

# IS GLOBAL GOVERNANCE BAD FOR EAST ASIAN QUEERS?

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The rise of transnational systems and networks of governance and norms since the 1990s has fostered the hope that a new global order, described by the UN as “global governance,” operating through shared goals, purposes, and values as well as consensus formation, would be created in place of state authority and brute force.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of the so-called global civil society holds out further hope for democratic potentials that promote the spirit of responsible humanitarianism as well as respect for diversity while weakening state power and domination in certain national contexts. In the developing liberal democracies of East Asia, optimistic LGBT advocates and marginal groups look to changing, and seemingly liberalizing, political regimes and expanding civil society as sites for possible leverage or gains, while pride marches, lesbian and gay cultural events, and booming queer Internet communities corroborate the impression that queer Asia may be much more than a concept.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, as the new global order has evolved in recent years, such euphoric feeling has been punctured by growing retrenchment in the same region, as various states take up measures quite inhospitable to queer existence. Police raids on Taiwan’s only gay bookstore in 2003 and on gay home parties since 2004 fueled public impressions of gay decadence and its resultant spread of HIV; subsequent litigation further intensified fear and intimidation.<sup>3</sup> Massive gatherings such as gay parties, exhibitions, performances, forums, and even picnics were banned in Singapore in 2004 and 2007.<sup>4</sup> On the grounds that lesbian and gay rights have not achieved social consensus, gay-sponsored antidiscrimination legislation met with repeated defeat in Hong Kong, and broad-based antidiscrimination legislation ended up excluding sexual orientation in both Singapore and South Korea in 2007.<sup>5</sup> Gay- and lesbian-oriented radio program content was criticized by broad-

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casting authorities as outright obscene in Taiwan in 2004, and characterized by Christian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as “biased towards homosexual marriage and thus inappropriate for children” in Hong Kong in 2007.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to the efforts of child-protection NGOs, helped in no small way by East Asia’s sensationalizing media, a heightened sense of vigilance is now pervasive; as a result, depending on the national context, legislation is either in place or underway to circumscribe all sexual communication and contact on the Internet.

While such events are described as either the natural outcome of democratic processes or well-meaning universal measures of obscenity and crime prevention, two significant observations demonstrate otherwise. First, Christian-based NGOs were not only actively involved in many of these processes but quite aggressive in promoting social discontent and mobilizing opposition against the growing visibility of gay lifestyles and the equity demands launched by queer activism.<sup>7</sup> Second, East Asia’s new liberal states, interpreting democracy as majority rule, have made it conveniently workable to claim respect for diversity while staunchly upholding and reaffirming mainstream values. Curiously, these two developments often work together to boost the public image and political power of both the Christian NGOs and the liberal states. One cannot help but wonder: How do Christian NGOs achieve such influential positions within East Asian societies despite the Christian community’s minority status?<sup>8</sup> And what do these recent developments reveal about liberal democracy’s own limits in promoting marginal issues of social justice in East Asia?

This essay contends that answers to these important questions are located in our current context of global governance and global civil society. As a matter of fact, fortified by UN discourse and worldwide policy directives, set in place by aspiring nation-states in collaboration with local NGOs (the most aggressive ones being fundamentalist Christian), a new “reign of civility,” widely popularized in the socially and politically volatile spaces of East Asia, is now producing detrimental effects on queer lives through increased media sensationalism, police baiting, recriminalization, and recurrent sex panic, not to mention new sex-repressive legislative reform measures. The analysis that follows centers on two major aspects of this development. First, the emerging global hegemony of morality has stepped up its assault on queer representations and queer interaction through new local legislation and litigation against a queer social presence, as well as through mobilizing and transforming conservative vigilance into an active surveillance network that thrives on fanning sex panic. Second, the construction of “child protection” as a universal imperative in actuality both reinforces heterosexual monogamy and debunks cultural diversity as inherently confusing and thus harmful for children.

This hegemony of morality and its child-protection campaign constitutes an important and growing offensive by conservative forces as they navigate the new world order of global governance.

### **Global Governance and the Reign of Civility and Respectability**

Since the 1990s, “governance” has been used by such international organizations as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to evaluate the political status of countries in need of aid as well as their sustainability for a free market economy so as to remove all obstacles to free trade while ensuring the countries’ ability to repay debt. Viewed in this light, the release of the United Nations report *Our Neighborhood: Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (1995), and the urgency and speed with which global governance has been popularized and aggressively promoted in various regions, reflects efforts to forge new social realities for economic globalization. In place of state-oriented approaches to global politics, the UN report proposes a new conception (and the emerging operation) of the institutions, practices, and processes for organizing and negotiating global politics in the post–Cold War era. The new global order is to be conducted mainly through the multiple and flexible interactions among intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the UN, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the IMF, and their various treaties; NGOs and their activism; multinational corporations (MNCs) and their operation; and existing, but allegedly weakened, state governments. In addition to the usual powerful players in international politics, the UN secretary-general envisions NGOs as “indispensable partners” of the UN “in the process of deliberation and policy formation” as well as in “the execution of policies.”<sup>9</sup> The UN thus enlisted an army of NGOs to raise public awareness of the need for international cooperation and to advance the report’s agenda, outlined as the “Charter for Global Democracy.”<sup>10</sup> Participation in such UN projects in turn adds to the political weight of local NGOs, who now find themselves involved in global negotiations and international politics, and capable of formulating rules of conduct for nation-states.<sup>11</sup> The resulting complex, explicit, implicit, and evolving system of interlocking unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral bodies of rules and documents gradually assumes the role of global principles and values, while new circuits and networks of power continue to emerge.

While the complex nature of and vast differences among transnational NGOs are said to mitigate the possibility of a benign and integrated global civil society working toward the common dual goals of human rights and democracy, the actual politics of NGOs working across national borders is much more volatile

and often variously implicated in different circles of political involvement.<sup>12</sup> There is, after all, nothing intrinsically progressive or democratic about international civil society. Internationally based NGOs have been known to set up branches in Third World nations not only as channels for needed funding and aid but more importantly as a field where Western values and interests can exercise their influence and foster checks and balances to resist local state domination and control.<sup>13</sup> Well-meaning development projects executed by well-meaning NGOs may intend to promote population management, disease prevention, and maternal and child health, yet they often end up intentionally or unwittingly shaping ideas about what constitutes “normal,” and thus acceptable, sexual practices and identities.<sup>14</sup> Conversely, East Asia’s liberal states are increasingly aware of the political expedience of choosing the right NGOs to international gatherings so as to guarantee a presence but also safeguard their national image; the choice of delegation naturally favors the mainstream and normative over the marginal and difficult. Tensions and contradictions among NGOs of different origins and ideologies are also complex. Within this new global public, emergent indigenous social movements could even find themselves suffering more from policy directives enforced by world powers at the urging of other NGOs than from the usual culprit of the authoritarian state.<sup>15</sup> In these and other cases, the intermingling of NGOs of different calibers with state governments of different democratic forms further complicates regional differences, resulting in complex webs of conflicting and collaborating forces that range far beyond the circuits of power described by the so-called boomerang pattern of transnational advocacy.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the structural complexity of this expanding global civil society, the consensus-building negotiations of global governance are predisposed to favor visions and values that congeal toward mainstream normative values, now expressed as global commonalities. The UN report calls for establishing a “global civic ethic” based on “a set of core values that can unite people of all cultural, political, religious, or philosophical backgrounds.”<sup>17</sup> As appealing as this imaginary brotherhood or sisterhood may sound, such core values have had only partial success and mostly on broad topics such as universal human rights or global environmental concerns, but even there, disputes and cultural differences run deep. The problems of universalism aside, the envisioned “global” and “civic” ethic—with its inherent assumptions about shared cultural commonality and cherished nationalistic civility—has tended to find its baseline of agreement in those areas most deeply entrenched in benign but unreflexive humanism, areas where long-standing differences are glossed over and long-held prejudices and fears remain buried and unchallenged, areas where modernization and the civiliz-

ing process find ready and unproblematic targets of critique—and what better choice than the subject of sexuality!<sup>18</sup> This also explains the compelling success in the global ratification of international agreements on measures directed at, in particular, (sex) trafficking, child pornography, pedophiles, and Internet content monitoring.<sup>19</sup>

The preference for such issues and their success in global negotiations has a lot to do with the specific nature of power under global governance. As Raimo Väyrynen points out:

In the multicentric world, power not only is dispersed, but it also assumes more forms than the traditional power analysis suggests. For instance, power can also be *symbolic and reputational*, as well as material, and it may reflect conventions and narratives. The fluidity of “soft” power means that it is difficult to capture and use for specific purposes. One implication of this state of affairs is that, in the multicentric world, traditional power resources alone cannot assure stability and progress; the management of power must be based also on *norms and institutions*. (italics added)<sup>20</sup>

“Norms and institutions” refer to structural constraints embodied in various international conventions and agencies and more significantly in local legislations; in other words, they tend to presume normative lifestyles and values that are to be regulated by legal frameworks. “Symbolic and reputational,” on the other hand, signals a form of power that rides mostly on gestures and tokens and consequently is extremely sensitive and apprehensive about possible scandal, which finds its most potent embodiment in things sexual. In other words, the nature and structure of the world of diffused power also render it vulnerable to populist demands, demands that are usually inclined to sidestep the difficult, the unpopular, and, in particular, the stigmatized. The norms underlying global propositions thus tend to gravitate toward “respectability” and toward “norms that repress sexuality, bodily functions, and emotional expression . . . the respectable person is chaste, modest, does not express lustful desires, passion, spontaneity, or exuberance, is frugal, clean, gently spoken, and well mannered. The orderliness of respectability means things are under control, everything in its place, not crossing the borders.”<sup>21</sup>

Such norms of civility and respectability, with their inherent proclivity for order and control, are most relevant for our understanding of East Asia’s new liberal democracies and their increasing collaboration with Christian NGOs in the construction of what looks more and more like what Jock Young has described as “exclusive societies.” What interests me the most about Young’s theory is his atten-

tion to the ever-expanding exclusionary system of crime prevention (detailed in the next section) and its correlation with the increase of “difference and difficulty,” the pluralization and fragmentation of identities and lifestyles, and the fears and responses they engender.<sup>22</sup> While Young’s analysis centers mainly on changes in technologies of social control that constitute the changing nature of state, civil society, and public realm in postwar United States, his observation is illuminating for our understanding of recent developments in East Asian democracies as the latter scramble to rein in increases in incivilities and active challenges to rules that accompany profound transformations in political and economic restructuring. As contemporary conflicts around sexual relations tend to acquire “immense symbolic weight” in the process, such exclusive measures also tend to concentrate on the sexual realm and its emergent diversity.<sup>23</sup>

What is unique about East Asian exclusive societies is that “an exclusive civil society,” made up of Christian NGOs and morally like-minded conservative NGOs, has now emerged in the newly invigorated public sphere. It is an exclusive civil society that embraces mutual interpenetration with the state so as to help better manage what is perceived as the unruliness of contemporary sexual libertarianism. As compliance with standards of civic respectability has become a token of legitimacy and political correctness in international relations, this new deployment of normative power also tends to favor a global social milieu in which nonnormative sexualities are deemed possible threats or undesirable practices. Significantly, it is in the *legal* domain that this suturing of global governance, nation-state aspirations, and pastoral impulses of Christian NGOs into a reign of civility and respectability is most concretely effected, as fragile nation-states, with the help of Christian NGOs weaving anxiety and uncertainty into popular support, fortify themselves into new regulatory states by increasingly regulating sexual acts, identities, information, and exchanges through codified laws aligned with so-called global standards. The fiercest battles have been fought in the legal domain as marginal NGOs working toward sexual justice and freedom of expression struggle against the soft-power-turned-iron-rule of governance.

### **The Juridification of Global Governance**

The UN Commission on Global Governance decrees that governance be underpinned by democracy on all levels and ultimately “by the rule of enforceable law.” Nations are thus strongly encouraged to bring their laws into alignment with UN decrees. With the blessing of the UN, conservative NGOs in various East Asian countries have been rallying legislators to amend old laws and institute new laws

concentrated in sex-related areas, and in accordance with a conservative agenda now described as concretizing UN standards. This significant redeployment of power, which Jürgen Habermas has aptly described as “juridification” in our late modern era, asserts itself by having more and more formal laws created in the sociocultural sphere, the private sphere, and the body-related sphere, the density of which leaves little social space outside the reach and definition of the law.<sup>24</sup> In fact, with the active involvement, if not total initiative, of mainstream women’s NGOs in collaboration with conservative Christian NGOs, legislation that aggressively regulates sexual conduct, contact, and information—in the name of modern civility and gender equity—has already come into place all over East Asia despite resistance by sex emancipationist feminists.<sup>25</sup> These include the regulation of sexual harassment, sexual assault, artificial insemination, HIV status, new sex-related drugs such as RU486, and, most important, sexual information and interaction on the Internet. The increasing codification of conduct previously located in the private realm is interpreted by such mainstream NGOs as enhancing protection for women and children, and by the state as proof of responsible government, ready to be presented to the international community as evidence of democratic progress toward a rational “rule of law.” Yet for those who now fall victim to such jurisdiction, the laws have practically redefined their daily life practices as nothing short of criminal.

In many East Asian countries, NGO-sponsored conservative legislation and surveillance of sex-related activities and information on the Internet have made it quite difficult for queers to conduct common forms of flirtation and sexual negotiation. In Taiwan, where nation-statehood is fragile and juridification fiercely underway as a top priority for Christian NGOs, any sexually explicit message on the Internet (such as describing the size of one’s penis or inviting a bottom or a master to collaborate in sexual play), even in clearly marked adult chat rooms or adult BBSs, is now considered harmful for the young and thus subject to indictment.<sup>26</sup> Local gay and lesbian groups have joined human rights groups in 2006 in demanding that the Constitutional Court examine such legal clauses to ascertain whether they violate basic freedoms of speech and expression as decreed by the Constitution. Unfortunately, the Justices of the Constitutional Court came up with only an equivocal response that again affirms the importance of child protection over freedom of speech.<sup>27</sup> It is now obvious that the child-protection (antisex) legislation has greatly exacerbated the already existing social and sexual stigma of marginal sexualities and their practices, not to mention bringing actual litigation against many individuals. Increasingly, social differences are no longer dealt with through the communicative reason of public debate; instead, the force of law is

directly applied. Nonnegotiable disciplinary management has now replaced rational debate and communication in dealing with gender and sexual diversity.

Incidentally, as NGOs find more and more room for involvement in national and transnational politics in the age of global governance, NGO status has also become desirable and even profitable currency. Significantly, aggressive Christian groups in East Asia have learned to refrain from presenting themselves as “Christian” groups or churches to the public; instead, they have created parallel civil society organizations to soften their religious image. Describing themselves as conducting the business of “social movements,” a string of such parallel civil society organizations has come into being since the 1990s in various East Asian countries and areas.<sup>28</sup> As only officially registered NGOs are eligible for government funding and franchise application, the transformation does bring important and practical benefits, but it also crowds out marginal and difficult NGOs who do not necessarily tow the mainstream line.<sup>29</sup> Such parallel civil society organizations also make it more convenient to rally other social movement groups around topical though conservative causes such as media monitoring.<sup>30</sup> The NGO-ization of Christian groups has been so successful that one of them has even won quite a few NGO-related international awards, thus greatly enhancing its social status and power of influence in national politics.<sup>31</sup> The flexibility with which Christian groups in East Asia adapted to this age of secularism and NGO operation often obscures their origin to such an extent that it is increasingly difficult to recognize their true nature, which also complicates the struggle of social movements in general when opposing views stand starkly against each other on the same issue within the civil society.

With its pernicious effect clearly in sight, juridification could also offer the prospect of protection by the law. East Asian queers, like queers everywhere, had hoped that new antidiscrimination legislation could help mitigate the social ills of homophobia and sex phobia. Yet such proposed legislation, if it comes up at all, has already been rejected in Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong. Ironically, the obstacles have a lot to do with two NGO conglomerates whose recent aggressiveness has received increasing encouragement from the general system of global governance.

The first NGO conglomerate that poses a problem is, surprisingly, mainstream women’s (not necessarily feminist) NGOs in East Asian countries. While pushing for general antidiscrimination legislation, most women’s NGOs are reluctant to incorporate sexual orientation in their claims, fearing that sexual stigma would hinder women’s own hard-fought equal rights claims.<sup>32</sup> UN-sponsored “gender mainstreaming” may have propagated the gender analytic with its implicit bio-



logical framework, but that analytic has often elided discussions about sexual orientation and gender variance. After all, gender mainstreaming aims to mainstream gender, not gender marginalities, much less sexual marginalities and diversity. On the issue of sexuality, the core feminist project of sexual self-determination has continuously restricted itself to heteronormality and the right to refuse unwanted sexual advances, which in turn converges nicely with Christian NGOs' advocacy of abstinence-oriented sex education. In that sense, such a feminist agenda may not cohere with queer sex rights at all.

Aside from the mainstreamers, feminist sex radicals do exist in East Asia, but their presence and power of influence are continually circumscribed by mainstream feminists who denounce sex-positive views as unfeminist.<sup>33</sup> In Taiwan, where feminist sex radicals spearheaded liberal and radical views on female sexuality, the challenge of sex-positive views was taken as so threatening to the feminist image that a string of purges took place. Sex emancipationist feminists were ex-communicated in 1995 from Taiwanese Feminist Scholars Association, the feminist scholars group that they had helped found. Feminist personnel who supported sex-work rights were fired from a leading feminist organization, the Awakening Foundation, in 1997. As so-called state feminists were invited to join the state cabinet in 2000, they have worked mostly to turn their own heteronormal agenda into state policies and laws in regard to child care and prevention of domestic violence.<sup>34</sup> Simply put, most women's NGOs in East Asia are not ready to tackle the force of sexual stigma that surrounds issues of sexual diversity or sexual pleasure. Some even capitalize on such social inhibition by demanding, to the dismay of queers, more protective surveillance or correction institutions as well as sex-phobic legal codes, all in the name of protecting women or, ominously, children.

In addition to the cold shoulder of mainstream women's groups, queer causes face real and formidable foes in East Asia's Christian-based conservative NGOs. Spurred on by a sense of imminent crisis in the profound social change resulting from globalization, but feeling "liberated" by the ideas of pluralism and multiculturalism to propagate their discriminatory discourses and their vendetta against anything nonnormative, conservative religious (Christian) groups have become dramatically outspoken in their concerted opposition to gay rights in recent years. In Hong Kong, Alliance for Family, an antigay Christian front, bought a four-page advertisement in one major local newspaper on April 29, 2005, detailing the dangers of homosexuality and calling on Hong Kong residents to rise up against the proposed antidiscrimination legislation that, according to the Christian group, would unleash the danger of gay sex for public health in addition to

eroding the monogamous heterosexual family. This was the first massive and open demonstration of conservative forces against queers in Hong Kong.<sup>35</sup> In Taiwan, city legislators associated with Exodus International, an international Christian organization that advocates “freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ,” demanded in 2006 that Taipei city government withdraw its annual funding for gay civic causes, which had been the city’s pledge to diversity.<sup>36</sup> In South Korea, a powerful conservative Christian lobby triumphed by persuading the legislative body that if the nondiscrimination bill were passed, “homosexuals will try to seduce everyone, including adolescents; victims will be forced to become homosexuals; and sexual harassment by homosexuals will increase.”<sup>37</sup>

It is obvious that the religious Right in East Asia has stepped up its efforts to stop antidiscrimination legislation. With a long-standing global missionary network loaded with historical ties to the colonial past and its hierarchies, the Christian-based opposition has, in a perverted way, usurped the strategies and energies created by marginal social movements and now works aggressively to characterize queer existence as an alarming global trend that will damage the young and fragile.<sup>38</sup> For the traditionally family-oriented Chinese, the “queer scare” has not only displaced social and parental anxiety and fear induced by globalization onto local queers and the latter’s proposed antidiscrimination legislation, but also encouraged litigation against previously acceptable queer practices. The prosecution and eventual conviction of Taiwan’s only gay bookstore, GinGin’s, in 2003 for “dissemination of obscene materials” serves as a sobering reminder that the law is now being employed to make a statement about queer cultural visibility.

It is noteworthy that in East Asia both mainstream women’s NGOs and conservative religious NGOs have chosen to abide by the most basic form of “sexual fundamentalism”—the notion that there is a singular, ideal sexuality (heterosexual, marital, procreative) and two genders (man and woman), and that those conforming to this standard have a right to police and control others, often by creating and enforcing new legislation. With the help of shame and stigmatization, legal regulation of sex and the body helps produce other effects of power, including an increasingly conservative social milieu and a chilling effect on sexual dissidence. Since such highly justified regulatory measures not only strengthen state power but also improve state legitimacy, conservative NGOs have enjoyed state support in fortifying the moral regime that now surrounds marginal sexualities in East Asia and elsewhere. Conversely, when such sexual fundamentalism pervades major conservative NGOs, women’s NGOs, and the tabloid media in Asia, emergent sexual practices, values, and activism easily become occasions for moral panics. The media consistently scrutinize the daily lives of already out marginal

sexual subjects, probing and exposing intimacies, demonizing alternative lifestyles, confirming stereotypes and prejudices, and sometimes even fabricating sex scares. While gay activism rarely receives media coverage, gay saunas, lesbian bars, and arrests at gay home parties regularly come under media scrutiny, and the stories are always narrated from a conservative and normative point of view. Media reports characterize safe sex measures (such as the presence of used condoms) as evidence of promiscuity and lifestyle stimulants as narcotics. As sexual hysterias have become a mainstay of East Asian media, they are unfailingly and flexibly used by the conservative NGOs and the state to encourage social vigilance against the nonnormative.

Such sexual regulation has met with fierce resistance from radical sex groups in East Asian countries where the forces of modernization have only begun to take root. Yet, as social mobility and keen competition in the newly prospering East Asian states continue to make the reproduction of class unpredictable, there is plenty of (middle-class) class anxiety to be galvanized and transformed into fear for the safety of children and aggressive efforts to keep them safe (safe from anything characterized as harmful or distracting to their “normal” development into designated class, gender, and sex positions). Middle-class parents thus make up the staunchest supporters of conservative NGOs in the latter’s crusade to purify the world. And as East Asian nations race toward liberal democracy on this wave of middle-class self-affirmation, the Christian NGOs’ active promotion of the imperative to protect children greatly contributes to the codification and juridification that helps bolster state power and state legitimacy.

### **The Child Protection Imperative**

Do you understand that children are the stem cells for the culture?  
The environment that you put them in is what they grow up to be. And  
if you can control what they hear, if you could control what they’re  
told, if you have access to their minds . . . you can make them into  
just about whatever you want them to be.

—James Dobson, Focus on the Family

The immense power of the cultural imaginary of the child can be partially glimpsed in the extraordinary success of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention is the most universally accepted human rights document in history, ratified by every country in the world except 2 (at last count, 192 total). By ratifying this document, national governments commit them-

selves to protecting and ensuring children's rights, and they agree to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community.<sup>39</sup> As the convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care, education, and legal, civil, and social services, many Asian countries are urged by their NGOs to bring national laws and practices in line with the UN's definition of children's rights.

While the convention beckons forth its own global vision of child protection, the adoption of the child-protection imperative proves not only useful but effective in managing local issues and struggles. Three areas of intense NGO vigilance in Taiwan are instructive for my discussion here.<sup>40</sup> To begin with, in the 1990s some relief seemed possible from the perennial problem of pornography and sex work as an indigenous feminist discourse of sexual freedom spread throughout East Asia, opening up social space for more liberal views on sexual representation and transaction. The advent of cable television and the Internet also provided channels for communication and transaction beyond existing state measures of control. Fierce debates thus erupted between feminist sex radicals and various conservative voices (from the medical profession to the Christian groups to the women's groups) as they fought for popular support. Yet with the advent of the child-protection imperative through amendments and new legislation enacted by 2000, adults seeking their right to freedom of (sexual) speech and information suddenly found themselves interpellated as parents or would-be parents with solemn duties to perform in order to safeguard the well-being of all children. And as age and generation stratification still constitutes a core belief and institution in Asian societies, constitutional rights to freedom of expression and information prove fragile when faced with the higher calling of protection of offspring. Deeply ingrained sex negativity eventually triumphed over newly affirmed entitlement to autonomy and pleasure.

The second area has to do with the institutionalization of homosexual relationships. Lesbian and gay couples of a previous generation were unable to gather enough force to challenge the heteronormative system. All they could hope for was to be able to pass and lead a secluded life. Yet since the 1990s, with the aggressive activism of an indigenous gay liberation movement, a new generation of lesbians and gays has emerged who may still suffer from prejudice and discrimination individually but who have acquired enough collective presence to make demands on society. Antidiscrimination bills are drafted in various nations, and the right to marry constitutes an additional demand. It almost looks as if growing social tolerance might allow for stable gay relationships. At this critical moment, Christian NGOs have come forth in various alliances to ensure the family institution stays

heterosexual. Unable to issue any argument against lesbian and gay love, the issue of children is raised as Christian NGOs caution against the radical changes that will take place in the home and in schools if homosexual marriages are legally recognized.<sup>41</sup> Once again, duties to the young prove to be formidable obstacles to social change.

The last and most recent development directly bears on the child as fetus. Abortion in East Asia is a complicated issue connected to sociohistorical conditions as well as life politics. In difficult times of limited means and resources and before the use of oral contraceptives became common practice, abortion, in keeping with state policies of population control, had been a popular and acceptable solution for unwanted pregnancies.<sup>42</sup> The social meaning of abortion was transformed after the 1980s as a rapid increase in premarital sex shifted the demography of abortions, and in response to the social condemnation of abortion, indigent myths about how “the fetus’s spirit will haunt the mother” began to spread as various temples devised special rites to ease the mother’s guilt and dread by helping put the fetus’s spirit to rest. Guilt and shame gradually replaced pragmatism as the dominant emotion associated with abortion, which articulated nicely with developing Christian right-to-life discourses. The introduction of abortifacients (emergency contraceptives) such as mifepristone (better known as RU486) since the late 1990s has brought hope that the social stigma and danger associated with abortion would no longer plague women. However, reading this development as encouraging irresponsible sexual conduct in the midst of a blatant sex revolution, Christian NGOs in Taiwan quickly responded by urging the state to institute regulatory measures that included parental consent for minors, waiting periods, and mandatory consultation. In the meantime, as much as the Chinese value fertility for the sake of family lineage, the availability of artificial insemination procedures still met with resistance from Christian NGOs, who believe that only the natural family should give birth to children, and from mainstream women’s NGOs, who fear the procedure would revive the age-old belief that women are nothing but child-bearing vessels for patriarchy.<sup>43</sup> Through deliberative democracy, it was determined that artificial insemination should be accessible only to married couples, which effectively excludes lesbians and gays. The insistent involvement of the conservative NGOs in debates surrounding abortion and artificial insemination boils down to requiring that the fetus be produced only through normal heterosexual sex conducted in state-sanctioned marriage.<sup>44</sup>

Underneath the emotional investment in the child and fetus is a deeply rooted fixation on the heterosexual monogamous family, which alone can guarantee the child’s proper birth, upbringing, acculturation, gender socialization, and

emotional maturity. The child, understood as the future of humankind, also carries a preemptive authority that decrees heterosexuality to be elemental to the survival of the family, the clan, and the nation, a noble obligation that queers have been shown to deliberately evade. The popular complaint that “gayness will cause the family (and the nation) to perish” aptly expresses the deep-rooted anxiety of reproduction-oriented East Asian cultures.<sup>45</sup> Here, Christian antigay doctrines and Asian heterosexual family traditions, often at odds with each other, oddly converge on the issues of the family and child protection. And the result is none other than a rejuvenation and legitimation of parental power, which had been greatly diminished and challenged in the sweeping influence of modern individualism, but is now amplified to fortify the state as an all-powerful overseeing parent.<sup>46</sup>

The child, now understood as supremely innocent, must thus be kept safe from harmful influences that could distract it from the heteronormative track of “developing to its fullest”—and influences that clearly encompass anything queer. To ensure the intactness of that innocence, new forms of discipline and regulation are created that end up affecting all adults, queer or straight. All things sexual, whether gay or straight, must be kept out of sight; all sexual knowledge and representation, whether gay or straight, must be considered taboo; all nonnormative sexualities are presented as pathological; all interactions must be desexualized. In collaboration with this protectionist mode of thinking, *child-protection* discourses quickly become aligned with like-minded antisex *women-protection* discourses. And without a critical perspective, it is only a matter of time before they become *fetus-protection* discourses, as is already the case in East Asia. This continuously broadening circle of protection works to strengthen the conservative NGOs’ power of influence, which in the final analysis contributes significantly to the grand project of state legitimacy as well as global governance. The child-protection imperative constitutes the ultimate trump card in enforcing the most rigid forms of social control, and this has become a key point of struggle for East Asian queers.

## Conclusion

That figural Child alone embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation’s good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights “real” citizens are allowed.

—Lee Edelman, *No Future*

The title of the present essay is a spin-off from the feminist political philosopher Susan Moller Okin’s 1997 essay, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” Okin’s

argument is that multiculturalism, a justice- and equality-oriented worldview, may help preserve some minority cultural values and practices that are oppressive to women and violate the demands of modern gender equality.<sup>47</sup> While I do not share Okin's views entirely, the structure of her logic is illuminating for the issues discussed in the present essay. For what appears to be justice- and equality-oriented global governance is shown to be helping propagate juridical tendencies and policy strategies that violate the basic demands of equality and diversity and are oppressive to queers, freaks, and other disenfranchised, disinherited, criminalized, and pathologized populations created by increasing modernization, civilization, juridification, and, not least of all, global governance.

Saskia Sassen has proposed that the relocation of various forms of sovereignty unto supranational or nongovernmental institutions could create "institutional voids resulting from the shrinking regulatory umbrella of the state" and strengthen "the ascendance of women . . . as subjects of law and the formation of crossborder feminist solidarities."<sup>48</sup> It is true that in many parts of East Asia and elsewhere, women have risen in status and have built cross-border solidarities, but as I have tried to demonstrate in this essay, the ones who have soared on the wings of global governance are specific groups of women, including women with class privilege, women of the heterosexual persuasion, women of Christian vigilance, and women with conservative views of sexuality. They have transformed themselves into subjects of law by creating legislation that subsumes many more (queer and sexually nonconforming) subjects under law. By doing so, they have helped broaden, rather than shrink, the regulatory umbrella of the state. The conjunction of social change and social anxiety, of nationalistic uncertainty and global aspiration, has created fertile ground for conservative maneuvers that often ride on the sweeping force of moral hysteria and social stigma against sexual dissidence.

If the Christian NGOs readily insert their conservative agenda into the normative nature of global governance, and if mainstream women's NGOs easily align themselves with the state and its schemes of governance, then are queer NGOs immune from such opportunism or co-optation? If global governance has proven to be not so good for East Asian queers, how should they respond to its continued spread?

The lesson of the Independent Gay Forum is still newly present, and we have already been cautioned by activist scholars such as Lisa Duggan about the co-optation of mainstream gay groups by the discourse of neoliberalism and the fluidity of NGO affiliation.<sup>49</sup> In East Asia, the same tension and possibility exists. Internal struggle has never been absent from the gay community as mainstreaming gays and militant queers diverge on strategies and issues. But I am also encour-

aged by the fact that at the December 2005 WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, queer groups from quite a few East Asian states lined up with other social movement groups (laborers, farmers, women, and sex workers) in fierce protest against WTO policies. Such collaboration has proven to be both educational and solidarity building. Queer groups from across Asia have also banded together to protest local legislation and litigation in, for example, Hong Kong and Taiwan that threaten to jeopardize queer existence. When marginal groups confront the state machine and its legal arms, valuable lessons about governance are learned. East Asian queer groups have also been a common presence at rallies for workers and sex workers in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea for the past ten years. The alliance provides a sobering experience for groups that have lingering hopes that the state will live up to the ideals of diversity and equality. Such coalition politics beckons forth a power that continues to contest any firm grasp of identity formation, a power that continues to constitute new and unexpected modes of intimate alliance, a power that is always quick in forging and consolidating new coalitions, and, of course, a power that continues to resist the temptation of the new state-NGO power bloc. It is toward this alternative kind of global solidarity that East Asian queers are struggling.

### Notes

This essay is revised from the author's keynote address to "Sexualities, Gender, and Rights in Asia: First International Conference of Asian Queer Studies," Bangkok, Thailand, July 7–9, 2005. The author would like to thank Ding Naifei and Kuan-Hsing Chen for reading the first draft and providing insightful suggestions. Heartfelt gratitude is also extended to the journal's two anonymous reviewers for their meticulous reading and invaluable suggestions, which helped bring about major revisions in this essay.

1. James N. Rosenau, "Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics," in *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, ed. James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4–5.
2. The spread of global governance is quite uneven across Asia. The discussion here will be limited to those nations in East Asia that share certain common features of (Confucian) cultural heritage but even more important the common experience of having been active players in Asia's economic boom in the 1990s. The former produces a context in which the state strives to manage developing democratic impulses while maintaining a lingering authoritarianism that stabilizes the ruling power; the latter



produces a context in which traditional class reproduction is disturbed by globalization. Both factors contribute to states of confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety that help make the Christian NGOs' conservative agenda increasingly palatable.

3. All adult publications sold in the bookstore had been wrapped in plastic and clearly marked for those eighteen and older only. Still, police ripped open the wrapping and charged the owner with disseminating obscenity. Gay groups repeatedly protested against the litigation; unfortunately, the gay owner still suffered a final conviction in 2005 ("No Guilt and Not Guilty, Say Homosexual Protesters," *Taipei Times*, June 16, 2004, [www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/06/16/2003175251](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/06/16/2003175251)). In front of media cameras, partygoers in their shorts or briefs were marched out of the building and required to take urine and blood tests at the police station ("Treatment of Homosexual Men Caught at Party Outrages Gay Rights Activists," *Taipei Times*, January 23, 2004, [www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/01/23/2003092323](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/01/23/2003092323)). Still, thanks to token gestures of tolerance from the Taiwan government, Wikipedia describes Taiwan as "one of Asia's most progressive countries as far as LGBT rights are concerned" ("LGBT Rights in Taiwan," [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_rights\\_in\\_Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Taiwan) [accessed February 9, 2008]).
4. "Singapore Bans Christmas Because It Might Be Gay," *Associated Press*, December 9, 2004, [www.yawningbread.org/apdx\\_2004/imp-168.htm](http://www.yawningbread.org/apdx_2004/imp-168.htm); Alex Au, "A Ban(ner) Week in Singapore," August 15, 2007, [fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2014&viewarticle=1](http://fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2014&viewarticle=1).
5. "Sexual Orientation Discrimination Legislation for Hong Kong," [www.ipetitions.com/petition/sodbhk/](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/sodbhk/) (accessed February 10, 2008). Despite a massive petition drive by gay and lesbian groups to demand equal treatment under the law, Singapore's lawmakers voted in October 2007 to retain section 377A of the penal code, which decrees that any male person found guilty of engaging in "gross indecency" with another male, whether in private or in public, faces a jail term of up to two years ("Allow Space for Gays but Gay Sex Ban to Stay: Singapore PM," October 24, 2007, [fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2124&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all](http://fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2124&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all)). The South Korean Ministry of Justice announced a bill in October 2007 to criminalize discrimination on twenty grounds, including race, sex, educational status, and sexual orientation. In the end, sexual orientation was removed from the list of inclusions ("Exclusion from Non-Discrimination Bill Mobilises Korea's LGBT Community," November 23, 2007, [fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2098&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all](http://fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2098&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all)).
6. "Sister Radio in Sex Sounds Row," *Taipei Times*, May 16, 2004, [www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/05/16/2003155678](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/05/16/2003155678). The case was repealed one year later after much protest. In the case of Hong Kong, one militant fundamental Christian NGO, Alliance for the Protection of Family, filed the complaint and demanded that all gay programming henceforth must include opposite (Christian)

views in order to meet parity standards for broadcasting, while religious programs are automatically exempt from this requirement under the principle of religious freedom. The case is now under review, and the final ruling will have far-reaching impact on advocacy for any unpopular views (“Gay Marriage Show Sparks TV Row in Hong Kong,” January 24, 2007, [www.fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=1844&viewarticle=1](http://www.fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=1844&viewarticle=1)).

7. Such aggressiveness may remind the reader of the Christian Right in the United States. Researchers maintain that the Christian Right’s political activism focuses on different targets domestically and internationally, with the former concentrated on “issues such as gay rights and school vouchers” and the latter on “United Nations population policy, women’s rights, and children’s rights.” See Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xviii. Christian-based NGOs in East Asia, however, merged the issues and turned gay rights into an issue that threatens women’s rights and children’s rights with its obvious challenge to the institution of the family as well as its insistent demand on sexual openness and diversity.
8. Christians may have been considered a minority in these nations, yet their colonial lineage and financial advantage afforded them the opportunity to occupy morally mainstream positions through establishing schools and relief agencies, and individual Christians also occupy positions of political and social influence. Their role as independent social service providers also facilitates their later transformation into government franchises.
9. “NGOs and the United Nations,” Global Policy Forum, [www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/docs99/gpfrep.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/docs99/gpfrep.htm) (accessed February 7, 2008).
10. Charter for Global Democracy (Charter 99), [www.i-p-o.org/global-democracy.htm](http://www.i-p-o.org/global-democracy.htm) (accessed February 7, 2008).
11. The states, of course, have made arrangements to ensure that no such dramatic turn takes place. After all, indigenous NGOs in East Asia are mostly financially ill-equipped to attend such international functions and must rely on the state governments to supply funding and bestow legitimacy to the delegation. It is little wonder that the chosen delegates almost always come from those mainstream NGOs friendly with the government. (Where nation-state status is questionable, such as Taiwan, the funding blatantly comes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where NGO participation in international conventions is considered a matter of national diplomacy.)
12. Kenneth Anderson and David Rieff, “‘Global Civil Society’: A Sceptic View,” in *Global Civil Society 2004/5*, ed. Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kal-dor (London: Sage, 2004), 27–29, [www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04/chapters.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04/chapters.htm).
13. The concentrated presence of international NGOs in the economically booming but ideologically restrained People’s Republic of China serves as a prime example of such

political motivation. While proudly presenting their grantees in China at a 2008 convention, an officer of a famous U.S. NGO apologetically explained that, because of the strategic policy decisions at her foundation, they could not offer grants to other Chinese-related territories such as Hong Kong or Taiwan.

14. Kate Bedford's seminal study of the World Bank's lending policies highlights one set of such maneuvers geared toward fine-tuning local heteronormative arrangements to collaborate with global economic transformation. See Kate Bedford, "Loving to Straighten Out Development: Sexuality and 'Ethnodevelopment' in the World Bank's Ecuadorian Lending," *Feminist Legal Studies* 13 (2005): 295–322.
15. New "moral" strings added to U.S. funding policies by President Bush since 2004 aim to exclude those NGOs, domestic or international, that support sex workers' rights or needle-exchange programs, as well as other harm-reduction strategies and HIV/AIDS prevention advocacy. This moral decree is already having a serious impact on Asia's nascent sex workers' rights movements, which are hard-pressed not only by the continued illegal status of sex work but more profoundly by the insistence of First World antitrafficking NGOs that women's migration toward economic betterment and their choice of sex work are nothing but forms of trafficking and exploitation.
16. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 13.
17. Our Global Neighbourhood, [www.libertymatters.org/chap2.htm](http://www.libertymatters.org/chap2.htm) (accessed April 1, 2007).
18. In many Asian countries where nation-statehood is still a relatively recent achievement, "civic" is often understood as something closely aligned with nationalistic sovereignty. In the 1910s, the early years of the Republic of China, opponents of masturbation exclaimed: "Masturbation is the draining of national energy!" Civic duties to the nation thus denote things serious and solemn, to the absolute exclusion of things sexual.
19. Significantly, such international agreements rarely promote sex-positive measures. Lesbian and gay rights, sex work rights, freedom to access sexual information, rights to sexual pleasure, and so forth encounter either defeat and frustration, or total neglect and disdain.
20. Raimo Väyrynen, "Norms, Compliance, and Enforcement in Global Governance," in *Globalization and Global Governance*, ed. Raimo Väyrynen (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), 27.
21. Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 136.
22. Jock Young, *The Exclusive Society: Social Exclusion, Crime, and Difference in Late Modernity* (London: Sage, 1999), 65.
23. Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality: A Reader*, ed. Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton (London: University College London, 1999), 143.

24. Jürgen Habermas, *Life World and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, vol. 2 of *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon, 1987), 357–73.
25. Western readers may be more familiar with the liberal concept of sex liberation or sexual freedom. In Taiwan, feminist sex radicals chose the term *sex emancipation* in 1994 to describe their project so as to highlight its linkage to the Enlightenment tradition and its vision of self-liberation of the oppressed. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Emancipations, Modern and Postmodern,” in *Emancipations, Modern and Postmodern*, ed. Jan Nederveen Pieterse (London: Sage, 1992), 5–41.
26. At the urging of Christian child-protection NGOs, article 235 of the criminal code, which originally indicted the commercial production and sale of pornography for dissemination of obscenity, is now generously applied to individual Internet sex messages. Article 29 of the Child and Juvenile Sexual Transaction Prevention Act (1995, with a number of amendments in the following years) further criminalizes any Internet message or content that hints at or discusses sexual transaction in whatever indirect fashion. For a detailed analysis of this gradual process of juridification in Taiwan, see Josephine Ho, “From Anti-Trafficking to Social Discipline: The Case of Taiwan,” in *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, ed. Kamala Kempadoo, Jyoti Sanghera, and Bandana Pattanaik (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2005), 83–105.
27. For the English version of Constitutional Court Interpretation no. 617 pertaining to article 235 of the criminal code (dissemination of obscenities), see [www.judicial.gov.tw/CONSTITUTIONALCOURT/EN/p03\\_01.asp?expno=617](http://www.judicial.gov.tw/CONSTITUTIONALCOURT/EN/p03_01.asp?expno=617) (accessed February 20, 2008). For the English version of Constitutional Court Interpretation no. 623 pertaining to article 29 of the Child and Juvenile Sexual Transaction Prevention Act (inducing people to engage in unlawful sexual transactions), see [www.judicial.gov.tw/CONSTITUTIONALCOURT/EN/p03\\_01.asp?expno=623](http://www.judicial.gov.tw/CONSTITUTIONALCOURT/EN/p03_01.asp?expno=623) (accessed February 20, 2008).
28. Taiwan’s Garden of Hope Foundation hired a veteran journalist, Hui-jung Chi, as its new CEO in 1992. Since then, the foundation has benefited greatly from her experience and expertise in public relations and has come to describe its various campaigns as “social movements,” adopting strategies of emergent social movements in organizing marches, rallies, petitions, fund-raising drives, and so forth for conservative causes. Chi herself admitted to such a maneuver in a 1997 interview (in Chinese). See [www.ccea.org.tw/soc/17.htm](http://www.ccea.org.tw/soc/17.htm) (accessed February 14, 2008). The most aggressive of such civil society organizations that tackle sex- and gay-related issues in East Asia include Hong Kong’s Society for Truth and Light, Hong Kong Sex Culture Society, Hong Kong Alliance for Family; Taiwan’s Garden of Hope Foundation, End Child Prostitution Association Taiwan, Exodus International, Center for the Study of Bio-Ethics; Singapore’s Liberty League; and South Korea’s Assembly of Scientists against Embryonic Cloning.
29. NGO-ization proves to be highly profitable. The annual budget of two of the largest

Taiwanese Christian NGOs, Garden of Hope Foundation and Catholic Good Shepherd Sisters Foundation, has grown tenfold since the transformation, with hundreds of full-time staff members and many more volunteers. Delegates from these conservative NGOs also enjoy privileged membership on most of the important policy-setting committees in the government, setting policy priorities that empower and benefit their cause while creating formidable obstacles for queers and other marginal groups.

30. Christian-based NGOs have been most keen in organizing a media monitoring alliance with other NGOs. As public discontent with the tabloid media runs high, the conservative agenda has successfully diverted social energy away from questions of ownership and control to questions of content and morality.
31. Probably the most aggressive of such Christian NGOs, Taiwan's Garden of Hope Foundation, has won international NGO awards repeatedly, including Kellogg's Child Development Award, World of Children Awards (2005); Changemakers Innovation Award, Ashoka Foundation (2005); and Citigroup's NGO of the Year, Asia-Pacific Region, Resource Alliance (2004). The awarding agencies may be merely corporate subsidiaries, and the awards more significant in image than in actuality, but the international status of such awards carries a weight that makes them irresistible to the aspiring Taiwan (non-)state.
32. The hesitation and reluctance remain undocumented except through reports from frustrated LGBTQ representatives who attended such negotiation meetings. Years of experience with political correctness have taught many NGO groups never to put their criticism of marginal views into writing for fear of being cited and rebuked. It is the underdog NGOs who tend to be explicit about their own nonconforming views in trying to open up social space.
33. Mainstream feminist writings on sexuality center mostly on the dangers of sex, pornography, and pleasure.
34. The Chinese term *state-feminism* describes the vision that encouraging housewives to become political agents and enter the public realm of the state apparatus en masse can help realize feminist ideals. The sheer presence and number of women would then swallow up the public realm, feminizing the state and forcing it to take up the job of caring, which has been women's domain and responsibility. It is with this vision in mind that mainstream feminists developed an unusually high interest and investment in the project of state building.
35. To the dismay of gay-rights organizations and activists, even after the newspaper campaign, this antigay NGO still won the "human rights education project" in 2005 from Hong Kong's Education and Manpower Bureau, with exclusive rights to train teachers as well as to produce education materials—on the subject of *human rights*—for middle schools all over Hong Kong. And in the extracts from the teaching course outline, the Society of Truth and Light is already saying that one theme it will discuss is "excessive use of human rights."

36. "Taipei Hosts Gay Civic Event; Religious Group Contests," *United Evening News*, August 25, 2006, [gsrat.net/news/newsclipDetail.php?ncdata\\_id=3013](http://gsrat.net/news/newsclipDetail.php?ncdata_id=3013).
37. "Exclusion from Non-Discrimination Bill Mobilises Korea's LGBT Community," November 23, 2007, [fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2098&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all](http://fridae.com/newsfeatures/article.php?articleid=2098&viewarticle=1&searchtype=all).
38. See [www.hkchurch.org/family/sub/1.htm](http://www.hkchurch.org/family/sub/1.htm) (accessed February 10, 2008).
39. The convention is the first legally binding international instrument that incorporates the full range of human rights—civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Yet, while it decrees that children be protected from abuse, violence, deprivation, and economic exploitation, the most active and fruitful NGO efforts in East Asia have been those that aim at protecting children from *sexual* abuse and exploitation. This focus on the negative aspects of sex reflects significant historical shifts in feminist movements and discourse. Just as the iconoclastic sex-liberation discourse in the United States in the early 1970s was eventually eclipsed by women's painful narration of rape and abuse experiences that culminated in the "Take Back the Night" rally in 1978, the celebratory pro-child-sexuality milieu of late 1970s was also eclipsed by protection-oriented discourse on child innocence and vulnerability that culminated in moral panics such as the McMartin Preschool sex-scare case in the 1980s. Steven Angelides has documented the feminist evasion of the issue of child sexuality in his important essay, "Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality," *GLQ* 10 (2004): 141–77. A similar shift has also taken place in Taiwanese feminism, where talk of subject-centered female sexuality and sexual emancipation in 1994–95 was silenced as mainstream women's groups chose to focus on victim-centered sexual harassment and sexual violence from 1996 on.
40. The case of Taiwan supplies the most emblematic example for my observation here because, given its unique and tumultuous process of ongoing democratization and uncertain nation-state status, it has afforded social movements the most fertile ground for active yet limited intervention. Moreover, Taiwanese gender/sexuality activists have produced the most sophisticated discourses on women's issues and lesbian and gay issues, which are now being disseminated throughout Asia.
41. Such views are most clearly stated on the Web page of the Hong Kong Alliance for Family, while opposition to the homosexual marriage bill in Taiwan took more veiled forms. See [www.hkchurch.org/family/sub/2.htm](http://www.hkchurch.org/family/sub/2.htm) (accessed February 10, 2008).
42. Only when conception was out of wedlock did it entail family shame, and even then, the shame mostly had to do with the fact that the woman was not married and had already consented to have sex with men.
43. Buss and Herman write about a shift in the Christian Right's UN rhetoric on defending the "rights of poor women" in its opposition to abortion (*Globalizing Family Values*, 58). The argument about "rights of poor women" is also invoked by conservative Christian NGOs in Taiwan but only in relation to their opposition to surrogate motherhood, which they see as serving the needs of the rich exclusively.

44. To safeguard the welfare of children from the earliest moment possible, article 32 of the Child Welfare Act of Taiwan (2002) even prohibits pregnant women from ingesting any substance (cigarettes, alcohol, betel nuts, LSD, or other intoxicating drugs) that might be considered harmful for the fetus. Nor are they allowed to engage in activities deemed dangerous for the fetus.
45. Uttered by Taiwan's ruling party legislator Hou Shui-Sheng in 2004, this quotation coincides with Lee Edelman's delineation of the politics of "reproductive futurism," in which the figure of the child represents the possibility of the future against which the queer serves as a negating drive. See Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
46. I thank my colleague Ding Naifei for reminding me that the convergence of the "colonial-modern" (Christian) and the "feudal-cultural" (in various Chinese contexts, transfer of ancestor-worship to children-fetish) is a historical phenomenon quite typical of many East Asian societies.
47. Susan Moller Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* ed. Joshua Cohen and Matthew Howard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7–24.
48. Saskia Sassen, "Towards a Feminist Analytics of Today's Global Economy," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 4 (1996–97): 7.
49. Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 2003), chap. 3.



