware of my implication in the data. However, as I have said, I should not be considered part of the data. Even though acknowledging my subjectivities – the way my own identities are discursively constituted – could potentially 'benefit my soul' (i.e., in the spirit of confession: Paechter, 1996; 1998; Peshkin, 1998), what matters more for my audience, and what is, of course, in the best interests of my participants, is that I have taken a more focused approach to the analysis (Peshkin, 1998). In particular, I have been careful not to indulge my own feelings more than is absolutely necessary. I have proceeded with this study pragmatically, stating plainly that I believe that qualitative research is an interpretative process. For these reasons, it made a great deal of sense to focus my attention on heterosexual relationships, rather than muddying the water by bringing myself further into the frame.

Finally, it is important to state my belief that there is a need to be cautious when considering the postmodern and poststructuralist critiques of knowledge/truth. This is because, as Turner writes, "human conscious action is reduced to the effects of discourse [and] we are determined by what we are permitted to know." (Turner, 1996, p. 229). Similarly, Derbyshire, in his critique of queer theory, writes about the "bad habits of high theory in general" (Derbyshire, 1994, p. 39), which he notes are:

"a willful abstraction, a fetishising of discourse as such, a contempt for the merely empirical or mundane, the confusion of linguistic categories with lived identities, the substitution of verbal accommodations for political resolutions, and so on." (Derbyshire, 1994, p. 39).

Postmodern concerns with representation, subjectivity and meaning-making warrant as much caution as they do consideration because it would be easy to lose track of the purpose of the interviews. Holstein and Gubrium, for example, warn: "as valuable and insightful as they are, these 'linguistically attuned' approaches can emphasise the *hows* of the interview process at the expense of the *whats* of lived experience." (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p. 142). In other words, it would be easy for the objectives of my research to get lost in "the postmodern fog" (Agar, 1991, p. 188), and for my research questions to disappear completely.

In Chapter 5, I will begin to illustrate the social context in which the teachers in my study lived and worked. In particular, I will problematise the dramatic dominance of White teachers in their school communities. In relation to this, I will examine the ways in which the cultural dynamics constrain the teachers' performances and limit the ways in which their performances can be received and understood. In Chapter 6, I will focus on the men, exploring

the ways in which White male privilege is constituted in the international migration of school teachers to East and Southeast Asia. I will discuss some of the issues that arose during the interviews related to the performance of heterosexual White masculinity in this context, and problematise the identities available to the men in my study – the expectations they are subject to and the ways they are likely to be perceived (Sikes and Everington, 2004). In Chapter 7, I will compare the women's experiences to the men's experiences and identify some of the contradictions in the women's experiences. I will discuss the embodiment of (heterosexual) White femininity in this context and the ways in which the women experience the world from the physical and material place of their bodies.

Chapter 5

Performing the Role of a 'Good Westerner': Being an International School Teacher in East and Southeast Asia

Introduction

"When an individual plays a part he [sic] implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show 'for the benefit of other people'."

Goffman, 1959, p. 28

Throughout the interviews, the teachers in my study described their experiences as expatriate teachers in ways that could be seen as an attempt, or strategy, to legitimise their (privileged) position in their host countries, although it is likely they were relatively unaware that they were doing this (Goffman, 1959). In particular, there was a sense that the teachers were trying to underline their liberal, and anti-colonial, attitudes and values – to demonstrate their open mindedness relative to the provincialism and the racist preconceptions of some other Westerners (tourists, travellers, expatriates) – thereby strengthening their performance as 'good Westerners' (Scuzzarello, 2020). The notion of 'good Westerner' is borrowed from

Scuzzarello's (2020) study of older White migrants from Western nation states who have settled in Thailand after retirement. I will unpack what this means for my analysis in the first section of this chapter and although it is not an identical situation, I will explain why the same ideas are still relevant to the teachers in my study.

In the third section of this chapter, I will summarise the teachers' reasons for relocating and begin to illustrate the social context of their relocation – the given circumstances for the teachers' roles. In particular, I will analyse the performative nature of the teachers' identities, highlighting the gap between their individual experiences and possible perceptions of them (Butler, 1990). In the fourth section, I will consider ideas to do with reputation management for teachers in this context and explain why this is a team effort. In the final section, I will problematise the ways in which the professional status of international school teachers in this context is defined not only by their qualifications and experience, but also by their Whiteness. Throughout all of this, I will use Goffman's dramaturgical model of social life to explain how certain elements of the teachers' experiences have the potential to be destructive to their characterisation of themselves (i.e., because of how they might then be interpreted by an audience):

> "Given the fragility and the required expressive coherence of the reality that is dramatized by a performance, there are usually facts which, if attention is drawn to them during the performance, would discredit, disrupt, or make useless the impression that the performance fosters." (Goffman, 1959, p. 141).

Combining Goffman (1959) and Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988), I will examine the ways in which the cultural dynamics in this context constrain the teachers' performances

and limit the ways in which their performances can be received and understood. I will show how the relations of power – the institutional pressures and societal norms/expectations – shape the epistemological and ontological possibilities for the teachers' personal and professional 'racialised' selves.

The subsequent chapters of my data analysis will focus on the ways in which the participants' experiences of living in their host countries were different depending on their gender identity. In this chapter, I will lay the groundwork by connecting with the 'teacherly' aspect of my study; this is, after all, a project about teachers.

'Good Westerner'

In this section, I will compare the strategies of self-presentation that were used by the lifestyle retirees in Scuzzarello's (2020) study and the teachers in my study. Scuzzarello provides an empirical account of how older White migrants from Western nation stations negotiate, practice, and justify their privilege in Thai society to secure a better lifestyle for themselves after retirement. Scuzzarello's primary concern is the way in which her participants' better life in retirement is made possible by their economic and social privilege, and what this has to do with the legacy of colonialism and global 'racialised' hierarchies. For these reasons, the scepticism of her participants' attempts to 'underline their righteousness' is entirely necessary, and even though the teachers' situation is different, a certain amount of scepticism is necessary when considering their motivations too. The issues surrounding migration privilege and the politics of mobility (Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Maher and

Lafferty, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020) are just as pertinent to international school teachers as they are to any other category of White, Western migrant.

To justify their decision to be in Thailand, the female retirees in Scuzzarello's study claimed knowledge of the local culture in order to validate their belief that it was the 'rightful' place for them to be. Conversely, none of my teachers, male or female, indicated feeling a strong, 'natural' affinity with their host countries (even though some of the teachers had met their spouses locally and Marie now had children):

"Most women claim knowledge about what they construct as authentic 'Thainess': a non-materialistic, kind-spirited society that lives by a slow-paced lifestyle following nature's own rhythm. They present themselves as being spiritually connected to Thailand, thus making it their rightful place to be, and consume what they think is Thai culture and religion for their own personal gratification, by tattooing alleged Buddhist symbols, wearing amulets, and displaying Buddha icons in their homes." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1625).

For the retirees in Scuzzarello's study, the ways in which they attempted to 'fit in' and show what they believed to be a 'natural' understanding of Thailand and Thai culture was a way of characterising themselves as 'good Westerners'. For the teachers, it appeared to be the reverse. They were, first and foremost, teachers who had been looking for a new role and, as I will explain in the next section, for most of them, their job search was global rather than specific to East/Southeast Asia. They possessed a level of cultural competence and professionalism which meant they were never going to claim to 'belong' where they were; however, they were able to *adapt* to the situation. For some of them, there was the

impression that this could have been almost anywhere, although Marie, for example, said she couldn't imagine herself living in the Middle East due to perceived cultural differences:

"I wouldn't have gone to the Middle East. I have no interest in living in the Middle East. I'm like the most feminist person in the world. I would struggle to keep my mouth shut. Erm, I would have a problem with it on various levels."

It appeared to be important to the teachers, including Marie, to make clear that they were not specifically attracted to living and working in East/Southeast Asia, rather it was a combination of circumstances that brought them there (i.e., first wanting to teach overseas and then finding job opportunities). Tina, for example, said:

"I was looking for a job. I didn't know where I wanted to go, just that I wanted to get out of [my country]."

The idea that 'it could have been anywhere' is significant in relation to how the teachers wanted to be seen by me. David, for example, said:

"Wherever you are in the world, you know, it's not the culture you grew up in, so… you know, having to be respectful, and really plan your… plan the business of the school around a different set of values, erm, around the culture. So, yeah. There's lots of [the local] culture that I really, really respect and value, and there are certain elements that I struggle with at times."

When I asked David if he thought it might be easier for some people to adjust to living in the country than others, he replied:

"if you're internationally minded and you're able to be flexible, or fit in, then [this country] is an easy place to live. If you're someone who expects your host country to, erm, to be flexible to you, then [this country] can be a very difficult place with some, erm, alien aspects of the culture. You know, saving face, and what appears to be a very placid culture can become a very heated environment, just by saying the wrong thing, or doing the wrong thing, or pushing the wrong buttons. For some people who can't show that level of flexibility or cultural understanding, then I think actually [this country] can be a disaster. For those people who are just very open minded, and happy to go with, 'do you know what, I'm just going let this happen', then it can be a very wonderful experience."

William had a different way of looking at the situation. Initially, he emphasised the importance of being willing to challenge one's own preconceptions about places and people:

"[the move] was exciting … I was right that it would be very different to the UK, but I was wrong in which ways."

However, he may have undermined his performance (for some if not most audiences) by going on to talk about the availability of cheese instead of something arguably more profound:

"You don't realise until you actually live somewhere … underneath the fabric, when you live somewhere, it's much more cosmopolitan, you can find things you thought were impossible. You can find cheese."

The mention of cheese was, for me, anticlimactic.

Freddie also told me that he enjoyed "experiencing" different cultures (he had worked in several countries across the region) but went on to say it was "really easy" to live in his current location "because there are so many international schools." He commented:

"there's a huge, erm, teacher social circle which mingles between all the different schools and I think without too much difficult you will find your niche."

Finding comfort in familiarity, be it with cheese or like-minded people, was probably an important coping strategy. Nevertheless, by also emphasising their cultural openness and presenting their intentions in a positive light (e.g., 'internationally minded', open to new experiences and flexible), there was a sense that some of the participants, like the retirees in Scuzzarello's study, believed they were 'good' expatriates. Indeed, as Binkley writes:

"Cultural and psychological anti-racisms place certain demands on Whites as interpreters and empathizers, bearers of cultural competency and the capacity to divine the others' standpoint – a task that is premised on the persistence of profound divides of racialized difference that demand of anti-racist Whites a robust sympathetic imagination." (Binkley, 2016, p. 193).

However, the participants' primary identities were as teachers or, more precisely, international school teachers, which implies a mobile lifestyle (Savva, 2015), and so they felt able to say what they did. David, for example, was not necessarily deliberately romanticising his experience, unlike the retirees.

The situation for the teachers is far more nuanced than for the retirees; the relations of power and privilege in this context are complex, which has to do with the dynamic

positioning of the various actors in the international school space and the power-relations that exist between them. For example, there was no indication that the teachers saw a direct need to 'improve' things for others where they were, unlike the retirees, some of whom were involved in volunteering activities:

> "[The retiree's] privilege embedded in global power inequalities gives them the power to enter new local social structures and to deem them in need of improvement and alignment to Western values and norms." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1624).

Nevertheless, in Michael's interview, he hinted at this idea when he spoke about some of the job opportunities for local people that had been created by his school. I will return to what Michael said about this later in this chapter; however, the important point to emphasise now is that certain types of international school could be criticised for importing Western values and for maintaining social and 'racial' inequalities in the teachers' host countries (see, e.g., Gardner-McTaggart, 2021; Lee and Wright, 2016; Machin, 2017).

The teachers, unlike the retirees, lived in a diverse range of countries and they were there to work; they were contributing to the local economies. Still, to feel personally happy, and to feel a sense of accomplishment, it was important for the teachers to demonstrate the ways in which they were able to 'fit in'. This aspect of the teachers' performances is similar to the retirees, albeit executed differently, and it appeared to be integral in establishing their credibility. For example, and as David made clear, possessing a level of openness, and intercultural awareness, was precisely what my participants believed had enabled them to make a success of their relocation – to be able to adapt to living in their host countries and to

'fit in'. Writing about the challenges for teachers who are new to working in schools overseas, Halicioglu explains:

"Surprises related to the new cultural context are inevitable, and working through these challenges will enable personal growth. The number of teachers who move around the globe happily and confidently demonstrates that such challenges can be surmounted, if there is the will to do so." (Halicioglu, 2015, p. 252).

The teachers in my study spoke about aspects of the local culture they found challenging. However, by also telling me they were able to adapt to the culture, they were showing me they were willing and able to 'improve' themselves. In this way, they represented their experience of teaching internationally as being personally beneficial to them. The teachers also frequently attempted to represent themselves positively by comparing themselves to others in their world, which was the same as the retirees and most likely for the same reason – to justify their economic and social privilege. Indeed, it could be argued that this was a necessary strategy for both groups.

Scuzzarello explains how the retirees in her study compared the 'unacceptable' behaviour of some Western tourists and other expatriates in Thailand to their own purported 'social progressivism' and 'cultural openness' as a strategy to make themselves appear 'good', despite some of the men paying for sex:

"Even though Ole [male participant] was buying sex, he was doing so in a better way than the 'bad' Westerners, with no alcohol or drugs involved and with the aim to find a Thai 'girl' who he could marry and take out of poverty." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1623).

The male participants in Scuzzarello's study compared themselves favourably to Western tourists "who are only after cheap drinks and sexual adventures with no strings attached." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1623). However, as I have mentioned, the retirees' situation, both male and female, is obviously not the same as the teachers. The teachers' reason for being overseas is fundamentally different. For example, there was no indication that any of the participants in my study were either buying, or specifically looking for, sexual/romantic encounters with local women or men. It is highly unlikely any of them would have said this about themselves, but most of them mentioned this when speaking about the stereotypes:

CB   Thinking about the wider expatriate community, what are some of the stereotypes of Westerners in particular that choose to live and work in the country?

Freddie   [Laughs.] I would say there are two stereotypes. You've got the fat older gentleman with a very young, very slim often very pretty [local] girlfriend. Erm, and then you've got the extended backpacker, young person. Both stereotypes exist.

Other participants made similar observations about the stereotype of older White men and this was not specific to any one country. The prevalence of the stereotype, and the stereotype of heterosexual White men of all ages who fetishize Asian women (Woan, 2008), creates particular problems for the identities all heterosexual White men living in East and Southeast Asia, including teachers. Sarah, for example, a teacher from New Zealand, who was the only single female participant at the time of the interviews, said:

"There's also a lot of people who come, some men, and they've already got a girlfriend, or they're not interested in [local] women, but they often get put into that category as well."

Similarly, William, acknowledging the problem for White, Western men involved in relationships with Asian women, said they would be "feeding the stereotype." He then went on to say this about himself, and being asked questions about his wife, who was also British:

"I often get asked the question, 'where's your wife from?' before they've met her … so they're obviously [making assumptions]. It's on their minds as well as mine. [Laughs.]"

As Stanley (2012) explains, writing about teachers of English as a foreign language in East Asia, even though the social arrangements are advantageous for White men, and even if they voice their disapproval of the stereotypical behaviours of other White men, they cannot control the identities that still might be attributed to them. This idea will be my focus in the next chapter; however, the salient point for now is that some White men may well want to deny having a particular sexual interest in Asian women and make clear that it is not their reason for living and working in Asia (something that Adam did, which I will discuss in the next chapter). In other words, White men in this context might feel compelled to say they are not like some other White men; that they are 'good Westerners'.

Gareth, a teacher in Southeast Asia, now aged 38, had moved to the region with his long-term Asian partner. He had been teaching overseas for 7 years. His partner was originally from his host country but they had met in the Middle East (where Gareth was teaching) and

so, because of this, at the time of his relocation, he had a closer association with his host country than the other participants in my study. Gareth, who said that he drank alcohol "just occasionally", spoke about Western tourists who visit the country in part because it is less expensive than their home countries and, in particular, because alcohol is relatively cheap and so they can drink more. Other participants made similar observations, although the cost of things varied between their host countries. David, for example, referred to some of the Western tourists in his resort location as "two-week millionaires":

> "for two weeks [pre-Covid] they'd spend money like it's going out of a fashion. They'll rent expensive villas, spend huge amounts on food, and the local population, especially the education population of teachers, we just sort of transcend that a little bit and we smile… we dip in and out if it."

There was no suggestion that my participants refrained from socialising in bars and clubs, although when they did, they talked about the need to moderate their behaviour. This is arguably no different to being a schoolteacher in the West (in the teachers' home countries). Drawing on Foucault's (1985) discussion of standards of sexual morality, the professional status of schoolteachers means they will always be held to different standards of behaviour in their private lives compared to people in some other professions. However, as I explained in Chapter 2, there is arguably more at stake for teachers in international schools.

International school teachers' right to live and work in their host countries is invariably less secure than in their home countries (Bunnell, 2016), and potentially less secure than other expatriates due to the expectations of them *because* they are teachers. This means that, for teachers in this context, even 'backstage fraternisation' is a threat to 'the show' (Goffman,

1959). To illustrate this point, Goffman (1959) uses the example of baseball players representing opposing sides of fans who are required, by the rules, to refrain from friendly conversations with each other before a game begins. Therefore, the teachers, like the retirees in Scuzzarello's study, stood to gain from drawing boundaries between themselves and other Westerners in their context. This was particularly evident in the ways in which the male participants distanced themselves from the stereotypes of other White men in this context, and I will discuss this further in the next chapter. However, the professional status of schoolteachers means they are still more vulnerable than other groups of Westerners (Bunnell, 2016; Savva, 2017) and this is amplified by 'race'. Put another way, the teachers experienced heightened visibility due to 'race'; their White 'racial' identities meant they were denied a structurally normative position within the host society – at least away from the school site – which invites scrutiny. In Savva's (2017) study, for example, one of the participants, an American teacher in China, who had previously lived in Japan, said:

"In Japan you just get used to people staring at you and usually you just smile back at them. I think on a subway a couple times I got my hair pulled out … they actually think blonde hair is good luck. Usually they are from the countryside if they've done that, like people who live in Tokyo proper won't pull your hair out." (Savva, 2017, p. 587).

There were situations in which my participants felt similarly aware of being visibly different to the majority (although none of them mentioned similar physical interactions), which led to them being more alert than in their home countries to the ways in which other people might think about them. This state of constant monitoring, as Foucault explains, describing the effects of the Panopticon, "assures the automatic functioning of power." (Foucault, 1977, p. 201). Discourses of teacher professionalism mean that the teachers must take care to manage

their reputation and respond to reputation threats in their private lives (which is not the same for all Westerners in this context), and this was clear throughout all of the interviews. Tina, for example, said:

"I know for a fact that certain people have been called into the headmaster's office and been told off for certain escapades over the weekend."

David also said:

"we've had plenty of casualties in the four years I've been here. People who've gone home due to inconsistencies in their ethical values. Some people have burnt themselves out very quickly."

Similarly, when I asked Gareth if he knew of any teachers who been 'moved on' because of incidents in their private lives, he said he did, replying:

"It tends to be centred around people's erm, nightlife basically. Their drinking, their going out and also, er, their dating. So people have got in trouble."

The participants' quotes highlight the precarity of teachers' lives in this context – the relative insecurity for teachers working in international schools compared to working in their home countries (Bunnell, 2016), including the potential for immediate dismissal or non-renewal of their contracts due to behaviours in their private lives deemed, by the school leadership/administration, to be inappropriate. I will develop these ideas further when I write about reputation management; however, it is important to state now that there are ways in which performing the role of a 'good Westerner' was not only an expectation of the teachers'

schools but also a requirement. Indeed, as David and Tina made clear, not *all* teachers will manage to stage a successful performance, and so the 'disruptive' members of the 'team' (Goffman, 1959) are likely to be let go.

As well as connecting the need to moderate their behaviour and respond to reputation threats in their private lives to the fact they are teachers (i.e., in their private lives, they indicated that they were careful not to bring themselves and, therefore, their schools into disrepute), it is also possible, drawing on Scuzzarello (2020), to contend that the teachers were using their 'good' character to justify many of the benefits associated with their chosen lifestyle in their host country. They were generally very well paid, certainly relative to the average local salary, which meant they could live comfortably, and they were supported by, and looked after by, their schools in other ways. I will write more about this in the next section; however, what was clear in all of the interviews, was that the teachers wanted to let me know they were grateful for their experiences, even though there might have been some aspects of living and working in their host countries which, at times, caused them personal discomfort (e.g., the ways in which White men risk being stereotyped).

Appearing to be grateful was another way of performing the role of 'good Westerner'. Sarah, for example, when asked about the benefits of working in her school relative to working in her home country, New Zealand, replied:

Sarah   Like, there's so many benefits. Obviously, the money. The school that I work at, we're not actually on a high scale compared to a lot of the international schools, but even so, what I take home… I think the money I get paid is about the same as I get in New

Zealand, but the cost of living here is *so* much cheaper, so I can do a lot more things. I can save more money, I can travel more, just have a really nice lifestyle here.

CB   What is it about your lifestyle? Good weather? Less expensive? Different things to do?

Sarah Well, if I was in New Zealand now, I'd have to share a flat with other people because of the cost of living. Whereas here, I can live by myself, in a condo, in a new part of town, like close to things. Erm… I can go out, and eat often, whereas at home, that's not an option really. There's so much more to do. There's a lot of places you can go easily and affordably compared to back home.

As well as emphasising the benefits of working in her school, Sarah, like the participants in both mine and Scuzzarello's study, was keen to demonstrate the ways in which she was respectful of the culture and traditions of her host country. For Sarah, this had to do with learning the local language. In her initial survey response, she wrote:

"I love [this country] and feel that because I have learnt a good amount of [the language] I am respected more by [the local] people."

I asked Sarah about this during the interview, although not specifically what she thought was a "good amount". I asked if learning the language was something she was intent on doing when she moved to the country.

Sarah's situation was somewhat different to the other participants. Sarah had visited her host country once before on holiday. After returning home to New Zealand, she saw a teaching job advertised in the northeast of the country, in a much smaller city to where she was now. She was successful in applying for the job and worked there for a year before

realising it wasn't for her; however, she wanted to stay in the country, and so she looked for a job in the capital:

> "the city I was in was very, very small. I didn't know much about it before I took that job and I, erm, so I worked there for a year, realised that it wasn't like, not the place for me, but suddenly was like wow, actually, there's this big, I love [this country], it would be quite amazing to work in [this city]. And then… I didn't really know too much about international schools before. And so I just started looking really."

Given the location in which Sarah lived and worked at first, with far fewer expatriates, she said that learning the language was something she *had* to do. Nonetheless, she went on to say:

> "If you can say more than hello and thank you, and you can say it in the right tone, they [local people] just absolutely love it."

Whilst Sarah clearly had very good intentions and, indeed, the imperative to learn the language was greater for her, at first, than for my other participants, the way she described what she perceived to be the reaction from the local people is problematic. Her response implied that no matter how limited her ability to use the language was, the 'respect' she felt for trying to do so was deserved and necessary, since other 'less good Westerners' often don't bother. John spoke similarly. When I asked about his ability in the local language, he replied:

> "It's not too bad. In terms of… I would put myself… I sound arrogant here, but like, this is not actually impressive, I put myself in the top ten percent of expats. But probably… I did some lessons. I was bought some lessons as a birthday present. I did some lessons.

And I do have a few friends who are [local] and will let me try out [the local language] with them. And I do try to use [local language] when I'm travelling… taxis or buses or ordering food or speaking to [the local] staff at school. A lot of the cleaners I will try to speak [the local language] to. So it's… I try. I was never very good at languages anyways so I don't know why I thought I'd try… why I would be any good at [local language]. You have to be doing it all the time and there's just not many opportunities really in [the city] unless you commit to a very different lifestyle."

John, like Sarah, was clearly trying to show his cultural sensitivity, positioning himself "structurally and morally as a 'good migrant'" (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1608). However, global asymmetries of power mean that despite the precariousness of the teachers' position (i.e., the teachers' right to live and work in their host countries is not always guaranteed), their cultural, social and economic privilege which is, of course, 'racialised', enabled them to relocate to their host countries with a degree of confidence that is not available to all migrants, and creates an illusion of superiority that is almost impossible for them to shake off (Moosavi, 2022; Scuzzarello, 2020).

There is a broad array of actors in the international school setting who are densely interrelated (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015), and so "the dynamic and symbiotic processes of social relation [create] divisions, alliances and departures along a range of social and material difference." (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 49). For this reason, and to keep up a successful performance as 'good Westerners', the teachers, as John indicated, had to be able to demonstrate they could move with at least some degree of confidence between the different social strata of the local culture, as well as moving in the cultural milieu of other expatriates, tourists and travellers. However, this may or may not involve learning the language. Even though the potential for psychological disorientation is profound (the teachers are

continuously monitoring their performances and adjusting their performance according to external factors, always thinking about how they might be compared to others), the context of the participants' work meant that, for most of them, learning the local language was not a necessity. Paul, for example, after explaining that it was difficult to get involved with the people outside of the school community if you don't know the language, then admitted that learning it wasn't a priority for him. It was a situation he could live with:

"You know, I'm not a big language person. I know I need to, and I have my own list and things on my phone, key words and phrases that I'm focused on. Some people are like I'm going to use the summer to lean [the language], but that's not me. I'm not going to do that. So that's my own fault and I know that by doing that, I'm limiting myself."

Tina also acknowledged the difficulties involved in not speaking the local language, but benefited from the fact her fiancée was able to communicate on her behalf (she was engaged to a Black Caribbean man whom she had met locally and who had lived there longer):

"Language is the biggest challenge. I love languages, I'm bilingual, but [this language] is a big no! My partner speaks it fluently hence why it's always been easier for us to live here. I count on him for a lot of things. In fact, everything, which is why we can live in a [local] compound."

The situation was different for Marie, who was unique in my study. She had married an Asian man whom she met locally, and they had children together. For her, the imperative to learn the local language was greater because of her extended family:

"I speak probably better [local language] than the average Westerner because my in-laws don't speak any English."

I will return to Marie's story in Chapter 7.

The performative nature of international school teachers' identities: understanding the context and the consequences of the teachers' relocation

In this section, I will consider the performative nature of the teachers' identities, focusing specifically on the consequences of their decision to live and work outside of their home countries. I will argue that the teachers define themselves in relation to an external set of standards – the definition of 'good Westerner' when applied to international school teachers – which are then partially internalised (Butler, 1990). For example, John, like Sarah, compared himself favourably to other Westerners in relation to learning the local language, and even the participants in my study who had little or no knowledge of the local language usually expressed shame or regret because of this. Joel, for example, said:

"There is no need to learn [the local language] which I think is a bit bad sometimes."

Appearing ashamed of the situation was hardly surprising. It would have been difficult for the participants to say anything to the contrary. In other words, whilst there was no reason to doubt that their means of self-presentation were sincere, it was in their interests to represent

themselves in this way, strengthening their performances as 'good Westerners'. Goffman explains:

"Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself [sic] in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain. Sometimes the individual will be calculating in his activity but be relatively unaware that this is the case." (Goffman, 1959, p. 17).

However, the knowledge claims that circulate around White teachers' identities in this context (i.e., do with being relatively wealthy, White, and mobile expatriates) restrict the field of improvisation and have the potential to discredit their performances. This is an idea that I will develop throughout the remainder of this chapter and it is arguably the most important part of my analysis. This is because, as I explained in my theoretical framework, how my participants see themselves is inextricably linked to how they may be seen, or at least how they would hope to be seen, by others – how they might be 'racialised' as White.

During the interviews, the teachers in my study stated various reasons for moving to the region. Alice and Gareth moved with their partners. Alice had moved from the USA to her city in East Asia for her husband's work and found her teaching job after arriving in the city. Her husband worked for a multinational corporation and when I asked whose job was a priority, she said that it was simply easier for her husband to find a position overseas within his company, and that it was always the plan for her to find a job later, "wherever we ended up." She said she was never too concerned about finding a job because "everywhere needs teachers." Adam moved to be with his girlfriend at the time. They met each other in the UK

and she had then returned home, but not long after he arrived to be with her, she ended their relationship. After this, he began a relationship with a teaching assistant at his school.

The other participants all indicated similar reasons to each other to explain their initial move abroad: wanting change in their lives; a desire to travel; wanting to experience living and working in another country. Overall, my data is consistent with the finding of Savva's research into the characteristics of English-speaking teachers working in international schools:

"There was a strong indication … that educators who chose to work and live abroad were inclined to do so because of the high value they ascribed to travel." (Savva, 2015, p. 26).

This is not surprising given the direction of the teachers' careers. However, whilst some of the participants talked about the value they ascribed to the educative and intercultural aspect of living in their host countries, this was not always the impression that was created. For example, the participants in my study most frequently socialised with other international school teachers/expatriates and not all of them had attempted to learn the local language. In addition, the teachers' schools offered either a British or American curriculum, and were mostly staffed with foreign nationals. With the exception of Sarah (from New Zealand) and Tina (from a country in Western Europe), there was little evidence that the teachers had applied for overseas jobs to reflect on their beliefs about education. Indeed, the familiarity of their schools' approaches to education meant it was a comfortable transition for them. For these reasons, there is likely to be a gap between the teachers' individual experiences and others' perceptions of them. This was also a theme in Tarc, Mishra Tarc and Wu's (2019) study of international school teachers with families. One of their participants described the

'richness' in her children's experiences, describing the children as 'citizens of the world'. However, as the researchers explain, the extent to which social relations with other mobile elites in the unique context of an elite 'international' education qualify the children as 'citizens of the world' is contestable.

Except for Alice, Adam and Gareth, none of my participants gave specific reasons for being in their particular countries. Where they were was simply the result of their job search (although the male and female participants described their initial experience of deciding to move from their home countries in quite different ways, and I will analyse this in Chapters 6 and 7). Michael, for example, said he loved his previous school in London, and the opportunities afforded by living in London. For reasons that I will go to explain, underlining the positive aspects of his previous incarnation as a teacher was significant. He also spoke about becoming fed up with the wintertime in the UK, and going to school and coming home in the dark, but said that he was not initially considering moving to Southeast Asia:

"I just kinda started to have a little browse around what was available, and there were lots of opportunities in China at that time. I'm sure they're still growing. Erm, but I was, pretty dead set on moving to South America. I'd travelled round there quite extensively, I spoke a bit of Spanish, I enjoyed the culture and, er, er, the climate. I was looking actually at [South American country and one city] in particular. There is, er, an international school [in the city]. But the more research that I did, erm, you know, I started to kind of get information that they, they're a little bit... less confident with what I felt I needed to be in, in, in a secure school, in terms of quality, you know, in terms of me being able to enjoy my job, in terms of financially, er, you know, enough money to enjoy myself. Er, possibly save. I think maybe I was thinking about that at the time. Erm, and... you know... all of this was a possibility until I saw the advert for [this job]."

The story of his job search was consistent with what other participants said. Marie, for example, described her current location as "just a bit of an accident really in terms of the actual specific place." Her next move, however, was strategic. She was leaving her current school and country at the end of her contract, and her new location needed to be a place where both she *and* her husband would be able to work.

Paul, who had the second longest international career of all my participants, now a senior leader at a school in East Asia, said this about finding his first job in an international school. His experience was similar to Michael's:

"So I had this push to go travel. And, erm, found myself at a job fair, and it was kind of surreal, and I don't even know about researching it, suddenly I was at a Search[8] job fair, it was late in the recruiting season, the only schools there were basically Middle Eastern schools, and I interviewed and was offered a job in [the Middle East]."

I will return to Paul's story at the end of this section, but he went on to say that he had not heard of the country he moved to before attending the job fair. His rather casual, indifferent approach to wherever he might end up appeared not to be unusual. Freddie, for example, a headteacher and the eldest participant in my study, had been overseas the longest (twenty-one years, one year longer than Paul) and had worked in a number of East and Southeast Asian countries. I asked him about the specific appeal of the region, and he replied:

"Erm… I'm not sure it was such a conscious choice to stay in Asia, I think it's just how it worked out. Erm… I do really like it, erm, cost of living's low, work's always enjoyable,

---

[8] *Search Associates* is a recruiting agency for international teachers.

I like living in a different culture and experiencing a different culture… Erm, but I don't think… I think you're overstating that it was a conscious decision though."

Even Gareth, who knew that he eventually wanted to move to his partner's home country, explained that it was a colleague (in the Middle East) who had seen the role advertised and shown it to him: "just a lucky coincidence."

As I explained in the previous section, for these internationally mobile teachers, the assumption that they could 'ply their trade' almost anywhere in the world has to do with their definition of 'good Westerner' when applied to international school teachers; it appeared to be a defining characteristic of their professionalism. At the same time, however, the issues surrounding migration privilege and the politics of mobility (Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020), as well as the types of school they worked for, means that the authenticity of the teachers' performances is likely to be called into question. For example, when I asked John about the advantages of living and working in his host country, he immediately spoke about his much higher salary relative to working as a teacher in the UK, before chastising himself for doing this: "That makes me sound like a total mercenary!"

When I asked Marie about the assumptions that could be made locally about the teachers in her school, she replied:

"I think there's an assumption that [because we work in this school] we're wealthy."

Marie did not specifically connect this to 'race'; however, the participants in my study had access to the symbolic and material resources to be able to move to the region in the first

place, which is to do with their cultural Whiteness (Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020). They also worked in well-paying premium international schools attended by expatriate students and wealthy local elite.

Another way in which the teachers appeared to define their professionalism is that, during the interviews, their desire to travel superseded whatever frustrations they may have felt teaching in their home countries before. There was widespread acknowledgement that working in their current schools was, in many ways, easier; however, this was not given as a reason for their relocation. Instead, my participants appeared to allow themselves to reflect on this retrospectively. For example, whilst Michael initially spoke about how much he loved his school in London, something that he went on to repeat, he also mentioned that his new role was less stressful:

"it's less stressful teaching at the school. I loved teaching at [my last school in the UK] but it was a much more stressful environment. I loved the kids, I remember one class I didn't like teaching, the rest of them I really enjoyed teaching. But here, you know, the kids are saying thank you at the end of a really shit lesson and that… you forget about that over time. It's much less stressful."

John made a similar comment, although he took more care than Michael did to emphasise that he still found teaching professionally rewarding:

"I was teaching in an inner-city state school, you know, it was tough, and it was very rewarding, and very new to me, and exciting. Teaching is still that to me and I love it, but it's a completely different job that I have here."

John went on to explain that he was not averse to returning to work in a UK state school, and that working in a private international school created "different stresses." This was similar to my own experience and, whether or not John does ever return, it seemed to be important to him to explain that it was a possibility. For example, saying this could have been a deliberate strategy to defend himself against the assertion that he would simply prefer an easier job/life. Adam was more candid about his experience:

> "It makes it really hard to imagine going back to the UK and teaching in a school. Obviously, when I was in the UK, I really enjoyed working in my school. It wasn't that I was unhappy."

In relation to UK (state) schools being more challenging, William talked about the "policing" of behaviour in his UK state school ("thirty percent of your job"), which he described as a "fairly rough" boys' comprehensive school. He compared the students in his current school to his former students in the UK. He said that the students in his current school were more motivated and had more supportive parents. He also compared the workload and said that his school in the UK was more bureaucratic:

> "There was more fear of more hoops to jump through. I don't want to sound like a clichéd teacher, but when I left the UK, I felt I was just given more time to do planning, teaching, marking."

However, when William spoke about this, he also appeared to be aware of the ways in which he might be negatively stereotyped and, like John and Adam, he didn't say it was unbearable.

In my experience, the regular school holidays means that teachers in the UK who complain about their workload sometimes receive little sympathy from those outside the profession. For teachers in international schools, especially those in tropical climates, the potential for negative reactions is even greater, and so it is perhaps for this reason that William was also careful to point out that his former school in the UK gave him a good start in his career:

"it wasn't a terrible place to work. I got a really good grounding."

Freddie was the most frank in the way he compared teaching overseas with what he remembered about teaching at 'home', and it was possible that he felt able to do so given how long he had been away. He said:

"I'm astounded how anyone managed to sustain a career teaching in the UK because it's so unremittingly hard work and unrewarding and… not a pleasant thing to do."

Apart from Freddie, the other participants were more measured when they spoke about the schools/systems they had left behind. However, in talking to me, It would have been potentially embarrassing had they given the impression that they couldn't cope in the classroom at home, which was why they had gone overseas, or that they were specifically looking for an easier job/life. The participants had control over how they represented themselves in the interviews and, as Goffman explains, it was likely to have been important for them to minimise certain aspects of their experiences in order to protect the reputation of *all* teachers in their own schools and similar schools:

"One overall objective of any team is to sustain the definition of the situation that its performance fosters. This will involve the over-communication of some facts and the under-communication of others." (Goffman, 1959, p. 141).

However, there are other ways in which it is more difficult for the participants to control the audience's response, which has to do with the dissonances between the way they sometimes talked about their experiences and the impression of reality that was created. These dissonances throw doubt on the participants' projections of themselves.

Many of the participants talked about the risk factors involved in their relocation. However, given the countries they had moved to, and the reputation of their schools, I would argue that the risks were overstated. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that the risks for the teachers in this context were less about personal safety, or job (in)security, and more to do with whether or not they would be personally happy in Asia. This was emphasised by Marie when she suggested that international teaching can be a lonely experience for some:

"I think for single people it's probably got that perception that it's all fun and games. You know, you're making loads of money, there's loads of travelling, and all that kind of stuff. But I think it can be quite lonely. Sometimes. For some people."

My participants indicated that this was especially relevant to single White women in this context, an idea that I will explore in Chapters 6 and 7, but it may also be true for some men. At the end of Michael's interview, I asked him about the downsides of being where he was, and of teaching overseas. He initially responded by talking about being away from his family

and friends, as well as mentioning the traffic and pollution. However, after the interview had concluded, he sent me this in an email:

"Having reflected on your last question the things I think might have been useful to say were that I often felt lonely in the first year but was confident that would pass (it did). Also the transient nature of the job (for many) makes forming friendships very, very different and I think that is interesting as there are positives and negatives."

The teachers' schools seemed to be aware of this possibility and took steps to mitigate the personal impact of the teachers' relocation. For example, Tina spoke about her experience of arriving in her host country:

"induction was phenomenal. Our school did their very best to make sure everyone was happy, everyone got together, they organised everything for us. So, dinner in the evening."

The teachers were supported through the process of relocation; given induction, which involved cross-cultural orientation; and received support in finding, or were provided with, accommodation. On arrival, some of them said they were picked up at the airport and either taken straight to their accommodation or were put up in hotels to start with. In Michael's case, he was provided with a domestic helper:

"I had a maid, er, assigned to me, which I found very, very strange … I think she was under instruction to take me to one of the big malls in [city district] which is a taxi ride away. And we walked around and then I kind of had to say to her, I really hate shops. And she was a bit embarrassed and we went back, she went away, and that… that's my kind of memories of the first day or so."

Michael then went on to say:

> "there's a community of helpers and various different kinds of workers in the community that we [the school] work very hard to support."

I will discuss the theme of domestic help in Chapter 7; however, Michael had married a local woman which gave him a different understanding of the socioeconomic problems for many people in his host country outside of his school community. However, his comment resonates with the ideas in Scuzzarello's study and her participants' belief that being 'good Westerners' involved helping local people out of poverty whilst failing to consider the ways in which they might be a part of the problem:

> "No consideration is ever given to how they are implicated in constructing and maintaining socioeconomic inequalities in the society in which they live." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1625).

The situation for my participants is different to the retirees in Scuzzarello's study, although there is the sense in what Michael said that if the local 'helpers' look after the teachers then the school will 'look after' them. This reinforces the teacher's superiority and dominance over the local population and, in the final section of this chapter, I will discuss some of the other ways in which certain types of international school could be argued to perpetuate structural racism (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021). I will focus on staffing in a similar way to Gibson and Bailey (2023) rather the schools' curricula.

Michael's experience appeared to be unusual; none of the other participants had someone to look after them in this way, although William said that the fridge in his apartment (the apartment was provided by the school) was filled with food for his arrival. However, most of the participants spoke about benefitting from a period of bespoke induction and 'settling in'. David, for example, described his school's approach to induction:

"A nice, gentle induction. We don't… yeah… it's not going out getting them blind drunk. Our new staff… we have a really thorough academic induction that lasts just over a week, on the school site. We have quite a few cultural induction activities. We take them to temples, teach them some basic [local] language, basic culture and etiquette. We take them to different beaches, some markets. It's a very gentle induction over a period of about two or three weeks."

It is possible to argue that this phase of the teachers' experience was a protective strategy, deployed by their schools in order to try to prevent the teachers' performances from failing. William, for example, said:

"the school was very good at insulating you from some of the biggest culture differences initially. There was about thirty in [my] year group who started at the school at the same time, so you all flew in together. The first couple of weeks you were bused to places together and you were staying in accommodation together."

To explain what he meant by being 'insulated', William went on to highlight some of the problems he experienced in his first year travelling around the city in taxis without being able to speak the local language, although he said this got easier when more taxi apps became available. As previously discussed, many of the participants in my study who had little or no

knowledge of the local language usually expressed shame or regret because of this. Nevertheless, they had moved to their host countries assuming they would get by, and their schools enabled this, at least to start with, such as by transporting them together to places during their induction. Tina, for example, said: "The bus would pick you up [during induction]. You'd be indulged in [the local] culture as well." She then went on to say about her arrival:

"I was picked up at the airport by the headmaster, taken to my housing immediately. I got some time to myself. I even got a SIM card. They were incredibly accommodating. Practically speaking, it was quite easy."

Transportation during the teachers' induction was mentioned several times (Gareth also spoke about his school arranging lifts to places). This was most likely to make things easier for the teachers, making sure they were in the right place at the right time. However, the various activities put on during 'induction' could also be thought of as more of a rehearsal, signposting the new teachers to particular aspects of the local culture that the school wanted them to be aware of in order for them to perform the role of 'good Westerner' more sensitively and, therefore, more convincingly. In William's case, the fact that the new teachers were kept together was also a way of ensuring that they moderated their own behaviour in response to each other: it was panoptic (Foucault, 1977).

In the context of the teachers' relocation, their privilege was not invisible to them. Michael, for example, said he found the experience with the maid "strange", indicating that this was not a lifestyle he was accustomed to. Similarly, John, after telling me the way in which he spoke about his earnings made him sound "mercenary", went on to describe his experiences as "whimsical":

165

"pre-Covid, we would get on... you know, fly somewhere for the weekend, almost on a whim, or, you know, go out for dinner... things in London I was, you know, budgeting for, whether we could go out for dinner once a month. You know, it's something where it's just like, where I say, it's almost whimsical here. A lot of sort of brunches, meeting up with friends, a lot of parties on boats, a kind of lifestyle which is not at all in the same tone or vein as it was back in London."

Likewise, William said:

"most teachers internationally can afford to get on a plane every [school holiday], pre-Covid, and fly and not really worry about doing that ... And during the term time, you have more money to spend on lifestyle activities. So you can go to brunches, you can go to theatres, you can do day trips, etcetera. Whereas in the UK, I think I would probably be thinking about which one. I would have to pick and choose."

The participants' comments bear out Tarc and Mishra Tarc's conclusion that international school teachers are "highly aware of the elite forms of mobility and interaction these schools engender." (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 40). Indeed, as I have noted before, all of the participants in my study, male and female, let me know they were appreciative of the opportunities afforded by living and working in their host countries. I have no reason to doubt their sincerity.

Paul was one of two American participants in my study (the other was Alice). His initial relocation from the US was, as I mentioned earlier, because he had an urge to travel:

"I taught for five years in a kind of low to middle-income public school, erm, you know, I was teaching [High School] and, erm, I... after five years, I started figuring out, and I

166

just remember, in the classroom next door to me was a woman who was in the same room for four years, and that just freaked me out. I couldn't imagine doing it for four years. I like teaching, but I really wanted to see the world."

He attended a job fair and accepted a role in the Middle East:

"I'd never heard of [the country], I didn't know where it was, erm, and I like actually had to look at an atlas and figure out where it was on the atlas. Erm, I just went. I wanted to do a bit of an adventure and I got to the Middle East."

A few weeks after Paul arrived in the country, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were carried out by al-Qaeda against the United States:

"And that was a fascinating time to be in the Middle East. Erm, I had a good experience. A number of people I know quit and went home right away out of fear. But I didn't feel that so, erm, I stayed. People were really good to me."

Characterising himself as somehow 'adventurous' was beneficial for Paul. It dilutes the fact that his ability to travel and work abroad was an advantage of his cultural Whiteness (Lundström, 2014), regardless of any anti-American sentiment in the Middle East. It is also rather romantic and not dissimilar to ways in which the retirees in Scuzzarello's study romanticised their cultural affinities to Thailand. For example, Paul went on to say about his current location in East Asia:

"it's amazing all the things you can do here. So diverse … and, you know, there's a whole different culture of things. So bizarre and so wonderful."

167

Paul also benefitted from introducing an element of danger into his career story – a potential threat to his personal safety in the Middle East that was not a problem for him in his current location. By emphasising that he stayed in the Middle East at a time when other Americans left in fear, and by claiming that the people there were 'really good to him', there was very much the sense that Paul was trying to present himself as a 'good Westerner', a well-meaning and kindly White man.

Tina also used the word 'adventure'. When I asked Tina why she wanted to relocate, she said: "it was … the adventure of it back then that really appealed to me." This was very near the beginning of the interview before she went on to describe the school's "phenomenal" induction and the way in which in which the school had "organised everything" for the new teachers in her cohort. Other participants made similar claims. Marie, for example, who had come out of a relationship before she left her home country, described newly single people like her as thinking that they want to "go and do something crazy." For Marie, there are implications in her use of the word 'crazy' that have to do with her gender identity. I will discuss the women's interview responses in more detail in Chapter 7; however, Marie's use of the word 'crazy' to describe her move (and later in the interview, "nuts") gives acknowledgement, albeit perhaps unconsciously, to the fact that her decision to leave the UK and move to Asia was in many ways riskier for her than it would have been for a man in a similar situation, supporting Clifford's claim that, "freedom and danger in movement need to be articulated along gender lines." (Clifford, 1997, p. 6). This is because (White) men enjoy greater freedoms in relation to migration, including sexual freedom, which is perhaps another reason why several of the men in my study chose to present themselves as being somewhat

indifferent about their move. They often downplayed it as a very casual decision. Michael, for example, commented:

> "I applied on the last day of application, I think, erm, on a, on a whim, I suppose you could call it."

Even John who had been to the country before and was encouraged by the familiarity, as well as his wife applying for a job at the same time, told me that he initially "kinda forgot" about the application until receiving an email from the HR department reminding him to complete it. However, John also mentioned risk, saying:

> "the people you meet here are all that same kind of character, and they've all taken a risk, and are up for trying something new."

John's comment has the potential to seem lacking in meaning or sincerity because it implies that the teachers' relocation was riskier than others might perceive it to be. For example, to most observers, the teachers' experiences are likely to seem to lack very much real 'adventure' and so, for this reason, it could be argued that John and the other participants who said similar things did so in defence of the claims that might be made by an audience (Goffman, 1959). In other words, they deliberately set out to give a particular impression of themselves. Indeed, as Goffman (1959) explains, concern for the way things appear is one of the dramaturgical elements of the human situation. However, the knowledge claims that circulate around heterosexual White teachers' identities in this context, not least of all their wealth and privilege relative to other migrants, determine the extent to which their interpretation of

identity is recognised and accepted. For the teachers in my study, this is a tricky staging problem.

As I have shown in this section, sociocultural norms and the assumptions of discourses shape the ways in which my participants are likely to be thought of, as well as how they are able to recognise themselves. The regulatory frame, or the given circumstances for the teacher's performances, and the networks of power/knowledge in this context, circumscribe the ways in which my participants are able to 'do' their identities as (White) international school teachers (Butler, 1990; West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Reputation management: The success of the 'team'

In this section, I will consider ideas to do with reputation management for teachers in this context. In particular, drawing on Goffman, I will identify the ways in which there is "a bond of reciprocal dependence linking teammates [international school teachers] to one another." (Goffman, 1959, p. 88).

Depending on the location of my participants, it was very difficult for some of them to escape from people attached to their school community (students, parents, other teachers). Joel, for example, said, "you can go to the most remote part of [the city] and you still see people you know." Similarly, William said: "it's impossible not to bump into someone [outside of school] connected with the community." I asked him if this bothered him, and he replied:

"Er, initially when you think about bumping into kids or parents etcetera on beaches, er, that seems like you're worried about that being more risky than fully clothed in a supermarket, erm, so you know, it's genuinely one of those things where I was initially uncomfortable because I thought that I had to be. But nobody here seems to care or notice. You walk up to people in bathing shorts and a t-shirt or not, say hi to people, and move on. Everyone seems to understand it's kind of a close community and doesn't see it as surprising when they see other members from it, and that has normalised it for me and everyone else."

However, even away from the school site, the participants are always 'teachers', and Joel went on to illustrate the potential problems:

Joel   I know someone who was at a festival here and he saw someone in his tutor group. And the student came up to him, and he just told him to fuck off. You know it was sort of OK. He said it in a sort of jokey way, but it went round the school. Other situations, people throwing drinks around at [a sports event], getting wasted, there's always a risk you know.

CB   Do you think it's a particular issue in international schools when you socialise with other expats in the city? When you're mixing with elite groups and some of them might be parents?

Joel   I think so yeah. If I compare it to, erm, like, yeah, when I lived in the UK and I'd be out and I'd see parents, it wouldn't matter so much, but here, I don't feel that comfortable with it. Yeah, you need to be careful. They could misinterpret what you say.

Joel made clear the fact that performance regions in international school communities are often less bounded, which means that the teachers must carefully manage the impressions they create of and for themselves and others in almost all aspects of their lives. For example,

Joel said: "you know, if I was a bit drunk, and saw some parents, I would say hi, then move to a different bar."

All of the teachers understood the importance of playing up to 'ideal' values; they were aware of, and understood the significance of, their schools' official and unofficial codes of conduct, including the risk of falling foul of expectations (e.g., non-renewal). Joel, for example, recalled what the former principal said to the new teachers arriving in his cohort:

"I remember when we first arrived, the old principal sort of had… did an introduction speech to us all… and one of things they said was you might not be at work when you finish work, but believe you me, people will recognise you and, you know, don't tarnish our reputation. [The principal] said that quite firmly."

Similarly, John said:

"it was laid out to us when we first arrived by the principal [at that time] that you don't wear anything out of school hours that identifies you as a teacher at, you know, er, the school. [The principal] didn't mind people enjoying themselves in the city and having some drinks after work and things like that, and [the principal] had parents say they'd seen a bunch of people drinking, but [teachers were supported] and that's allowed, of course, but just don't be wearing any [school] branded items, and kind of, and certainly, so…. The code of conduct is, I think, based a lot around common sense, it's based a lot around… almost, I guess, an unspoken code, our jobs are on a yearly contract, so it is…. I can't think of anyone off hand, but I think there have been staff who've broken… I don't know the exact details… but not had their contracts renewed on the basis of that."

Michael, paraphrasing his school's community standards, mentioned the importance of observing local customs:

> "we have to respect the local community, er, and we have to understand that we are guests in the country."

Freddie, a headteacher, was understandably the most direct:

> "you have a duty to uphold the professional standards we expect of a teacher, you have a duty to uphold, or act in way that doesn't bring the name of the school into disrepute."

Alice referred to "a big cluster outbreak [of Covid-19] that was mostly expat driven." Alice's school leadership instructed teachers to follow the local Covid protocols in order to protect both their own and the school's reputation:

> "there was an email from the Head of School reminding staff to protect the reputation of the school by not going out and possibly contracting the virus and spreading it in the community."

The cultural context of Covid-19 is interesting because, where Alice lived and worked, there was a heightened suspicion of foreigners due to the way in which Western countries had responded to the pandemic. This was similar to my own experience in Taiwan. There was almost no local resistance to Taiwan's 'zero-Covid' strategy, unlike the reports of some people's attitudes to Covid preventative measures that were coming from Western countries, which inevitably created a belief that some Westerners were not taking the situation seriously.

In a Foucauldian sense, the various interdictions – the rules, duties and prohibitions – constitute a mechanism of power and discipline that is highly invasive, reaching all aspects of the teachers' lives. This is exacerbated when the different performance regions are less bounded, and so the social actors are hardly ever 'off' (Goffman, 1959). The participants were reminded that they never stopped being teachers and, for some people, this is likely to create a sense of uncertainty and anxiety. Therefore, according to Goffman, social actors must work together to create the conditions necessary for the team to be able to perform 'in safety'. Team members are required to demonstrate "loyalty, discipline, and circumspection" (Goffman, 1959, p. 222) in order to reduce the likelihood of an 'embarrassing performance'.

Tina was the only participant to share very specific details of her colleagues' misdemeanours. She spoke about one former colleague who was frequently drunk and used recreational drugs:

"Always involves alcohol. Just drinking too much. Damaging property within the school housing. There was one in particular that had trashed… we were only living there for a week, this was week one, and I went… I encountered three different types of drugs on entering his apartment. And this is in a country where it's very, very, very illegal. And this is a teacher as well. His entire apartment was basically demolished. He was called in and had to pay for the damages. The same teacher would be drunk on many different occasions at school. At school functions. It would no longer be fun or funny."

Whilst other participants alluded to their colleagues behaving 'badly' (e.g., the "casualties" that David referred to), or felt able to highlight less serious misdemeanours (e.g., Joel's colleague who swore at a student at a festival), the other participants *appeared* to be more loyal to their teams by not sharing similarly specific information.

If the other participants had shared specific and detailed information in the way that Tina did (a teacher who was drunk on occasions at school, as well as using recreational drugs), it would have potentially threatened the success of *their own* performance. It would have opened up the possibility that if they knew about similar behaviour, or had witnessed similar behaviour firsthand, then they could just as easily have been involved in similar behaviour. This is what Goffman (1959) implies when he explains that because we all participate on teams, we must inevitably carry around some guilt. For example, to ensure the stability of the team, we must be prepared to conceal certain aspects of ourselves, or play them down. It is impossible to know if this was the case for my participants, although it is unlikely they would have sustained their careers had they regularly done the things described by Tina. However, Goffman's position is relevant to all aspects of my study. For example, it is impossible to know what the participants really thought about the situation they were in, and how sincere they were during the interviews. As I explained in Chapter 4, this is a problem for all qualitative researchers.

Even so, what matters for my analysis is identifying the knowledge claims surrounding the teachers' identities: the various cultural scripts and the localised discourses of power which threaten the intelligibility of their performances. As Foucault shows us in his genealogies, discourses arise out of networks of power-relations, and they make appeals to 'truth' in order to gain authority and legitimisation. Therefore, as I explained in my theoretical framework, the formation of discourses and the production of knowledge should not be analysed in relation to how consciously the process is perceived, from an ideological standpoint, but instead "in terms of tactics and strategies of power." (Foucault, 1980. P, 77).

In other words, and as I have started to do in this chapter, the important work to be done is interrogating what is gained and by whom, and what is made possible.

For teachers in premium international schools in East and Southeast Asia (although it is very likely to be the same in similar schools globally), their public image is important. It is important for the school's reputation and success. It is also important for the reputation of all Western migrants, and so the participants in my study were not acting for themselves but were united across multiple teams (Goffman, 1959). Marie, for example, said:

"Obviously, we do have to be careful when you're surrounded by White faces, and everyone can understand what you're saying, you can't mention the school name, or mention surnames of people. Definitely just an awareness that you don't wanna be caught slagging the school off."

As previously discussed, the idea that teachers must uphold certain standards of behaviour in their private lives is relatively uncontroversial. However, analysing the ways in which teachers in this context manage their impression is complex because 'race' is an inescapable sign-vehicle (Goffman, 1959). In particular, the schools' requirement for the teachers to behave a certain way – to perform the role of a 'good Westerner' – is arguably a 'racialised' expectation.

When I asked Gareth if he thought it was fair that expatriate teachers are held to different standards in their private lives compared to other expatriates, he replied:

"I think… part of an international school's package is that they're… not only are they teaching high quality information and content, but part of the package is also that

they're sort of… what's the way to say this… they're also trying to sell a certain set of values, I guess. And a sort of certain set of morals."

David made a similar comment:

"as a school, we're quite ethically based. We're not a religious school, but we do have quite a robust set of values and ethics."

It was interesting that both David and Gareth invoked religion as the foundation of morality. Gareth went on to say:

"there's an implication that international schools are sort of the elite. I guess that the elite are… you don't want to give the impression that the elite basically don't have good morals. So, I think it probably is fair. You know, we are very expensive. A lot of international schools are very expensive, certainly compared to, I'd say, all the other private schools here. I'd say we are vastly more expensive. So, I'd say it's fair that staff do uphold a certain set of values. Yeah, I think so. And, it must be difficult actually, if you're into partying, and meeting lots of people and dating… casually. Yeah, so I think, it's an interesting thing this. I sometimes look back on my teaching career and wished that I'd gone abroad much, much earlier in my life. But had I done… I don't know how much I'd have enjoyed it actually because… yeah, you've got to be careful. You've got to toe the line to some extent. Maybe I would have embarrassed myself and news would have got back to the school. But I think it probably is fair. I think it's a bit like being like, er, a priest, or a policeman, or some other profession like that where, you know, those people have to make sure they're not caught in, you know, compromising positions, I guess."

Gareth's comparison of the teaching profession with the moral formation of priests has the potential to sound extreme (i.e., as the living embodiment of Jesus Christ, although

he may not have thought about priests in quite that way). However, it is significant

nonetheless in relation to his understanding of the social status of teachers. His reference to

'elitism' was also problematic. At the time of the interview, I understood his comment to refer

to the wealthy elite, both local and expatriate, who were buying into the concept of an

'international' education. However, it is certainly possible to infer that Gareth was implying

an association between Whiteness and elitism in this context. As Gardner-McTaggart

concludes, the type of Whiteness that is privileged in international school communities

cannot be learned, rather it must be lived in order to achieve its potency:

> "the dominance of this cultural capital and symbolic power supplies the international
> gaze with vision and enacts symbolic violence against those who cannot partake in its
> whiteness … It is, therefore, a simple matter to see how this symbolic capital is reified
> and sold on the global market." (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021, p. 17).

Considering this, the demands on White, Western teachers in this context to conduct

themselves a certain way, whilst to be expected, could also be seen, by some people, to be

more insidious given the potentially harmful effects. In the next section, I will focus specifically

on the issues to do with White 'racial' visibility in the context of my participants' schools, and

consider what this means for the performance of the teachers' professional identities.

"Very White": problematising the dramatic dominance of White teachers in the participants' schools

As I explained in my theoretical framework, Whiteness is an already visible identity in this context. Whiteness is not the racial 'norm', and so as Savva notes, writing about White teachers in China, the social construction of seeing 'race', including the ways in which White people might be negatively stereotyped, will affect local reactions to them:

"educators looked visibly different from the majority. This made educators vulnerable to both explicit and implicit forms of discrimination. Although discrimination was not always intentional it was nevertheless present." (Savva, 2017, p. 587).

Similarly, in Moosavi's autoethnography of Whiteness and White privilege in East Asian universities, he explains:

"although whiteness often has several positive connotations in East Asian societies, white people are simultaneously stereotyped as: arrogant, overpaid, immoral, selfish, sexually promiscuous, impolite and unassimilable outsiders." (Moosavi, 2022, p. 117).

The institutional context of Moosavi's work is different to mine, although the relations of power and privilege are similarly complex. And so, whilst remaining cautious not to perpetuate the discourse of 'white victimisation' (Moosavi, 2022), it is important for me to reiterate two points. Firstly, international schools in East and Southeast Asia provide an English-medium education that is 'in demand' (Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Machin, 2017), both for expatriate families as well as for wealthy local elites. However, it is not my intention to

critique the ways in which certain types of international school meet this demand. Whilst this is undoubtedly problematic, this is not part of my study. The second point is that in spite of this demand, and in spite of the cultural and philosophical purchase of Whiteness in English-medium international schools generally (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021), Whiteness in this context is not 'always-and-only privileging' (Moosavi, 2022; Savva, 2017). The cultural and philosophical purchase of Whiteness in the field of education, in both the institutions that Moosavi (2022) writes about, as well as in international school communities, exists in parallel with the possibility for Whiteness to be understood in less positive terms. I will expand on this idea in Chapters 6 and 7, particularly in relation to the perceptions of White men, although as Moosavi (2022) explains, these impositions are likely to be tolerable if a person's Whiteness is reimbursed at other times.

Some but not all of the participants in my study identified ways in which being White gave them certain advantages in their host countries. For example, Joel described being treated differently to his Asian friends, often receiving preferential treatment:

"the way the police deal with you, the way you're dealt with in shops, security, kind of everywhere. You are sort of treated differently to locals in the majority of places. And that's certainly what I hear from my Asian friends."

Similarly, Sarah said:

"I think if there was a police stop, or something, they'd be most likely, 'off you go' [to me]. That sort of thing."

Letting me know that he was attuned to perceived 'racial' injustices was strategic self-presentation: Joel is being a 'good Westerner'. However, Sarah's observation about her preferential treatment was more to do with the fact she felt she was less likely to be tainted by some of the negative stereotypes of White men (and men of other 'races') in her context. In fact, because she is a White woman, there were times when Sarah felt invisible in her host country, which was both an advantage and a disadvantage for her, and I will discuss this further in Chapter 7. For example, whilst Sarah talked about the ways in which it was more difficult for heterosexual White woman to date men (both local and expatriate) relative to other contexts, she nonetheless experienced greater freedom living in her host country than in New Zealand. Scuzzarello explains:

> "[White] women, who are traditionally disadvantaged by patriarchal normative social practices in their homeland, benefit from global racialised structures of domination and become part of the privileged in the destination country." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1609).

I will examine the experiences of the White women in my study in Chapter 7, with a particular focus on the contradictions in the women's experiences. However, the salient point for now is that the benefits associated with being White that were identified my participants, both male and female, usually had to do with going about their daily lives rather than the conditions of their employment as teachers, which were generally overlooked.

The teaching staff in my participants' schools were identified by the participants as being predominantly White, except for teachers of the local language. William, for example, described the teaching staff at his school in Southeast Asia as being "very White." (It was clear

in the context of what he was saying that he was referring to the absence of non-White expatriate teachers rather than the teachers' cultural perspectives, although this could also be relevant.) The dramatic dominance of White teachers in my participants' schools inevitably means that their professional status will not only be defined by their qualifications and experience but also by their Whiteness, which is problematic. Indeed, something that stood out from the interviews is that when comparing their experience of working in East and Southeast Asia to their home countries, the participants felt that greater respect is shown to teachers in this context. Michael, for example, spoke about students saying thank you at the end of a lesson even if, in his opinion, it was "really shit." Similarly, Sarah commented on the reaction she sometimes receives in her host country when people find out that she is a schoolteacher:

> "Whenever I tell a [local] person I'm a teacher, they love it. They're so happy and excited, they love it, and then, you know, they're like, teach me English, chatty, and… [Local] people regard teachers quite highly."

The colonialist overtones of Sarah's comment are impossible to ignore. Freddie also said that teaching is "a much more highly respected profession" in Asia relative to Western societies and whilst he offered a slightly more nuanced perspective, it was still reductive:

Freddie   I think, er, our professional status here, both within society and on a day-to-day basis in the classroom is much higher than certainly in the UK but I think also [than] in most of Europe and most of North America. Erm… I do think it's a job that people still respect here. Erm…

CB   Does that level of respect vary between different groups of parents, if they're expat, if they're local?

Freddie   Erm. That's quite difficult to say because how an expat parent would approach you would be different or might well be different to how a [local] parent or another Asian parent might approach you. Outwardly, Asians are, er, more polite, but we shouldn't necessarily confuse that with respect.

Freddie's perspective may have been due to his position as a senior leader in the school (i.e., his involvement in a wider range of whole school issues and more frequent engagement with parents). His comment is important because it indicates the possibility that whilst, outwardly, White teachers might appear to be respected by local parents, there may also be hidden hostility towards them. However, the parents' underlying mistrust is potentially less about perceived 'racial' differences. It could also have to do with the parents' high expectations and what they believe to be at stake, wanting to make sure they get the desired 'return' on their investment. Paul, for example, said:

"these are people paying a lot of money and they want their kids to go to the best [English-medium] universities in the world".

The high standing of some international schools within communities in East and Southeast Asia – and also, therefore, the schools' teachers – was made by clear by Joel when he spoke about the respect he feels from local people after they first assume he's a teacher of English (e.g., in a cram school):

"When you tell them what kind of school, they're like wow, you can see like there's a big distinction in how people view it… there's definitely a distinction. Which is interesting… cos it's like people at home shit on teachers, and think of it like as not a very well-respected job, but here it has a lot more kudos I suppose."

As I explained in Chapter 2, for many local parents in this context (i.e., parents outside of expatriate communities), an international school is seen as a desirable choice for their children (Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Machin, 2017). This is because their attendance provides a pathway to leading English-medium universities. For local national students, their attendance at an international school also confers other sociocultural advantages (Lee and Wright, 2017). However, as Gardner-McTaggart (2021) explains, these advantages can be seen to have more to do with the cultural and philosophical purchase of Whiteness in education, which is perpetuated by the existence of certain types of international school, than they are to do with an English-medium education *per se*. This was particularly obvious in what Tina said about her school in East Asia. The students/parents were, she said, mostly Asian, and the teachers mostly White:

> "My school is very prestigious. It profiles itself as very prestigious. We are constantly named in the top three in [the city]. By top three, I mean number one. That's what they say, you know what I mean.[9] So it's very prestigious. It profiles itself as British."

The ethnocentricity of Tina's school is important for my analysis and whilst I did not question her further about this during the interview, it highlights a problem. Despite what some of the teachers said about being 'internationally-minded' and flexible, which they believed enabled them to adapt to the lifestyle in their host countries, it is impossible for them to escape from the ways in which Whiteness has been constituted in this specific educational context. This creates tensions for their professional identities, whether or not they realise it, and whether or not they are willing to admit to it. As Moosavi explains:

---

[9] The implication was that, amongst the local community, it was thought to be the best international school, rather than any particular criteria being applied to the ranking.

"While the glorification of fair skin in East Asia predates colonialism, it was in the colonial period that the contemporary understanding of whiteness in East Asia was cemented. In the academic domain, this colonial-era racism still materialises as a mantra that implies that white people are best equipped to produce and convey knowledge due to supposedly being superior in creativity, innovation and critical thinking, which has not only privileged white scholars, but has also devalued the intellectual contributions of scholars of colour in the past and the present" (Moosavi, 2022, p. 114).

This is especially pertinent given that the participants told me their schools had significant populations of local students, usually in the majority.

Marie, Joel and Adam were the only participants to speak directly about white-skin privilege in teaching, although Marie and Joel were not referring to their own schools, rather English language schools or private English language tuition. Marie said:

"I've got friends who are British born [of Asian descent] and who wanted to teach English as a foreign language [here] and wouldn't get a job because their face didn't fit."

Similarly, Joel said:

"I do see on some of the WhatsApp groups, people putting the adverts up [for English language tutors], it will say: no Asian, no Pakistani, no Black."

My participants' observations of the teaching staff in their own schools (e.g., "very White") indicated very clearly that the social construction of Whiteness is not only centred in the

teaching of English as a foreign language in the region, but in English-medium education more broadly. This was in addition to the widely-held assumption that the social arrangements in this (geographical) context are more advantageous for White men, despite some of the problematic stereotypes of White men that were referred to (Appleby, 2013; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Moosavi, 2022; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Scuzzarello, 2020; Stanley, 2012; Zheng, 2016).

Adam was the only participant to speak about white-skin privilege in the context of his own school, and this was due to his personal situation. He had told me previously that his girlfriend's background was Asian/Arab, with one parent from the country they both lived in:

> "in talking to my girlfriend about it, she… obviously being mixed race, she raises the fact that I'm a White teacher. She mentions that it's very easy for me to have my job. And she notices that if she wants to go into teaching [in an English-medium international school], which she's thinking about, she feels that she'd have a much harder time because English is not her first language and because, even if it was, she doesn't look stereotypically English."

Adam's girlfriend, whom he met locally, was a teaching assistant in his school. In my experience, teaching assistants in international schools in the region are usually hired locally, which means they are less expensive than overseas hires, but must still possess a reasonably high level of English language proficiency. If teaching assistants are hired locally, it avoids the additional costs and bureaucracy involved in recruiting from overseas. This was corroborated by Alice, a primary school teacher in East Asia, who made this observation about her school:

"Most of the classroom teachers are White. Particularly White women. Most of the TAs [teaching assistants] are Asian women."

In this situation, the semiotics of the classroom are highly significant for my analysis. The teachers in charge of the classrooms are White, the support staff are non-White, and the language of instruction is English. This dimension of international schools in the region was also commented on by Gibson and Bailey in their study of schools in Malaysia:

"[the] schools predominantly represented educational expertise as white and Western. Non-white educators were kept hidden, received lower remuneration, and occupied lower status positions within the organization … non-teaching staff in all the schools were predominantly Malaysian." (Gibson and Bailey, 2023, p. 412).

According to Foucault (1980), power-relations operate more effectively when they permeate the fabric of day-to-day life and so, in this sense, power is participatory rather than authoritarian. The teachers in my study rarely indicated a belief that being White meant they were culturally superior, which is to be expected, except for in some of their stereotypical descriptions of local people outside of the school setting, and especially the gendered 'racialisation' of Asian women, which I will discuss in Chapters 6 and 7. However, as Moosavi explains:

"white people are often granted preferential treatment regardless of whether they wish for this to happen." (Moosavi, 2022, p. 109).

There was data to suggest that this was the case in some aspects of the teachers' daily lives. The extent to which this was the case in the teachers' schools and whether or not the schools

discriminated against non-White applicants for teaching roles is impossible for me to know, despite the teachers' observations and despite the apparent frustrations of Adam's girlfriend. Nevertheless, the dramatic dominance of White teachers in the scene is clear, and the sense of reality that is produced is one that privileges Whiteness. This creates problems for the teachers' identities because, as I explained in the previous section, their ability to control the definition of the situation they are in by means of performance is limited. For example, whilst the teachers may have thought about themselves as being 'adventurous', the given circumstances mean that audiences might foster a different impression (Goffman, 1959). In addition, despite the ways in which my participants attempted to align their thoughts/actions with their definition of 'good Westerner' when applied to international school teachers, they are part of an educational system which perpetuates structural racism (Gardner-McTaggart, 2021).

Of course, there are many things that my participants could have done, and possibly were doing, in their own schools and classrooms towards a reduction of racism. For example, when I asked Tina about how diverse the teaching staff in her school was, she replied:

"Most of them are British. I'm the only person from [my country]. I've always been the only person from [my country]! Which is not very surprising. Not a lot of Europeans unless you go into the modern foreign language department. We have a few American teachers. For some reason it doesn't always gel well with American teachers in our school. Erm, we, diversity-wise, there's a lot more happened in the last two years. There's a lot more aimed at the curriculum, especially in the junior school. There's a lot more Black Lives Matter. The secondary could still learn a lot from the junior school. Teacher wise, I think they've done their best to hire a very diverse crowd. Most teachers in our school are white, however. We might have in secondary like four or

five black teachers of which my fiancée is one, by the way, just so you know. Diverse nationality, yes, more or less, yes. But when you look at the teaching staff from an outside perspective, there's a lot of white teaching staff."

Tina was planning to leave her school and return to Europe with her fiancée. She told me this near the beginning of the interview when I asked what factors would affect how long she stayed in her host country:

"I've already decided to leave. I've received from the school what I thought I was going to receive and I'm now head of [department] while I started as a teacher. So my career progression I got, absolutely. Enhanced my teaching tremendously. Personally too I've grown a lot. I met my fiancée [here] and I'm going back to my home country in December. I do not want to set up my life [here]. This was supposed to be something, erm, for two years, but it turned out to be six because of the progression I made. But I'm going back for personal reasons. I would like to get married. I would like to be closer to my family."

It is interesting that relative to the other participants, Tina put more emphasis on the professional and personal development she felt she had gained by working in her school, although her decision to leave had possibly enabled greater reflexivity. William was in a similar situation (planning to leave and return to the UK) and he also compared the advantages and disadvantages of teaching at home and abroad in a way that was perhaps more objective than some of the other participants. However, the teachers' professional practice, and the values and priorities of their schools (e.g., to do with teacher development), was not really the focus of the interviews. Instead, although with a wider lens, my concerns are similar to Leonard's (2010) and the challenges for White British migrants in postcolonial Hong Kong:

"the ways in which aspects of identity may be disordered and reordered in the processes that accompany personal displacement." (Leonard, 2010, p. 1248).

And so, with this in mind, it seems useful, at this stage, to remind the reader of Hacking's inquiry question that was the starting point for my investigation:

"*How is the space of possible and actual action determined not just by physical and social barriers and opportunities, but also by the ways in which we conceptualise and realise who we are and what we may be, in this here and now?*" (Hacking, 2004, p. 287).

What I have begun to do in this chapter is to explain the ways in which the forms of identity adopted by my participants have the potential to be undermined by power/knowledge formations (Paechter, 2007). In the next chapter, focusing on the experiences of the male participants, I will show how power/knowledge formations mediate the male teachers' social performances as 'privileged' or 'superior' others. However, as my analysis will show, whilst the men are socially empowered (Stanley, 2012), the meanings and effects of discourses of heterosexual White male embodiment in this context will always determine what is *and is not* possible for their identities. Nonetheless, it is important to re-emphasise that I am not in any way suggesting that White men are a marginalised or disadvantaged group; the relations of power and privilege will always be complicated. As Allen (2003) explains, power is always spatial, and so it is my aim to show the ways in which 'racialised' gendered subjectivities are formed within localised networks of power.

Chapter 6

'Doing Man': The social position of heterosexual White men in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia

Introduction

"the ways men form their identities as men, or 'do man' is not fixed. Nor is there some one thing which we can label 'masculinity' and leave it at that, believing that we have explained what we need to know about men. There are many different versions of masculinity which are affected by, among other things: the social positions of particular men or groups of men (differentiated by race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, bodily abilities); their relationship to the state (for example, employed by a branch of the state as civil servants, soldiers or teachers; imprisoned by it for some criminal offence; opposing or supporting the status quo); the life histories of individual men; and common sense or oppositional notions of what men should be like."

Epstein, 1998, p. 49

As discussed in the previous chapter, there were no distinguishable differences in my participants' reasons for moving to live and work in East and Southeast Asia that had to do with their gender identity (except for Alice who had relocated due to her husband's job). However, my primary concern from now on is the extent to which my participants' stories are likely to be received and understood differently depending on their perceived gender. In this

chapter, I will focus on the men, exploring the ways in which White male privilege is constituted in the international migration of school teachers to East and Southeast Asia. I will consider some of the matters that arose during the interviews related to the performance of heterosexual White masculinity and problematise the identities available to the male teachers in my study. In doing this analysis, it will be necessary for me to consider the power-relations within which gender and sexual identities are formed and regulated in this context: how identities are shaped in relation to localised discourses of masculinity and heterosexuality.

Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which the subjectivization of White men in this context has the potential to create problems for all international school teachers, regardless of their perceived gender identity. I will show how the complex field of power/knowledge relationships limits the forms of identity available to the teachers in this context and restricts their social performances, both privileging and disprivileging their bodies. Or, put another way, I will show how racist and sexist ideologies are reproduced through discourses. As Connell writes:

"Masculinities do not exist prior to social interaction, but come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given milieu." (Connell, 1998, p. 5).

Masculinities are socially constructed, and so, in this chapter, I will use my theoretical framework to make visible the very specific set of conditions at the local level which create problems for the male participants' identities. In particular, I will consider the eroticisation of White men in East and Southeast Asia (Appleby, 2013; Kelsky, 2001; Maher and Lafferty, 2014;

Stanley, 2012). To put this idea in context, I will make use of Maher and Lafferty's (2014) study of White, Western men who live in rural Thailand with their Thai partners. The background to their research is obviously not the same as mine; their participants had settled in Thailand specifically to meet and enter into relationships with Thai women. However, in the same way that I have benefitted from Scuzzarello's (2020) study, using an alternative data source has been helpful to gain a more widespread understanding of the issues being explored.

In the next section, I will problematise the issues for the performance of heterosexual White masculinity in this context. After doing this, I will confront the stereotypes and the ways in which the men in my study are likely to be 'racialised' as White. I will revisit the ideas discussed in previous chapters in order to set out the ways in which various aspects of living and working in the region contrive to make it a far more attractive prospect for many heterosexual White men than it is for heterosexual White women, particularly single women. In the final section, I will consider the wider implications of what William and Freddie said to me about the recruitment of teachers in their schools.

White men as 'privileged' others: what are some of the considerations for the performance of heterosexual White masculinity in this context?

In their literature review, Maher and Lafferty (2014) note that the scholarship on migrant men focuses primarily on the experience of men from developing states in the global south engaged in low-paid, unskilled work in wealthier countries in the global north. Drawing

on the literature, they highlight the various masculine tropes ('breadwinner', 'adventurer', etc.) which, "permit [migrant] men [from the global south] to build their masculine credentials back home through displays of cash wealth or cosmopolitanism upon their return." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014, p. 429). Maher and Lafferty highlight a significant gap in the research to do with White, Western migrant masculinities in the global south. However, in the Thai context, they identify similar benefits in relation to the ways in which the given circumstances of the Thai setting – the social environment and the historical conditions – enable the successful performance of White heterosexual masculine tropes. They summarise:

> "[the men in this study] experienced increased assets in erotic and romantic relationships that enabled performances of masculine subjectivities (e.g., as a 'player' or 'provider') that would not have been possible back home. The masculine identities they created in this space drew upon scripts of hegemonic masculinity from their home countries and neocolonial imaginaries about what it means to be 'white men,' at the same time as migrants also created new, local masculine cultures that served to create bonds of community." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014, p. 428).

As I have already explained in previous chapters, the elevated sexual appeal and status of White men in this context is a common theme in the literature (Appleby 2012; 2013; Kelsky, 2001; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2012), and this idea is very important for my study. For example, it is important in order to understand the cultural schemas of difference and moral/sexual worth which undergird racist and sexist ideologies in this context. It also invokes the possibility that the men in my study needed to control the impression they created of themselves more carefully than the women. Therefore, throughout this chapter, building on the work I have done before, I will consider some of the protective strategies (Goffman, 1959) that were deployed by the male participants.

In the same way that the participants in my study were likely embarrassed to say they moved to the region because they couldn't cope in the classroom at home, it was also highly unlikely the men would have admitted that their reason for moving there was to do with increasing their sexual capital. Indeed, there was no indication that the male teachers' motivation for living and working in Asia had to do with desiring Asian women, or even, when they first decided to move to Asia, that they were worried about being stereotyped. Michael, for example, said:

"I don't think I was really fully aware of the stereotype [before I moved]."

Only Adam, who was in his second relationship with an Asian woman, the teaching assistant he had met at his school, admitted that it was important to him to make clear to others that he does not have a particular sexual interest in Asian women and that this was not his reason for living and working in Asia. In the Thai context, Maher and Lafferty explain:

"Western men with Thai partners encounter the stigma of a 'sexpat' reputation, no matter how the relationship actually began." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014, p. 433).

However, Adam's situation was more complicated than the other male participants, and so his concern for the way things appear was to be expected. He had met his first Asian girlfriend at home in the UK; she then returned to Asia and not long after he arrived to be with her, she ended their relationship:

"I try to make it clear that I'm not just here because I've got some sort of particular interest in Asian women. It's more because I wanted something new. But... I can't

blame people for feeling that… because even with my eyes, when I go to certain areas, I can see there are men who, you know, are particularly… Maybe I shouldn't judge them, but it does seem like they are… trying to get very young Asian women to be with them."

It is impossible for me to know whether or not Adam was being truthful in the interview. He may also have been in denial. However, the important point is that Adam felt compelled to say this. Writing about 'the arts of impression management', Goffman (1959) identifies three defensive attributes and practices: dramaturgical loyalty; dramaturgical discipline; dramaturgical circumspection. Out of loyalty to his different teams (e.g., White men, international school teachers, Western migrants to Asia), it was necessary for Adam to at least act as if he had accepted certain moral obligations. This also required discipline (he must remember his part), as well as foresight and design in terms of how best to present himself. As Goffman writes: "Prudence must be exercised." (Goffman, 1959, p. 212).

Nonetheless, regardless of what the participants felt comfortable sharing with me, or the ways in which they may have deliberately misled me, there is no doubt that all of them were seeking a better life by moving to live and work in the region. Irrespective of their gender identity, their Whiteness confers privilege (at least *some* of the time), and so, as discussed, the focus of my analysis is the ways in which men and women enact their privilege in this context differently (Scuzzarello, 2020). In my data, this was particularly obvious in what the participants chose to say about money. Joel, who had worked overseas previously but in a different industry before training to teach back in the UK (it was the same for William), said that earning "a lot of money" was "one thing" he "really liked" about his job: "I've got more

money now than I ever dreamed of having." However, like John, who was worried that talking about his salary made him sound "mercenary", he was also rather apologetic:

"It sounds awful, but it means I can save money. That's a big draw."

Gareth also spoke about the benefit of being more financially secure in his current situation and explained that he would not consider leaving his school in the near future because: "I've got a little bit of debt I want to pay off." He also hoped to buy property where he was.

By comparison, Alice, who earned part-time in her school in East Asia what she earned working full-time in the American public school system, described the situation as "bizarre" and "insane." This is an interesting point of comparison and whilst I do not want to be unfairly critical of Joel and John (they were very honest in their interviews and at least *tried* to sound embarrassed) it is nonetheless true that the social construction of masculinity gives men 'bragging rights' in this situation. This has to do with normative expectations of men as breadwinners, which was also a theme in Maher and Lafferty's study, and whilst their focus is different, it is interesting to note the attitudes and values of their participants in comparison with the teachers. James, for example, a 49 year old British participant in Maher and Lafferty's study, discussed the ways in which some men of a similar age might find it difficult to accept the demands of Western women in a marriage, particularly if they're made to feel 'less of a man' (e.g., if the woman's career is more important than his): "[Here,] we feel we're in charge of marriage, we're the breadwinner." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014, p. 436). The reasons why my participants would have chosen *not* to present themselves in a similar way are straightforward. However, the prevalence of these opinions, or rather the performances of

some White men in this context which attest to other realities, underlines the need for more careful consideration from the teachers in order for them to stage a successful performance.

To make the experience of living and working overseas easier, the participants, including those participants with Asian partners, generally socialised with others in a similar situation to them – either international school teachers or other expatriates. Sarah, for example, had moved to her current city from a more rurally situated school in the same Southeast Asian country. She didn't want to leave the country but knew that, in order to be happy, she needed to be somewhere where there was a wider expatriate community:

"you need to be able to, just kinda have people understand you."

This is not dissimilar to the international school teachers in Savva's (2017) study whose reliance on monocultural friendship groups was a coping mechanism. However, it is useful to include Sarah's words here in order to show the differences between the female and male viewpoints. For example, whilst there is evidence in my data that Sarah's sentiment was also shared by the men (e.g., Michael told me in his email that he felt lonely when he first arrived, and it was important for some of the men to engage in social pastimes such as sports or card games), it is significant that Sarah was the participant to make the point most clearly about needing to be around similar people who *understood* her situation. I will develop these ideas further in the next chapter; however, it is likely to be much harder for some White women to adjust to the circumstances, depending on the location, than it is for White men, in spite of the staging problems. William, for example, a British teacher in a resort location in Southeast

Asia with his British wife, acknowledged that socialising as a couple was often difficult for them:

> "she's uncomfortable visiting some bars with me that I might want to go to and watch football because it is lots of old White men, lots of young [local] waitresses."

Of course, there are ways in which the situation he described could be thought of as similar to Western pub/football culture, at least for some women. However, in highlighting that the waiting staff are exclusively female and younger than most of the customers, as well as previously mentioning the culture of sex tourism in the country, the inference was that the men in the bars are looking for – and are willing to pay for – sex, as well as drinking alcohol and watching football.

John, a British teacher whose British wife worked in the same school (for both of them, this was their first-time teaching overseas), spoke about the importance of playing football in his spare time, playing on teams that were mostly expatriates. Football was important to John. He played for several different teams, and it was obviously something he enjoyed. However, whilst he did not explicitly say this, there was also a sense that, for him, as well as for some of the other male participants, participating in competitive sport was a way of preserving his (heterosexual masculine) identity. For example, it is highly likely that he was 'leaning on the familiar' in order to make sense of this new landscape – the unfamiliar histories and social hierarchies that might otherwise disturb his sense of self and of others (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015). Or, as Leonard (2010) explains, writing about sports clubs in Hong Kong – "organisations which have played an integral role in structuring the social fabric since colonial

times" – the membership of White, Western men, and their active participation, is a way for the men to sustain "the values attached to symbols and daily routines of white, middle-class culture." (Leonard, 2010, p. 1255). However, what was also interesting about John's interview was the way he used football and playing against other predominantly local teams to articulate his sense of being an outsider:

> "even on the football field, you do get a sense of being an outsider when you're playing against the more local sides … especially when things can get a bit more heated in arguments on the field. Definitely some phrases thrown around that make you feel you're not really part of that, of you know, the place you've made a home for yourself."

It is tempting, but perhaps unfair, to turn John's story into some kind of an analogy. For example, there are similarities between John's experience of hostilities on the football pitch and the experience of expatriates across the region more broadly who are trying to take in, understand and feel a part of their host culture. However, whilst there was no other mention of local hostility in John's interview, non-acceptance due to 'race' was clearly something that he found challenging: something he was grappling with. His acknowledgement of feeling like an 'outsider' appeared to be sincere. For example, there was no indication that he felt he *should* be accepted into the host culture simply by virtue of being a White man, or that by playing football against local teams he was living out an internalised dominant identity (e.g., similar to the participants in Maher and Lafferty's (2014) and Scuzzarello's (2020) studies). However, the discomfort he refers to, and the way that he does this (receiving verbal abuse *even* on the football field *and* in the place *he has chosen* to make a home for himself), makes it is very difficult to escape from Leonard's (2010) conclusion that White expatriates will always be "to some extent positioned by the legacy of empire." (Leonard, 2010, p. 1260).

What this means is that the various cultural scripts concerning Western migrants in Asia (Scuzzarello, 2020) – the localised discourses of power – threaten to undermine the intelligibility of John's performance. He clearly did not believe that he ought to receive special treatment, but it is still difficult not to think otherwise about him. This is because what is and is not possible for John's identity in this situation – how he might be interpreted by others – is, at least to some extent, outside of his control (Butler, 1990).

Without criticising or blaming individuals, particularly the men in this study (indeed, Sarah was the participant who used the most 'racial' stereotypes, something that I will explore further in the next chapter), the most important function of my analysis is to uncover the role that discourse plays in producing networks of power/knowledge. White masculine identities are made and remade in different sites, securing their power in different ways (Connell, 1995; 1998; Leonard, 2010), and whilst John and the other male participants in my study may or may not see their own privilege, it is still the case that the superior position of heterosexual White men in this context (i.e., relative to White women and all other 'racial' identities) is upheld by power/knowledge relations. However, to uncover how power/knowledge relations operate in this context, Goffman's (1959) perspective on this is more practical and immediately useful than Foucault's work, albeit for what Goffman does *not* say rather than what Goffman does say. For example, Goffman (1959) explains the way social actors must work together in 'teams' to project a definition of the situation they are in to ensure the show runs smoothly, supporting each other to look good and, in John's case, quite literally 'playing a good game'. However, Goffman does not discuss the extent to which the definition might have been agreed upon by all of the actors (actors who are themselves each other's audiences) and the problems this creates for an individual's identity.

Confronting the stereotypes

There was widespread acknowledgement in the interviews of the problematic stereotypes of White men living in the region. For example, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, some of the participants referred to relationships between White men and significantly younger Asian women (although only David and Freddie intimated this in relation to some of their colleagues, and they explained how it was kept hidden), or men who were sexually promiscuous. The participants described behaviours that were tolerated in their host countries, but which were unlikely to be socially acceptable in their home countries (Stanley, 2012; Appleby, 2013). However, the male participants in my study were generally accepting of the fact that 'it is what it is'. In other words, some people may take a negative view of them (e.g., making assumptions about them, their sexual proclivities, and their reasons for living in Asia), but it does not weigh heavily on their minds because the stereotypes, whilst they exist, do not apply to them, and the way they conduct their private lives is evidence of this.

Freddie was the only person to explicitly mention racism:

"it's very difficult to talk about [some of the problematic stereotypes] because you end up making borderline racist statements."

Also, in spite of deploying problematic stereotypes in some of her own observations, Sarah mentioned the problems she observed that are created by racist attitudes:

"if I was a White man, I'd get profiled as somebody that wants to be with a [local] woman or go to sex shows and all that kind of stuff. Erm… and… if I had a different colour… if I had dark skin. One of my friends is of Nigerian descent and she gets stopped by police quite often and things like that and gets profiled quite often."

Freddie's responses about the way in which White men are 'racially' stereotyped were particularly consequential given his role as a school leader and his involvement in recruitment, and I will discuss this in more detail towards the end of this chapter. Sarah's remarks are also important for acknowledging the potential for an array of actors to be discriminated against due to 'race'. However, whilst the men in my study employed strategies in the interviews in order to distance themselves from the stereotypes of heterosexual White men (including outright denial from Adam), there was tacit acknowledgement that the social arrangements benefit White men and disadvantage White women. For example, William, whose wife was uncomfortable drinking in some of the local bars, said that the experience of living there had been more difficult for her and that she had to be "more creative with her coping strategies [e.g., setting up a Facebook group for expat women.]"

The social arrangements in this context are more advantageous for White men, regardless of the potential for them to be discriminated against. In addition, all White men can access the benefits, irrespective of how much they individually deny being complicit in those arrangements: the patriarchal dividend amplified by 'race' (Connell, 1995). Sarah, for example, echoing some of the ideas explored in Stanley's (2012) study, spoke about the ways in which heterosexual White men who would not ordinarily be the recipients of similar sexual attention in their home countries have more success in Asia when it comes to dating:

"there's often men that are not as attractive, or that bit older, or whatever… for whatever reason find it hard to date back home, and then suddenly they're, like, hot property because they're Western. Which sounds really bad, but that's definitely something that happens."

Similarly, Tina said:

"We all have that one male colleague that, you know, would never be able to get a woman back home."

However, as I have already explained, 'the superhero phenomenon' (Stanley, 2012) is likely to cause feelings of personal discomfort for *some* men:

"While some enjoy the 'hedonistic' masculinity attributed to them, most experience a discord between this and the subjective identities they appropriate." (Stanley, 2012, p. 227).

This was certainly true for my participants. For example, whilst there was no indication that the men felt obliged to adapt their performances according to social constructions of what heterosexual White, Western men are like in this context, and most indicated some degree of disapproval of those who do, there was anxiety about the identities that may be *attributed* to them (i.e., by inference) rather than *owned* by them. Adam, for example, was not alone in saying that he generally avoided certain bar areas because of the associations with Western men looking for sexual encounters with Asian women, often younger women:

"I don't go to [those areas] very often. If I do, I'm not by myself trying to talk to women."

As mentioned before, Adam's concern for the way things appear, which had to do with his relationship history, appeared greater at times than the other participants. However, his relationships also meant he was possibly more sensitive to the issues being discussed. Nevertheless, as I said, he was not alone in making clear to me that certain areas were generally off limits. For example, when I asked David if there were places he avoided being seen, he replied:

> "The places I would definitely never go to are the famous places. [There's a road] where every other bar is a brothel or a sex bar. I've got no interest in frequenting those places."

The concerns were not only to do with the physical world, but also, in Paul's case, his online presence:

> "I avoid some apps [here] that I would normally use. Erm, it's not my thing to be honest. If I was a single teacher, I would use apps that are Western based, but I don't because I am in leadership and I have to be a bit more discerning about my face out there."

However, the problems for the men in this study are not just about being seen to maintain certain standards of behaviour in their private lives, but also the need to avoid being stereotyped, which was less of a problem for the women. The teachers managed the threats to their identities by carefully crafting their public performances (Goffman, 1959).

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Michael, who was married to an Asian woman he met locally via a dating app, used humour to deflect my questioning about stereotypes:

CB	Thinking about stereotypes of expats, what are some of the stereotypes that exist where you are?
Michael	Erm, yes. Sexpats, you know. I've pretty much turned into one now. Beer belly, bad shirt. Possibly bald head. Ugly as fuck. Sitting in a bar drinking beer with prostitutes. That's it.
CB	Are any assumptions made about you sometimes?
Michael	I have no idea because I'm not the other person, but I presume if that's the stereotype and, er, I share some of the characteristics, maybe that's the assumption. I know what the stereotype is, and so therefore I'm making an assumption about any er… luckily I'm so handsome so I don't think they think that at all.
CB	Does it ever bother you? Do you think about it?
Michael	Not really no. Not really. I mean it's something I think about because I talk to people about it. But it's not something that I'm concerned about. But equally I've been married for some time now, so maybe earlier on I'd be slightly more concerned. But I think that some of the sexpats are so bad, I don't think in comparison people would be looking at me and thinking bad thoughts of me. There's plenty of other… not necessarily… no, it's not something I ever... It's not a chip on my shoulder. It's not something I worry about, but it's definitely something I've thought about.

Earlier in the interview, when I asked Michael why there is a perception that it's easier for White men to settle down in the region than it is for White women who arrive by themselves, he replied simply: "Cos it's true." This was echoed by Tina: "It's not a perception, it's true." Michael said that it was more difficult for single heterosexual White women to date in the region than it is for White men, as well as stating that "male privilege is a thing and so generally it's easier for us in life." Tina went further, suggesting that White women are "intimidating" for local men. She continued: "we're quite loud. We are less likely to bend… to

adjust our lifestyle." Tina, as well as Sarah, was confident to share her opinions about the differences between (heterosexual) Asian women and White, Western women – "they'd be way more likely to do what a man would tell them to do" – and the differences in perceived attractiveness – "let's be honest, they're very pretty women". I will develop these ideas in the next chapter when I problematise the embodiment of White femininity in this context.

Being sensitive to my data, I am conscious of the problems involved in reducing individual stories to group statements. As I discussed in Chapter 4, 'race', gender and sexuality are all part of a bigger picture, and there was a danger in my approach to the interviews and analysis that the idiosyncrasies and uniqueness of the teachers' own life experiences were lost or overlooked. For example, it would be erroneous to suggest that the men in my study bear similarities to the diverse group of Western men in Maher and Lafferty's (2014) study – men who've settled in Thailand specifically to meet and enter into relationships with Thai women – or the retirees in Scuzzarello's (2020) study. In particular, Maher and Lafferty indicate that the identities and performances of the participants in their study in Thailand are not mobile but are specific to the tourist regions and social context of northeast Thailand where their research was carried out. This is important because, as Butler (2004) explains, what it means to be 'masculine' and 'feminine' changes radically depending on where you are in the world, different gendered cultures, and on *who is imagining whom and for what purpose*. However, whilst my study covers a much bigger geographical area than Maher and Lafferty's study, and it is focused on the unique context of international school communities, I believe there are enough similarities in the participants' experiences/observations to be able to pull together common threads and to consider the interrelationship with other expatriate

stories, albeit cautiously. For example, in terms of access to power and privilege, Adam's words are useful. Adam described his experience of using dating apps after his arrival:

> "it became apparent to me quite quickly that maybe even just because I am White, or there were assumptions about my job and how much I'm earning… it was quite easy for me to meet people on the apps, and we would match quite easily."

My participants shared similar concerns to the men in Maher and Lafferty's study surrounding the perceptions of other White men who choose to live and work in the region and what this means for them. This was not only to do with the way in which in White masculine identities are variously constituted through narratives of wealth and sexual superiority (e.g., Adam's story about using dating apps), but also the fact that the social position of White, Western men in East and Southeast Asia, and particularly those involved in 'interracial' relationships, will always be shaped by postcolonial discourses and the history of sex tourism in the region (Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020; Woan, 2008; Zheng, 2016). However, crucially, as I have already noted, there are ways in which the men presented themselves differently. For example, the men in my study did not draw on White, Western masculine ideals to position themselves as superior or more desirable than Asian men. Maher and Lafferty explain:

> "Many [participants] thought it natural for Thai women to be attracted to them but expressed puzzlement about how any Western woman could find a Thai man attractive or adequate as a lover. Such stories illustrate how farang men [foreign men who come to Thailand from Western countries] strategically adopted fragments of whatever masculine ideals would permit them to position themselves not just as 'real men' but also as racially superior white men, a construction informed in part by neo-colonial imaginaries." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014, p. 436).

The fact that the men in my study did not express similar opinions is unsurprising. To do so would have been inconsistent with the participants' definition of 'good Westerner' (Scuzzarello, 2020) when applied to international school teachers, again highlighting the performative nature of their identities.

Despite the apparent social benefits, especially for White men, and despite the financial rewards for international school teachers in the region, there was also, as discussed in the previous chapter, some awareness in the interviews of the fact that the terms and conditions of teachers' employment are less secure than they would be in their home countries (Bunnell, 2016). For example, the potential for immediate dismissal or non-renewal of their contracts due to behaviours deemed by the school to be inappropriate. David and Tina were not alone in speaking about "casualties" – colleagues who had overindulged in their social lives, enjoying certain aspects of the lifestyle 'too much'. However, this was only potentially disastrous because it took place 'front stage' (i.e., because people were watching). David, for example, spoke about teaching colleagues in relationships with local people who were younger than them, but who took measures to avoid being seen:

> "The staff are very good at not publicising those things. Those things that we know… and those staff are very subtle and, erm, discreet about their activities. They're not walking down the road with someone fifteen years their junior. You know, sort of… to the point where some will leave the island and go to other places where they've got a girlfriend or boyfriend etcetera."

He went on to say that it was only likely to be a problem if the staff member was seen, thereby openly bringing the values of the school into question.

According to Goffman (1959) the requirements for acceptable behaviour in a performance region can be divided into two categories: moral and instrumental. Sexual 'propriety' is a moral requirement; instrumental requirements, which are not ends in themselves, include a person's duties at work. For teachers, however, who never stop being teachers, even away from the school site, the situation is much more complicated. As I have discussed, for the teachers in my study, the performance regions are less bounded than in Goffman's framework. (Indeed, William mentioned Year 13 students at his school sometimes babysitting for his colleagues, although he was the only person to indicate such an obvious blurring of the division between teachers' professional and private lives.) However, acknowledging the problems of his framework, Goffman writes:

"The answer … is for the performer to segregate his [sic] audiences so that the individuals who witness him in one of his roles will not be the individuals who witness him in another of his roles." (Goffman, 1959, p. 137).

This is exactly what David describes. However, the situation is made further complicated by Goffman's assertion that: "Performers can stop giving expressions but cannot stop giving them off." (Goffman, 1959, p. 111). David, for example, implies that whilst the teachers take steps to hide their relationships, this is still something that might be *known* about them. This leaves open the possibility for all White men, especially single men above a certain age, to be suspected of having particular sexual interests, whether or not they actually do. It is very difficult for men in this context to escape being stereotyped. For example, in a similar way to David, Freddie also described the behaviour of groups of men in one of his previous schools in Southeast Asia:

Freddie   A lot of the single men would disappear on the weekends to [the neighbouring country] for the kind of activities we were just discussing[10] where some of the single females wouldn't have been welcome and weren't invited.

CB   Presumably, it was a known fact that the boys were going off for the weekend and having fun?

Freddie   Yes.

CB   Erm. Was that a problem?

Freddie   For whom?

CB   For other teachers, for the school, for the parents in the community?

Freddie   No, I think... because it's such a small community... that was one of the problems of [the Southeast Asian country], it was such a small community... it was teachers, expats who almost by definition were parents... everyone knew about it... erm, or I think in one or two cases... how to phrase this... people knowingly looked the other way... typically women finding their husbands [women finding out what their husbands were doing and choosing to look the other way].

Chris   OK.

Freddie   It was very... That was one of things that made me leave [the country]. It was the smallness of the community. And that incestuous kind of school/parent, parent/school grouping. Everyone knew everyone else's business. All the time.

Freddie's account is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, he begins talking about single men before it becomes obvious that not all of the men on the weekend trips were single. Secondly, he talks about the men's wives 'looking the other way'. The obvious risks here are to do with the breakdown of relationships and disease being brought home to the wives. However, the

---

[10] We had not actually discussed any specific type of behaviour, but it was clear to me by this euphemism that he meant casual sex with local women and possibly even paying for sex.

other risk has to do with people's perceptions. For example, the stereotype of sexually promiscuous White men in Asia (and of sexually available Asian women) is so pervasive, there is a risk that even if a man is married/partnered, some people might assume that his wife/partner has moved with him in order to facilitate his interest in Asian women. The assumption might be, as Freddie described, that his wife is prepared to 'look the other way'. One might also speculate that wives are taught to look the other way by other wives in the same situation. For example, it is possible a woman might move with her husband believing he is unlikely to stray if she is there too, but later realises there is a lack of support from other wives (i.e., if they all choose to ignore the problem). Of course, this is just conjecture. To refocus on the men, Sarah summed up the problems for them:

"I mean there's a stereotype for a reason. There's a lot of people like that and… There's a lot of people who come, some men, and they've already got a girlfriend, or they're not interested in [local] women, but they often get put into that category as well. Erm… yeah, I think they have to be a little bit more careful about the way that they are, the things that they say and stuff."

Similarly, Alice said:

"from what we've seen [I took this to mean her and her partner], a lot of White men here seem to fall in with younger Asian women. So if I think about the few men on staff at my school that are single, I wonder if they think, 'do people think I'm here for that specific reason, that I'm here to find an Asian woman to date, marry, whatever?'"

The 'race'/gender relations and political formations that I have begun to outline in this chapter obviously have a significant impact on teachers' private lives. However, the potential

for male teachers in this context to be discriminated against is not only to do with the assumptions that might be made about them by other people more generally, but also what these ideas could mean in terms of their employment.

What are some of the issues for the recruitment and retention of teachers in international schools in East and Southeast Asia?

There was no evidence in the data to suggest the social construction of White masculinity in this context meant that the male teachers involved in my study were treated any differently at work, or that they were treated more or less favourably than female teachers working in the same school. For example, using my data, it would be impossible for me to test Dillabough's (1999) argument that, "historically determined gender dualisms serve as identity-framing devices in the field of [international school] teaching." (Dillabough, 1999, p. 386 - 387). Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly the case that the association of masculinity with authority in the public sphere (in East and Southeast Asia, societies are predominantly patriarchal) and discourses of teacher professionalism reinforce a gender regime which naturally privileges (heterosexual) men. It is also impossible for me to comment, at least with certainty, on the extent to which particular ideologies of masculinity (and femininity) were affirmed within the participants' schools, although this was given brief mention by Tina and David. Tina commented that the majority of the middle and senior leaders in her school were White men, although she said this was something the school was actively seeking to address. David went further by saying he had met more people than he had expected to at his school

who held "*Daily Mail* opinions on race, on sexuality, on all kinds of bits and pieces", although he said their views were not advertised at school and only ever infrequently in social situations (if these people 'let their guard down' at the end of a night out). However, when I asked David if he thought teachers chose to work internationally to 'escape' from potential scrutiny of their views (i.e., if their views are inconsistent with statutory requirements to promote inclusivity, mutual respect and tolerance), he replied:

> "No. Well, not being those people, I don't know. I don't think that's the primary factor. I think the primary factors for escaping the UK, from speaking to people, are workload and stress. And the financial package. When people get here and they see their lifestyle is more of a 'drinks at the yacht club with white middle-class people' on a Saturday afternoon, then it probably does lend itself to those people doing those things. But don't get me wrong, it's not everybody in school. There are a good number of people that are like minded to myself. But, yes, those people who did come across with those views, I don't think they came here seeing it as somewhere that would propagate those views."

In this sense, the men's social performances are reificative. In other words, when David says that the setting probably does lend itself to *those people* doing *those things,* it is possible that audience expectations in response to the setting and the men's new roles have been internalised. However, in relation to whatever attitudes, views and opinions may be espoused in the classroom, this was not really the focus of my investigation. There are already some postcolonial readings of expatriate teaching which examine the cultural biases inherent in some curricula and in the pedagogies that are employed by international school teachers (e.g., Burke, 2017; Deveney, 2007; Ferguson, 2011; Joslin, 2002). Instead, my concerns are to do with the perception that it is easier for White men to live and work in East and Southeast Asia

than it is for White women. I am particularly interested in what this has to do with problematic stereotypes of heterosexual White men choosing to live and work in the region so that they can experience the benefits of increased sexual capital (Stanley, 2012), and the implications for international school teachers' lived identities.

Writing about schoolteachers and sex will always be problematic and, as discussed in Chapter 3, Foucault's (1978; 1985; 1986) work is vitally important in this regard to understand how sex and sexuality have been constituted as moral domains, and how sexual desire has been pathologised. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, there is a real danger that in simply writing about these issues, incorrect assumptions will be made about my purpose. It should, of course, be expected that international schools require teachers to demonstrate high standards of professional *and* personal conduct (i.e., acting with discretion in their private lives) and I do not believe that this is unfair. Nevertheless, I am also not suggesting that White men who fetishize Asian women, or men (and women) who are sexually promiscuous, are necessarily unsuitable to work with children and young people. Neither am I implying that I think my participants fall into these categories. Instead, what my analysis reveals is that the problems writing about teachers, sex and sexuality in this context are compounded by other important factors, not least the uneven distribution of power. Therefore, to finish this chapter, I will consider William's and Freddie's comments about recruitment decisions in their schools, and problematise the potential effects of negative 'racial' stereotypes on international schoolteachers and their schools.

Freddie, as a school leader, was directly involved in recruitment. Paul was also a school leader, but he was relatively new in post, and in a new school. He did not discuss recruitment.

David had a leadership position but was less senior. William was unique for choosing to share what he knew about his school's approach to recruitment, albeit under the previous headteacher, although David was critical of headteachers renewing teachers' contracts when he believed it was time for the teachers to be 'moved on.' There are several reasons why other teachers may not have chosen to talk about recruitment. For example, they may not have known much, if anything, about recruitment. In addition, the recruitment of teachers in international schools is more complex than it often is in teachers' home countries: candidates for teaching positions are not always interviewed in person, unless they meet representatives from the school in their home country or at a recruitment fair, and school leaders might sometimes have to factor in a candidate's personal circumstances for economic reasons. Hiring a teacher without dependents, or a teaching couple, will invariably save an international school money. This is because, in premium schools, there are usually benefits as part of the package for teachers' dependents (e.g., relocation costs; accommodation; healthcare, return flight allowances; school places for dependent children).

William was married and whilst his wife (also British) initially did not work, she later took a part-time teaching job at the same school. We did not discuss this in the interview and so it is impossible to speculate whether or not this gave William an advantage in getting the job, but knowing that a teacher has a 'trailing spouse' who is a qualified to teach and may be willing to work at some point in the future is often attractive for headteachers of international schools (e.g., if there are emergency cover needs or simply for ease if a suitable position arises). As this extract from William's interview helps to make clear, headteachers of international schools often need to consider teachers' personal circumstances in ways that other headteachers do not:

CB   You mention [your location] to people and they think parties. The teachers in the school, are they mostly singles, couples, families?

William   This school… erm, the previous headteacher had a very explicit hiring policy. He was looking for couples or families. And although he felt the salary itself did not compete with the best paid schools in [the region], he would try to make it very hard for families to want to leave. The overall package for the children and the family, and the lifestyle they could have here, outdoor space, clean air, etcetera, was too good to put down. So, for that reason, the average length of service here is more like eight, nine years, which is very long for an international school. There are some here, a few I can count on my hand, who've been here fifteen plus, and a lot of people who now… I guess, if you ask about parties, there isn't really that here [teachers from the school going partying]. There are other schools [here] that are, erm, at a different price point with their, erm, student fees who go looking for hiring slightly younger teachers, maybe slightly cheaper, and they would have a very different demographic. A lot of ours are either teaching couples, two Westerners with children, or they are a Western man with a [local] partner, who moved to [the region] some years ago and have now had children. I can see a good number of those looking to send their children all the way through the school, from three to eighteen, unless they get moved on. So it's a very stable population.

CB   You said the previous head had a very deliberate approach to recruitment. Was that to do with the school's reputation?

William   [Discussion edited to remove personal identifiers.] Partly, yes. I think it was more practical. There is the party lifestyle here, without Covid, but there's not a lot going on otherwise. So I think he was looking for long tenure and felt that the best way to find that was to find couples that had their own family unit. I think young men, being honest, are probably more likely to stay here for a long time, but attracting single women, them staying for a long time was harder. So, looking for a balanced gender, it was easier to do via couples. And that was a conversation I had with him over lunch. So, yeah, he was all for, er, less stress, and also feeling that… I think he had worked in some… he'd worked in

217

international schools and been a head in the UK and felt that having a low turnover was really good for school culture. And that was his way of achieving it.

Despite the previous headteacher's explicit hiring policy, William acknowledged that it was difficult to attract single women anyway (or at least women who would stay). The subtext was that it's easier for single men to meet women, which, as I have explained, was a theme in almost all of the interviews. Indeed, some of William's male colleagues had met their partners locally and hoped to send their own children all the way through the school. Therefore, looking to recruit couples or families was a way to ensure that the school had more female teachers and to reduce teacher turnover. Families are more likely to stay longer, minimising disruption to their own child(ren)'s education, which in turn is preferred by other parents in the school (a high annual turnover of teachers could suggest there are some problems at the school, i.e., that the teachers are dissatisfied). However, whilst arguably sensible, the headteacher's approach to hiring exacerbates the problems for single White women, who are already less visible across the region.

The context of Freddie's school was different. Freddie was the headteacher of a school in a big city in Southeast Asia, and he was more nervous to suggest that any such thinking factored into his decision-making when choosing people for jobs (this was potentially to do with his more senior position):

CB   Thinking about the wider expatriate community, what are some of the stereotypes of Westerners *in particular* that choose to live and work in the country?

Freddie   [Laughs.] I would say there are two stereotypes. You've got the fat older gentleman with a very young, very slim, often very pretty [local] girlfriend. Erm, and then you've got the extended backpacker, young person. Both stereotypes exist.

CB   So, how much does that, sort of, factor into your screening process when you're looking at potential applicants? Is it ever something that you think about?

Freddie   Erm. Do we think about it? Yes and no. Erm… Primarily we're looking for a good teacher that will fit our school. Erm… But I think like everyone, we have our… your initial prejudices, erm, and stereotyping and, erm, I think, you know, you know that's true, that's true of everyone. And. [Pause.] No, I think the answer's no, to be honest. If you were able to convince us you were a good fit for the school and a good teacher. Eugh. It would be horribly unfair on anyone in an hour's interview if I was making those kinds of judgements about your morals.

Whilst Freddie acknowledged the problematic stereotype of White men in the region and the possibility of being prejudiced in an interview, he then backtracked to say he was simply looking for good teachers who were a good fit for the school. He quite rightfully concluded that it would be unjust to decide about a person based on their age, gender identity and 'race'. Nonetheless, in this situation, it is difficult to determine if the stereotyping of single White men is more or less of a concern than the problems for single women who, if they are not put off from going there, are likely to experience a different set of problems. I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

The subjectivization of White men in this context and the knowledge that is produced – for example, the way in which White men in Asia have been stereotyped as sexually promiscuous – creates a situation in which the role options for White men are limited. And so

whilst the social construction of White masculinity in this context can, of course, be beneficial for White men, the relations of power and privilege will always be complicated. This is because power is fluid.

After Foucault, 'racialised' and gendered subjectivities are formed within localised networks of power. To bring in Goffman, the way in which an audience accepts or rejects, credits or discredits an actor's performance is always dependent on a complex field of power/knowledge relationships (although Goffman does not explicitly say this), which in turn regulates the extent to which an individual is able to control the definition of the situation they are in by means of performance. The way in which audiences impute characters to social actors is, of course, problematic, and as Goffman explains at the end of 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', the imputation is not usually the *cause* of the scene, but rather the *product* of the scene. Therefore, what Goffman appears to argue is that what others are usually expected to do based on one's prior experience (i.e., the way in which knowledge of oneself and others is situated and framed), restricts the possibility for the other to be thought of any differently. Adam, for example, aware of his own subject position, said that *even with his eyes* (i.e., even from his perspective – a White man involved in a relationship with an Asian woman), he can't avoid making assessments of other White men that are potentially a defamation of their character. Of course, this is very one-sided, and, as I explained in Chapter 4, what I have been unable to do in this thesis is to analyse the experiences of Asian women, particularly those who might risk being accused of fetishising White, Western men (see, e.g., Piller and Takahashi, 2006). I will return to this problem in the next chapter. Nonetheless, the reciprocity of *cause* and *effect* (although this is not quite what Goffman is arguing) is a

significant problem, and especially so for White men like Adam involved in relationships with Asian women. I will return to these ideas in the conclusions to this thesis.

In this chapter, I have begun to explore the ways in which White male privilege is constituted in the migration of White, Western school teachers to East and Southeast Asia. In the next chapter, I will consider more fully the problems for heterosexual White women. I will explain how the problems for women are far more nuanced than they are for men, and identify some of the contradictions in the experiences of the women in this study.

Chapter 7

(In)visibility: The social position of heterosexual White women in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia

Introduction

"Finding themselves in different places, far away from home, women underwent rare experiences, acquired knowledge that had the possibility of transforming their whole lives, and constructed quite novel personal relations to the new and unknown world. Therefore, going out to meet the world, women travellers also learnt how to stand on their own feet."

Tamboukou, 1999, p. 24

Tamboukou's (1999) analysis of the autobiographical writings of women teachers trained in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is very relevant to this thesis, despite the different historical and cultural context. Tamboukou highlights the teachers' deep love of travelling and explains how this contradicts assumptions that have been made about women at that time. In addition, whilst travelling was inevitably easier for women from wealthier backgrounds, Tamboukou writes that women teachers of the lower classes also, "thrilled to the idea of travelling." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 18). The situation for English-speaking teachers today is obviously very different. The expansion of the international

school sector has made it easier for teachers to live and work in different countries. Nonetheless, Savva (2015), researching the characteristics of English-speaking teachers working in international schools, makes a similar observation insofar as one of the key motivators for the teachers was their desire to travel, and their cosmopolitan outlook on life. However, as I have explained before, whilst the male and female participants in my study gave similar reasons for wanting to live and work overseas (e.g., to travel, to experience a different culture), single women who make the move are likely to be viewed differently to single men. Marie, for example, who described herself at the time of applying for jobs overseas as wanting to do something "crazy", said of the reaction to her decision:

"I hadn't even been to Asia, so everyone [at home] thought I was a bit nuts really."

Similarly, Tina said:

"As a single female moving to Asia you're already strong-headed and quite quirky as it is."

For White women in this context, their lack of visibility relative to expatriate White men, of whom there were perceived to be more, means that single women who move to the region risk being seen as a curiosity – an exception to the norm and either brave or mad. However, the situation is made more complicated by the many contradictions in the women's experiences. For example, White women in this context might feel a greater sense of freedom relative to being in their home countries, as well as feeling safer. At the same time, however, some of the women in this context might feel less desirable to men, which could affect their self-esteem (e.g., making them feel uncomfortable about their bodies).

Alice, who was the only female participant who arrived with a partner, said:

"It's much safer [here] than the States."

Even in the countries where personal safety might otherwise be a concern for female teachers, the residential areas and the type of accommodation in which some of the teachers lived meant they were shielded from the potentially more dangerous aspects of life there (which were more or less of a concern depending on the location). Michael, for example, describing the two districts in his location in which most teachers lived, explained:

"Both of those places are very safe to walk about during the day or during the night, for both men and women. Because they're heavily, heavily guarded."

The other lifestyle benefits that were discussed by the women were similar to those identified by the men. Sarah, for example, said:

"I can save money, I can travel more, just have a really nice lifestyle here."

However, when Sarah was asked in the initial survey to provide further information about her personal experiences which may be relevant to the themes of the project, she wrote the following statement, which I read back to her during the interview:

"As a Western woman, I'm definitely not the top priority for Western men when it comes to dating."

Sarah also spoke about some of the difficulties she had experienced in dating local men, and I will discuss this in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

For the women in my study, more so than for the men, there appeared to be a contradiction between the opportunities for them living and working in East and Southeast Asia and the personal struggle it may involve. This was similar for the women teachers in Tamboukou's analysis; for these women, travelling meant both literal freedom – "women moving in space, changing places" (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 16) – and metaphorical freedom – escaping from the internally and externally imposed habits and conventions of their everyday spaces and the concomitant fear of always being watched and evaluated:

> "*Go out, get out, be out, spread my wings, run away, leave,* are some of the verbs that can be frequently traced in women teachers' autobiographical writings and *out* as a participle, often accompanies these verbs of movement. Thus, women's self-writings present selves on the move, always attempting to cross the boundaries of their family, their locality, their town or city and in some cases of their country. Women tend to move, they experience great difficulties in remaining in certain spaces. They feel confined and oppressed." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 6).

However, as Tamboukou concludes, whilst travelling was an opportunity for the women teachers to try a different way of life, "new conventions, limitations and restraints would emerge to be confronted." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 25). This resonates in the context of my research, particularly in relation to the way that Sarah described her experiences.

The ideas that Tamboukou writes about – women mapping themselves in new places and spaces, and how they understand themselves in relation to their environment – are

important for my analysis. Indeed, how power works in and across societies has been widely theorised about. Allen, for example, explains:

> "People are placed by power, but they experience it at first hand through the rhythms and relationships of particular places, not as some pre-packaged force from afar and not as a ubiquitous presence." (Allen, 2003, p. 2).

Allen's concern, like Tamboukou's, both of whom draw on Foucault's work, is about how geography makes a difference to power and how power is mobilised. For the purposes of my analysis, this has to do with the role of places and spaces in the structuring of 'racialised' gender relations.

The women's predicament is not dissimilar to the men's insofar as the role options for them are limited, although the women are less likely to suffer from the imposition of negative stereotypes. Even so, the relations of power and privilege remain complicated. Power, in Foucault's thinking, is "productive of situations and identities," and so, "as configurations of power shift, social structures and individual senses of self shift as well." (McWhorter, 2004, p. 43). Or, put another way:

> "Who a person is, or the way s/he feels, will vary according to her or his immediate context." (Epstein, 1998, p. 49).

This means that to understand the ways in which power is mobilised in this context, the most crucial part of my analysis in this chapter is attempting to understand the priorities, values and trade-offs of the women involved.

In the next section, I will set the scene for my analysis in this chapter by comparing the women's experiences to the men's experiences, and by identifying some of the contradictions in the women's experiences. I will also problematise the ways in which Sarah, the only single female participant in this study, described how she had experienced and consequently understood the cultural differences in her setting. I will explore the possibility for Sarah (and other participants) to be unfairly characterised as being antagonistic towards members of the local population in their host countries, or even prejudiced against them.

After doing this, I will discuss the embodiment of White femininity in this context and the ways in which the women experience the world from the physical and material place of their bodies. This is vitally important for my analysis in order to be able to understand how my participants see their identities as well as their relationships with others. In the final sections, I will consider the ways in which the mobility of all international school teachers is a mark of privilege, regardless of 'race' and/or gender, before considering the very specific dilemma for single White women in this context, focusing on Sarah's story.

In what ways are the experiences of heterosexual White women different to the experiences of heterosexual White men in this context, and what are some of the contradictions in the women's experiences?

White heterosexual men are an already privileged group and the social arrangements in this context reproduce their privilege. However, as I have discussed in previous chapters,

whilst White men in this context are socially empowered, they have less power to control some of the factors that might influence their identities (Stanley, 2012). The extent to which this could be similar for White women is less clear and, as to be expected, there are similarities and dissonances in the men's and women's experiences.

During the interviews, it was frequently mentioned that it is easier for White men living in the region to meet female partners than it is for White women to meet male partners. Sarah, for example, described herself as "bottom" of the pile for dating:

"It's a pretty terrible place to be if you're a single woman and want to find somebody to date … if you want a Western man, there's not that many that are first off single, and if they're not [in a couple], most of them are into [local] women."

Sarah also spoke plainly about the problems she had dating local men. I will return to her points about this at the end of this section; however, for all of these reasons, the participants assumed that single White women working in international schools in the region are unlikely to stay there for a significant length of time. David, for example, spoke about the female teachers who had left his school and the country because "they couldn't see a personal pathway in – sort of – their personal life." He explained: "It's a minefield of expectations what people are looking for." William also commented on two former colleagues for whom it was difficult "to find men with similar likes to them in the community." He continued: "they felt there was a lot of competition also." The implication was that the women had 'given up'. In other words, even though there may have been aspects of living and working in the region that were attractive to the teachers, negotiating the sexual politics involved (i.e., the uneven

relationships with respect to 'race', gender and sexuality) meant that living/working there and feeling contented was too great a challenge for them. This is because, as Gareth explained:

"there's a perception that it's more usual, more the norm, to have the man from the West and the woman in the relationship being Asian."

Tina was rather more to the point and told me: "Single women will leave because they can't find a partner and they think it's time to move on." Marie made a similar comment, referring to women she knew who had gone home "because they felt their biological clock ticking and they were never going to meet someone here." However, Marie was an exception to this because she had met an Asian man locally, got married and started a family, and she commented herself that this is unusual. Remembering a visit to the antenatal clinic and seeing another couple like her and her husband, she recalled her surprise:

"so when I had [the eldest], actually I was sat waiting for an antenatal appointment, there was another couple who were like us. You don't very often see couples our way round, actually. You often see couples the other way round, so White male, [Asian] lady, but you don't often see it the other way round. There was another couple waiting there for their pregnancy appointment and I was like, oh, you're like us. And she was [English speaking] and so we made friends there and we've been friends ever since. Because we're raising bilingual children, and bilingual families, and things, there's lots of things in common there as well."

Marie's anecdote is illustrative of the occasions when my participants' experience of life in their host countries was made meaningful by the ways in which they understood themselves as being similar or different to others (i.e., being aware of their own subjectivities). However,

as I will go on to show, the categorical understandings of social structure evident in some of the participants' interview responses – particularly Sarah's descriptions of the local women and men – were problematic. Nevertheless, as I explained in Chapter 4, the participants' descriptions of White, Westerners in this context, especially White, Western men, were often as uncritical as their descriptions of local people, and I have no reason to believe any of the participants took part in the interviews to propagate racist views. The problem is, some but not all of the participants were generally uncritical about racial stereotypes (of both White and Asian people), and whilst it could be interpreted as racism, I understood it was more to do with making broad and sweeping, but non-judgemental, categorisations.

Almost all the participants indicated that White men in the region are, for various reasons, more visible than White women. William, for example, discussing the stereotype of a White, Western man dating a local "girl", commented: "on first glance, it's hard not to find." Similarly, Sarah said:

"Obviously people notice me cos I'm expat, but I don't think people pay as much attention to me [i.e., relative to White men]."

Sarah used the example of White men getting drunk and being involved in antisocial behaviour:

"I think just in general, White men are not tolerated as much."

This comment stood out because although other participants referred to 'White, Western men behaving badly', Sarah appears to imply that White, Western men might be less welcome

locally than some men might be willing to realise or appreciate. However, I would argue that this is one of the ways in which women like Sarah are able to exercise their power and privilege. Like other participants, Sarah also suggested that White men receive attention because they are more likely to be stereotyped as sexually promiscuous and/or as having a 'racial' fetish, which is not the same for White women involved in 'interracial' relationships. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I will analyse in more detail the ways in which the women, particularly Sarah, negotiate and practise their privilege as Western migrants, building on the ideas in Chapter 5. However, my focus now is on some of the contradictions in the women's interview responses.

Problematic stereotypes of White men in this context were talked about often during the interviews, as well as stereotypes of Asian women. However, the participants gave no indication that there is a corresponding stereotype of White women in the region, except for the characterisation by Marie and Tina of the intrepid but slightly bonkers solo female traveller. In relation to this, and in the way that they spoke, Marie and Tina bore similarities with the solo travelling teachers in Tamboukou's analysis, although neither of them remained single for very long after arriving in Asia. Tamboukou writes:

> "one senses that they were thrilled by the experience of finding themselves striving alone in the wild world." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 23).

Tamboukou goes on to explain how the women teachers were fighting against the expectations of them and 'taking refuge' in places far away from home and *the* home, which had been constructed as the woman's 'natural' place to be:

"In such a transitional space, the female self would fight, but at the same time, 'take refuge' without immediate risks of being utterly excluded from the social structures she was trying to challenge." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 25).

The extent to which this might be the same for my participants is unclear and none of them said explicitly that their departure from home had anything to do with challenging patriarchal structures.

Marie was the only participant who mentioned the break-up of a previous relationship as being the catalyst for moving overseas. It also didn't seem to matter much to her where she went, although the proliferation of international schools in Asia is likely to have meant that there were more jobs advertised there:

"[This city] was just a bit of an accident really in terms of the actual specific place. So I was just looking to, erm, move abroad. I'd come out of, erm, a relationship. I think it's quite a common story, actually. I think sometimes people come out of relationships, and they're like let's go and do something crazy."

There is a danger of overplaying Marie's break-up and she did not share many further details about the relationship. As she said, it is possibly a common story, for women and for men, although apart from Michael, who mentioned past relationships but did not specifically connect them to his decision to find work in another country, none of the other participants indicated that a failed relationship had anything to do with their decision to leave their home countries. Nevertheless, there are aspects of Marie's story which echo the experiences of the women teachers in Tamboukou's (1999) analysis and their feelings of confinement and

oppression. For example, Marie chose to mention that her previous partner had no desire to work abroad, unlike her:

"I'd always wanted to work abroad, but I didn't because my previous partner hadn't always wanted to, and then so I just started looking around and seeing what there was."

The rather spontaneous aspect of applying for jobs in different countries was, as discussed in Chapter 5, a feature of the men's interviews too. This is in addition to the freedom that the participants experienced being overseas which, in part, has to do with the financial rewards of working in premium international schools in the region compared to working at home. Again, this was mentioned by both the men and the women. However, there are some key differences between the men's and women's experiences that are crucial for my analysis.

In the initial survey, Sarah wrote that she felt "extremely privileged as a White woman" in her host country. In the interview, I asked her to explain what she meant, and she replied that she was less likely to be 'racially' profiled and untainted by some of the negative stereotypes of White men in this context. Sarah then went on to suggest that women like her are invisible but turned it into something positive:

"I'm not ever seen [here], which is almost a good thing. I can go about and do my thing and not really have to worry too much."

And so, despite also describing where she was as "a pretty terrible place" for single White women (in relation to dating), the situation for Sarah is paradoxical. She was still able to

capitalise on the benefits of being a White woman by emphasising certain freedoms she had relative to being at home in New Zealand.

In the same way that William said it's hard *not* to see White men in relationships with Asian women, Alice commented that she sees White men with Asian women "everywhere." I asked her why she thought this might be and she replied:

> "I mean, there's obviously like a… trying to think… stereotype… expectation… tradition of White men fetishizing Asian women."

There was evident concern in the way Alice spoke about the local women she saw in relationships with White men, especially older White men. She questioned whether there was an element of exploitation as she had witnessed in New York:

> "I had quite a few Asian girlfriends who often talked about how difficult it was to date, even in the States, because the White men were always after something very specific with them. So, I wonder about it a lot when I see it here."

Alice's concern was more personal because the situation reminded her of friends at home. Sarah took a different line. She suggested that many local women seek to gain financially from being in relationships with Western men:

> "there's a lot [of local women] that will see a White man as money."

Sarah went on to say that local women are "very forward" and "very upfront" in the ways they try to get with together with Western men:

> "they'll go and stay one night [with a man] and leave the shampoo in the shower. Come back, not leave, sort of thing. I guess it's... I dunno. I've never been with a [local] woman so I don't know what magical thing they do, but [laughs]... I dunno. It just seems there's *a lot*."

Sarah's use of the word "magical" is particularly problematic. For example, it is possible to argue that Sarah's use of the word "magical" is culturally rooted in discourses about the gendered 'racialisation' of Asian women as 'villainous temptresses', which implies immorality (Hwang and Parreñas, 2021). However, I do not believe this was Sarah's intention; in fact, given her relative lack of success in dating men where she was, it is possible to infer that she was impressed by the local women. In other words, she was articulating her belief that at least some of the local women are culturally able to do what she feels culturally unable to do (as well as implicitly questioning how the women get away with it). Nevertheless, the salient point for my analysis is that there is an uneven distribution of power between expatriate and local women, as well as other actors, and that White women in this context exist in an anomalous and liminal space, simultaneously visible and invisible. This was very clear throughout Sarah's interview, as well as from Marie's story about visiting the antenatal clinic.

Whilst Sarah is 'single' and, to some extent, 'free', the problem for her is that there are ways in which she is not even recognised as being there. Her experience is in direct contrast with Marie's. Whilst Sarah's gendered 'racial' identity made her feel invisible, Marie

felt hypervisible. This was because she was married to an Asian man, raising 'biracial', bilingual children:

"People notice us as a mixed family … We get attention sometimes from people who are fascinated the kids can speak both languages. People look at us on [public transport] sometimes because they can hear [my son] speak to his Dad in [the local language], then turn to me and speak in English. So I think sometimes people find us fascinating [laughs] and interesting."

Marie's situation meant that when she was with her family, she felt watched and evaluated in ways that the other women did not.

The confluence of 'racial' and gender stereotypes in this context arguably creates far more problems for White women's lives than it does for White men. In particular, feeling undesirable to men is a significant disadvantage for women like Sarah and the problems are to do with White women's embodied femininity. For example, whilst it was obvious that Sarah didn't want to go out and use her 'feminine wiles' to attract a man in the way she imagined the local women do, her Whiteness means she couldn't do this convincingly anyway, and I will consider these points in the next section. However, it is also possible that White women in this context have more power than the men in relation to the ways in which they represent themselves. The problematic stereotypes of White men living in the region are so pervasive that they make it considerably more difficult for White men to be viewed any differently, no matter what they may say about themselves. Audiences are far more likely to accept the authenticity of a White woman's performance, and this is for two reasons. Firstly because of the anomaly – the women are not expected to be there in the first place. This is particularly

true for single women as well as for women like Marie who are involved in relationships with Asian men. Secondly because the audience is likely to assume that the woman has made some kind of sacrifice in order to be there. For single women, this means accepting the difficulties involved in finding a partner. For women who have relocated with their partners, this means accepting some of the concerns discussed in the previous chapter (e.g., assumptions that their partners might be unfaithful to them).

Throughout her interview, Sarah volunteered information about the difficulties she had experienced dating men in her host country, both local and expatriate men. However, she was willing to go on dates with men from both groups, and she did not indicate that she had a romantic or sexual preference. Similarly, although she deployed various problematical stereotypes when discussing relationships between local women and expatriate men, she did not claim that 'race' is a factor in the dating interests of *all* local women and expatriate men.

Sarah suggested it is difficult for some Western women to date local men because whilst some of the men may be 'shy' due to the language barrier, local men are also 'known' to have multiple partners:

"they are known for having like, extra, extra girlfriends on the side. You know like, not even cheating, but there's this whole thing where like they'll have their wife and their bit on the side, and it's unsaid, but people know it happens."

Sarah referred to a colleague who had previously been married to a local man:

"they split up because he was cheating… like couldn't keep it in his pants. That's why they split up."

She implied that some of the local men behave no differently to White, Western men in this context, who also risk being stereotyped as sexually promiscuous and, therefore, might be seen as similarly unsuitable partners by some women. However, Sarah also referred to what she perceived as the local men's emotional immaturity, describing them being like teenagers:

"Like, I've kinda, I've been on *some* dates with [local] men… but then it's also… it's really like… they're… it's almost like dating a teenager. Erm, I think like maturity-wise and experience-wise and things like that, it's just… yeah… it's very, very different. I'd liken it to dating a teenager. Yeah. Like, when I was a teenager, that kind of weird relationship and experience."

Nevertheless, despite talking about the perceived cultural differences, she gave no indication that she found Asian men physically unattractive – at one point during the interview, she said: "There's cute ones down at the beach."

The paradoxical nature of Sarah's situation is that even when she is visible to men, the men are not what she wants. At the same time, this discussion highlights a significant theoretical and methodological challenge for my analysis of the data, which is the way in which my participants frequently universalised human tendencies. For this reason, and in view of the complexity of the issues being investigated in this chapter, it is important to re-emphasise some of the problems for me as the researcher, which were discussed in Chapter 4. The problems are to do with the one-sidedness of my analysis and the danger of allowing Western projections onto a culture that is not fully understood by Sarah, by me, by the other

participants, or potentially by my audience. This is particularly relevant in relation to different attitudes towards sex and sexuality in an East and Southeast Asian context (Seabrook, 1996).

Problematising the embodiment of white femininity in this context

In this section, I will problematise the ways in which White women in this context experience the world from the physical and material place of their bodies. This is vitally important for my analysis in order to be able to understand how my participants see their identities and their relationships with others.

As I explained in the previous chapter, the social construction of White masculinity in this context privileges White male bodies. For White men, the markings of 'race' and gender signify power and privilege on multiple levels, and their Whiteness enhances their masculinity, regardless of how un/attractive they might be seen by others at home ('the superhero phenomenon': Stanley, 2012). For White women, it is the opposite situation; the valorisation of feminine Whiteness in Western societies does not hold up in the same way (Lan, 2011). Even so, this is not to say that, for the women, their Whiteness is an unmarked 'racial' category (Frankenberg, 1993). Whiteness is still an indicator of privilege and White women still have structural advantages. Instead, the problem for White women is that they may be seen as less feminine than local women, or even unfeminine, and excluded from heterosexuality (Lan, 2011; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994).

In addition to the perceived cultural differences that Sarah discussed between White, Western women and local women, White women are perceived to be physically different to Asian women, although Tina was the only person to comment specifically on this:

"We're very differently built compared to Asian women in general."

Tina also went on to say that most of the local women are "very pretty," alluding to the stereotypical image of East and Southeast Asian women as having smaller, delicate and less robust facial features. Caucasian women's bodies are typically larger, and their facial features are more pronounced, and, as far as I can tell, this applied to my participants, although it is impossible to say anything precise about my participants' size and shape because I interviewed them online.

It was interesting but not unsurprising that my participants rarely spoke about the preference of some White men for local women based on the history of fetishising Asian women in certain Orientalist tropes – childlike, obedient, submissive, and naïve – although Alice came close, and David, whose comments I will go on to mention. If my participants had emphasised this, suggesting that these perceived attributes are the specific attraction for some White teachers, it is likely that some people would find this uncomfortable and suspect there might be child safeguarding concerns. Instead, Sarah used different Orientalist tropes to talk about the local women. For example, she implicitly referred to the seductive techniques that might be used to 'entrap' Western men (Hwang and Parreñas, 2021).

In addition to the problems identified by Sarah in relation to dating local men, White women are often thought, locally, to be similarly unsuitable partners for Asian men – unsuitable wives and unsuitable daughters-in-law (Lan, 2011). Drawing on the case of high-skilled Western migrants in Taiwan, Lan (2011) explains how, on the one hand: "The empowerment of a coloured man being with a white woman is symbolised as the enhancement of his sexual competency." (Lan, 2011, p. 1687). However, on the other hand White femininity can be 'rejected', which has to do with, "the association with feminism and sexual liberation in the West." (Lan, 2011, p. 1687). This was backed up by Freddie:

"I think Western women expect more equality, to be treated differently, and I think the [local] men find that very difficult to cope with."

It was also reinforced by David in what he said about some of his male colleagues:

"I don't put much value really on having a partner who will unquestionably wash clothes or provide a house service or unconditionally be a loyal partner. But you will find people who do put a value on that. And there are certainly male colleagues of mine who in all other aspects of their professional abilities are sane, normal people, but will have a conversation with you along the lines of, it's so good, my wife will do this, this, this and this. And for some reason, that has triggered something in their psyche that they were looking for in a partner that they would never find in a Western society. Someone who has no interest in a career, who even has no interest potentially in children, but just being someone who is a subservient sidekick. And there are a surprising number of male colleagues of mine who do buy into that. I don't."

Alice went further, as I have already said, specifically mentioning fetishisation, stating:

"I think the first thing that comes to my mind anyway [when I see a middle-aged White man with a young Asian woman] is the fetishization aspect. Erm, I just kind of question, right or wrong, the intentions behind that relationship."

Asian bodies often appear more youthful in comparison to Westerners (Eng-Beng Lim, 2014), in addition to locally specific expectations about how men and women are meant to behave. This youthful divide upholds the conception of the superior rationality of the Western mind, as well as challenging the corporeal integrity of Asian men (Eng-Beng Lim, 2014). Asian men's physical appearance means they are often perceived as less masculine than White men. This stereotype disadvantages Asian men, especially in Western societies, and has to do with the effeminisation of their bodies (Feliciano et al, 2009; Eng-Beng Lim, 2014; Han and Choi, 2018; Jackson, 2000). It is the reverse problem for White women. For example, throughout the interview, Sarah gave no indication that she felt uncomfortable about her body or that she was uncomfortable expressing her sexual desires. However, what was very clear, was that she felt denied sexual agency. It wasn't easy for her to date men because, in this context, White bodies do not conform to localised ideals of beauty, as well as White women being perceived to be less 'feminine' than Asian women in other cultural ways (Lan, 2011).

Writing about dominant sexual ideologies in gay culture and the 'gay cult of hypermasculinity' that disadvantages some Asian men in the West, Jackson describes a situation which is similar, in some ways at least, to how women like Sarah may feel:

"When desirability is linked with race, and when certain races are ascribed a greater erotic interest than others, then to be a member of an 'unsexy' ethnic group is to be equated with an inferior form of existence." (Jackson, 2000, p. 184).

However, the notion of 'inferiority' arguably does not have the same weight when applied to White women in the context of my research. There are many ways in which these women enjoy a privileged lifestyle, which Sarah acknowledged about herself, and so the layering of 'racial' and gender disparities means that the situation is messy. This is because the women's systems of values – Westernised, 'liberalised' – are brought into conflict with other ways of thinking, other ways of being. And so, if following Foucault (1978; 1985; 1986), we are to conceptualise sexuality – what we find desirable and what we find undesirable – as the effect of power-relations, rather than it being a natural quality of the body, we need to understand how power is mobilised (and resisted), and specifically how gender/'race' relations "operate as nodes of power which attract or condense other power relations." (Johnson, 1997, p. 12). This requires very careful analysis.

Writing about embodiment, White female (in)visibility, 'racialised' desire/rejection and the production of knowledge in this context is fraught with difficulty because there is a risk of legitimising historical and 'racial truths' and knowledge that undergird racist and sexist ideologies. The formations of power/knowledge mean that it is impossible not to recirculate colonialist discourses that eroticise Asian women and, in turn, de-eroticise White women, which has a polarising effect, reproducing 'racial'/gender inequalities. Zheng (2016), for example, is particularly useful for her review of the cross-disciplinary literature, explaining how the long history of sexualised stereotypes of Asian women in Western culture is likely to contribute to "an individual's sexually preferring them, even if that contribution is not obvious or accessible to introspection." (Zheng, 2016, p. 406). Of course, this doesn't just matter for the attraction of White men, but also for the perceptions about all women in this context.

Sarah suggested to me that if heterosexual White men were not exclusively into Asian women before they moved to the region, they eventually become that way. I asked her why she thought this was and she replied with the 'shampoo in the shower' anecdote. It was remiss of me not to ask her if this was based on factual evidence or if it was her imagination, and so how much of what Sarah described about the local women is accurate is impossible for me to know. Tina's observations were similar to Sarah's and whilst she was a little more careful about what she said, she still, at first, spoke somewhat disparagingly of the local women, invoking negative 'racial' stereotypes:

"it's just something [me and my female colleagues] noticed from day one. [Local] girls, [local] women nearly throwing themselves to our male colleagues. I mean this with no disrespect, absolutely none, but [local women] would be way more likely to do what a man would tell them to do. Or I'm just gonna do whatever it takes to be in your good graces. So, it's easier for a man to find a partner here or in Asia. I think mostly because of that. And the men here, although my fiancée is not one of them, but many Western men find [local] women very attractive. I mean, let's be honest, they're very pretty women. Most of them."

However, when I asked Tina if she thought this was problematic, she replied:

"For us women in the school, we often talk about it. It's not okay. These are young girls, twenty-one, twenty-two. Students often. Very pretty. Wanna date a White man and they can. I think the problem is the local women are being used by Western men."

Tina's situation was different to Sarah's. Tina was already in a relationship and so she was less emotionally invested in the problems for White women, playing the role of a supposedly impartial observer (similar to Alice). However, for Sarah, when describing her reality, and even

if she had shown more concern for the local women, the given circumstances for Sarah and her role make it very difficult for her not to be interpreted as being somehow envious of them. At the same time, she might be seen to be positioning herself as being morally and culturally superior, which is a tricky staging problem for her, and has to do with 'the shape of the contours of the storyline' in this context (Prasad, 2018). For example, for Sarah, the sexual competition with Asian women appeared real, her views shaped by her own experiences and what she thought was happening around her. However, this does not make some of the things she said any less problematic or less potentially damaging. She refers to local women and local men as certain types – the women are hypersexualised whilst the men are shy and emotionally immature. She also, as I previously mentioned, suggested that for some local women, Whiteness, or rather White masculinity, might be a signifier of wealth.

However, as I noted in the previous chapter, Freddie was the only participant who specifically mentioned the dangers involved in making assumptions that are potentially racist. For this reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that he suggested that local women might benefit from relationships with Western men in different ways, although the underlying assumptions are no less problematic:

"the [local] women perhaps get treated better than they would do, or more equally than they would do by a [local] partner."

Freddie seemed to be less concerned about the possibility that local women might be exploited by Western men, although to properly interrogate the issues is beyond the scope of this study; it would require a much wider investigation. Instead, what matters here are my

participants' perceptions of the situation and how they come to understand themselves as being different from others in their world. John, for example, when he spoke about being on holiday in Southeast Asia, described the attention he received from local women:

> "[There was] a group of us. My girlfriend was there as well, and when she left us briefly to go to the toilet, suddenly there was a couple of girls coming over."

John went on to say that he would not ordinarily have been the recipient of similar female attention in the UK. This was something that he was not used to:

> "sort of an opposite situation to what it was like in the UK for me in that sense. [Laughs.]"

He said that the situation made him feel uncomfortable:

> "there's definitely a sense that as a White male, you're like a target for girls that some guys would be very happy with. It makes me feel very uncomfortable in those situations."

It is difficult to know precisely what John meant and whether or not he felt uncomfortable because of the power imbalance or because he was married. When I asked him to elaborate on the situation, he said his remarks were flippant and that based on his experiences, the women he had encountered locally were more "forthcoming" than in the UK. However, the salient point from this is twofold. Firstly, that when talking about the local population, both Sarah and John used Orientalist tropes, although Sarah's descriptions, especially of the local women, were often more lurid. Secondly, that the power-relations are complex. Sarah

ascribes power to the local women (e.g., in her use of the word "magical"), whereas John appears to be uncomfortable because he feels that he has power that he does not warrant.

Marie carefully avoided talking about some of the problematic stereotypes that featured prominently in the other interviews but never explicitly mentioned racism. For example, when I asked her why it was more common to see Western men with Asian women rather than the other way round, she replied:

"I'm really not sure. I've thought about this before and… but it is noticeable because I always notice it when I see someone who is like us…. erm, maybe it's a numbers game. It would be an interesting statistic to see if there are more White male expats than female expats. I don't know. Or maybe because of the job field or something like that."

I also asked Marie if she thought it was easier for some groups of people to adjust to living in the city than others. She spoke about the fact that the city had "a reputation" for its dating scene and went on to say:

"And I think there is that perception of, erm [sighs]. It's kind of an awful thing to say but that the White men expats come out and they want a [local] girlfriend, so they're not gonna be interested in the White women, erm, that's definitely something that gets talked about. I have no idea how accurate that is or not."

Marie's responses were not dissimilar to the other participants, but she was generally far more cautious than the others about what she said, attempting to frame her responses in a more scientific way. This could have been out of respect to her host country due to her familial ties. However, it could also have been because it made her feel uncomfortable. She was

247

already aware of the ways in which her physical presence (a White woman with an Asian male partner) made her stand out as being different, and I picked this up again later in the interview after we had developed a rapport. I asked her how it made her feel:

Marie   Erm, you know what, it's really interesting. Because I read quite a lot, and think about things quite a lot. I guess, I'm not used to feeling different. OK, so I'm White, heterosexual, there's nothing about me in the UK that would make me stand out. At all. I tick pretty much every regular box, for want of a better word, and so I'm not used to being… to standing out in any way. So it's interesting to be on the receiving end of that for a change.

CB   Has that faded overtime or is that something you continue to be aware of?

Marie   I think now I just take it in my stride. And I haven't really… I can't think of any negative interactions that I've had because of it.

Marie gave no indication in the interview that she had faced any kind of 'racial' discrimination or hostility due to her relationship with an Asian man, or that there are spaces she would avoid, only that her family attracted curiosity. However, when she was with her family, Marie felt watched and evaluated in ways that she did not at home, and in ways that Sarah did not away from home, their White bodies mediating their spatialised sense of (dis)comfort and (un)safety (Zambelli, 2021).

White women as 'privileged' others?

For the reasons I have set out, the situation for White women in this context is undoubtedly more complicated than it is for White men, but not without its advantages. In this section, I will consider what the women said about the advantages and debate the women's privilege. I will focus particularly on Sarah's interview responses. This is because the participants generally agreed that living in the region, and being content there, was a more difficult prospect for single women.

As I have already discussed, the women in this context potentially have more power than the men over the ways in which they represent themselves. For example, they are less likely to be negatively stereotyped, although their bodies are still 'racialised' in problematic ways. In particular, the sense of freedom and safety that the women experience in this context, relative to other contexts, should not be overlooked and, in this way, their experience is not dissimilar to the participants in Scuzzarello's (2020) study. For the retirees, regardless of their perceived gender identity, their experience of 'freedom' had to do with being White, Western and relatively wealthy, and, whilst the context for them being in Asia is different, both the international school teachers and the retirees appear, at least, to be going for 'the good' life. Scuzzarello writes:

> "To be able to live a better life, free from one's society social norms, while at the same time ignoring how freedom and a good life are found at the expenses of the local population who is directly impacted by the lifestyle and long-term tourism industries, is the ultimate expression of privilege." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1626).

As I have discussed in the previous chapters, the mobility of all international school teachers is a mark of privilege, regardless of 'race' or gender. This is in addition to the social status and respect often afforded to school teachers in this context. However, perhaps the most important aspect in what Sarah said was that she wanted me to know she also enjoyed aspects of being single, in spite of the other problems. This included the freedom to socialise and do things on her own terms, which is sometimes different for people with family commitments. She understood that she had a privileged lifestyle as an international school teacher and that her life would be very different as a single woman teaching in New Zealand. These ideas resonate with Tamboukou's analysis:

> "what emerges is an account of women resisting the space restrictions imposed upon their lives, claiming space of their own, sometimes creating new space boundaries for themselves but also imagining different spaces beyond masculinist geographical closures." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 5).

Whilst the difficulties that Sarah experienced dating clearly preoccupied her (e.g., now feeling undesirable to Western men), there was a sense that the freedom she felt she had to do whatever she wanted, relative to being at home, was an acceptable trade-off:

CB   You've listed some of the problematic stereotypes, the Western men who are looking for Asian women, the Asian women who are looking for Western men. They're all assumptions, even judgements that are made about people. But your experience is different.

Sarah   There's definitely… there's those kinds of judgements. But I mean, like, you can be interested in whatever… there's so many different… opportunities, interests… like things you can do here. And like you can wear whatever clothes you like. Like you

could literally wear your pyjamas outside and no one's gonna look at you twice. You can dress up to the nines and go to the mall and no one's gonna look at you twice. So it's quite cool in that respect.

After Sarah talked about wearing her pyjamas outside, I asked her if she ever bumped into parents outside of school, but this was not a concern for her in the way it was for some of the other participants, which had to do with the geography of her location: "they're [parents] mostly further out and you don't usually go too far from home". However, she overlooked the fact that foreigners in this context often get away with being culturally offensive and/or behaving in ways that are not socially acceptable (e.g., wearing pyjamas outside) through their ignorance and by suspending certain values they might observe in their home countries. In part, this has to do with language (i.e., not knowing what others are saying about them), but it also forms part of a wider issue to do with general ignorance or misunderstanding. Nonetheless, what is important is that this kind of liberation Sarah felt was her perception of reality.

In relation to the benefits of being an international school teacher in the region, Tina was the only participant (female or male) to mention her school being a good fit for her and somewhere she was able to develop professionally – "enhanced my teaching tremendously" – although Alice also mentioned the quality of the resources available in her school compared to the public schools she worked at in America (the equivalent of British state schools). In relation to the lifestyle aspect, the teachers seemed to know they 'had it good', which was the case for both the women and the men. Marie, for example, also spoke about the privileged lifestyle of international school teachers but took steps to distance herself from

this, talking about the local reaction to teachers who had chosen to travel home in the early days of the pandemic, risking not being able to get back:

> "after Christmas, there was a bit of a hoo-ha here. They changed the rules for flights coming back from the UK. So, quite a lot of people were told not to travel. Erm, for example, I didn't choose to travel. Some people did choose to travel, and then they got stuck in the UK, and they couldn't make it back for their jobs. And, you know, different schools handled that differently. But when I was reading some of the comments online, there was quite a lot of feeling of entitled expat teachers who think the rules don't apply to them. Why would they travel during the middle of a pandemic? You know, all that kind of thing."

Marie's reasons for distancing herself from the stereotype of the entitled, privileged expatriate may have been due to her family connection to her host country insofar as this was now her 'home'. However, whilst she was critical of the teachers' sense of entitlement, she still benefited from being in a similarly privileged position. For example, she also spoke about the culture of domestic help in her host country which made it easier for her to socialise given that she had children:

> "I don't do badly with socialising here because obviously we've got a helper culture, so I've got help with the childcare."

This was something that Freddie, also a parent, commented on:

> "In [Southeast Asian country], we had a live-in maid, that's what you did, we could go out when we liked. We got to [East Asian country], we didn't have a live-in maid,

therefore with young children at the time, it had a massive implication on our social lives."

The culture of domestic help was mentioned several times in the interviews. Michael, for example, spoke about being assigned a maid when he arrived, and William said this about having a cleaner: "I ironed my own shirts in the UK, but I don't do that here." However, there is a risk that Marie will be interpreted less favourably than the men because of gender stereotypes (i.e., the expectation that women should take on greater responsibility than men for raising children and for doing housework).

In relation to where she lived (her accommodation), Marie acknowledged her privilege, although still attempted to play it down to some extent:

"Erm, actually our particular estate is mixed [locals, other Asian nationals]. I suppose maybe we're in a bit more of an exclusive area, erm, not one of the really rich areas. I suppose better than average, we're really lucky."

Scuzzarello writes:

"Settlement in a new country and in its social context can heighten lifestyle migrants' privilege and power. Often, they live a more luxurious life than the local communities. They may also live out and negotiate their privilege in their everyday lives and they develop narratives that justify their privileged social position in the host society." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1606-1607).

Despite Marie mentioning the criticism of the behaviour of other teachers during the pandemic, which had to do with their sense of entitlement, there was no sense in her interview that she was trying to justify or defend her own privileged position. Marie said that she was "really lucky", giving tacit acknowledgment of her structural privilege (i.e., her luck of birth, and a privilege that is unearned). This was similar to how Alice described international school teachers' salaries as "bizarre" and "insane". However, Scuzzarello is useful for my analysis in terms of understanding the tactics that are sometimes used by Western migrants to deflect similar criticism. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5, Scuzzarello explains how the women in her study enacted their privilege by claiming knowledge of what they constructed as 'authentic' in Thai culture. However, whilst none of my participants, male or female, expressed feeling similarly connected to their host countries during the interviews, this was part of their performance. As teachers, they took steps to present themselves as more culturally and politically sensitive than Scuzzarello's participants, and less romantic (although, as mentioned, Sarah, in her initial survey response, claimed to "love" her host country, and felt respected by the local people because of her efforts to learn the language).

Towards the beginning of the interview, I asked Sarah what it was about the country that made her think she could live and work there happily, assuming that perhaps something unique had piqued her interest. Instead, it was more the opportunity to travel and experience a different culture that inspired her, and Sarah's response was similar to responses given by the male participants:

> "I don't think it was [this country] specifically. It was… the opportunity because New Zealand is so far away from everywhere else. The fact that I might be able to travel

and, erm, experience a new culture and just, just have a different experience, erm, instead of same old, same old. Just new opportunities, I think."

Sarah's desire to experience something new and 'spread her wings' was, like aspects of Marie's interview responses, characteristic of the women teachers' autobiographical writings analysed by Tamboukou (1999). However, Western women today are unlikely to feel at least *as* confined and/or oppressed in their home contexts and so Sarah's ability to travel – and to take herself almost anywhere she wanted – is, as Scuzzarello has written, "the ultimate expression of privilege." (Scuzzarello, 2020, p. 1626).

As stated in Chapter 5, the difference for the teachers, compared to the retirees studied by Scuzzarello (2020), is that they are in work. This possibly substantiates the women's (and the men's) stories to some extent insofar as there was no indication that they could afford to live in the region and *not* work. However, at the same time, one must not ignore the ways in which international schools across East and Southeast Asia maintain socioeconomic inequalities in the teachers' host countries, and the role that migrant teachers play in this as part of a Global Middle Class (Ball, 2010):

"The middling qualities of international educators are not simply defined in terms of material or professional status. If expatriate teachers have access to elite lifestyles in comparison with local populations (and certain home country referents), they also service elites." (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 48-49).

As I explained in Chapter 2, local national students attending the type of international schools where my participants worked are usually at the wealthier end of society (unless scholarships are available).

However, this was not the focus of my investigation and was not discussed during the interviews, and so it would be unfair to my participants for me to dwell on these points. What is more pertinent to my analysis is the irony of the fact that whilst many of the teachers wanted to experience another culture, they worked in an environment that is not representative of the local culture as a whole, populated by elites (local and expatriate), as well as frequently socialising with other expatriates whose position in their host countries is similarly privileged.

Sarah's dilemma

White men in this context risk being 'racialised' in disadvantageous ways – ways that are injurious to their identities – whereas, in some ways at least, despite the problems she experienced dating, Sarah is more privileged. Her relative lack of visibility means that it was somewhat easier for her to foreground some of the choices she made about how to represent herself, particularly in relation to her reason for being there. Or, put another way, the choices that Sarah made over how to represent herself are likely to appear, at least at times, and to some people, to be more authentic than the male teachers. However, in this section, I will consider the ways in which Sarah was simultaneously undergoing and exercising power, and how Sarah's dilemma reflects the problems for all of my participants, regardless of their

gender identity. In particular, Sarah's account of herself resonates with the female travel writing analysed by Tamboukou and what she constructs as the authors' attempts "to transgress the female boundaries of place and identity and try for new and improbable conditions of existence." (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 23). Sarah, like all of the participants, was trying to make her life in her host country liveable, to make her existence more bearable.

There was a sense that Sarah was enjoying the adventure: the freedom, the opportunities and even the challenges, which is similar to the women in Tamboukou's analysis, and similar to the other participants. For example, when I asked Sarah what it was about the country that made her think she could live and work there happily, she said that it was more the opportunity to be somewhere else, away from home, that attracted her. She had not thought about the problems involved if she wanted to find a man. This is similar to the way in which Michael said that he didn't think about the stereotypes before he moved insofar as the challenges for both of them were possibly unexpected, although they arguably affected Sarah more because she was single. Sarah was trying to assimilate herself into this new context, to surmount the challenges, and to master a new way of being. Throughout the interview, she took steps to make herself visible within the social milieu – the given circumstances for her role – in ways that others could read and understand. Writing about 'the arts of impression management', Goffman explains:

"The performer who is to be dramaturgically prudent will have to adapt his [sic] performance to the information conditions under which it must be staged." (Goffman, 1959, p. 216).

Goffman (1959) uses the example of aging prostitutes in nineteenth-century London who only worked in dark parks so that their faces would not weaken their 'audience appeal'. This is an unfortunate analogy but Sarah, who was undoubtedly conscious of the invisible subject position of heterosexual White women in this context, carefully presented the version of herself that she wanted to be seen.

Sarah took advantage of the overall sense of independence that is ascribed to single White women in this context. She acknowledged her privileged position as a White woman in her host country and appeared to enjoy the freedom and the opportunity very much. For example, she talked about her pastimes, which included getting together with the New Zealand community in her city, learning the local language, eating out, martial arts classes, hiking and travel. When I asked Freddie, based on his experience, which was the longest of all of the participants, the extent to which the problematic stereotypes are likely to affect female teachers in the region, he suggested that it was up to the women what they made of it:

> "I think it very much depends on the individual and to what extent you let it, er, affect you. We have a significant number of youngish single female staff and they formed a cli… er, clique's not the right word, they formed a group. They have, er, they have a ball. They go out together, they go away together. And it doesn't have the slightest impact on them, whereas I've known other teachers become quite lonely, er, because of this."

It is important to make clear that the urban location of Freddie's school meant that there were more (and potentially more appealing) opportunities for women to socialise away from home than there were for William's wife in their location. However, when saying this, Freddie

seemed to be unaware of his own privilege and the ways in which it is sometimes more difficult for women to socialise in foreign countries and to feel safe.

Sarah spoke frankly about what she found difficult being in her host country. However, when describing the dating situation, which was her reality, it would have been very difficult for her not to convey stereotypical ideas to do with 'race', gender and sexuality (e.g., in comparing herself to local women) in ways that Freddie and the other male participants could more easily avoid. As I have explained, the categorical understandings of social structure evident in the participants' interview responses, and particularly Sarah's responses, indicate that lives are sometimes made meaningful by the ways in which we understand ourselves as being different to others (being aware of our own subjectivities). Following Foucault, the relations of power are an effect of these perceived differences. However, it is important to re-emphasise that Sarah did not indicate a person's 'race' was a determining factor in her own dating interests, and neither did she imply 'race' was a factor in the dating interests of *all* local women/expatriate men, but she was attentive to perceived cultural differences.

In the context of my research, Foucault's understanding of power and the relations of power necessarily means that 'racial' and gender hierarchies are continuously being renegotiated. The spaces for identity formation overlap; the spaces are blurred and so the situation is messy:

"Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words,

individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application." (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

Power/knowledge relationships constrain dramaturgical reinvention; they limit the roles available for social actors by restricting how they are able to understand themselves and how their performances are likely to be interpreted by others.

Towards the end of the interview, I asked Sarah, if she were to leave her host country, what she would be looking for and what would make her happy. She replied:

"Erm, I guess like, so low, like low-cost living, and expat community, which I didn't think I needed before, but definitely do need. I would need to be more… I love that I can travel to the beach easily, and being here, it's a big, massive city, and the pollution can be really bad …. So if I was looking for somewhere else, I'd probably look for somewhere that was a bit cleaner. Erm, things I hadn't really thought about, so, obviously, erm, yeah, the dating situation [laughs]."

Following up on this, I asked Sarah how important it was to her, in terms of her happiness and wellbeing, to be somewhere where she could more easily date men. She maintained that she was happy to get on with her life, but that it would be more of a consideration if she moved again:

"Erm… it's not like the be all and end all, and I'm very happy doing my thing and living my life, erm, but… I would put… I would consider that and think about that a bit more if I was moving to another country, yeah."

It is very possible that playing down the limitations of dating in her host country after playing up the advantages of living there was intentional. Sarah's apparent ambivalence about the situation could have been a deliberate strategy. In other words, this was front stage behaviour (Goffman, 1959) and I was the audience. It may also have been a performance that she felt compelled to act out for her own satisfaction. However, it is problematic to make assumptions. For example, suggesting that Sarah was secretly unhappy when she did not say this about herself would imply that she needed to be in a relationship with a man to change this.

The obvious danger here is the potential for interpreting Sarah's words in a way that is essentialist and stereotypical. In other words, casting Sarah as being somehow jealous of other women and/or dissatisfied about not getting more male attention in her host country, which is not what she said about herself. Even though Sarah (and other participants, male and female) used Orientalist tropes, all women in this situation, regardless of 'race', experience the effects of hegemonic White, heterosexual masculinity (Connell, 1995; 1998). Masculinities are diverse, but the ways in which ideas about masculinities in opposition to femininities undergird historically uneven power-relations is consistent. As Messerschmidt explains, "[hegemonic masculinities] do not occur in a vacuum. Instead, they are situationally influenced by and in turn reproduce the gendered relational and discursive social structures in particular settings." (Messerschmidt, 2019, p. 90). Messerschmidt continues:

> "[hegemonic masculinities] are culturally significant because they shape a sense of what is "acceptable" and "unacceptable" gendered behaviour for copresent interactants in specific situations." (Messerschmidt, 2019, p. 90).

The sense of what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' gendered behaviour in the context of my research has to do with credibility and so should also be conceptualised as 'intelligible' and 'unintelligible' gendered behaviour, or 'convincing' and 'unconvincing' gender performance. The social structures of my research setting and the formations of power/knowledge in this context shape the possibilities for the participants' social performances and how they are likely to be interpreted by others. Or, more specifically, as my analysis has shown, they shape whether or not the participants' own belief in the impression of reality they attempt to engender will be called into question by the audience.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Between Goffman and Foucault

This thesis offers a way of thinking about the challenges to international school teachers' identities, specifically involving the intersection of 'race', gender and heterosexuality, in a way that has not been proposed before. Combining the work of Goffman (1959) and Foucault (1977; 1978; 1980; 1985; 1986; 1988) has enabled a theorisation of how the teachers are able to conceptualise and realise their identities in this context, and to understand how knowledge about them is produced. This application of different sociological and philosophical theories makes a unique contribution to the small but growing body of literature on international school teachers' lives.

Together with my participants, I have investigated the ways in which mobility, place and presence shape and reshape international school teachers' multiple identities. Employing Foucault's idea of power, I have considered how White, heterosexual subjectivities are constituted in this context and examined the social effects. I have analysed the ways in which the teachers' performances are simultaneously enabled and constrained by normative understandings of 'race', gender and (hetero)sexuality. To do this work, and to successfully address my research questions, it was necessary for me to identify the various discourses, or knowledge claims, that circulate around White teachers identities in this context, and the role

that these discourses play in producing the localised networks of power/knowledge on which performances of self are predicated.

After Foucault, the existence of power-relations depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: "these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations." (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). The points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network: where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault, 1978). And so it is for this reason, following Hacking (2004) and Leib (2017), I would argue that there is much to be gained from using a Goffmanian dramaturgical framework to understand the given circumstances for my participants' roles, and others like them, and the tactics and strategies involved in staging a successful performance of themselves. Or, put another way, combining Goffman and Foucault, my analysis offers a critical examination of the various strategies of self-presentation my participants have used within a field of constraint. Nevertheless, as I explained in Chapter 3, it is important to be clear that Goffman and Foucault are not *always* complementary, particularly in relation to postmodern concerns to do with individual agency, subjectivity, representation, and meaning-making, and I will briefly return to these concerns now.

Foucault's work on subjectivization has to do with the ways in which human beings are made subjects: how our lives are made meaningful by the ways in we understand ourselves as being different to others (e.g., due to 'race', gender, and/or sexuality). However, after Foucault, individuals are the vehicles but not the agents of power, and whilst Goffman (1959) hints at the ways in which social actors experience the effects of power (e.g., by maintaining standards of behaviour in public that one might not necessarily agree with, leading to personal discomfort), he also implies that human beings have far more control than

Foucault does over the meanings that are made in social interactions. Nevertheless, power, in the Foucauldian sense, should not be thought about as simply a repressive force; instead, running through the whole social body, "[power] traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse." (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). After Foucault, power is what makes change possible, whether that be to limit an individual's agency, or to promote it (Heller, 1996). The relations of power, which are an effect of the perceived differences between people, are not reducible to individuals and so, therefore, cannot be controlled by individuals (Heller, 1996). And yet this does not counteract resistance to power.

Whiteness as privileging, and the privileging of Whiteness

My analysis helps to understand the ways in which White teachers' identities in this context are discursively constituted and 'racialised'. The expansion of the international school sector in Asia has received only limited attention in relation to the possibilities and impossibilities for teachers' lived identities, including what this has to do with 'race' (see, e.g., Bailey, 2015; Gibson and Bailey, 2023). In addition, the relations of power and privilege in this context are arguably more complex than in some other situations involving 'race' conflict. My theorisation, combining Goffman and Foucault, has proven particularly useful to illuminate the ways in which external factors – factors outside of the teachers' control – create a unique set of problems for their identities. In my analysis, this was particularly evident in some of the contradictions in the women's experiences, although there were similar paradoxes at work elsewhere too.

Throughout the interviews, there was an obvious concern shown by my participants about how they might appear, which was partly connected to 'race' and ideas to do with 'race' privilege. In relation to this, one of the limitations of this study is to do with the ways in which teachers in international schools may be viewed by the local population, both within and outside of their school communities, or by their teaching colleagues at home, although neither group may have given it much thought. Exploring this could be a worthwhile endeavour. Nonetheless, the absence of other voices is not a weakness of this study. There was, at times, a sense that the participants were their own audience; audience expectations had been internalised by them and so, in the interviews, they gave a moderated performance of themselves. This is crucial to my epistemological position. It is entirely possible and, at times, very likely, the participants were, to some extent, *working the research situation to their own ends* (Sikes, 2000). Whilst they may not have set out to be deliberately deceptive, it should be expected that what they chose to say to me during the interviews was related to concerns about how they might appear. This is always likely to be the case in qualitative interview studies. However, the social setting of my research, and the participants' roles as (international school) teachers, means these concerns were likely to be exacerbated.

As Goffman illustrates in 'The Performance of Self in Everyday Life', concern for the way things appear is a fundamental aspect of the human condition and is at the heart of social life. Therefore, as Sikes explains, research participants will almost certainly want to present themselves in a favourable light:

"In the course of forming relationships in everyday life most of us develop a degree of competence at this, while some become particularly adept." (Sikes, 2000, p. 264).

For example, the participants in this study used a variety of protective strategies (Goffman, 1959) in order to resist the possibility of being characterised as somehow entitled and 'only in it for the good life'. They were sometimes self-deprecating, as well as conscientious about expressing gratitude for the opportunities afforded to them as teachers in international schools in their host countries. Indeed, self-deprecating humour was quite possibly the most effective form of resistance to otherwise problematical 'racial' stereotypes – for example, Michael suggesting the ways in which he had potentially morphed into the image of a 'sexpat' (*beer belly, bad shirt, bald, ugly as fuck*), and Sarah comparing her own lack of success relative to local women in dating expatriate men (*I don't know what magical thing they do*).

My participants understood how their Whiteness confers privilege, which enabled them to navigate the situations they were in with confidence. However, this was not always stated clearly. For example, it was implicit in what some of the participants said about learning the local language, which was a choice for them, a hobby even. In part, this has to do with the dominance of the English language globally. However, more significantly, the context of their work as teachers in international schools meant that learning the language was not a necessity (although it helped to improve Marie's relationship with her in-laws). For Sarah and John, learning the language was something that made them feel good about themselves. Nonetheless, postcolonial discourses inevitably mean that, in this situation, teachers are quite possibly 'damned if they don't' but also 'damned if they do.' Not learning the local language is a strong indication of privilege. The teachers in my study knew they could 'get by' without it. They expected their schools to protect them to some extent (this was part of their package, e.g., for some of them, their schools supported them by providing accommodation) and they were insulated from other more challenging aspects of life in their host countries. They were

surrounded by other White, Western teachers, expatriates and wealthy local elite. Conversely, but precisely because of this situation, there is a risk that those who *do* learn the language will be seen as positioning themselves above other teachers/expatriates who have not, and, therefore, seeking commendation (i.e., they are being 'good Westerners'). This was certainly a possibility when John ranked his ability in the local language relative to other expatriates. The paradoxical nature of this was, overall, typical of the teachers' experiences.

As I discussed in Chapter 5, working in international schools (at least the type of schools the participants were employed in at the time of the interviews) enabled the participants to relocate to their host countries with a level of self-confidence that is not available to all migrants (Lundström, 2014). The only exception to this was Sarah, who suggested that her first overseas experience – in a more rurally situated school in her host country – had been a somewhat different and less enjoyable experience. However, because of this relative safety, there were aspects of the teachers' stories that were destructive to their characterisation of themselves (i.e., because of how they might then be interpreted by an audience). This was particularly the case when some of the participants spoke about 'risk' or 'adventure'. In addition, because of the type of schools they worked for, the teachers were complicit in an arrangement that often privileges White, Western ways of thinking and doing (Gardner McTaggart, 2021). At the same time, however, the teachers' Whiteness is a desirable commodity. As Gareth implied, White cultural values are 'part of the package' in premium 'international' schools. This means that in the non-White geographies of East and Southeast Asia, the teachers are likely to be scrutinised and criticised in ways they are unlikely to experience living and working at home (Savva, 2017). Therefore, as Moosavi (2022) explains, the teachers' Whiteness is not 'always-and-only' privileging. They are

simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. However, as I have commented on before in this thesis, I am in no way suggesting that White, Western teachers working in English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia should be thought of as a marginalised or disadvantaged group. Far from it.

The important point to re-emphasise is that, following Foucault, power is immanent; everyone has access to mobilising power, just not all to the same extent. Therefore, in discussions about 'race' privilege, particularly in this context, it would have been decidedly unhelpful for me to conceptualise power as a top-down repressive force (McWhorter, 2005). Instead, what matters more for teachers in this situation is that they are able to critically reflect on their beliefs, values and experiences in order to challenge their own prejudices. Reflexivity is important (Goodson, 2001). This was evidently something that Tina was aware of when she spoke about the work on diversity, equity and inclusion that was happening in her school. However, the focus of the interviews was not on pedagogy and practice and so, therefore, no assumptions should be made about the fact that other participants in this study did not volunteer similar information.[11] Nonetheless, given the issues I have explored in this thesis, it is relevant and appropriate for me to emphasise that this type of work (on diversity, equity and inclusion) is very important in international schools and, indeed, in all schools, and I will return to this point in the final section of my conclusions.

---

[11] See, for example, the following statement from The Council of International Schools (CIS) on Inclusion via Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism (I-DEA): https://www.cois.org/for-schools/inclusion-via-diversity-equity-and-anti-racism [accessed 17.03.24]

White heterosexual masculinities and femininities

Understanding the ways in which White 'racial' subjectivities are constituted across multiple domains opens up the possibility of resistance, and is one step towards teachers in this context achieving personal and social comfort. As Sikes and Everington have explained: "we have to find some way of being who and what we want to be *in the circumstances that prevail* [my emphasis]." (Sikes and Everington, 2004, p. 22). In this section of my conclusions, I will discuss the significance of my findings in relation to how gender is established.

My initial interest in this project, based on my own experiences, had to do with the identities available to White men in this context, which must necessarily take into consideration issues to do with 'interracial' intimacies. This is because 'the playboy role' is frequently an expectation of White, Western men in East and Southeast Asia (Stanley, 2012). I was concerned about the intense power of stereotyping, and the cultural schemas of difference and moral/sexual worth which undergird racist and sexist ideologies. However, as I have mentioned before, it was never my intention to complete a genealogy of 'racialised' sexual desire in this context; that would be an entirely different project. Instead, I have set out to examine the resources and strategies available to heterosexual White men in this context – how White masculine identities are (re)produced, and the ways in which heterosexual White men are able to secure their power. In my analysis, I have considered the social effects of some of the pervasive and problematic stereotypes of White men (which impinge on all actors in this context, not only heterosexual White men).

One significant aspect of my findings is that the men in this study needed to curate their stories more carefully than the women. The way in which they organised and presented their stories, which took foresight and design, was based on an implicit understanding of the potential for them to be interpreted less favourably than other actors. This is a data point in other similar research (e.g., Stanley, 2012; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020). For example, some of the men explained their reasons for teaching in their current schools in quite a casual, even indifferent way. Michael explained that he was not initially thinking of moving to Southeast Asia, and that when he did move, he was not fully aware of the stereotypes. William also chose to emphasise the positive grounding of his career in a state school in the UK where the students' behaviour was more challenging.

Adam was the only participant for whom it appeared to be important (to him) to deny outright that he had a particular sexual interest in Asian women. Instead, rather like the participants' career stories, Adam's relationships with Asian women were based on a combination of circumstances. I have no reason to doubt Adam's sincerity. However, this misses the point. What matters is not so much whether Adam was lying to me, but rather that he felt the need to say what he did (Sikes, 2000), which is the same for the other participants. In relation to understanding this, this is where my use of Goffman's sociology/social psychology combined with the philosophy of Foucault has been most productive. After Foucault, the potential for the credibility of the men's performances (and, in some areas, the women's too) to be called into question has to do with the complex field of power/knowledge relationships. To bring in Goffman, the more something is 'known' – or at least popularly believed – about a situation, the more difficult it is for the cast of characters to be viewed any differently. Therefore, the way in which audiences impute characters to social actors will

always be problematic. Put simply, ideas about heterosexual White, Western men in this context *come from somewhere*, although examining the historicity of the knowledge claims is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, as I indicated in Chapter 6, it is the reciprocity of *cause* and *effect* which creates an almost insurmountable problem for the men's identities.

The prevalence of certain stereotypes – men of a certain type – which were often alluded to in my participants' observations (both male and female), means that White men in East and Southeast Asia, particularly but not exclusively older men, risk being thought about, and spoken about, in injurious ways. However, perhaps the only way for the men to counteract this is to talk about it, and to acknowledge it, which is somewhat self-defeating. For example, Freddie did this when he spoke about the men *disappearing on the weekends.* Even though the implication was that whilst other men might do this, he did not, the inevitable suspicion of Freddie and others like him is an undesirable but unavoidable consequence. This is an effect of power-relations and, as Paechter explains:

"the analysis of power … has to start from the small and local and work outwards to the global, rather than in the reverse direction" (Paechter, 2000, p. 18).

Whilst I have not analysed the historical formation of power-relations in this context, I have used Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of social life to understand some of the mechanisms through which the exercise of power takes place. This is equally, if not more productive.

In spite of the fact that the role options for men are limited, the idealisation of White masculinity in this context is still profitable (the patriarchal dividend amplified by 'race'). This was particularly obvious in what some of the participants said about the retention of teachers in their schools and their observation that single White women are often less likely to 'stick around'. Further exploration of how this might be similar or different for non-heterosexual White teachers would be worthwhile.

As I explained in Chapter 7, White women in this context exist in an anomalous and liminal space, simultaneously visible and invisible. However, in comparison to White men, the women's relative lack of visibility makes it easier for them to foreground the decisions they have made about how to represent themselves. In other words, they are likely to appear more sincere, which is an obvious advantage. The disadvantages are primarily to do with the ways in which White women in this context experience the world from the physical and material place of the bodies, which is the same for White men, but for opposite reasons (i.e., the men experience *increased* sexual capital: Stanley, 2012). The way things appear (e.g., Sarah described herself as being bottom of the pile for dating) and the meanings that are found (e.g., feeling less desirable) are no less problematic for the women than for the men. Even in the example of Marie, who had married an Asian man, she was aware of the ways in which her situation looked – to others – to be unusual, which was not something she was used to when she lived and worked in the UK.

All of the participants, male and female, showed some level of awareness of the ways in which 'racial' and gender hierarchies are continuously being renegotiated, and the ways in which localised power-inflected discourses constrain the field of improvisation for them. In

relation to this, and as I have discussed before, there is a strong argument to be made for using Foucault's analytics of power in discussions about 'race' and 'race' privilege (McWhorter, 2005). For example, even if the participants had wanted to reinvent themselves in different places, far away from home (Tamboukou, 1999), the possibilities for them will never be limitless, which is an effect of power-relations. However, the relational aspect of power means that resistance is also located within those very same power-relations. For Sarah, for example, it was her overall ambivalence to the situation that proved to be the most effective strategy of self-presentation. She let me know that she had been on dates with *some* men, but also that dating wasn't the be all and end all for her. The freedom that she felt relative to being in New Zealand, and relative to White men in this context, was, for her, the best thing about her experience. This was an acceptable trade-off for the otherwise less favourable ways in which she experienced the effects of 'racialised' gender norms.

Adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality

Adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality, I have examined the ways in which localised power-inflected discourses constitute White, heterosexual subjectivities in a process of social control. For example, the notion that gender identity is not a natural extension of the body, but rather it is a product of experience and an operation in meaning-making (Butler, 1990) is, of course, very relevant to this thesis. In particular, this way of thinking is helpful to understand the geographical situatedness of gender and (hetero)sexual identities, as well as processes of identification, recognition, imitation and fantasy imposition

that are of similar concern in queer theory (Derbyshire, 1994). However, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, there are reasons to be cautious with this philosophical approach. In this section of my conclusions, I will briefly revisit those arguments in order to make clear some of the conditions and caveats relating to how this thesis can and should be used by others.

As Shilling (1993) has discussed, Goffman (1959) is generally quite earnest in his belief that human beings have agency in terms of how to represent themselves, even though this is possibly naïve. He makes little attempt to challenge ideas about social orthodoxy and/or human agency in ways that Foucault, Butler and others have done subsequently. Nevertheless, as I discussed in Chapter 3, the problems of post-structuralist thinking in this regard have to do with the ways in which linguistic categories are substituted for lived identities (Derbyshire, 1994; Turner, 1996), and the fact that lived experiences risk being relegated. Consequently, in adopting a queer stance to researching heterosexuality in this (or any) context, there is a danger of my research questions disappearing completely. The most sensible way to mitigate this, as I have explained before, is to be careful to ensure that the idiosyncrasies and uniqueness of the teachers' experiences are not lost or overlooked (i.e., by not reducing individual stories to group statements). Throughout my analysis, this is something I have been cautious about, and it is particularly important when it has to do with 'interracial' intimacies.

In writing about 'interracial' intimacies in this context, one must carefully negotiate the inherent presumptions about 'racial' fetishisation and any possible claims of immorality. To move at the abstract level and to make generalised conclusions has the potential to cause harm to my participants and others like them. This has required due care and attention in my analysis. However, there are ways in which my application of theory has proven to be very

well-suited to writing about White, heterosexual identities in this context. The discursive manipulations and possible modes of resistance that have been the concern of much queer theory (Derbyshire, 1994) are equally as relevant and important when thought about in relation to the identities of White, heterosexual men and women in the social, cultural, historical and political context of international school communities in East and Southeast Asia.

Teachers' lives and careers

The expansion of the international school sector in Asia (Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Lee and Wright, 2016; Machin, 2017) is obviously a determining factor in the increasing number of White, Western teachers who choose to migrate there. Indeed, as I have discussed, the growth of the sector globally means that teaching abroad is a more feasible option for some teachers than ever before. This is an effect of globalisation; teachers are able to 'ply their trade' in a range of countries and with greater confidence than was previously possible (Burke, 2017; Hrycak, 2015; Rey, Bolay and Gez, 2020; Savva, 2015, 2017). Significantly, this includes the option to return home and resume teaching in their home countries with possibly less suspicion from school leaders and colleagues about 'what they've been up to' in while they've been gone. This is something I have done and, at the time of their interviews, Tina and William were both planning to do. However, still not enough attention has been given to how international mobility, place and presence shape and reshape teachers' identities – the processes and outcomes of their relocation (Bailey and Cooker, 2019). This warrants further investigation, particularly in relation to teachers who have later returned 'home' to teach. However, to finish this thesis, I will briefly consider the implications of my research for

international school teachers' lives and careers (which extend beyond teachers working in English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia). I will reconnect with the 'teacherly' aspect of my study.

First of all, as I discussed at the beginning of my conclusions, reflexivity is likely to be important in this context for teachers to consider how normative ideas about gender, heterosexuality and Whiteness affect their sense of self. Secondly, but in doing this, it will be important for teachers to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of their situation, and to decide what are the acceptable (and unacceptable) 'trade-offs' involved for them personally. This was very obviously something that Sarah had done, but it appeared to be the case for some of my other participants too, and the issues were brought to the fore during the interviews. Being reflexive was a way of mobilising power (e.g., in order to resist the imposition of negative stereotypes).

Understanding oneself, and how the beliefs and values we hold shape the possibilities for one's self, is arguably more important for this group of teachers than it is for *some* other groups of White, Western expatriates. For example, certain types of business executive. This is because, as Goodson (1980) has commented, teaching is *intensely personal*, and so for everyone involved to be successful (students, families, teachers and non-teaching staff), it is important they understand each other and feel a sense of connection to the school and wider community. However, there are some problems with this, which I must at least acknowledge. This is because whilst the construction of teachers' identities in this context is complex, it is also sometimes contentious. In Chapter 2, for example, I mentioned some of the possible critiques of the model of education provided by the type of international schools my

participants worked in, including the ways in which certain types of international school could be argued to privilege White, Western ways of thinking and doing. Nevertheless, it was never my intention to respond to these critiques. Instead, my argument is that the type of self-examination I am recommending – which, of course, involves being honest with oneself – must surely be a good starting point for international school teachers to confront some of the dominant ideologies in this and other similar contexts, both at school and in their own lives, and to find ways to be who they want to be. However, there are also implications of this study which go beyond the personal, and I will consider these implications to finish.

In the same way that I have not set out to critique international schools and their different models of education, I have also been careful to avoid critiquing the policies/approaches of international school leaders, for example, regarding recruitment and retention. These issues have not really been explored in this thesis, and it would undermine my conclusions to imply otherwise. Similarly, I am opposed to making recommendations for policy makers in relation to why, for some people, remaining in classrooms 'at home' is less attractive than teaching overseas. My data is insufficient for this, but it could be used as part of other studies. For the teachers in my study, their relocation appeared to be predominantly a lifestyle choice. Consequently, there is a need to accept that teaching is now, more so than ever before, a mobile profession; it is simply easier for teachers to work overseas. Of course, if increasing numbers of teachers leave the countries in which they were trained to teach, this will be a problem for national governments. However, as I explained in Chapter 2, this has never been my concern.

The conclusions of this thesis are most relevant to the context in which the research was carried out. However, in recommending ways for international schools in East and Southeast Asia to provide better support for their teachers, there is a risk that some people might think this is rather indulgent. This is because a significant part of my analysis has focused on the teachers' relatively privileged lifestyles (e.g., in comparison to teachers living and working in the UK). In addition, it is important to be clear that none of the teachers in this study indicated they were unhappy. Nevertheless, my analysis of the ways in which the teachers in my study have accommodated to the teacher role (Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985) in the broadest sense, encompassing all aspects of their lives, deserves consideration by international school leaders. This is because to be more effective professionally, and to experience life as liveable, it is important that all teachers have a nuanced understanding of the cultural context in which they live and work, and of the knowledge claims that circulate around their own and others' identities.

When it was mentioned by them, the teachers in this study spoke positively about their school's approach to the induction of new teachers, which included elements of cross-cultural orientation. The teachers were also grateful for some of the other ways in which they had been supported immediately after their arrival. However, in the same way that teachers in this context are encouraged to be reflexive about aspects of their identities, it would also be appropriate for school leaders in this context to acknowledge the challenges to teachers' identities, and for this to be reflected in teachers' induction, as well as in their continuing professional development. This ongoing dialogue should be relevant and specific to the cultural context of each school and its location. This is a responsibility that international schools should take seriously for the benefit of everyone involved.

Contribution

In addition to my contribution to the small but growing body of literature on international school teachers' lives, the work I have done may well be useful to people with a variety of interests beyond the field of international education, and so this study should not be confined within disciplinary boundaries. For example, this study is partly about some of the determining factors and outcomes of (privileged) human migration, in which the international school sector plays an increasingly prominent role (Bunnell, 2016; 2019; Hayden and Thompson; 2013; 2016). It is also about the social performance of Whiteness in the non-White geographies of East and Southeast Asia (Appleby, 2012; 2013; Chesnut, 2020; Kelsky, 2001; Lan, 2011; Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Maher and Lafferty, 2014; Moosavi, 2022; Piller and Takahashi, 2006; Scuzzarello, 2020; Stanley, 2012).

Nevertheless, I must acknowledge the inspiration I have taken from the proponents of the life history method in British educational research, most notably Ivor Goodson, Pat Sikes and Peter Woods, as well as Carrie Paechter's work on gender identity and power/knowledge in school contexts drawing on Foucault. As Goodson (2001) explains, life history work has coincided with the turn to postmodernism and poststructuralism in a range of disciplines. He writes:

"Assumptions of linearity of chronological time lines and story lines are challenged in favour of more multiple, disrupted notions of subjectivity." (Goodson, 2001, p. 137).

We tell different stories about ourselves at different times, depending on the given circumstances and who our audience is, and so the overall aims of this project are perhaps best understood as being to do with the pursuit of improved self-knowledge – in other words:

> "understanding 'where we're coming from', and considering where the beliefs, values and experiences that we hold and have, originate and how they have developed, and how our past might influence our present and our future." (Sikes and Everington, 2001, p. 16).

In the context of my research, it was important for the participants to be reflexive and to consider the ways in which, living and working in East and Southeast Asia, normative ideas about gender, heterosexuality and Whiteness affect their sense of self.

However, I accept the possibility that some people might be critical of my participants, and others like them, including myself. For example, we might expect some level of criticism in relation to the privileges afforded to White, Western teachers in this context relative to working in the countries and school systems in which we were trained to teach. In other words, questioning our motivation. Nonetheless, addressing these concerns was never my aim (indeed, there are aspects of my analysis which exacerbate these concerns). Instead, my hope is that this study will *enliven* our understanding of the situation by revealing some of the identity concerns of White, Western teachers in this context (Prasad, 2018), and by "showing how [teachers] take care of these concerns by crafting personal performances in the public sphere." (Prasad, 2018, p. 50). It is this theatricality which has been of most interest to me.

Appendix A: *Participants' Biographical Details*

Interview No.	Date/Time (Taipei)	Pseudonym	Region	Age	Nationality	Gender	Relationship Status	Partner/Spouse Detail	Number of Children Live With	Years Overseas	Age Range Taught	Other Information
1	28/04/21 4pm	Freddie	Southeast Asia	50	British	Male	Married	British wife (met teaching in UK)	2	21	Secondary	Senior Leader
2	28/04/21 8pm	Marie	East Asia	41	British	Female	Marrried	Local husband (met in present country)	2	9	Secondary	
3	29/04/21 7pm	Sarah	Southeast Asia	35	New Zealand	Female	Single		0	4	Primary	
4	03/05/21 6.30pm	John	East Asia	35	British	Male	Partner	British girlfriend	0	5	Primary	
5	04/05/21 7pm	Joel	East Asia	38	British	Male	Partner	European girlfriend	0	7 (but not always as a teacher)	Secondary	
6	06/05/21 6.30pm	Adam	East Asia	30	British	Male	Partner	Local girlfriend (one parent from a different Asian country)	0	3	Primary	
7	12/05/21 7pm	Michael	Southeast Asia	41	British	Male	Married	Local	0	10	Secondary	
8	24/05/21 7pm	Gareth	Southeast Asia	38	British	Male	Partner	Local (but met in the Middle East)	0	7	Secondary	
9	02/06/21 7pm	Alice	East Asia	31	USA	Female	Married	American husband (works in finance)	0	2		
10	07/06/21 9pm	David	Southeast Asia	44	British	Male	Divorced		0	4	Secondary	Senior Leader
11	08/06/21 6.30pm	Paul	East Asia	49	USA	Male	Divorced		0	20	Secondary	Senior Leader
12	09/06/21 8pm	William	Southeast Asia	38	British	Male	Married	British wife (met teaching in UK)	0	8 (teaching)	Secondary	
13	23/06/21 6.30pm	Tina	East Asia	32	European (not British)	Female	In a relationship (planning to get married)	Partner is Black Carribean, met in host country (studying at the time, but now a teacher)	0	6	Secondary	

Appendix B: *Invitation Email*

Dear Heads of School,

I would be most grateful if you could forward this email to the teachers in your school, inviting them to take part in an ethically approved research project in the School of Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University, UK. The project will explore the social positioning of teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia and the ways in which teachers negotiate their identities, focusing on issues to do with race, gender and sexuality:

Power/Knowledge, Visibility and Sexuality:
The lives of White teachers working in English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia

Online Survey

Before continuing to the secure online survey[12] (which should take around twenty-minutes to complete), **please read the attached two-page Participant Information Sheet** in order to make an informed decision as to whether or not you wish to participate in the project. The Participant Information Sheet is required for both data protection and ethical reasons, and contains important information about confidentiality. Please also read the eligibility criteria for the project (information below).

Respondents to the survey will have the option to opt-in or out of follow-up one-to-one interviews. If you are willing to take part in the interviews, you will be asked to leave your name and email address when you complete the survey; however, please note that not all respondents will be contacted for interviews.

Participation in the project is entirely voluntarily. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part, and **please forward this invitation to anyone else in your network who meets the eligibility criteria.**

Eligibility criteria

Participants must be teachers in English-medium international schools in countries in East or Southeast Asia. They must identify as White, and they must not have any family connection to their host country, unless they met their partner/spouse whilst in the country.

---

[12] Hyperlinked

In addition to this, participants must have no formal connection to Taipei European School, where I am Deputy Headteacher in the British Secondary and High School Section. My research is in no way connected to my work in this context. However, if it is likely that this could compromise the research relationship in the future, participants will have the option to withdraw from the project without prejudice. This will be discussed at the beginning of the interviews.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if anything is unclear or if you require further information:

[Contact details provided.]

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Bellamy

Appendix C: *Participant Information Sheet (PIS)*

Power/Knowledge, Visibility and Sexuality: *The lives of White teachers working in English-medium international schools in East and Southeast Asia*

This Participant Information Sheet is required for both data protection and ethical reasons. Please read it carefully in order to make an informed decision as to whether or not you wish to participate in the research project, and discuss it with others if you wish. Participation is entirely voluntary. Please also refer to the eligibility criteria in the email invitation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if anything is unclear or if you require further information:

[Contact details provided.]

What will taking part involve?

The survey should take around twenty-minutes to complete. You will be asked to provide some personal information (age, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, how many children live with you, the number of years you have lived overseas, present country of employment, the type of school you work in, and previous countries). The questions are free-text boxes and you will also be asked to provide information about your partner/spouse (optional), the reasons for choosing to work in your host country, the groups of people you most frequently socialise with and any other information you think is relevant to the themes of the project.

Respondents to the survey will have the option to opt-in or out of follow-up one-to-one interviews. If you are willing to take part in the interviews, you will be asked to leave your name and email address; however, please note that not all respondents will be contacted for interviews.[13]

Interviews will take place either in-person in Taiwan, or using Skype (video calls, voice-only calls and/or instant messaging), or by email. With consent, interviews will be recorded for transcription (audio only) and the audio files will be destroyed once the interview has been transcribed. The duration and frequency of the interviews will vary between participants, but it is unlikely to include more than two interviews of between 30-60 minutes. The interviews will involve personal questions and some of the data that is collected is likely to be sensitive in its nature.

The topics/themes that will be covered in the interviews include:

- o Your reasons for teaching overseas, and why in East/Southeast Asia;
- o The social positioning of teachers in international school communities in East and Southeast Asia;
- o The interleaving of social relationships and ways of negotiating identity;

---

[13] The secure online survey data will be extracted once the first phase of data collection has been completed in approximately 2 months. For further security information relating to the survey, please read: https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/help-support/online-surveys-security/.

- o   Race, gender and sexuality.

Will my taking part in this project be confidential?

All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the identities of the individuals who take part in the project. If you volunteer to take part in the interviews, the information that you provide will be anonymised. This means you will be given a false name and any information that might identify you will be removed from your survey and interview responses. Only I will have access to your personal information, which will be stored in secure project folders on servers based on Nottingham Trent University campuses in the UK. Data will only be accessed via a secure network connection and analysed using password protected computers. All of your personal information, or anything that could identify you, will be deleted by the end of the project.

The interview transcripts will be emailed to participants within two weeks, and participants will have three weeks from the date of receipt to request amendments or redactions.

If participants disclose information which indicates they pose a risk to children and young people, this will be reported to the relevant law enforcement agencies in accordance with normal procedures.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participants will be asked personal questions which are relevant to the themes of the project, but which may make some people feel uncomfortable.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Within the growing body of literature about international schools, there is a paucity of literature which speaks of, and to, teachers in this context. This project is intended to address some of the gaps in the existing research.

How will the information I provide be used?

The results of the research will be written up in my PhD thesis[14], and possibly articles in academic journals and conference papers. Direct quotations from your interviews and survey answers might be included, but not in a way that would identify you. Additionally, the anonymised versions of your survey responses and interview transcripts will be preserved in the Nottingham Trent University Data Archive for at least ten years. The data may be made available for other researchers to reuse in future ethically approved research.

What happens if I later choose to withdraw from the project, and who should I contact if there is a problem?

---

[14] Nottingham Trent University sponsors this project and will as act as the data controller for this project. As a publicly funded institution, Nottingham Trent University uses personal information to carry out academic research in the public interest. Therefore, if you agree to take part in this project, I will only use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research project.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants can terminate the interviews at any time. You can ask to withdraw from the project, without giving a reason, up to five weeks after an interview, and the data you have provided me will be deleted. Any problem, complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the project should be addressed with me in the first instance, or my supervisor, Carrie Paechter:

[Contact details provided.]

If you wish to raise a complaint about how I have handled your personal data, you can contact the Nottingham Trent University Data Protection Officer, Tracy Landon, who will investigate the matter: [Contact details provided.]

Who has reviewed the project?

To protect your interests, this project has been reviewed by and received a favourable ethical opinion from Nottingham Trent University College of Business, Law and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Appendix D: *Online Survey Questions*

Power/Knowledge, Visibility and Sexuality: The Lives of White Teachers Working in English-medium International Schools in East and Southeast Asia

Consent

I confirm that I have read and understood the information contained in the invitation email and Participant Information Sheet. If it was necessary for me to ask questions, these were answered to my satisfaction.
I confirm that I meet the elibility criteria for the project.
I understand that participation in the project is voluntary.
I understand that anonymised versions of the data that is collected will be preserved in the Nottingham Trent University Data Archive for at least ten years and may be made available for other researchers to reuse in future ethically approved research.
If I disclose information which indicates I pose a risk to children and young people, I understand that this will be reported to the relevant law enforcement agencies.
I agree to continue and complete this secure online survey. * *Required*

○ Yes
○ No

Consent to be contacted for a follow up interview

I am willing to be contacted by the researcher for a follow up interview. (If the answer is no, you will not be asked to provide your name and email address.) *
Required

○ Yes
○ No

Name

Name ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Email address

Email address ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Age in years

Age in years ✱ *Required*

Please enter a number.

[   ]

Nationality

Nationality ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Gender

Gender ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Relationship status

Relationship status ✻ *Required*

- ○ Single
- ○ Married or civil partnership
- ○ In a relationship
- ○ Divorced or separated
- ○ Its complicated

Partner/Spouse

Please provide some information about your partner or spouse e.g. their nationality, age, occupation, where and how you met, years together. (This field is optional.)

Your answer should be no more than 500 characters long.

Children

How many children live with you? ✻ *Required*

Please enter a number.

Time overseas

In total, how many years have you lived and worked overseas? (If you have returned to your home country for extended periods, please add up all the time you have been overseas.) ✱ *Required*

Please enter a number.

[   ]

Present country of employment

In which country do you currently work? ✱ *Required*

[   ]

Why did you choose to work in your host country?

Why did you choose to work in your host country? ✱ *Required*

Your answer should be no more than 500 characters long.

[   ]

Other countries

Please list all of the other countries you have worked in **outside** of your home country. (If you have not worked in other countries, please move on to the next question.)

School

Please briefly describe the type of school you curently work in and the curriculum(s) on offer. ✱ *Required*

Your answer should be no more than 350 characters long.

Students

What age groups do you teach? ✱ *Required*

Socialising

With which groups of people do you most frequently socialise and why e.g.
teachers from your school, teachers from other international schools, expatriates
who work in jobs unconnected to the school, parents from within the school
community, other local nationals? * *Required*

Your answer should be no more than 750 characters long.

Other information

The project will explore the social positioning of teachers in international school
communities in East and Southeast Asia and the ways in which teachers
negotiate their identities, focusing on issues to do with race, gender and
sexuality. Please provide any further information about your personal
experiences which you think is relevant to the themes of the project. (This field is
optional.)

Your answer should be no more than 1000 characters long.

Final page

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. If you gave consent to be contacted for an interview, please note that not all respondents wil be contacted for an interview. The survey data will be used to identify a spread of participants and those selected will be contacted by the end of November.

Appendix E: *Interview Consent Form*

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEWS

Power/Knowledge, Visibility and Sexuality:

The Lives of White Teachers Working in English-medium International Schools in East and Southeast Asia

How to return the signed consent form

Please sign the form by hand and either scan or take a picture of it.

You will be sent a separate email from NTUZendTo with a link to drop off the signed consent form. The link will remain valid for three days from the time of the email. Once you have dropped off the form, you will be notified when it has been picked up.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above project.
2. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided. If it was necessary for me to ask questions, these were answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can terminate an interview at any time.
4. I understand that I can ask to withdraw from the project without giving a reason up to five weeks after an interview and my data will be destroyed in a way that is consistent with technology best practice standards.
5. I consent to my interview(s) being recorded under the condition that the audio file is permanently destroyed after an interview has been transcribed.
6. The interview transcripts will be emailed to participants within two weeks of an interview taking place, and I understand that I will have three weeks from the date of receipt of the transcript to request amendments or redactions.
7. I understand that my data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law and, as explained in the Participant Information Sheet, all of my personal information, or anything that could identify me, will be deleted by the end of the project.
8. I give permission for the anonymised data I provide to be preserved in the Nottingham Trent University Data Archive for at least ten years. I understand that the data may be made available for other researchers to reuse in future ethically approved research.
9. If I disclose information which indicates I pose a risk to children and young people, I understand that this will be reported to the relevant law enforcement agencies.
10. I agree to be interviewed as part of this project.

At the end of the first interview, you will be asked if you are willing to participate in a follow-up interview if I later decide that this could be beneficial to the project. In signing this form, you are giving consent to be interviewed more than once, unless you decline further invitations.

Name of person giving consent:

Date:

Signature:

Name of person taking consent: Christopher Bellamy

Date:

Signature:

Appendix F: *Interview Debrief Sheet*

INTERVIEW DEBRIEF SHEET

Power/Knowledge, Visibility and Sexuality:

The Lives of White Teachers Working in English-medium International Schools in East and Southeast Asia

Thank you for taking part in this project. The audio recording will be permanently deleted as soon as the interview has been transcribed and anonymised. All personal identifiers will be removed, which means it will be impossible for people to connect the interview data with you.

The transcript will be sent to you by email within two weeks of the interview taking place, after which you will have three weeks from the date of receipt to request amendments or redactions. This also applies if there are things you did not mention but would like to be included.

If you want to withdraw your data, this must be done within five weeks after the interview.

Social and Emotional Support

If you were upset by anything that was discussed during the interview, the following organisations offer virtual counselling:

- Better Help: https://www.betterhelp.com
- Expat Nest: https://www.expatnest.com
- Truman Group: https://truman-group.com
- William & Associates Counselling Services: https://www.wacs.ca

Your school administration should also be able to provide you with details of English-speaking counselling services in your local area.

References

Acker, S. (1989). *Teachers, gender and careers*. New York: Falmer.

Agar, M. (1991). The Right Brain Strikes Back. In Fielding, N. G. And Lee, R. M. eds., (1991). *Using Computers in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Alcoff, L. M. (2006). *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and The Self*. Oxford: OUP.

Allen, J. (2003). *Lost geographies of power.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Appleby, R. (2013). Desire in Translation: White Masculinity and TESOL in *TESOL Quarterly,* 47 (1), 122-147.

Appleby, R. (2012). Singleness, Marriage, and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinities: Australian Men Teaching English in Japan. *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies,* 10 (1).

Atkinson, P, Coffey, A. and Delamont, S. (2003). *Key Themes in Qualitative Research: Continuities and Change*. Oxford: Altamira Press.

Bailey, L. (2015). Reskilled and 'Running Ahead': Teachers in an international school talk about their work. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 14 (1), 3-15.

Bailey, L. and Cooker, L. (2019). Exploring Teacher Identity in International Schools: Key Concepts for Research. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 18 (2), 125-141.

Ball, S. (2010). Is there a global middle class? The beginnings of a cosmopolitan sociology of education: A review. *Journal of Comparative Education,* 69 (1), 137-161.

Ball, S., and Goodson, I. eds. (1985). *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. London, New York: RoutledgeFalmer

Battershill, C. D. (1990). Erving Goffman as a precursor to the post-modern sociology. In S. H. Riggins ed. (1990). Beyond Goffman: Studies on communication, institution, and social interaction. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

BERA [British Educational Research Association] (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research: Fourth Edition*, London: BERA https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018 [accessed 06.04.24]

Binkley, S. (2016). Anti-racism beyond empathy: Transformations in the knowing and governing of racial difference. *Critical Psychology (Lawrence & Wishart),* 9 (2), 181-204.

Bittencourt, T. and Willetts, A. (2018). Negotiating the tensions: A critical study of international schools' mission statements. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 16 (4), 515-525.

Blain, H. and Diskin-Holdaway, C. (2023). Destabilizing Racial Discourses in Casual Talk-in-interaction. *Applied Linguistics,* 44 (4), 631-657.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: a practical guide.* 1st ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Brewis, J. (2005). Signing My Life Away? Researching Sex and Organization. *Organization,* 12 (4), 493-510.

Brinkmann, S., and Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of the Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Third Edition. London: Sage.

Brummitt, N. and Keeling, A. (2013). Charting the Growth of International Schools. *In:* R. Pearce, ed., *International Education and Schools: Moving Beyond the First 40 Years.* London: Bloomsbury, 2013, 25-36.

Budrow, J. and Tarc, P. (2018). What Teacher Capacities do International School Recruiters Look For? *Canadian Journal of Education,* 41 (3), 860-889.

Bunnell, T. (2019). *International Schooling and Education in the 'New Era': Emerging Issues*. Emerald Publishing

Bunnell, T. (2017). Teachers in international schools: a neglected "middling actor" in expatriation. *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research,* 5 (2), 194-202.

Bunnell, T. (2016). Teachers in international schools: a global educational 'precariat'? *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 14 (4), 543-559.

Bunnell, T. and Gardner-McTaggart, A. (2022). The cultural capital of senior leaders in elite traditional international schools: an enduring 'leadership nobility'? *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* 1-19.

Bunnell, T. and Poole, A. (2021). *Precarity and Insecurity in International Schooling: New Realities and New Visions*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Burke, L.E.C. (2017). Casting a critical eye on the positioning of the Western expatriate teacher. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 16 (3), 213-224.

Burns, T. (1992). *Erving Goffman*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1994). Against proper objects: introduction. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies,* 6 (2), 3.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. London, New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993 [2011]). *Bodies That Matter*. London, New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1990 [1999]). *Gender Trouble*. London, New York: Routledge.

Carabine, J. (2001). Unmarried Motherhood 1830-1990: A Genealogical Analysis. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S. J. eds. (2001). *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis.* London: Sage.

Carlson, M. (1996). *Performance: a critical introduction*. London: Routledge

Carroll, R. (2012). *Rereading Heterosexuality : Feminism, Queer Theory and Contemporary Fiction.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Chesnut, M. (2020). Disruptions of teachers' gendered identities through bodies and dress: 'foreign' women teaching English in South Korea. *Gender and Education,* 32 (2), 194-210.

Cho, S.K. (1997). Converging Stereotypes in Racialized Sexual Harassment: Where the Model Minority Meets Suzie Wong. *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice,* 1, 177-555.

Chou, R.S. and Taylor, B. (2018). Yellow Fever and Yellow Impotence: The Polarity of Asian-American Sexuality. In S. Lamb and J. Gilbert, eds. (2018). *The Cambridge Handbook of Sexual Development: Childhood and Adolescence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 241-260.

CIS [Council of International Schools] (2021). Determining the Diversity Baseline in International Schools. Leiden: Council of International Schools. https://www.cois.org/about-cis/perspectives-blog/blog-post/~board/perspectives-blog/post/what-the-data-tells-us-about-diversity-in-international-school-teaching-staff-and-leadership [accessed 06.04.24]

Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century.* Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press.

Collins, P.H., (1986). Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. *Social Problems (Berkeley, Calif.),* 33 (6), S14-S32.

Connell, R.W. (1998). Masculinities and Globalization. *Men and Masculinities,* 1 (1), 3-23.

Connell, R. W (1995). *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Crisfield, E. (2023). Orientations to Linguistic Diversity in International Schools: Setting a new agenda. In *Ecolint Institute Research Journal / Journal de recherches, Vol. 9, Spring 2023*, 11-23, https://www.ecolint-institute.ch/sites/default/files/resources/research_journal_spring_2023.pdf [accessed 06.04.24]

Curley, M. (2014). Combating Child Sex Tourism in South-east Asia: Law Enforcement Cooperation and Civil Society Partnerships. *Journal of Law and Society,* 41 (2), 283-314.

Deakin, H. and Wakefield, K. (2014). Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers. *Qualitative Research,* 14 (5), 603-616.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In (2005) *Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Derbyshire, P. (1994). A Measure of Queer and Queer Theory and Homosexual Identities in Britain, *Critical Quarterly*, 36:1, 39-48.

Deveney, B. (2007). How well-prepared do international school teachers believe themselves to be for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms? *Journal of Research in International Education,* 6 (3), 309-332.

Dickson, P. (2008). Researching educational governance and control: LEA and OFSTED. In Sikes, P. and Potts, A. eds. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: investigations from within.* London, New York: Routledge

Dickson-Swift, V., et al. (2007). Doing sensitive research: what challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research,* 7 (3), 327-353.

Dillabough, J. (1999). Gender Politics and Conceptions of the Modern Teacher: Women, identity and professionalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20:13, 373-394

Dyer, R. (1997). *White*. Oxon: Routledge

Ely, M. (1991). *Doing qualitative research : circles within circles.* Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.

Eng-Beng Lim (2014). *Brown Boys and Rice Queens; Spellbinding Performance in the Asias.* NYU Press.

Eng-Beng Lim (2004). *Tropic spells: The performative encounters colonials and nativized boys in Singapore, Bali and the Asian diaspora.* University of California, Los Angeles.

Epstein, D. (1998). Marked men: Whiteness and masculinity. *Agenda (Durban)*, 14(37), 49–59

Epstein, D. and Johnson, R. (1998). *Schooling Sexualities.* Buckingham: OUP

Etherington, K. (1996). The counsellor as researcher: boundary issues and critical dilemmas. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling,* 24 (3), 339-346.

Feliciano, C., Robnett, B. and Komaie, G. (2009). Gendered racial exclusion among white internet daters. *Social Science Research,* 38 (1), 39-54.

Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding Popular Culture*. London: Unwin Hyman

Foster, S. (2004). Colonialism and Gender in the East: Representations of the Harem in the Writings of Women Travellers. *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 34, 6-17.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Politics, philosophy, culture : interviews and other writings, 1977-1984.* Ed. L. D. Kritzman. New York, London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1986 [1990]. *The Care of Self. The History of Sexuality: 3.* London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1985 [1992]). *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality: 2.* London: Penguin

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977.* Ed. C. Gordon. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978 [1998]) *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: 1.* London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1977 [1991]) *Discipline and Punish*. London: Penguin.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White Women, Race Matters : The Social Construction of Whiteness.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gailey, J.A. and Prohaska, A. (2011). Power and gender negotiations during interviews with men about sex and sexually degrading practices. *Qualitative Research,* 11 (4), 365-380.

Gardner-McTaggart, A. (2021). Washing the world in whiteness; international schools' policy. *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 53 (1), 1-20.

Gardner-McTaggart, A. (2016). International elite, or global citizens? Equity, distinction and power: the International Baccalaureate and the rise of the South. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 14 (1), 1-29.

Gibson, M.T. and Bailey, L. (2023). Constructing international schools as postcolonial sites. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 21 (3), 405-416.

Gillies, V. and Alldred, P. (2012). The ethics of intention: research as a political tool, in Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M. and Jessop, J., 2012, *Ethics in Qualitative Research*, London: Sage, 43-60.

Goffman, E. (1983). The Interaction Order: American Sociological Association, 1982 Presidential Address. *American Sociological Review,* 48 (1), 1-17.

Goffman, E. (1974 [1986]). *Frame Analysis*. Illinois: Northeastern University Press.

Goffman, E. (1961 [1991]). *Asylums*. London: Penguin.

Goffman, E. (1959 [1990]). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.

Goodson, I. (2008). *Investigating the Teacher's Life and Work*. Rotterdam, Taipei: Sense Publishers.

Goodson, I. (2001). The Story of Life History: Origins of the Life History Method in Sociology. *Identity,* 1 (2), 129-142.

Goodson, I. (1980). Life histories and the study of schooling. *Interchange* 11, 62–76.

Goodson, I., and Sikes, P. (2001). *Life history research in educational settings : learning from lives*. Buckingham: Open University.

Green, A.I. (2010). Remembering Foucault: Queer Theory and Disciplinary Power. *Sexualities,* 13 (3), 316-337.

Greteman, A. J., and Socol, I. D. (2020). Performativity and Disidentification: Subverting Identity Politics through Stereotypical Embrace or Rejection. In Jenlick, P. M. (2020). *Sexual Orientation and Teacher Identity*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Hacking, I. (2004). Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: between discourse in the abstract and face-to-face interaction. *Economy and Society,* 33 (3), 277-302.

Halicioglu, M.L. (2015). Challenges facing teachers new to working in schools overseas. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 14 (3), 242-257.

Han, C. and Choi, K. (2018). Very Few People Say "No Whites": Gay Men of Color and the Racial Politics of Desire. *Sociological Spectrum,* 38 (3), 145-161.

Hancock, B.H. and Garner, R. (2011). Towards a Philosophy of Containment: Reading Goffman in the 21st Century. *The American Sociologist,* 42 (4), 316-340.

Hanna, P. (2012). Using internet technologies (such as Skype) as a research medium: a research note. *Qualitative Research,* 12 (2), 239-242.

Hayden, M. and Thompson, J. (2013). International Schools: Antecedents, Current Issues and Metaphors for the Future. In Pearce, R. ed. (2013) *International Education and Schools: Moving Beyond the First 40 Years*, London: Bloomsbury

Hayden, M. and Thompson, J. (2016). International schools: the developing agenda. In Hayden, M. and Thompson, J. eds. (2016) *International schools: Current Issues and Future Prospects*, Oxford: Symposium Books

Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. (2018). Time for new terminology? *International School,* 21(1), 3.

Heller, K.J. (1996). Power, Subjectification and Resistance in Foucault. *SubStance,* 25 (1), 78-110.

Hill, M. (1997). *Whiteness: a critical reader*. New York ; New York University Press.

Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F., (2004). The active interview. In Silverman, D. ed., (2004). *Qualitative Research: theory, method and practice*, London: Sage, 140-161.

Hrycak, J. (2015). Home and away: An inquiry into home-based and overseas teacher perceptions regarding international schools. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 14 (1), 29-43.

Hwang, M.C., and Parreñas, R.S. (2021). The Gendered Racialization of Asian Women as Villainous Temptresses. *Gender & society*, 35(4), 567–576.

Israel, T. (2002). I. Studying Sexuality: Strategies for Surviving Stigma. *Feminism & Psychology,* 12 (2), 256-260.

Jackson, P.A. (2000). 'That's what rice queens study!' white gay desire and representing Asian homosexualities. *Journal of Australian Studies,* 24 (65), 181-188.

Jackson, S. (1999). *Heterosexuality in question.* London: SAGE.

Jenkins, R. (2008). Erving Goffman: A major theorist of power? *Null,* 1 (2), 157-168.

Jenner, B.M. and Myers, K.C. (2019). Intimacy, rapport, and exceptional disclosure: a comparison of in-person and mediated interview contexts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 22 (2), 165-177.

Johnson, R. (1997). Contested Borders, Contingent Lives, in Steinberg, D. L., Epstein D. and Johnson, R. eds. (1997). *Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality*, London: Cassell

Joslin, P. (2002). Teacher Relocation: Reflections in the Context of International Schools. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 1 (1), 33-62.

Kannen, V. (2013). Pregnant, privileged and PhDing: exploring embodiments in qualitative research. *Journal of Gender Studies,* 22 (2), 178-191.

Kelsky, K. (2001). *Women on the Verge; Japanese Women, Western Dreams.* Duke University Press.

Kiger, M.E., and Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical teacher*, 42(8), 846–854.

Kim, H. and Mobrand, E. (2019). Stealth marketisation: how international school policy is quietly challenging education systems in Asia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 17 (3), 310-323.

Kitzinger, C., Wilkinson, S. and Perkins, R. (1992). Theorizing Heterosexuality. *Feminism & Psychology,* 2 (3), 293-324.

Kunz, S. (2020). Expatriate, migrant? The social life of migration categories and the polyvalent mobility of race. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 46 (11), 2145-2162.

Kunz, S. (2016). Privileged Mobilities: Locating the Expatriate in Migration Scholarship. *Geography Compass,* 10 (3), 89-101.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 12 (3), 480-500.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews—An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lan, P. (2011). White Privilege, Language Capital and Cultural Ghettoisation: Western High-Skilled Migrants in Taiwan. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 37 (10), 1669-1693.

Lee, M. and Wright, E. (2016). Moving from elite international schools to the world's elite universities. *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development,* 18 (2), 120-136.

Lee, R.M. and Renzetti, C.M. (1990). The Problems of Researching Sensitive Topics: An Overview and Introduction. *The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills),* 33 (5), 510-528.

Leib, R.S. (2017). Spaces of the Self: Foucault and Goffman on the Micro-Physics of Discipline. *Philosophy Today (Celina),* 61 (1), 189-210.

Leonard, P. (2010). Work, Identity and Change? Post/Colonial Encounters in Hong Kong. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 36(8), 1247–1263.

Lundström, C. (2014). *White Migrations : Gender, Whiteness and Privilege in Transnational Migration.* London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Macey, D. (2009). Rethinking Biopolitics, Race and Power in the Wake of Foucault. *Theory, Culture & Society,* 26 (6), 186-205.

Machin, D. (2017). The Great Asian International School Gold Rush: an economic analysis. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 16 (2), 131-146.

Maher, K.H. and Lafferty, M. (2014). White migrant masculinities in Thailand and the paradoxes of Western privilege. *Social & Cultural Geography,* 15 (4), 427-448.

Marshall, C., Rossman, G.B. and Blanco, G.L., (2022). *Designing qualitative research.* 7th ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mattley, C. (1997). Field Research with Phone Sex Workers: Managing the Researcher's Emotions. In (1997) *Field Research with Phone Sex Workers: Managing the Researcher's Emotions*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications..

McIntosh, P. (1989). *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* https://www.nationalseedproject.org/images/documents/Knapsack_plus_Notes-Peggy_McIntosh.pdf [accessed 06.04.24]

McWhorter, L. (2012). Queer Economies. *Foucault Studies* (14), 61-78.

McWhorter, L. (2005). Where do white people come from? A Foucaultian critique of Whiteness Studies. *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 31 (5-6), 533-556.

McWhorter, L. (2004). Sex, Race, and Biopower: A Foucauldian Genealogy. *Hypatia,* 19 (3), 38-62.

Messerschmidt, J.W. (2019). The Salience of "Hegemonic Masculinity". *Men and Masculinities,* 22 (1), 85-91.

Miller, T.G. (1984). Goffman, social acting, and moral behavior. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour,* 14 (2), 141-164.

Minkin, L. (1997). *Exits and Entrances: political research as a creative act*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Press.

Montgomery, H. (2007). Working With Child Prostitutes in Thailand. *Childhood,* 14 (4), 415-430.

Moosavi, L. (2022). 'But you're white': An autoethnography of whiteness and white privilege in East Asian universities. *Research in Comparative and International Education,* 17 (1), 107-123.

Paechter, C. (2007). *Being Boys, Being Girls: Learning Masculinities and Femininities*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Paechter, C. (2000). *Changing school subjects : power, gender, and curriculum.* Buckingham: Open University.

Paechter, C. (1998). Investigating Power in the Staffroom: issues in the study of power and gender relations in a professional group. *Cambridge journal of education*, 28(1), 97–111.

Paechter, C. (1996). Power, Knowledge and the Confessional in Qualitative Research. *Discourse (Abingdon, England),* 17 (1), 75-84.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In Search of Subjectivity—One's Own. *Educational Researcher,* 17 (7), 17-21.

Piller, I. and Takahashi, K. (2006). A Passion for English: Desire and the Language Market, in Pavlenko, A., ed., 2006. *Bilingual minds emotional experience, expression, and representation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 59-83.

Poole, A. (2020a). Constructing International School Teacher Identity from Lived Experience: A Fresh Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 19 (2), 155-171.

Poole, A. (2020b). Decoupling Chinese internationalised schools from normative constructions of the international school. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education,* 50 (3), 447-454.

Poole, A. (2019). International Education Teachers' Experiences as an Educational Precariat in China. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 18 (1), 60-76.

Poole, A. and Bunnell, T. (2023). Diluting, decoupling, and dovetailing: Considering new metaphors for understanding the changing international school landscape in China. *Journal of research in international education*, 22(1), 3–19.

Poole, H., Giles, D.C. and Moore, K. (2004). Researching sexuality and sexual issues: implications for the researcher? *Sexual and Relationship Therapy,* 19 (1), 79-86.

Portelli, J. (2008). Researching a secondary school in Malta. In Sikes, P. and Potts, A. eds. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: investigations from within.* London, New York: Routledge

Prasad, P. (2018). *Crafting Qualitative Research: Beyond Positivist Traditions.* New York and London: Routledge.

Rafferty, Y. (2007). Children for sale: Child trafficking in Southeast Asia. *Child Abuse Review (Chichester, England : 1992),* 16 (6), 401-422.

Rey, J., Bolay, M. and Gez, Y.N. (2020). Precarious privilege: personal debt, lifestyle aspirations and mobility among international school teachers. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 18 (4), 361-373.

Richards, A. (2001). Shaking the frame: Erving Goffman and performance studies [Paper in: Performance Studies in Australia, edited by Gay McAuley, Glen D'Cruz and Alison Richards.]. *Australasian Drama Studies,* (39), 58-75.

Roediger, D. R. (1991). *The wages of whiteness : race and the making of the American working class.* New York: Verso

Rosino, M.L. (2017). Dramaturgical Domination: The Genesis and Evolution of the Racialized Interaction Order. *Humanity & society*, 41(2), 158–181

Roskell, D. (2013). Cross-cultural transition: International teachers' experience of 'culture shock'. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 12 (2), 155-172.

Said, E. (1978 [2003]). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

Savva, M. (2017). The personal struggles of 'national' educators working in 'international' schools: an intercultural perspective. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 15 (5), 576-589.

Savva, M. (2015). Characteristics of the international educator and the strategic role of critical incidents. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 14 (1), 16-28.

Scott, S. (2012), Intimate deception in everyday life. In (2012) *Intimate deception in everyday life. Studies in Symbolic Interaction.* Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Scuzzarello, S. (2020). Practising privilege. How settling in Thailand enables older Western migrants to enact privilege over local people. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 46 (8), 1606-1628.

Seabrook, J. (1996 [2001]). *Travels in the Skin Trade: Tourism and the Sex Industry*, London: Pluto Press

Shilling, C. (1993 [2003]). *The Body and Social Theory: Second Edition*, London: Sage

Shilling, C. (2008). *Changing Bodies: habit, crisis and creativity*, London: Sage

Sikes, P., (2010). Teacher-student sexual relations: key risks and ethical issues. *Ethnography and Education,* 5 (2), 143-157.

Sikes, P., (2008a). At the Eye of the Storm: An Academic('s) Experience of Moral Panic. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 14 (2), 235-253.

Sikes, P. (2008b). Researching research cultures: The case of new universities. In Sikes, P. and Potts, A. eds. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: investigations from within.* London, New York: Routledge

Sikes, P. (2000). 'Truth' and 'lies' revisited. *British Educational Research Journal,* 26 (2), 257-270.

Sikes, P. and Everington, J. (2001). Becoming An RE Teacher: A Life History Approach. *British Journal of Religious Education,* 24 (1), 8-19.

Sikes, P. and Everington, J. (2004). 'RE teachers do get drunk you know': becoming a religious education teacher in the twenty-first century. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice,* 10 (1), 21-33.

Sikes, P., Measor, L., and Woods, P. (1985). *Teacher Careers: Crises and Continuities*. London, Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Sikes, P. and Potts, A. eds. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: investigations from within.* London, New York: Routledge

Silverman, D. ed. (2004). *Qualitative Research: theory, method and practice*, London: Sage

Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The Complex Construction of Professional Identities: Female EFL Educators in Japan Speak Out. *TESOL Quarterly,* 38 (3), 405-436.

Stanley, P. (2012). Superheroes in Shanghai: constructing transnational Western men's identities. *Gender, Place & Culture,* 19 (2), 213-231.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Second Edition*. London: Sage

Tamboukou, M. (1999). Spacing Herself: Women in education. *Gender and education*, 11(2), 125–139.

Tamboukou, M. (2000). The Paradox of Being a Woman Teacher. *Gender and Education,* 12 (4), 463-478.

Tarc, P. and Mishra Tarc, A. (2015). Elite international schools in the Global South: transnational space, class relationalities and the 'middling' international schoolteacher. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36 (1), 34-52.

Tarc, P., Mishra Tarc, A. and Wu, X. (2019). Anglo-Western international school teachers as global middle class: portraits of three families. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 40 (5), 666-681.

Tierney, W.G. (1998). Life History's History: Subjects Foretold. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 4 (1), 49-70.

Turner, B. S. (1996). *The Body and Society: Second Edition*. London: Sage

Vicars, M. (2008). Is it all about me? How Queer! In Sikes, P. and Potts, A. eds. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: investigations from within.* London, New York: Routledge

Welland, T. (2001). Living in the 'empire of the gaze': time, enclosure and surveillance in a theological college. *The Sociological Review (Keele),* 49 (1), 117-135.

Weller, S. (2017). Using internet video calls in qualitative (longitudinal) interviews: some implications for rapport. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 20 (6), 613-625.

West, C. and Zimmerman, D.H. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender & Society,* 1 (2), 125-151.

Williams, M. and May, T. (1996). *Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Research*. London, UCL

Wilkinson, S. and Kitzinger, C. (1994). The social construction of heterosexuality. *Journal of Gender Studies,* 3 (3), 307-316.

Woan, S. (2008). White Sexual Imperialism: A Theory of Asian Feminist Jurisprudence. *Washington and Lee Journal of Civil Rights and Social Justice,* 14, 275-357.

Woods, P. (1993). Managing Marginality: teacher development through grounded life history. *British Educational Research Journal,* 19 (5), 447-465.

Woods, P. (1985). Conversations with Teachers: Some Aspects of Life-History Method. *British Educational Research Journal,* 11 (1), 13-26.

Zambelli, E. (2021). Interracial couples and the phenomenology of race, place, and space in contemporary England. *Identities, ,* 1-19.

Zhang, E. Y. (2018). The Irony of Size: Male Smallness and the Rise of China. In Chiang, H. ed. (2018). *Sexuality in China: Histories of Power and Pleasure*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Zheng, R. (2016). Why Yellow Fever Isn't Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association,* 2 (3), 400-419.