

“Neoliberalism and online discourse of fitness, masculinity, and sexuality

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In 2014, a British journalist coined the term *spornosexual* to account for the emergence of the body-obsessed version of *metrosexuality*. Spornosexuals are men obsessed with developing muscular bodies and self-objectifyingly flaunting them online. In an age of highly mediatized globalization, where the ideal male body is nearly unrealistically fit and well-muscled, these people seek to display their own attempts to attain this physique, and this form of masculinity has now spread worldwide, including to Singapore. Using a multimodal analysis, we investigate four racially Chinese, Singapore-based Instagram influencers who represent the prototypical spornosexual ideals through their bodies and fitness practices.

The meanings and values associated with the muscular body are explored and subsequently compared with traditional notions of masculinity in Singapore. The idea of spornosexuality describes a generational difference in Singaporean ideals of masculinity. On a superficial level, men’s fit bodies began to entail a sense of desirability owing to global influences, and counter to the traditional view which associates muscularity with low-class or physical labor. As a result, among today’s Singaporeans, fit male bodies are not only connected to their physical competency but also to hegemonic notions of ideal aesthetics for both heterosexual and non-heterosexual men. This study also shows that the influencers employ mediatization processes in producing their photos, as manifested in how and where they choose to pose, how they edit their photographs, and also in how they interact with their followers, imbuing these photos with much more meaning than the simple base-level physical fitness itself.