

Call For Papers

Policing with Play: Humour, Ridicule, and the Construction of Hegemonic Masculinities in Asia-Pacific

Editor: Dr. Debapriya Ganguly

While classical relief models of humour frame laughter as an innocent social mechanism or an antidote to institutional authority, critical masculinity studies reveal humour to be a primary technology for the production, preservation, and regulation of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Foucault, 1977). Masculinity is not a static identity but a precarious performance that is built upon constant validation and defence against the spectre of the "feminine" or non-normative sexualities. Within male peer groups, humour, banter, parody, and ritualised ridicule operate as the critical engine of "jeer pressure" (Billig, 2005), a coercive social corrective that polices the boundaries of manhood through the constant, low-level threat of public emasculation and social exclusion. This special issue interrogates the regulatory and defensive architecture of male humour across educational, corporate, militarised, digital, and everyday social spaces, with a core emphasis on Asia and the Pacific alongside global comparative perspectives. Thematically anchored in foundational ethnographies of schoolyard "hard-man" banter (Kehily & Nayak, 1997), theoretical formulations linking disciplinary ridicule to gender-sexual hierarchies (Abedinifard, 2016; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), and empirical analyses of defensive male resistance to gender-transformative pedagogy (Barnes, 2012), this issue demonstrates how "having a laugh" serves a dual masculine purpose: it acts as an offensive instrument to establish dominant and subordinate male hierarchies (and subordinate women), while functioning as a defensive shield to neutralize critiques of male privilege. In Asia and the Pacific, the imperative to prove and protect manhood through humour is mediated by distinct localised matrices of male power. Here, masculine anxiety and peer-policing intersect with postcolonial state-building, military hazing, filial patriarchies, indigenous warrior archetypes, caste/class stratification, and hyper-masculine digital subcultures (e.g., "incel" and troll networks). Utilising an intersectional masculinity framework (Crenshaw, 1989; Bridges & Pascoe, 2014), this collection brings together interdisciplinary scholars to examine how culturally situated forms of humour construct, police, fortify, or destabilise masculine dominance within complex postcolonial and transnational landscapes. The special issue invites scholars to submit original research articles, including localised case studies, autoethnographic accounts, and interdisciplinary investigations. All papers will undergo double-blind peer review process. The topics for submission include but are not limited to:

1. Dad and husband jokes
2. Homophobic jokes
3. Humour across public and private spaces
4. Humour and production of heterosexuality
5. Humour, boys and lads
6. Humour and gender surveillance
7. Ridicule and hegemonic masculinity
8. Masculinity, humour, ridicule and teasing
9. Humour and slangs
10. Humour as a masculinity corrective
11. Subversion of masculinity and humour
12. Humour and masculinity hierarchies
13. Humour and intimacy

Submission Guidelines:

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Abstract Submission Deadline: 21st August 2026

Decision Letter: 28th August 2026

Manuscript Submission Deadline: 31st October 2026