

# **Globalization in Different Directions: Glocalization and Cultural Distances between Otaku Cultures in Different Regions**

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## **Abstract**

Globalization is a crucial issue in the modern world. Western culture is the dominant power and spreads toward other areas. However, Japanese anime and manga, or otaku culture, show a reverse trend of global diffusion. How anime and manga spread globally is the main concern of this research. Existing research usually regarded otaku industries as a whole, omitting the power of fan communities and their roles during global diffusion. Moreover, most studies did not pay attention to online otaku community, which is a crucial space for modern otaku. The aim of this research is to explore how cultural distance and local contexts affect globalization of otaku culture, leading to glocalization in local practices. This research uses content analysis and online interview as its research method. Two groups are selected: Taiwanese and American otaku. The research results reveal two things. On the one hand, globalization presents strong power in the diffusion of otaku culture, affecting entertainment consumption and stigmas toward otaku. On the other hand, cultural distance and local contexts affect otaku local practices in different regions, creating different behavior both online and offline. The results show that the spread process of otaku culture is indeed the mixture of globalization and glocalization and researchers should not omit either of them.

**Key Words:** cultural distance, globalization, glocalization, otaku, otaku culture

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## Introduction

When talking about cultural globalization, most people will have in mind the idea of Western cultural products selling around the world. The idea has indeed become one of the mainstream views in cultural studies that Western cultural products, values, and ideologies are predominant and spread to the whole world (Appadurai, 1990; Crane, 2002; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; Pieterse, 1993; Tomlinson, 1999; Ritzer, 2003). However, there is a trend sweeping from Asia to the Western world: Japanese comics (manga) and animation (anime) culture.

Manga and anime are terms specialized to refer to Japanese comics and animations. Most manga and anime feature art styles that are different from American cartoons and comics, e.g. shrunken torsos, oversized heads, huge eyes, endless flowing hair, and colored hair such as pink, green, or blue (Napier, 2016). Their fan culture, otaku culture, is an iconic sign in Japanese society. In the past few decades, manga and anime has become a huge industry not only in the Japanese domestic market but also in foreign markets. According to Chen (2009), popular Japanese shōnen, or juvenile, manga magazine reached sales of 500 million in 1994; over 4000 different kinds of manga were sold in the market. Anime sales were also huge. During 1995-1998, 21.5 million anime were sold per year, bringing 72.5 billion yen profits on average annually (Chen, 2009, 10-11). In 2007, the total value of manga and anime industries reached over 180 billion yen (Takahiro, 2009). Though the scale of domestic manga and anime market is declining in recent years (Chen, 2009, xxi; Bryce, Barber, Kelly, Kunwar, and Plumb, 2010), it still represents a crucial part in the Japanese popular culture market. The international market, on the other hand, is undergoing rapid growth and has become a huge market. In the United States, manga sales were worth 175 million dollars and there were approximately 2.8 billion dollars in anime sales in 2007. In Europe, France and Germany consumed 87.5 million euros of anime and spent 50-70 million euros on manga (Bryce et al., 2010). Manga and anime have also widely spread in East Asia, including China (Cooper-Chen, 2011), South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and so on (Chang, 2008; Otmazgin, 2008). On a global scale, anime accounted for 60% in the global animation market (Chen, 2009, 10) and accounted for 56% in the export of Japanese television programs in 1980-81 (Newitz, 1994). All of these reveal that manga and anime have become popular around the world and has also spread otaku culture worldwide.

Many people tried to answer why this trend would happen. Some researchers claimed that character matters during the spread of anime and manga. Anime and manga, as a part of Japanese kawaii (cute) culture, generate many cute, big eyed characters and attract a wide audience around the world (Lamerichs, 2013; Xu, 2001). Pokémon is a good example of this. Pikachu, a yellow cute mouse created by Nintendo,

swept the world from 1996 to 2000 (Tobin, 2002). Other researchers saw that universalization helps anime and manga spread to the world. They claimed that characters are designed in a way that minimizes Japanese elements, making anime and manga more acceptable for foreign audiences (Iwabuchi, 2002; Lu, 2008). Others sought the answer in industrial perspective. The idea of plurality was seen as the crucial factor for the spread of manga and anime industries. Plurality is composed of two dimensions: genre and media mix. Manga and anime have a variety of genres, unlike American cartoons which usually target children as audiences, and have a variety of topics (Chen, 2009, 25; Price, 2001). Therefore, the audiences of manga and anime lie across a wide range of age group and both genders, enlarging its potential consumers. A survey in Japan reveals that the audiences of manga and anime listed from teenagers to salarymen in thirties; other surveys showed similar results in Taiwan and even America (Chen, 2009, 25-26). The other factor is media mix (Chen, 2009, 73). Media mix means the “combination of various analog and digital media forms” (Ito, 2006, 50). Manga and anime showed their heterogeneous property (Ito, 2006): a work may be translated into many different forms, like comics, animations, games, music, for maximizing profits. Different sources of media may provide broader marketing opportunities and thus create a greater audience for manga and anime industries (Bryce et al., 2010). Lastly, some researchers explore this question in globalization perspective. Some of them critiqued the spread of otaku culture from the perspective of cultural imperialism (Iwabuchi, 2002; Lu 2008; Newitz, 1994; Xu, 2001), claiming that anime and manga are Japanese imperialism that are going to invade other countries. Others held a more positive view toward this process, regarding it as an example of local practices during globalization (Bryce et al., 2010; Chen, 2009; Denison, 2011; Lee, 2011; Leonard, 2004; Price, 2001).

Nevertheless, there are some deficiencies in existing research. Most studies focused on the relationship between the Western and Eastern societies and regarded otaku as a single group in their analysis. However, it is problematic to analyze otaku culture in this framework. Those researchers ignored some important aspects of otaku culture. First, they did not pay attention to the power of fan culture. Since otaku fan culture plays an important role in spreading anime and manga (Chen, 2009), the theories may be biased and do not fit in reality well. They also omitted the complicated relationship between different actors inside otaku culture; the relationships between industries and fans are dynamic and not fixed in specific ways. Lastly, there may be differences between otaku who are embedded in different cultural backgrounds, which are not mentioned in most of the existing studies. All these reasons make the framework they used unsuitable for analyzing otaku culture. They also failed to realize the importance of the Internet. The Internet has become an important media for spreading otaku culture in recent years (Bryce et al., 2010; Cooper-Chen, 2011; Denison, 2011; Ito, 2006; Price,

2001). Though some of the studies mentioned the rise of Internet use in otaku activities, they only treated it as another means for otaku activities rather than the crucial or even main platform for otaku interaction and practices.

The aim of this research is to explore the differences between otaku fans' behavior in different areas, with particular reference to their cultural practices on the Internet. Since otaku culture has become popular across the world, identifying how it works both on a global and local scale would be crucial. Through qualitative research, including content analysis and interviews, the researcher aims to find out how otaku culture embedded in local contexts.

### *Otaku culture*

“Otaku” is a blurred concept and has generated many different definitions for different purposes. According to Azuma, otaku refers to “a group of people who are deeply addicted to subcultures like comics, anime, games, personal computers, SF, tokusatsu, and figures” (cited from Takahiro, 2009, 74). This definition restricts the concept of otaku to a specific group who consume manga, anime, games, and relevant popular culture. Some economists redefined otaku in a broader range to “idol enthusiasts who devote almost all of their time and disposable income to following their favorite idols or collecting idol-related items without caring for their own everyday life.” (Kitabayashi, 2004, 2) Researchers mainly focused on otaku's consuming behaviors under this definition. Sometimes otaku would also be regarded as young people who are interested in specific popular culture and access this on the internet *without leaving their homes* (Tobin, 1998). This definition partly came from the misunderstanding the word *otaku*, which means “your home” in Japanese (Kinsella, 1998) and “home” in Mandarin Chinese; this leads to confusion between the concept of “otaku” and “NEET<sup>1</sup>” or “cocooning<sup>2</sup>” in some otaku studies in Asia (Chang, 2008). The image of “isolation” represents the negative meaning in this definition. In the research, I tend to use the original definition by Azuma, which focuses on the audiences of manga, anime and games in this study. This definition appropriately refers to the group that is enthusiastic in fan creation and diffusion, which lies in the core topic of the research. Moreover, it also fits in the research concern of globalization and glocalization, since manga and anime fans will indeed spread the works and their creations around the world, mostly via the internet. Though Kitabayashi's definition (2004) also stresses the motivation for

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<sup>1</sup> Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), refers to the youths that lack of ability to engage in labor market and spend a substantial amount of time outside any form of education, employment, or training (Bynner and Parsons, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> The concept proposed by an American trend predictor that “sees individuals socializing less and re-treating into their home more” (Marsden and Srivastava, 2012). There are also relevant concept in Japan called “ひきこもり”, or hikikomori, which focusing on the escape of social interaction and the connection to society (Saito, 2002).

spreading and creating works, it mainly focuses on personal behaviors rather than the link to the world and the process of globalization. Moreover, otaku would be too broad for a globalization study. It is also problematic that not all enthusiastic fans will develop into a community on a global scale. Tobin's definition (1998), lastly, focuses on the relationship between individuals, technology, and society rather than the globalization process of a fan culture. Overall, the original definition best fits our research purpose.

The negative definition also reflects moral judgment and conflicts between otaku culture and the mainstream society. In Japan, otaku culture has sustained a negative image or stigma for a period of time (Chang, 2008; Chen, 2009; Iwabuchi, 2002; Lamerichs, 2013; Newitz, 1994). Otaku were regarded as people who "don't care about what they dress... [and are] not into physical activities" (Tobin, 1998, 109) or "...those people who usually stuck in the corner of classroom and have no friends...buying lolicon doujinshi (little-girl-love fan-made comics) with disgusting smiles" (Chang, 2008, 70) in public and mass media. After the Tsutomu Miyazaki Event, a murder caused by an otaku, a moral panic toward manga and anime arose (Kinsella, 1998; Ito, 2006). People accused manga and anime of leading to his alienation and lack of substantial social relationships, which generated his antisocial behavior. (Kinsella, 1998). Manga and anime were also accused of encouraging child pornography and violent behavior (Chang, 2008; Chen, 2009, 56-59; Kinsella, 1998). Some researchers proposed psychiatric explanations linked with the properties of otaku. Nakajima, for example, claimed that otaku is a group of people who reject reality and live in their own virtual world. Saito argued that otaku represented a deficiency in reality cognition, a lack of common sense, a high investment in virtual things, and a perversion of sexuality (cited from Chen, 2009, 88-89).

However, some people disagreed with those negative descriptions and linked otaku culture to positive traits. Otaku fan culture is the core component in manga and anime popular culture. Fiske (1989) regarded fans as agencies rather than receptors; they are initiative, enthusiastic and interact with the content. They are capable of creating their own content by exploiting original ones as resources so they are cultural consumers as well as cultural producers. They not only consume manga and anime produced by cultural industries but also recreate these materials in various forms. Sometimes their creations may even reduce the profits of cultural industries (Denison, 2011; Lee, 2011). These fan creations illustrate the energy and agency of otaku culture. Some researchers proposed positive traits in the practices of otaku culture. Okada, for example, regarded otaku as new breed born in the 20th century 'visual cultural era', who is a group with a viewpoint based on an extremely evolved sensitivity toward images (Okada, 2000). He also believed otaku are appreciators, who are experts in aesthetic feeling (the eye of *iki*), understanding the technique of craftsperson (the eye of *takumi*),

and realizing the social position of the works (the eye of *tsu*). In his view, otaku culture inherits the old spirit of craftsperson culture that originated from the Edo era<sup>3</sup>. Okada also claimed that otaku is able to access information from various genres of media. For him, otaku is actually the elite for information integrating and managing. Nomura Research Institute (2005) shared the same opinion, regarding the outstanding ability to collect and broadcast data as a feature of otaku.

The practices of otaku culture lie in many different forms. Doujinshi is one of the most well-known forms of fan creation. Doujinshi conventions reveal the popularity of doujinshi. Tens of thousands of people flux into Comics Market, or Comiket, the largest doujinshi convention in Japan, every year (Chen, 2009, 96; Kinsella, 1998; Lamerichs, 2013). Doujinshi is “fan-created manga that circulate within the fan communities of Japanese popular culture” (Lamerichs, 2013, 159). It is usually also seen as amateur manga (Kinsella, 1998), but the concept of amateur cannot precisely illustrate the properties of doujinshi. Doujinshi is a highly open creative form; amateur artists can become professional by drawing doujinshi and professional artists will sometimes also participate in doujinshi conventions (Chen, 2009, 97; Lamerichs, 2013). Its openness can also reflect on the role of females. Most doujinshi artists were female (Kinsella, 1998) and they created a special genre of manga called “yaoi”, which became popular among otaku. Yaoi, or Boys’ Love (BL), refers to a genre of anime, manga and fan art whose subject matter is erotic and romantic relationships between young males (Zanghellini, 2009). Yaoi does not essentially correlate with actual homosexuality because, as mentioned before, most producers and consumers of yaoi are female (Zanghellini, 2009) and there have even been conflicts when gay people have encountered yaoi manga (McHarry, 2007). Yaoi art works play at the intersections of identity and gender of female otaku. Through yaoi, females were able to break the boundaries of the body, resist static conceptions of gender and the construction of identities by gazing upon male characters’ bodies and expressing needs, desires and preferences during consumption (McHarry, 2007; Zanghellini, 2009). Overall, doujinshi is a classic case of fans’ daily practice as they are usually generated and sold by fans independently who are still in a young age (Kinsella, 1998). It also represents the openness of otaku culture, allowing everyone to participate, explain, and create their own works. Doujinshi, therefore, is “the identity of cultural participants and creators toward manga and anime, the cognition and practice of self-presence, and powerful pillar for industries” (Chen, 2009, 98).

Besides doujinshi, other kinds of otaku creation are also important elements for

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<sup>3</sup> The craftsperson culture in Edo era could be regarded as the traditional Japanese spirit, since it represents the site of the lost-but-not-forgotten authentic Japan, the pre-Western ‘outside’ of modernity (Steinberg, 2004). The craftsperson culture stressed on the temperament that devoting to works as moral sentiments; they pursued the doctrine regarded the improvement of techniques and skills as the ultimate life style (Chen, 2009, 80-82).

otaku culture. Cosplay, or costume play, is “a performance art in which the participant masquerades as a character from a selected film, television series, video game, or comic book” (Gn, 2011, 583). Cosplay is a crucial form of daily practice for many otaku in both identity and body display. First, cosplay can be seen as “a practical symptom of fan pathology” (Gn, 2011, 583). It is not just ‘dressing up’ but representing the identity of the character and belonging to a greater community of like-minded fans (Norris and Bainbridge, 2009). Overall, cosplay is a performative phenomenon that solidifies fan identity (Lamerichs, 2013). Furthermore, otaku exhibit special practices through cosplay. On the one hand, they imply gender play and gender disruption by cosplaying characters of different gender (Norris and Bainbridge, 2009). On the other hand, their body display and animated image creation revise the meanings and gratifications of the human body, which is objectified and commercialized in modern society (Gn, 2011). Fansubbing is another form of otaku practice; fansubtitlers introduce anime to the English world or areas using other languages by adding subtitles to videos to make anime accessible to foreign otaku. In this sense, fansubbing is a powerful tool for spreading manga and anime around the world (Denison, 2011; Lee, 2011). Fanspeak, lastly, refers to the specific language use inside a fan culture that only other fans can fully understand (Gooch, 2008). Fanspeak may be specific lines or poses of anime characters or terms created by otaku. Otaku culture is known for creating lots of fanspeak; some of them are so famous that even non-otaku acknowledge those words. *Loli*, for example, means cute little girl; *tsundere* means a character that is fond of a person but interacts with him or her in an angry or negative way; *yundere*, on the other hand, means the character loves a person so much that the character will even damage others to protect their relationship. Fanspeak is the actual practice of otaku culture in daily life. It also represents the diffusion of otaku culture, since some Western otaku directly borrow Japanese phrases as fanspeak in conversation (Bloem, 2014). All these fan creations represent the bottom-up mechanisms of otaku culture and have become the fundamental features of otaku culture worldwide.

Since many otaku studies focused on its globalization process and the intercultural relationship along with the process, the researcher will explore otaku behavior from the perspective of globalization theory and introduce relevant existing studies.

## **Theoretical Review**

### *Globalization and Glocalization*

Globalization is a multidimensional concept that is widely applied in political science, economics, sociology, and cultural studies (Achterberg, Heilbron, Houtman, and Aupers, 2011; Pieterse, 1993; Tomlinson, 1999). It refers to the process of increasing



transnational exchange of goods, persons, and ideas (Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord, 2008). Tomlinson (1999) argued that globalization should be seen as a process of connectivity and proximity; the compression of time and space creates a network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life. In the domain of cultural globalization, Tomlinson argued that culture should be understood as “the order of life in which human beings construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation” (Tomlinson, 1999, 18), therefore globalization is actually reciprocal with modern culture. In the studies of cultural globalization, researchers especially focused on “the transmission or diffusion across national borders of various forms of media and the arts” (Crane, 2002, 1). Researchers were concerned with the relationships between global and local in the flow of cultural goods and information. Under this concern, there are two main perspectives for explaining the mechanisms and consequences of cultural globalization: *homogeneity* and *heterogeneity*.

People who held homogeneous views regarded globalization as a process of incorporating people around the world into a single world society (Pieterse, 1993). One perspective is that globalization would promote a single global culture. From the consumption perspective, it means the synchronization of consumption culture, making everywhere look the same (Tomlinson, 1999, 6). Robertson (1990) even regarded it as autonomy in the globalization process. Furthermore, many scholars focused mainly on cultural imperialism. It refers to “the power of transnational capitalism to distribute its cultural goods around the world” (Tomlinson, 1999, 81). Sometimes cultural imperialism was developed into an even more specific concept, like Westernization or Americanization, regarding the dominant power of Western countries and the United States. Schiller, for example, claimed that the western capitalist power would incorporate all societies into a single, controlled realm (cited from Tomlinson, 1999, 81). Cultural imperialism highly corresponds with the mass media (Crane, 2002) and mass consumption (Crane, 2002; Featherstone, 1990) as it is presumed that mass audiences would absorb hegemony culture passively and uncritically (Crane, 2002). In their view, the world as a system is dominated by Western countries; with the power of mass media, they were able to spread their ideologies and shape the global culture through capitalistic power (Chen, 2009, 139). This process also corresponds to a central-periphery model which points out the direction of power and cultural inequality (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). This perspective illustrated that people around the world were united by western hegemony in consumption, ideologies, and eventually culture.

Cultural imperialism provides a critical perspective for examining the power structure of cultural globalization, yet it represented some deficiencies and was widely criticized by other researchers. Tomlinson (1999) argued that cultural imperialism had a

leap of inference on international trades of cultural goods directly to attribution of cultural and ideological consequences. Furthermore, cultural imperialism ignored the fact that the appropriation of symbols was not unilinear as well. Tomlinson also argued that homogeneity only revealed parts of the reality. The globalization trend affected in fact only a small percentage of people and therefore lost its claim for a universal condition. Furthermore, when globalization practice applies to local area, it actually turns into locality practices. Crane (2000) argued that global culture is not a single, homogenized global culture but a complex and diverse phenomenon consisting of global cultures. Pieterse (1993) also argued that cultural experience does not simply tend to cultural uniformity and standardization; cultural imperialism overlooked the impact of nonwestern cultures on the West. Overall, researchers concluded that homogeneity is insufficient for it cannot appropriately reflect the complexity and multiple dimensions of globalization (Achterberg et al., 2011; Crane, 2002; Featherstone, 1990; Robertson, 1995; Tomlinson, 1999, 83-85).

Heterogeneity, on the contrary, presumed diverse cultures and practices in globalization. The relationship between global and local has been the core concern for researchers in cultural globalization studies for a long time. Tomlinson (1999) claimed that locality refers to the place where people live in their daily lives, it is not affected immediately by the standardization and connectivity of the global. Moreover, it was often invisible when discussing the process and power of globalization. He also argued that “the ‘live culture’ enacted and experienced within different local contexts and traditions produces the ‘thickening’ of culture” (Tomlinson, 1999, 88). Hence, researchers with a heterogeneous perspective focused on differences among local contexts and proposed *glocalization* as the concept of the interaction between global and local.

Glocalization refers to “the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas” (Ritzer, 2003, 193). Ritzer argued that Glocalization emphasizes heterogeneity and rejects the idea of homogeneity that Western force dominates in the cultural field. Glocalization is a dynamic process, showing that global culture is not unilaterally applied around the world but adapting to different local contexts (Achterberg et al., 2011). Robertson (1995) regarded it as the discourses of locality, community and home on a global scale. It is a concept that is constituted by interconnectedness of many local cultures; it “involved the creation and the incorporation of locality, processes which themselves shape the compression of the world as a whole” (Robertson, 1995, 40). Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) argued that glocalization even exists in local practices which are strongly affected by global power, e.g. youth consumption.

Another concept in dealing with the relationship between global and local is hy-

bridization. Hybridization means ‘the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices’ (Pieterse, 1993, 49). The core concept of hybridization is the *mix* of different cultures (Tomlinson, 1999, 142). Different types of culture mix together and create a complex, new culture. It represents a process of deterritorialization, which breaks or crosses the barrier between cultures (Pieterse, 1993; Tomlinson, 1999). Hybridization is not just the summation of different cultures, but the coexistence of diverse symbols (Kraidy, 1999). Glocalization and hybridization are similar to some extent, yet they mainly focus on different objects. Glocalization mainly deals with the interaction between local and global, and interconnection between local cultures, while hybridization puts more attention on the mixture of different cultures (Pieterse, 1993). By using these two concepts, the researcher is able to explore the differences in cultural practices and understand how globalization works differently in local contexts.

### *Otaku Research in Cultural Studies*

The existing otaku research showed diverse topics and theoretical basis, revealing different concerns in the studies. Some studies analyzed otaku culture from the cultural imperialism perspective. For instance, Newitz (1994) mainly focused on American otaku, arguing that they are people who are addicted to the twisted foreign subculture. In her view, anime is a form of popular culture that reflects the political incorrectness of Japanese culture, e.g. feminist issues are unrecognized, while at the same time anime is also similar to American popular genres, making it attractive to American otaku. She argued that anime provides a way to detach from American mainstream culture and political correctness, e.g. the fear of being feminized. Moreover, she argued that anime is actually a form of imperialism that “as a form of ideology specifically aimed at influencing a Western audience” (p.13), making American otaku sympathize with Japanese culture and even “want to be colonized by Japanese culture” (p.11) (Newitz, 1994). There was the same concern in Asia. Xu (2001) argued that anime promotes Japanese cultural imperialism and invades colonies by boundary-less imaginary worlds and harmless-looking symbols on anime characters.

Other researchers analyzed the diffusion of anime using the concept of Orientalism. Orientalism refers to the way in which Western societies have understood and interpreted oriental societies through the period of imperial expansion. It is related to decolonization and the writing of history (Turner, 2002). Orientalism revealed in many different domains, including historical and cultural relationship, scientific discipline, and ideological suppositions, images, and fantasies (Said, 1985). Orientalism segregated Western society from the other parts of the world, subjectively constructing the ‘facts’ of the Orient world and gazing upon them from the view of “Otherness” (Turner, 2002).

Applying the concept of Orientalism, Iwabuchi (2002) claimed that the development of manga and anime was embedded in the colonized history of East Asia; Japan can strengthen the lingering asymmetrical power relations with other Asian countries through promoting anime. He also proposed the concepts of techno-nationalism and techno-orientalism. Techno-nationalism refers to the rise of nationalism due to the progressiveness and worldwide admiration of technology products from Japan, as it is crucial for postwar Japan to rebuild national identity. Iwabuchi argued that this trend also happened in cultural industries as techno-orientalism, which means the process of reconstruction in opposite to western-centered collective identity during cultural and media globalization. He argued that the diffusion of otaku culture fitted well with this concept as to sell anime worldwide it was designed as an “odorless” commodity, hiding the distinctive “Japaneseness” in anime. He also argued that it caused Japanese people to view themselves from a narcissistic point of view. However, this self-orientalism is still constructed under the Western Orientalist gaze.

Based on the concept of Orientalism, Lu (2008) expanded it into three different pathways for interpreting the internationalization of anime: de-politicized, Occidentalism, and self-orientalized. In de-politicized internationalization, anime became ‘open’ to audiences, making people more willing to accept it. Remediation may also explain parts of the reason since anime may remediate from the style of Hollywood films, making people familiar with the narrative styles of anime. The concept of anime being “odorless” from Iwabuchi may also help for explaining this pathway. By reducing Japanese elements in the show, anime and manga are looked less Oriented and are more acceptable for Western audience. Occidentalism internationalization is a different way of thinking that goes against Orientalism. It presents the way of viewing the West as “other” from the East. More precisely, it involves a set of negative attributes or stereotypes portrayed by Western or American characters. Lu argued that anime contains some elements of Occidentalism and aspires to affect audiences in nationalistic ways. Self-orientalized internationalization, lastly, represents a double relationship in East/West and in East itself. When being orientalized with Western countries, Japan also becomes the “West” among Asian countries. During the internationalization of anime, Japan not only adopts but also promotes Orientalist discourses; it spreads hegemony over the rest of the East as Western countries did.

The cultural imperialism perspectives provided critical thinking for the diffusion of otaku culture. Nevertheless, it may not precisely present how manga and anime industries work and fails to understand the unique aspect of otaku culture. Firstly, the cultural imperialism view presumed a process that Japanese cultural industries promote manga and anime to the world and construct their cultural hegemony intentionally. However, many researches shows that this assumption is spurious as not only creators

of manga and anime but the industry itself is mainly focused on the domestic market inside Japan. Foreign markets are out of their consideration most of the time (Cooper-Chen, 2011; Denison, 2011; Lamerichs, 2013; Lee, 2011) and it is even a surprise for some Japanese animators to learn of the success of anime around the world (Price, 2001). The process of anime spreading around the world does not support cultural imperialism theory either. Chen (2009) argued that Japanese anime companies did not sell their products overseas in the very beginning and that piracy and illegal copies, instead, played a crucial work in the diffusion of anime. This process took place in many countries, including East Asian countries like Taiwan, South Korea, China and Hong Kong (Chang, 2008), and Western countries like France or the United States (Chen, 2009, 41). Japanese anime industries actually tended to be passive in the process of globalization (Chen, 2009, 132).

Second, cultural imperialism theory neglected the agency of fans. In cultural imperialism analysis, audiences were usually regarded as uncritical publics and are absent in analysis; it led to a fatal deficiency in otaku culture studies for otaku's energy and ability to spread subcultures. Otaku were enthusiastic in recreating and promoting their favorite works to others and these behaviors helped the spread of otaku culture, especially via the Internet (Bryce et al., 2010). Chen (2009) argued that fan culture, rather than the power of cultural industries, should be seen as the reason for otaku culture globalization. Otaku interacted with manga and anime textures by doujinshi, cosplay and other derivative works; they also interacted between fans and even creators. This interaction created powerful live practices and generated a bottom-up force for globalization. Empirical research also showed that not industrial promotion but fan (illegal) broadcasting caused otaku culture to thrive in the United States (Leonard, 2004). Moreover, otaku culture may even conflict with industries during the globalization process, which contradicts the cultural imperialism view that mass consumption would facilitate the hegemony of capitalistic power. Denison (2011) and Lee (2011), for instance, demonstrated a dynamic relationship between fansubbing otaku communities and industries. The rise of fansubbing was based on several factors: anime fan subtitler, technology, and community. At first, industries in America welcomed these fansubbing behaviors for the advantages of promoting and enlarging the anime market but they started to regard it as piracy when fansubbing threatened their profits. Fansubbing is a preferred choice for otaku because they could provide faster, better and more kinds of anime than industries. Fansubbing, as fans' practices, were forcing the industries to improve their business mode. The case shows that otaku are not a passive audience, waiting for the information from cultural industries. Instead, they act, compete, and even force industries to change their business ways. All this reveals that otaku culture is initiative and has a bottom-up power to spread worldwide.

Recently, some researchers focused on the differences of local practices and globalization of otaku culture. Bryce et al. (2010) argued that otaku culture is connected to globalization in the translation process as it presents a cross-cultural, global communication process. Lamerichs (2013), on the other hand, mainly focused on local practices in reality. She argued that otaku culture is not a homogenized globalization process, but “an iteration of localized practices that spread globally and create cultural conjunctures.” (p.155) She regarded 'doujinshi' and 'cosplay' as two migratory fan practices for observing the locality in fandom practices and argued that “the cultural dynamic of transmedia fan texts is not only given shape by these different language traditions, but also by the production of local meanings” (p.173). She found that there were indeed cultural differences between the practices of doujinshi and cosplay in Japan, America, and Europe. Doujinshi, for example, showed differences in how it embedded in local cultural industries. Japanese artists mostly generated derivative works, while European artists tended to cooperate with local industries, and American artists presented hybridity in their creation. Cosplay also showed differences in purpose. Japanese cosers were devoted to reproducing the image of the character, while European and American cosers mainly focused on self-exhibition. Otaku fan practices were, therefore, strongly embedded in local contexts.

To sum, existing otaku culture studies focused on different domains and left some gaps in the field. Many of them remained in the traditional perspective of cultural imperialism, which is regarded as insufficient for otaku studies. Some of the studies focused on the fan practices on the Internet, e.g. fanspeaks (Bloem, 2014), and the reaction between otaku communities and industries, e.g. fansubbing (Denison, 2011; Lee, 2011), yet their analysis regarded otaku as a single culture and did not explore the cultural differences under the concept of globalization. Lamerichs’s work (2013) presented a fine result from comparing the cultural differences of otaku culture in local practices. Nevertheless, she mainly focused on the practices in reality and abandoned the otaku practices on the Internet, which have become more and more important in the life of otaku culture. Otaku generate many activities on the net, like accessing anime (Kinsella, 1998), constructing networks with others (Ito, 2006), joining communities for translation and subbing (Bryce et al., 2010; Denison, 2011; Lee, 2011). Moreover, the Internet plays an important role in the globalization of otaku culture, e.g. fansubbing videos on the net. Since there are so many otaku activities progressing on the net and affecting the processes of globalization tremendously, the omission of the internet would be a huge deficiency for otaku studies. To fill the gap, this research intends to focus on the globalization of otaku culture based on their activity on the internet.

## **Research Framework**

The research purpose is to explore whether there are cultural differences, or glocalization, in otaku activities on the internet. To make a theoretical analysis, I introduce the concept of cultural distance. Cultural distance is originally a concept in business studies, referring to “the degree to which the cultural norms in one country are different from those in another country” (Morosini, Shane, and Singh, 1998, 139). I expect that cultural distance may affect the degree of glocalization: the greater the distance, the less affected by the Japanese original norm, and thus the more hybridization in the local practices of otaku culture. Through the study, the researcher will focus more precisely on the relationship between glocalization and the differences in the cultural norms.

To explore the cultural differences between different areas, the researcher intends to apply cross-sectional comparative analysis. Cultural distances and language barriers are treated as core factors that lead to cultural differences. By comparing the data from two countries, the researcher can obtain the differences among otaku practices in different cultures. Taiwan and the United States serve as the objects in the study. These countries have different cultural distances with Japanese culture, different extent of language barriers, and their own local contexts. These factors may lead to the different levels of glocalization during the diffusion of otaku culture. Through hybridization, the otaku cultures in different countries are expected to transform into mixed and unique styles.

Taiwan has been colonized by Japan for half a century and is strongly affected by Japanese culture, thus sharing a high cultural similarity or proximity with Japanese culture (Iwabuchi, 2006). Taiwan also has a high accessibility in language use: Mandarin, or Chinese, the main language used in Taiwan, shares a high similarity with Japanese. People who use Chinese as first language find it much easier to learn kanji, the Chinese characters in Japanese, than alphabet-based learners (Haththotuwa Gamage, 2003) so Taiwanese people confront fewer obstacles when accessing original otaku content. Moreover, as mentioned previously, Mandarin also serves as one of the main pathways for the diffusion of manga and anime (Cooper-Chen, 2011), making it easier for Taiwanese people to come into contact with original otaku content. Therefore, the researcher expects that Taiwanese otaku will perform in the way that is most similar to Japanese otaku. For instance, they may be able to replicate anime figures in the way that is most similar to original work. Nevertheless, Taiwanese otaku will still combine some local elements in their cultural practices. For example, the open atmosphere for political discussion facilitates Taiwanese otaku to combine derivative creations with political issues. The researcher expects that Taiwanese otaku will retain most of the elements of Japanese anime works but will apply them to local issues.

The United States, compared to Taiwan, has a greater cultural distance with Japan. However, Americans still hold some benefits in the diffusion of otaku culture. Though

the language barrier with Japanese is larger than the one between Chinese and Japanese, English plays a crucial role in the globalization process of otaku culture. On the one hand, English is also one of the main pathway languages for spreading manga and anime (Cooper-Chen, 2011), making it easier for English users to access otaku content in the version of their mother tongue. On the other hand, English is the dominant language in the online world, accounting for approximately 70% of the websites (Block, 2004), which makes otaku content spread widely and quickly in English. All these factors reveal that American otaku lie in an environment with a high cultural distance yet easy accessibility to otaku works due to the popularity of English. Moreover, American otaku may show strong glocalization in practices. The strong influence of American culture around the world may lead to a high tendency to mix Japanese anime and manga with their own culture. In the researcher's expectation, otaku culture in American style will prefer individual style works and be fond of genres with heroes, power, and muscle. Their derivative works will not be so similar to Japanese original works because of the addition of some American comic style. They may also present a popular but twisted image of Japanese culture due to the great cultural distance with Japan.

## **Methods**

This research uses qualitative methods. Two research methods, content analysis and interviews, are mainly used in the research. Content analysis is a research technique for “making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 2012, 403). There are three different types of content analysis: conventional, directed, and summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This research intends to use conventional content analysis as it is the fittest method for describing phenomenon and exploring objects that existing theory is limited in the field (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In this research, the researcher intends to focus on the genre and form of practices. The otaku content sources will be articles published on online discussion forums. The data for Taiwan will be taken mainly from a Bulletin Board System (BBS) called “PTT”: a board named “C-Chat” provides a platform for discussing otaku topics. The data for America will be taken from the popular online forum Reddit. These two websites are suitable for content analysis in this research for several reasons. Firstly, they are popular forums in Taiwan and in America. It is easier to collect plentiful data from different sources, making the analysis more representative. Secondly, the post structure is simple and informative in these forums, making the coding easier and more consistent. Both forums allow posters to select titles and thus the researcher can identify properties of articles easily. The replying threads are also concise that the two forums are actually in the same structure, which allows direct comparison. Lastly, the data from these forums is easy to preserve. Both forums provide time-lasting sites for each post and would



not easily diminish online. Overall, C-Chat and Reddit are ideal forums for content analysis because they are representative, comparative, and easily preserved.

In content analysis, the researcher will record the genre of the content, fanspeak used in the article, an explanation of the manga and anime works and the feedback from others as the dataset for analysis (see Appendix A for detailed content). Systematic sampling will serve as the sampling method in content analysis; the researcher will pick out samples per ten articles on the discussion boards. Analysis methods will be executed separately depending on the property of dataset. Quantitative analysis will provide some descriptive information for the data, like the tendency of the genre otaku consume. Narrative analysis will be used for qualitative data, like the content and feedbacks.

Interview is a method to collect data from respondents. There are three different forms of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). This research will use semi-structural form. Fixed questions allow the researcher to obtain basic information, like the way they make contact with and reproduce otaku culture, the genre they prefer, and their attitude toward the hybridized style fan arts. Also, there are open questions that allow the researcher to extend their responses to the domains that fixed questions do not talk about, which may enrich the findings and discover some aspects that researcher did not think of (see Appendix B for concrete question list and Appendix C for Chinese version). For the convenience and accessibility for collecting data, this research will mainly use online drives as the medium for interview. Online interviews allow the research to reach respondent without the limitation of time and space. Respondents can fill in the interview at any time and any place. Since both groups of respondent are far away from the researcher, online interview is the most ideal way to progress the research. There are two main ways to search for respondents. The first is from the online discussion forum mentioned previously; the researcher will post the interview format on popular forums, C-Chat, Reddit or Crunchyroll, or will pick up some active users on the otaku discussion boards and send them the interview format. The other method would be snowball sampling. Through being introduced by existing respondents from first method, the researcher can make contact with some otaku that are not easily found on the online space. Narrative analysis will serve as the analysis method for the interview data. By exploring the differences between content from different cultures, the researcher is able to unfold the local practices of otaku culture.

These two methods also serve as triangulation for checking the quality of measurement. By using content analysis, on the one hand, the researcher can understand how otaku present their cultural practices on the internet. Conducting interviews, on the other hand, allows the researcher to obtain more advanced information that is not shown

on the exterior of websites. Combining the results from these two methods, the researcher can form a comprehensive view of the online otaku activities and the differences among different cultures.

## Data and Descriptive Results

For the content analysis, the researcher picked posts from a three day interval on C-Chat in PTT (Taiwan) and /r/anime and /r/manga on Reddit (America) to reach samples that valid enough for analysis. The researcher collected 80 posts on C-Chat and 62 posts on Reddit; 2142 responses are recorded on C-Chat and 4171 responses are recorded on Reddit<sup>4</sup>.

In the analysis, there are several differences between posts on C-Chat and posts on Reddit: media source of the topic, language use, and fanspeak. First of all, regarding the media source of the topic, posts on C-Chat contain more types than Reddit does (See Figure 1 and 2). Due to the restricted segregation among different media, there is no post based for games on Reddit, which is the main source of posts on C-Chat. To make a further comparison, the researcher excluded posts for games on C-Chat and the result is shown in Figure 3. Figure 2 shows that anime accounts for most posts on Reddit; anime serves as the main channel for Western otaku to make contact with Japanese otaku culture. C-Chat, on the other hand, shows a more diverse composition event after excluding posts about games. Moreover, “media mix” accounts for 22%, which is far more than the 8% on Reddit. These graphs show that American people regard otaku content from different media separately, while Taiwanese people tend to treat otaku content in a universal way. It may represent the extent to which Japanese otaku culture has mixed with local culture. Further discussion on this will be in next section.

Secondly, there is also a difference in language use (See figure 4 and 5). On Reddit, most of the posts are in English or are translated into English; only 5% of the posts are in Japanese. 14% of posts on C-Chat, on the other hand, are in Japanese. Japanese is more acceptable as an otaku culture medium in Taiwan than in America. It reveals that, because of the closer distance to original Japanese culture, Taiwanese people indeed find it easier to access Japanese as medium language. It is worth noting that the “other” in C-Chat represents posts in Taiwanese. It suggests that Taiwanese otaku still retain some local elements in their otaku behaviors. This statement will be elaborated on further later.

Third is about fanspeak. In the research, fanspeak are defined as those terms which are usually only used between otaku. The proportion and frequency of fanspeak use would reveal to what extent otaku culture permeates into daily life. Fanspeak can be counted in two ways: item and number. Item represents how many kinds of fanspeak

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix D for rough data.

Figure 1. Media Source of the Topic on C-Chat

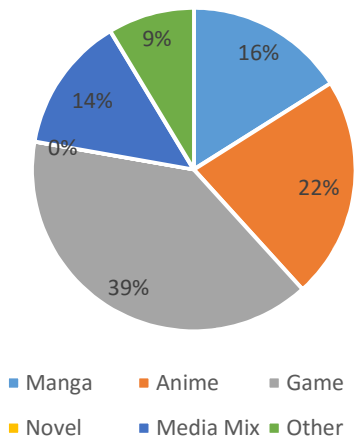


Figure 2. Media Source of the Topic on Reddit

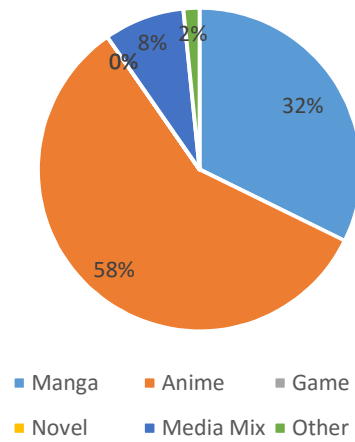


Figure 3. Media Source of the Topic on C-Chat (without game)

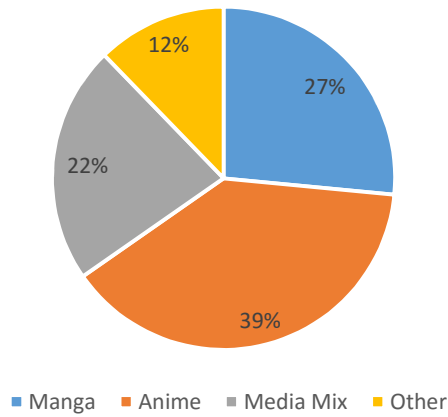


Figure 4. Language Use on C-Chat

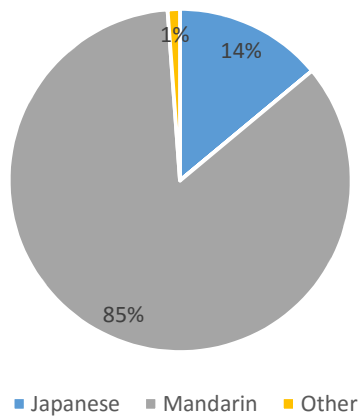
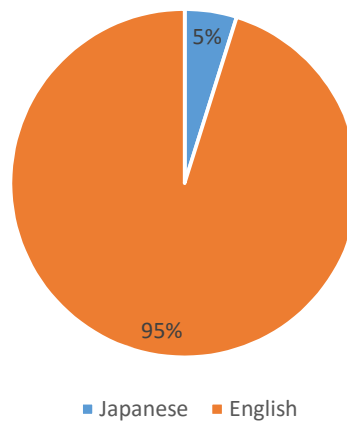


Figure 5. Language Use on Reddit



phrase are used in content. The more different kinds of fanspeak phrases are used, the larger the item. Number, on the other hand, refers to the total amount of fanspeak phrases. To count the proportion of fanspeak, the researcher regarded post as “contain fanspeak” if there are otaku phrases in the main posts or in the responses. In Figure 6 and 7, it is clear that posts on C-Chat account for a much higher proportion than posts on Reddit: 67% of the posts on C-Chat contain fanspeak. On the contrary, only 39% of the posts on Reddit contain fanspeak. To count the frequency, the researcher treated both main posts and responses as messages and combine them together. The results (See Table 1) show that C-Chat has both a higher proportion of articles with fanspeak and a higher density of fanspeak than Reddit users. Overall, Taiwanese people tended to use more fanspeak than American people did.

In sum, all the three analyses show that Taiwanese otaku are more engaged in otaku culture; the sources they intake are also more diverse than American otaku and may be closer to the way Japanese otaku behave.

For the online interview, there are 116 respondents for the Chinese version after excluding repeated, empty and unqualified<sup>5</sup> respondents. 89 are female, 26 are male, and one signed as “the third gender”. There are 50 respondents in the English version interviews, yet only half of the respondents are from America. To make the analysis more precise, the researcher divided respondents into two groups: one is people from the United States of America, the other is people from other areas. Both the “America” group and “other areas” group consist of 25 respondents; 16 are male and 9 are female in “America” group, while 21 are male and 4 are female in the “other areas” group. The precise data for gender and age distribution are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.<sup>6</sup>

Next, I will elaborate on the qualitative analysis results in four sections. The first section is about the power of globalization in the online otaku community and an elaboration on what is similar across all three of the groups. The remaining sections are related to glocalization and how otaku communities are embedded in local context and present their uniqueness depending on their cultural distance with Japanese culture. Three groups: Taiwanese otaku, American otaku, and otaku from other areas will be elaborated separately.

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<sup>5</sup> Unqualified respondents: respondents that are not from Taiwan. For example, people from China or Hong Kong.

<sup>6</sup> The rough data for both respondents in Chinese version and in English version are attached in Appendix D.

Figure 6. Proportion of Articles with Fanspeak on C-Chat

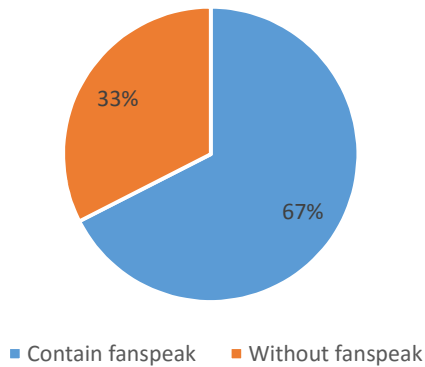
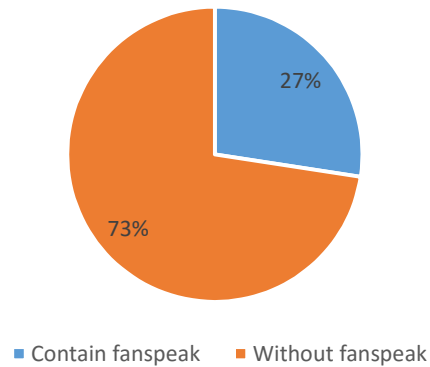


Figure 7. Proportion of Articles with Fanspeak on Reddit



	C-Chat	Reddit
Average Item (per article)	1.225	0.581
Average Number (per article)	3.7	2.468
Average Item (per message)	0.044	0.009
Average Number (permessage)	0.133	0.036

Table 1. The frequency of fanspeak on C-Chat and Reddit

Gender	Taiwan	USA	Other	Age	Taiwan	USA	Other
Male	26	16	21	10-15	0	0	2
Female	89	9	4	16-20	38	9	8
Other	1	0	0	21-25	57	10	9
				26-30	13	3	5
				31-35	5	1	1
				36-40	3	0	0
				Other	0	2	0

Table 2. The gender distribution of interview respondents

Table 3. The age distribution of interview respondents

## Internet: the Power of Globalization?

The power of globalization presents in several dimensions in online otaku behaviors; all three groups of respondent shared these behaviors and experiences. First is the dominant power of Japanese anime and manga; second is the similar pattern for making contact with anime and manga; the last is the negative prejudices and stigmas toward otaku communities.

Japanese manga and anime take a dominant proportion in otaku's entertaining consumption around the world. 80-99% of the consumption are Japanese manga and anime in Taiwan, America and other areas. Many respondents even said that they did not watch cartoons or comics which are not from Japan.

*日本有 90%以上 在地創作不到 5% (Taiwan, No.29)*

*Japan[ese manga and anime] accounts over 90%, local creation is less than 5%.*

*(Taiwan, No.29)*

*Overwhelming majority is from Japan, with some from Korea; only one American comic series (The Sandman) (America, No.4)*

*I rarely read comics and I watch some local shows, like Steven Universe. But 99% of the anime and manga I look at is from Japan. (Other areas (from Canada),*

*No.23)*

Although the resources of the remaining parts may differ from group to group, it is no doubt that Japanese manga and anime have a dominant position in the manga and anime market. Here, globalization plays an important role in the diffusion of otaku culture as, no matter how far the cultural distance is from Japanese culture, manga and anime take a dominant place in otaku's entertainment consumption.

Otaku around the world also share a similar life pattern in making contact with manga and anime. In most cases, respondents made contact with manga or anime at a very young age, which is around elementary school or even kindergarten. Also, there are similar patterns for the transformation of acquisition media. Many respondents watched anime on television when they were in childhood, and engaged more into otaku and anime through using computers and internet. Manga reading is also alike: respondents contacted with manga in the form of books or magazines from bookstores, libraries or book fairs. Recently, respondents tended to read manga through online platforms or applications.

*早年藉由海報、電視廣告和同學的文具書包。網路發達之後大部分是從社群網站粉絲頁(Facebook、噗浪等)、大眾論壇(如已經關閉的台灣論壇)、網友的貼文以及動畫公司官網 (Taiwan, No.1)*

*In early childhood I usually obtained otaku information from posters, TV commercials and classmates' bag and stationery. In the internet era I usually obtain information from social networking sites (Facebook, plurk, etc.), forums (e.g. closed*

*TWBBS), posts from netizens and official sites of anime companies. (Taiwan,  
No.1)*

*A friend in primary school lent me a manga book and from there I started going  
to public libraries to read manga. Later in high school is when I started watching  
anime on the internet. (America, No.3)*

Though the actual patterns differ from person to person depending on their personal experiences, the macro patterns are still quite similar between the three groups. Otaku in the three groups have a similar way of coming into contact with anime and manga and find manga and anime resources via the internet after the popularization of the internet. This also shows that the internet has indeed become a crucial channel for otaku to obtain manga and anime related information.

Last is about the stigma toward otaku communities and how it affects the way otaku interact with mainstream society. Previous studies claimed that Western society had a positive image toward otaku, while East Asian society holds a negative view toward them. Newitz (1994) argued that “In Japan, the term otaku is a kind of insult... In America, fans of Japanese animation often call themselves otaku with pride... in order to affiliate themselves with anime fan culture, American fans are calling themselves by a name the Japanese use as an insult” (p.1). Lamerichs (2013) also claims that “in Western countries the term has been introduced to connote a more positive identity: the cult-fan interested in Japanese content” (p.156). It seems that otaku has a neutral or even positive image in Western society and the insult toward otaku is a localized phenomenon in Japan.

However, this is not the case in online otaku communities. All three otaku groups, including Taiwanese, American, and otaku from other areas, are facing the negative prejudices and stigmas to some degree. In Taiwan, the stigmas toward otaku have been a prolonged issue to deal with for the Taiwanese otaku community. Otaku is often linked with negative traits like “staying at home”, “not good at social interaction” or “dressing messily”. Otaku is sometimes even linked to crime or pornography (Wu, 2015). Western otaku, on the other hand, are accused of being “weeboo”, which refers to people who are manic toward Japanese anime and manga.

*In real life there's the stigma, at least in the US where I live, that's associated  
with watching manga and anime, which is mainly the weeabo stigma (America,  
No.8)*

The prevalence of stigmas reveals the effects of globalization that not only cultural products themselves spread around the world, it also spreads concepts and prejudices that are originally restricted in certain area.

How otaku communities confront and deal with these stigmas will be one of the main concerns in my research. Before showing the analysis results, it is needed to clarify how to define or conceptualize “online community” or “virtual community” and to elaborate on how these concepts relate to otaku’s actions or responses to mainstream society. Virtual community, or internet studies, has become a popular topic in contemporary sociological studies, yet the vagueness and broadness of the online community makes it hard to even conceptualize the word. To make the term “virtual community” more applicable and valid, de Koster (2010) argued that internet studies should not stick to identifying whether an online space is qualified to be called a “community”, but to study how specific forms of “togetherness” are shaped in specific contexts. He also argued that it is important to explore the interrelationship of online and offline interactions and experiences in internet study. For him, internet studies cannot omit the relationship with real life.

Along with this framework, it is crucial to put social context into account when discussing online otaku behaviors. The difference between online and offline behaviors provides a good example for this. Many respondents in all three groups behave differently between online and offline world. In online forum, they speak out loud about their love toward anime and manga and discuss those works enthusiastically, while in the offline world they will be more cautious talking about otaku topics.

*anime/manga is stigmatized, I would only talk about it to other fans or close friends (Other areas (from Ireland), No.5)*

The offline social context, namely negative stereotypes toward otaku, have led them to only express themselves on the internet. The offline context will indeed affect online behaviors on a global scale.

This framework can also be applied to the discussion about stigmas toward otaku community in different areas, that to what extent those negative labels are related to local context and cultural distance with Japanese culture. To explore them independently, the researcher divided each group into a single section and showed how otaku in different areas behave differently both online and in real-life, and how local contexts and cultural distance can explain such differences.



## Taiwanese Otaku: Highly Influenced Culture and Strong Identity

Taiwanese otaku presented in a way both reveal how they are deeply influenced by Japanese otaku culture and how they act under unique local contexts. There are several dimensions in this section: how Taiwanese otaku behave in daily life, how they confront prejudices and stigmas, and how they regard local manga and anime industries in the view of nationalism.

It is no doubt that Japanese culture, and otaku culture of course, deeply permeate into Taiwanese otaku's daily life. Social networks are deeply engaged in the process that Taiwanese otaku attach and obtain manga and anime information. Brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, and even parents would be the source for providing and discussing manga and anime information. Social networking is still crucial even in the internet era that not only people around otaku but also people on the internet play a role in otaku's daily life. Social network sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter and Plurk have become important sources for obtaining otaku related information. Some people even obtain first-hand information from people related to anime or manga industries directly via Twitter. Forums like PTT are also crucial. It is clear that social networks, no matter in real life or in virtual world, play an important role in Taiwanese otaku activities.

Taiwanese otaku's daily behaviors and speaking styles are also deeply influenced by Japanese otaku culture. Though it is not universal, some otaku are able to “recognize” their affinity by fanspeak as the phrases and the words in conversation could be the mark of being an otaku. Furthermore, some fanspeak in otaku culture even spreads back to mainstream society and those people who are not fond of anime and manga can also understand some otaku fanspeak and may even apply them in daily life. It reveals that Japanese otaku culture has a strong influence on Taiwanese society.

*...網路上則可以看個人用語，但發現近幾年網路資訊流通快速，很多在 ACG 圈內的用語會很快薰染到一般大眾之間 (Taiwan, No.112)*

*... I can recognize otaku through personal terms on the internet, but I discovered that recently information circulates so fast that the terms between otaku will spread to the public rapidly. (Taiwan, No.112)*

Another way to reveal the closeness between Taiwanese otaku culture and Japanese otaku culture is how they judge fan arts. Lamerichs (2013) claimed that Japanese otaku hold a different criteria with Western otaku toward cosplay. While Western otaku focus on the self-expression in cosplay, Japanese otaku regard cosplay as “modelling of the character” and have a more strict view toward cosplay exhibition. Following this

statement, the aesthetic view toward fan arts in Taiwan may to some extent be affected by original Japanese otaku culture. In other words, Taiwanese otaku held a higher criteria and tougher view toward fan arts and their style. In the online interview, for instance, the opinions toward fan art pictures are highly divided. Some people praised the cuteness and delicateness of picture B. and C., yet there are many people who disliked these fan arts because of the poor drawing skill (B.) and strange art style (C.). Many respondents only noted that this fan art “is not their taste”, which reveals that there is an ideal art style in their mind and that they will not accept an art style that is away from the criteria. For them, there is an original image for those characters and fan art creators should not twist it. This is similar to the Japanese criteria toward cosplay reveals a culture closeness with Japanese otaku culture.

The culture closeness also relates to the second issue: the stigmas and prejudices toward otaku and how the otaku community reacts to them. Taiwanese society, as Japanese society does, holds some negative images toward otaku, regarding them as withdrawn, disgusting, or even criminal. Furthermore, the way Taiwanese society regards otaku is similar to the condition in Japan. The stigmas toward otaku are multi-dimensional; otaku is linked to abnormal pornography toward 2-D figures (Huang, 2010), inability of social interaction, and crime (Wu, 2015). The close cultural distance between Japan and Taiwan to some extent leads to the resemblance of negative labels toward otaku.

Confronting such prejudices has become one of the main concern for otaku and how otaku react to those stigmas may also reveal how local context plays a role in otaku behaviors. In the interviews, many respondents tended to suppress themselves when facing social pressures. They tried not to look like an otaku, or initially dressed up to avoid the drabbed stereotype image of otaku. Some respondents regarded the phrase “otaku” itself a symbol of discrimination and attack this word and people who use it to refer to anime and manga fans.

*算我，拜託。別再，他媽的，說「御宅族」了。這是歧視、貶抑。不管是  
有心無心，都請記得以後不要再隨意使用這種形容詞。(Taiwan, No.61)*

*Please, do not say fucking “otaku” again. This is discrimination and belittling. No  
matter if it is accidental or intentional, please remember not to use this adjective  
at will again. (Taiwan, No.61)*

Nevertheless, there is another way to deal with stigmas for Taiwanese otaku: group identity. Taiwanese otaku tended to regard them as a community and some otaku showed a tendency to be proud of their subculture and made a distinction between in-

group and out-group people.

我是御宅我自豪 (Taiwan, No.24)

*I'm proud of being an otaku (Taiwan, No.24)*

讓非御宅一知半解的學到我個人會很不爽 (Taiwan, No.25)

*I'd be very pissed if someone with superficial knowledge about otaku learned the fanspeak. (Taiwan, No.25)*

The group identity is clear among Taiwanese otaku. Even those people who stated that other otaku should “constrain themselves” argued for “not ruining our reputation” rather than cutting them out of otaku groups.

喜愛動漫身為御宅不是罪 但是還是希望部分的人能更克制自己 (Taiwan, No.48)

*It's not a sin to be fond of anime and manga and being an otaku, but I still hope some people will constrain themselves. (Taiwan, No.48)*

It shows that Taiwanese otaku indeed hold a community identity as people who are in the community would be proud of its value, defend attacks from society, and care about the reputation of the community.

The tendency for community identity is also shown in another aspect. Taiwanese otaku are concerned about the development of Taiwanese manga and anime industries. When comparing Japanese anime and manga to Taiwanese ones, they tend to point out the deficiencies and problems of Taiwanese anime and manga industries, which sometimes expresses a care about the development of local anime and manga. Some respondents even blame government for doing too little to help local anime and manga industries.

出版社的商業投資也都還太少，能見度非常低 (Taiwan, No.23)

*The commercial investments from presses are too scarce, leading to low exposure to the public. (Taiwan, No.23)*

日本比較重視這整個產業，不像臺灣政府基本都不重視 (Taiwan, No. 16)

*The Japan[ese government] pays more attention on the whole to industries,  
while the Taiwanese government basically does not care about it. (Taiwan,  
No.16)*

Taiwanese otaku, therefore, hold a national identity in discussions about anime and manga. It is, again, related to local context in Taiwan. The complicated and suppressed international position of Taiwan make Taiwanese otaku more concerned about Taiwan as a whole and compare Taiwan with Japan on a national scale. The context in real life affects Taiwanese otaku's view and behavior in the online world.

Moreover, Taiwanese otaku are fond of works with local elements. In the online interview, though some respondents dislike the political meaning in picture A., most respondents hold positive views, regarding it funny to combine current events and political figures into fan art creation.

*台灣人對於日本動漫很熟悉並且會用在政治人物身上很有趣 (Taiwan,  
No.36)*

*It's interesting to see Taiwanese people familiar with Japanese manga and anime  
apply them to politicians. (Taiwan, No.36)*

It reveals a local concern, showing that even though Japanese anime and manga are dominant in the market, local elements are still appeal to Taiwanese otaku to some extent.

In sum, though Taiwanese otaku are strongly influenced by Japanese culture due to the closeness of cultural distance, they still present some localized styles. They have intense social network for sharing information, and present community identity when facing stigmas. Moreover, they still attach to local culture elements and trying to combine them into fan arts. The effect of close cultural distance and local context are simultaneously presented in Taiwanese otaku's online behaviors and create a hybridization in Taiwanese otaku culture.

### **American Otaku: Low Permeation and Individualistic Community**

Unlike Taiwanese otaku, American otaku have a greater cultural distance with Japanese otaku culture, allowing more space for original culture. The researcher will elaborate on the behavior of American otaku in several dimensions: the extent otaku culture permeates into American otaku, the hybridization in American otaku behaviors, and how they face the “weeboo” stigma.

There is a great cultural distance between American pop culture, e.g. Hollywood movies, and Japanese otaku culture. The censorship toward sex, for instance, reveals how different Japanese culture and American culture is. While American culture has a strict censorship toward sexual scenes, Japanese culture holds a more open attitude toward this:

*In Japan sex or sexy scenes (sexual innuendos, jokes, etc.) aren't as censored in normal manga / anime scenarios as they would be in America (America, No. 3)*

*Manga and anime doesn't have the same social constraints that many shows and movies have in America. That is to say, nudity, death, homosexuality. (America, No. 6)*

The great differences between these two cultures makes respondents from America pay more attention to culture as a whole rather than focusing on national industries. When comparing anime and manga with American cartoons and comics, they mainly focus on the targeted audience, the structure and issue of the works, and the institution of industries. This is fundamentally different from the way Taiwanese otaku are concerned about their relationship with Japanese otaku culture.

The greater cultural distance with Japanese otaku culture leads to a lower permeation in American otaku's life. One of the results is the lower ability to recognize affinity in daily life. Unlike Taiwanese otaku, American otaku usually recognize other otaku by their clothes, decoration or discussion content rather than fanspeak; the content analysis also reveals a lower frequency of fanspeak use. Some American otaku cannot even understand the meaning of some fanspeak. For instance, in content analysis texture Amre-05, some people on Reddit could not understand what "NTR" means and had to ask others in the post. The diversity in fan activities is another example for the differences between American and Japanese otaku culture. American otaku tend to attend to more variety of activities, including scanlation, website management, and cosplaying; derivative works like novel or fan-made manga take relative small proportions in their activities. This result corresponds to Lamerichs's research (2013) that fan-made comics are not so prevalent in American anime conventions. Overall, otaku culture is not permeated in American otaku's daily life, and this allows local context to engage in their behavior more.

One thing worth noting is that American otaku obviously prefer Japanese otaku culture to their local one. In this research framework I expected that American otaku's preference will be affected by their public taste, yet they have a broad preference to many different genres, showing that they do not have a tendency toward their original

culture explicitly. Moreover, they even have more positive view toward Japanese manga and anime than American cartoons and comics. Many of them regarded Japanese manga and anime as more open to different audiences, some of them are even fully engaged into otaku world and have little contact with their original culture.

*No. I don't read American comics (America, No.1)*

*Eh, I'm pretty isolated from American pop culture... (America, No.9)*

Therefore, American otaku is relatively far away from their original culture and tend to embrace Japanese otaku culture, which is more distinct from their own.

That is not to say that there is no glocalization in American otaku culture. On the contrary, the hybridizations of American culture and Japanese otaku culture present in many places, but in more implicit ways. First of all, American otaku present some extent of individualistic beliefs that may be called the “American dream” in their attitude toward fan arts. The “American dream” refers to a belief that everyone can be successful through hard work, energy, and optimistic expectations (Moen and Roehling, 2005). This belief is to some extent presented in their opinions toward fan arts as they hold a positive view toward fan arts and believe that no matter what the fan arts look like, their hard work, high skills and passion should be encouraged and respected.

*They each must have taken some effort to make/create, so I appreciate the creativity spent on these works. (America, No.12)*

*All three works show that the creators are passionate about the original series, which is most important to me (America, No.4)*

Another explanation is that they treat fan art as the way people express themselves. Lamerichs (2013) argued that Western otaku usually regard cosplay as a way for self-expression and they may hold the same view toward fan arts and be positive to all fan art works. Both explanations reveal that due to the greater cultural distance, it is mainly local contexts that determine the way American otaku treat fan arts.

This individualistic view also leads to a low community identity in online world; they may treat themselves as individuals rather than members of an online community. Moreover, the English-speaking online condition is less likely to form a single community. Since English is the dominant language in the online world (Block, 2004), those

popular online forums, like Reddit or 4chan, will not be for Americans only. The interview data, as mentioned in the descriptive section, shows that many people are from Europe, Latin American, and even Asia. The data from content analysis also shows that there are some posters who are not from America. Under this condition, it is less likely for American otaku to form a community under the same national identity.

Nevertheless, cultural distance and local contexts also have influence on the other side of otaku activities. As mentioned previously, stigmas toward otaku becomes a universal phenomenon. In the Western world, this stigma is shown in the name of “weeboo”, which regards over-enthusiastic otaku as weird, crazy people. Here, cultural distance may play a role in the property of stigma. Unlike stigmas in Taiwan and Japan, the “weeboo” stigma presents in a more single dimensional way that links less to other negative traits like social phobia or crime. A greater cultural distance with Japanese culture may result in the different form of stigmas.

The individualistic perspective leads American otaku to deal with such stigmas in different ways to what Taiwanese otaku do. Because of the lack of community identity, American otaku do not fight for otaku’s reputation in a whole when facing stigmas or negative stereotypes, but more tend to deny the stigmas on themselves. They will even blame “weeboo” together, accusing those who are crazy to anime and manga for downgrading their reputation:

*People who only wear anime paraphenelia or constantly spout otaku nonsense are disgusting. (America, No.5)*

*I'm against showing off anime/manga pride. It just comes off as obnoxious and people will make shitty assumptions about us (America, No.9)*

Of course there are still some respondents trying to fight back such stigmas, yet they tend to argue the existence of mania fans in mainstream culture rather than defend for otaku as a whole. The group identity among American otaku is still absent.

Other aspects in American culture also affect the way American otaku deal with stigmas. The rational and managing tendency leads to a discourse that stresses anime and manga as “manageable” hobbies. They claim that otaku activities are just parts of their life, or as a way to escape from reality, and will not fully engage in it. Moreover, some people regard otaku or weeboo as people who cannot “control” or “manage” this hobby well:

*Most people my age who have functional lives don't wallow in anime, but just*

*appreciate it as part of a "balanced diet." (America, No.19)*

*There's a difference between otaku and anime/manga fan! Otakus are basically losers that make it their whole lives, while anime/manga fans keep it healthy.*

*(America, No.11)*

As respondent No.11 said, many American respondents intended to prove that they are “normal” and “healthy” by showing that they have a good control for the intake of anime and manga. Those who cannot control themselves and wholly embrace anime and manga will even be regarded as “losers”. Rather than fighting against stigmas, they did not challenge these stigmas and tried to behave in a way that fits into the mainstream standards.

Overall, American otaku present glocalization behaviors due to the longer cultural distance with original Japanese otaku culture. It mainly revealed in individualistic traits, e.g. the positive attitude for hard work and having a passion, the lack of community identity in online interaction, and the belief of personal balanced life image. The universal property of online forums also prevents them from constructing a strong identity as Taiwanese otaku do and shifts the stigmatized blame to manic fans rather than fighting back.

### **Otaku from Other Areas: Mix of American Style and Local Contexts**

Otaku from other areas show a mixture of features with American otaku. Since otaku in this group mostly act in the same online space with American otaku, they share similar traits on specific dimensions with American otaku. First, they are also in a low Japanese otaku culture permeated environment. For some of the respondents the permeation is even lower than American environment as it is hard for them to find an affinity in real life. The result of low permeation is also similar to American otaku. Otaku from other areas can recognize other otaku mostly from explicit features, like clothing, accessories or discussion contents.

Otaku from other areas also have similar tendency in cultural comparison with American otaku. They prefer Japanese manga and anime to their local ones, arguing that manga and anime have broader genre and are suitable for different kinds of people.

*Local comics and animation seem to have a more specific target audience in mind: children, fans of police stories, world travel adventurers, etc. Manga and anime from Japan tend to have a broader audience (Other areas (from Belgium),*

*No.14)*



It shows that when talks about cultural comparisons and permeation in real life, there is not much difference between otaku from other areas and American otaku.

The second aspect is that otaku from other areas hold similar attitudes about stigmas. Like American otaku, they also hold a negative view toward “weeboo”, regarding those who show their enthusiasm in real life as “stupid” and “losers”.

*...it was unpleasant, so many losers who ought to do something better with their life are wasting time lusting after 2d wifus (Other areas (from South Asia), No.11)*

*In internet people actually talk anime or manga, in real life they are just stupid (Other areas (from Argentina), No.21)*

Here, cultural distance plays a role as a reason for stigmas. Some respondents claimed that Japanese is so different from their native language that it is weird to mix Japanese into their speeches. The great cultural distance lead to the distinctness of using fanspeak and to some extent strengthened the stigmas.

*I witnessed what happened when you use small Japanese phrases in normal conversations. Weird, almost disgusted looks and confusion (Other areas (from Germany), No.13)*

It is worth noting that there are respondents from Asia, which suggests that those stigmas toward otaku in Asia may spread to popular Western online forums through this channel.

Also, the issue related to stigmas uncovers some differences between American otaku and otaku from other areas. Unlike how American otaku mainly focus on the mania of “weeboo”, otaku from other areas have broader negative images toward stigmatized otaku culture. For otaku from other areas, the phrase “otaku” contains more negative meanings as both “otaku” and “weeboo” can refer to the manic fans of anime and manga. It is presented in a way as a mixture of the American and Asian view toward otaku culture. Another thing is that Australia seems to be an exception from negative stigma toward otaku, or at least not severe enough to suppress otaku’s expression. These differences present how glocalization works depending on different local culture.

*...People dont really hide it in Australia. ... People dont really think about it negatively here since everyone grew up watching pokemon, yugioh, etc. (Other areas (from Australia), No.21)*

There are other dimensions that tell American otaku and otaku from other areas apart. For instance, otaku from other areas are not as friendly as American otaku are toward fan arts. They judge fan arts in a more strict way and criticize those works if they want.

Overall, otaku from other areas present a mixture of American otaku style and local context. They hold a similarly negative attitude toward so-called “weeboo”, have low permeation of Japanese otaku culture, and more highly grade manga and anime than original culture. Still, there are some differences with American culture. They have more diverse concepts about “weeboo” and “otaku”, and they hold a quite different criteria toward fan arts. Since this group contains people around the world, it is reasonable that respondents behave in such a diverse way.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

There are two main dimensions in this research. First is the power of globalization, showing how Japanese manga and anime spread around the world. The second is how cultural distance and local context affect otaku behavior and community in different areas. The research shows that both globalization and glocalization exist, and cultural distance indeed plays a role in shaping the way otaku behave.

Japanese anime and manga show a strong trend of globalization. Manga and anime take the dominant position in entertainment consumption of all three groups. Otaku around the world also share a similar pattern in how they make contact with manga and anime. Most people start to watch anime and read manga at an early age, showing a long-term effect in life. Globalization also led to negative views or stigmas toward otaku, which were originally restricted in Asian areas. These stigmas spread to the West and became a global phenomenon. Otaku around the world therefore present different behaviors between the online and offline world and tend to suppress their otaku hobby in real life. Online communities serve as the place that allow otaku to express themselves and become shelters for them all over the world.

Still, the process of glocalization can be found in local practices. Two dimensions affect the way otaku localize their practices. The first is cultural distance. The distance with Japanese culture results in a different extent of permeation in local culture. It affects how easy otaku can obtain otaku related information or cues in daily life. It also affects the content of stigmas. The Taiwanese group has stigmas in multiple dimensions, which is closer to Japanese society. The one with a greater distance, on the other hand,

presents fewer elements similar to Japanese society. Of course, this division is not absolute and we can still find stigmas about social position in the American group, but the main issue of stigmas in society reveals the overall image or stereotype about otaku.

Secondly, otaku practices are embedded in local contexts in many ways. One way otaku presented their local uniqueness is identity, including both otaku identity and national identity. Identity is the way people classify the relationships between themselves and other people. In other words, it is “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, 21). Identity, therefore, is objectively constructed by people. Castells (2011) argued that identity is “people’s source of meaning and experience” (p.6) and constructed through the process of individuation. How people construct their identity would be a crucial issue in sociological studies. Many researchers regarded drawing boundary between self and ‘other’ as an important feature of identity. Edensor (2002) claimed that people will distinguish themselves and others at both a collective and individual level. Identity is a process that continuously remade an ‘internal–external dialectic’ between self-definition and ascription by others. Hall and Du Gay also proposed the production of an “outside” that identity operates “through exclusion, through the discursive construction of a constitutive outside” (p.15). People distinguish others into many different social categories, depending on prototypical characteristics or schemas (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). They also exploit elements like historical roots, cultural traditions or popular symbolic images (Edensor, 2002). Through distinguishing those ‘key’ cultural similarities and differences in cultural practices, people acknowledge their belongings and their relationship with the outside world.

Taiwanese otaku present a strong community identity since their behaviors fit in the discussion above. They drew a line between otaku and non-otaku depending on common elements like fanspeak, anime knowledge, clothes and so on. It is clear that there is a boundary to identify “otaku” as a group out of others and mainstream society. The reason why Taiwanese otaku constructed such identity is partly because of the prejudices and stigmas from mainstream society. Castells (2011) proposed that different conditions will lead to different identities and generate different forms of society. Resistance identity, for instance, is generated by those social actors who are under oppression or in devalued positions and therefore construct the identity that opposes the dominant values in society. Resistance identity will lead to the formation of communities, constructing from a collective resistance against the huge pressure from society. These statements can explain why Taiwanese otaku construct the “otaku” identity. Taiwanese otaku faced long-term stigmas and pressure from mainstream society allowing the formation of a collective identity for resistance, namely otaku identity. National identity is the same thing: Taiwanese otaku imagine Taiwan society as a unity and constructed antagonism between Japanese anime and manga industries and Taiwanese ones. Since

Taiwan was oppressed in international society, Taiwanese otaku may be more aware about the image of Taiwan on a national scale. Both otaku identity and national identity show that local context affect otaku's behaviors and practices. The long-term prejudice environment generate the collective resistance identity, while the oppressed, unclear international position leads to the tendency to focus on national development.

American otaku, on the other hand, show strong approval to personal hard work, passionate and skills. This individualistic tendency is also shown in their attitude toward stigmas. They did not regard otaku as the same community and tend to hide away from stigmas or even blame other "weeboo" together. They still present some kind of boundary in their view, yet unlike resistance group identity, their boundaries are drawn between themselves and "weeboo" or "otaku" and there is a lack of a collective identity as a whole. American otaku also held a rational view that life and hobby should be managed; this attitude affects how they regard their manga and anime hobby as well. Lastly, when comparing local pop culture with Japanese otaku culture, American otaku more focus on cultural level and lack of national identity. The more diverse online environment in the English-speaking world and individualistic culture leads to cultural practices that are not present in the Taiwanese otaku community.

Otaku from other areas, lastly, present many similarity with American otaku. For instance, they hold the same attitude toward stigmas. Nevertheless, there are still some differences between each other, showing that local context and hybridization are still present in this group.

Hence, the globalization process of otaku culture show homogeneity as well as heterogeneity. This fits in the prediction of the research, showing that globalization should not be regarded as single, steady process, but a dynamic process that keeps mixing elements from different cultures. Only making these factors clear provides a more comprehensive understanding of the institution of globalization.

## **Further Discussion**

There may be limitations in this research that need further exploration. Firstly, due to technical restriction, the sample of content analysis from C-Chat and Reddit are not in the same period. The samples from C-Chat were gathered in the middle of anime season, while the samples from Reddit were from the end of anime season. Since there are different discussion densities between the time in the middle of anime seasons and in the end of anime seasons, some items in measurement, like the proportion of anime discussion, may be biased for this time gap. Still, those important properties, e.g. the density of fanspeak, the proportion of language use, will not be strongly affected, therefore the descriptive results are still creditable.

Secondly, the relationship between cultural distance and otaku's attitude toward

stigmas needs further exploration. Though I clarify the relationship between cultural distance and the form of stigmas, the link between cultural distance and otaku's reaction toward stigmas is not completely clear and I have to explain the differences mainly through the existence of local contexts. Cultural distance may still work in this relationship, yet the existing data is hard to conclude strongly in this way. Further research is needed to clarify the relationship between cultural distance and otaku's reaction toward stigmas.

Lastly, the diversity in otaku from other areas also needs further research. The opinions toward the phrase "otaku" reveal that there may be diversity among otaku from different regions. Otaku from Latin America may hold a different attitude with otaku from European or South Asia. However, the related data is so scarce that it is hard to carry out a detailed analysis in this research. To explore this issue further, research in the future may focus on specific regions and analyze what factors determine the way otaku localized their practices. Through concise studies region by region, researchers could obtain a more comprehensive view about how otaku culture globalized, how cultural distance will affect the way people perceive manga and anime, and how otaku in different areas specialize this foreign culture in their own way

## **Appendix A: Coding book for content analysis**

### The type of texture

- Chat and discussion
- Information
- Creation
- Live
- News
- Popularization
- Other activities

### The media of the work in topics

- Manga
- Anime
- Other

### The source of the work in texture

- Japanese
- English
- Mandarin
- Dutch
- Other

### The genre of the work in topics

- Shōnen (juvenile)
- Shōjo (maiden)
- BL (boys' love)
- GL (girls' love)
- Other

### Fanspeak use

- Yes (record the way of use and frequency)
- No

### Explanation to manga and anime works

### Feedbacks from others

- Positive
- Negative
- Debate
- Narrative content of the feedback

## Appendix B: Interview Format (English Version)

Hello, I am Kuei-Chuan Liu, a master student in Tilburg University, Netherlands. This interview is aimed at studying how manga and anime fans behave on the internet. Please fill in the interview as concisely as possible. This interview is only for academic use and will not reveal the identity of respondents at any time. Thank you for your participation!

1. Rate a score for the extent in which you engage in manga and anime. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Please describe, when and how did you first come into contact with manga or anime?
3. Where do you obtain otaku information (including manga, anime, discussion, and derivative works) at the moment?
4. What type of manga or anime you prefer? Why?
5. What proportion of manga and anime you read is from Japan? And what proportion is local ones?
6. Do you perceive any differences between Japanese and local manga and anime? Please describe how they differ according to you?
7. Can you recognize other otaku in your country (online or in reality)? How can you recognize other otaku?
8. Could you describe the difference between the content in manga and anime and typical American popular culture in your country?
9. Will you apply knowledge and typical phrases from manga and anime in your daily life? If you do, how and why? Please give some examples.
10. Do you have activities that are related to otaku on the internet? If you do, please describe them.
11. How do you interact with other otaku on the Internet?
12. How do you engage in the online otaku communities?
13. What is the difference between otaku activity online and in real-life?
14. Are you enthusiastic about talking about your favorite manga and anime in real-life? Why and how?
15. Have you been into contact with original Japanese otaku culture (online or in reality)? If yes, was it like you expected it to be?
16. Below there are some derivative works. How do you feel about these derivative works? Please describe how you feel about them and why.



A.

Source: Retrieved 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015, from <http://tinyurl.com/jj56rqf>



B.

Source: Retrieved 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015, from <http://foxlett.deviantart.com/art/Shippo-587239711>



C.

Source: Retrieved 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015, from <http://shira-hedgie.deviantart.com/art/OPM-unwanted-curse-587425949>

17. Do you sometimes create derivative works on the Internet? What type of creation you prefer to make?
18. You can write your opinion about manga, anime, and otaku culture here if it is not mentioned above.
19. What is your gender? Male Female Other: \_\_\_\_\_
20. What is your age? 10-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
21. Lastly, where are you come from? The United States of America Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C: Interview Format (Chinese Version)

您好，我是荷蘭蒂爾堡大學的社會所碩士生劉貴全。本訪談旨在了解動漫迷的線上行為。請依照您的經驗盡可能詳細填答問題。本訪談僅作為學術用途，不會公布填答者身分，敬請放心填答。謝謝您的參與！

1. 請填寫您的性別。男 女 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
2. 請填寫您的年齡。10-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 35-40, 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
3. 請為自己涉入動漫的程度評分。1 2 3 4 5
4. 請描述您是何時以及如何接觸漫畫或動畫的呢？
5. 您是從哪裡取得動漫資訊(包含動畫、漫畫、相關討論、以及同人作品)的呢？
6. 您喜歡哪種類型的動漫？為什麼？
7. 你所接觸的動漫有多少比例是來自日本？又有多少是來自在地創作呢？
8. 本土的動漫和日本動漫間有什麼差別嗎？
9. 你可以辨認出其他御宅族嗎(無論網上或現實中)？可以的話是怎麼做到的？
10. 動漫作品中有哪些是和台灣本土文化不同的地方呢？
11. 您會將在動漫或御宅文化中學到的知識或單詞應用在日常生活中嗎？如果有，是怎麼使用的？請舉例。
12. 您在網路上有任何和御宅族有關的活動嗎？如果有，請詳列出來。
13. 您在網路上如何和其他御宅族互動？
14. 您如何投入線上的御宅社群？
15. 您在線上和現實生活中的御宅相關行為有什麼不一樣的地方嗎？
16. 您會熱情於推廣宅物嗎？為什麼？如果是的話，又怎麼做？
17. 您在網路上有同人作品嗎？您傾向用怎樣的方法進行同人創作？
18. 您曾經接觸日本的御宅族嗎(不論是在線上或是現實生活中)？如果有，他們和您的預期有什麼不同？
19. 以下是一些同人作品。您喜歡這些作品嗎？請描述您的理由。



A.



B.



C.

20. 最後，如果有甚麼事情是以上的問題沒有提到的話，您可以將任何有關動漫和御宅族的意見寫在這裡。

本訪談到此結束。謝謝您的參與！

## **Appendix D: Data for Analysis**

- Content analysis

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy\\_8LU1GS1J6SXLNIU](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy_8LU1GS1J6SXLNIU)

- Online interview (English version)

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy\\_8U2p4bTVocGtuQzQ](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy_8U2p4bTVocGtuQzQ)

- Online interview (Chinese version)

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy\\_8U2IyV1hxTmxqN1U](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6okO2EsIy_8U2IyV1hxTmxqN1U)

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