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Exploring the ‘Ideal Wife’ mages in Internet Dating Sites: Taiwan vs. China

The paper compares the Internet dating profiles of female marriage seekers in Taiwanese and Chinese sites, investigating the traces of feminist thoughts in the online construction of ‘ideal wife’ images across the Taiwan Strait. In Taiwan, local feminism arguably burgeoned in the 1970s and flourished in 1980s as part of the new social movements, while in China, feminist thoughts, dating back to the Chinese Enlightenment, have been changing shape with the rise of Mao’s regime, the Cultural Revolution and the ‘reform and open’ project initiated in 1978. Despite their different orbits and political/economical contexts, feminisms in both societies struggle with Chinese patriarchy and the beauty economy embedded in capitalism. Working on the comparison, the researcher adopts and reformulates Williams’s triplet of ‘the dominant, the residual and the emergent’ in defining feminism as historical force, with an aim to explore the possible function of ‘the re-emergent’ and re-examine the meaning of the residual in contexts.