



Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Presents

Shinjuku Ni-chōme is a nightlife district in central Tokyo filled with bars and clubs targeting the city's gay male community. Typically understood as a safe "queer space" where same sex attracted men and women from across Japan's largest city can gather to find support from a relentlessly heteronormative society, this presentation reveals that the neighbourhood may not be as welcoming as previously depicted in prior scholarly and popular literature. Through fieldwork observation and interviews with young men who regularly frequent the neighbourhood's many bars, I argue that the district is instead a space where only certain performances of gay identity are considered desirable. Drawing upon careful analysis of media such as pornographic videos, manga comics, lifestyle magazines, and online dating services, I further suggest that the commercial imperatives of the Japanese gay media landscape and the bar culture of Shinjuku Ni-chōme act together to limit the agency of young gay men to better exploit them economically. Importantly, reflecting on the principal arguments of my recent book, I explore how Japanese gay culture simply reinscribes hegemonic understandings of masculinity and chart the impacts of what I term "regimes of desire" on the sexual lives of four young Japanese men who were consuming various media during Japan's so-called crisis in masculinity.

Thomas Baudinette (@tbaudinette) is Senior Lecturer in Japanese and International Studies at Macquarie University, Australia. A cultural anthropologist, his research focusses on Japanese queer media and its impacts on understandings of gender across East and Southeast Asia. His first book is *Regimes of Desire: Young Gay Men, Media, and Masculinity in Tokyo* (2021, University of Michigan Press). His second book, *Boys Love Media in Thailand: Celebrities, Fans, and Transnational Asian Queer Popular Culture*, is scheduled for publication in late 2022 with Bloomsbury Academic. His academic homepage is <https://www.thomasbaudinette.com/>.

This talk is organized by James Farrer (professor of Sociology, Sophia University)

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture: <https://www.icc-sophia.com/>

Date: Jan. 13, 2022

**Time: 07:00 PM Osaka,
Sapporo, Tokyo (On Zoom)**

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