

ABSTRACT

Modern Chinese men and masculinities are relatively an uncharted territory with only handful exploratory expeditions underway. These expeditions did not go far enough. They were voyages within the realms of history, literature and media. Images and stereotypes were found. But how close these images and stereotypes correspond to real life men is still unknown.

This study employed written surveys, interviews and field observations on Chinese men living in the capital city of Beijing in China. Data are solidly grounded in real people whose identities and perceptions of their masculinities are coming into light.

Masculinities meant different ideas to men of various age groups. The older generations saw the way to be a man was to be the sole breadwinner for his family. Times were hard and life was simple. The ability to put food on the table meant everything for the older Chinese men. The younger generations had totally different ideas of being a man. They saw themselves as closer to the ideal way of doing manhood, as advocated in the media. However, at the same, they felt rather lost of to which way was the way to approach manhood. Information overload made the choices tougher and more confusing.