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Shift in the perception of homosexuality in contemporary China

Posun ve vnímání homosexuality v současné Číně

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Shift in the perception of homosexuality in contemporary China

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The main objective of the thesis is to describe four main historical periods; the first known mention of homosexuality in Chinese texts until the late Qing dynasty; period of the late Qings until the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; PRC until 1980s; the era from 1980's and milestones in 1997 and in 2001 until today. The description will compare each periods as well as show how the situation in China from this perspective is changing. Moreover, I will aim to compare the situation of how homosexuality is perceived in Chinese first-tier cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen) and in the rural parts with reference to discrimination, family relationships and marriages. The aim of the last part is to compare the theoretical part with the practical part which will be based on the analysis of the interviews I conducted and questionnaire I spread amongst the Chinese LGBT community by using social platforms such as Sina Weibo and Wechat. The case study on a random sample of more than 600 people all around China was performed from March, 2016 until June, 2016. In this part, I will aim to prove or deny certain facts about the current situation in China from the perspective of the homosexual population.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a uvedl veškeré použité prameny a literaturu.

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Anotace

Hlavním cílem práce je popsat současný postoj čínské společnosti vůči homosexuální menšině a zároveň analyzovat, k jakým posunům došlo v této oblasti během historického vývoje. Teoretická část práce shrnuje v historickém kontextu čtyři hlavní období od prvních zmínek homosexuality v čínské literatuře, přes vývoj postoje reflektující politické změny v 19. a 20. století až po současnost. Kapitola mapující dnešní situaci seznamuje s novými trendy homosexuality, kde nechybísmluvní sňatky, mobilní seznamky a rostoucí mediální atraktivita.Praktická část práce vychází z vlastníhovýzkumu autora. Náhodný vzorek640respondentů vyplnil dotazník distribuovaný na sociální síti Sina Weibo. Doplňující video-interview přes WeChat poskytla omezená skupina 6 respondentů. K průzkumu autora motivoval zájem o problematiku a snaha porovnat dostupné teoretické informace s aktuálními fakty.

Klíčová slova: homosexualita, čínská společnost, LGBT, vnímání homosexuality, pozice homosexuálů, diskriminace

The main objective of this thesis is to describe the contemporary situation of homosexuality in China and to analyze the shift in the perception of homosexuality in different eras. The historical context includes four main periods from the first mentions of homosexuality in Chinese literature, through political changes during the 19th and 20th century until today. The part which deals with the contemporary situation also present new trends in this area such as contract marriages, dating apps and general broader coverage of this topic in media. The second objective of the thesis was author's own research on the random sample of 640 respondents conducted through questionnaire (distributed on Sina Weibo) and additional 6 video interviews on WeChat. The main motive for this part was the general author's interest in this topic and an attempt to compare the theory with reality through research. Moreover, it was possible to compare the results with other studies and possibly also come up with new observations.

Key words: homosexuality, Chinese society, LGBT, perception of homosexuality, position of homosexuals, discrimination

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Note

The thesis include some words or expressions in Chinese language. In this case, these words are written both in pinyin without tone marks and in simplified characters accompanied with English translation. As for the questionnaire, the majority of responses were in Chinese as well as some of the interviews. The translation into English is provided by author.

The term LGBT (LesbianGayBisexualTransgender) became an umbrella term for all sexual minorities including bisexuals, transgender and simply all non-heterosexual individuals. For the purpose of this study I use the term LGBT community rather than gay community even though my study focuses primarily on homosexuals.

The word „China“ in this thesis means the People's Republic of China and other Chinese territories such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau are not included given their different systems and different history. Even though these territories might influence the PRC, I decided not to include them in my thesis.

Terms used in the thesis such as "West", "Western" and "Western countries" relate particularly to the territories of North America and Europe. The word *xifang* 西方, which is directly translated as the "West" also relate to North America, Europe, eventually Australia and New Zealand rather than Middle East, Africa or Latin America.

Introduction

The thesis deals with the shift in perception towards homosexuality in China. The main objective of this work is to describe and analyze the contemporary situation of homosexuals in China. In order to profoundly understand the situation and show the shift in the perception of homosexuality throughout history, I first begin with a description and comparison of four historical periods: the first known mention of homosexuality in Chinese texts until the late Qing dynasty; period of the late Qings until the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; PRC until 1980s; the era from 1980's until today. As the long historical context indicates, homosexuality has always been part of Chinese society. There were times when homosexual acts were common and highly tolerated. From a historical context it can be seen that except for a very short period during the Jiajing era, Ming dynasty, the tradition of homosexuality stayed unchanged until Qings implemented Neo-Confucian doctrine. Moreover, since the middle of the 19th century, western culture and its anti-homosexual ideas have gradually spread into the lives of Chinese people, particularly during the May Fourth Movement. Such ideas and influences formed, on one hand, a more cosmopolitan society, but on the other hand, tolerance for homosexuality declined. With the ascent of communism in China, any signs of homosexuality were oppressed, because it denoted corrupted western culture. It became a crime and was considered a mental illness, resulting in a tremendous number of Chinese homosexuals living in hardship. After China's opening to the world (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放), the situation encountered a slight, gradual step forward. However, it was not until 1997 that homosexuality became decriminalized and not until 2001 when it was officially excluded from the list of mental diseases. The two dates aforementioned can be regarded as the most important milestones in the Chinese history of homosexuality and a way to further its openness and tolerance within the whole society. The new millennium is a period of changes as Chinese LGBT communities become more visible and vocal within the society. Nowadays, media dedicates more coverage to these topics, the internet is full of information regarding LGBT issues, and pink money already plays a significant role in the economy. Yet, the general perception of homosexuality is still outdated and inaccurate and more awareness must be spread. For these reasons, studies are conducted to provide the population with more comprehensive information and to encourage government to take action to these issues.

The foundation for the theoretical elements of this thesis are primarily books such as *Passions of the Cut Sleeve* (Hinsch 1992), *Gay and Lesbian Subculture* (Wing Wah Ho 2011), *Queer Women in Urban China* (Engebretsen 2015), *Sex and Sexuality in China* (Jeffreys 2007) and specialized English and Chinese articles, studies and papers.

The second objective of this work is an analysis based on the questionnaire I created and spread amongst the Chinese LGBTcommunity via social platforms such as Sina Weibo and WeChat. Before the questionnaire was created, I was interested in the field of homosexuality in China. I studied the literature, as well as read some studies and decided to perform a research to compare the theory with the reality. The case study on a random sample of 640 people all around China was performed from March, 2016 until May, 2016. The research is furthermore extended by interviews, providing personal stories of interviewees so to better understand the real situation in China. The primary objective of the second part is to come up with new observations and hypotheses which are based on the analysis of answers from the questionnaire. Eventually, I enclose a synthesis to present a claim about the whole topic. In order to do so, I compared my own data with various resources which I presented in my theoretical part.

The motive behind this research was a general interest in the topic, what I observed in literature and media. I intend to provide this field with a comprehensive study of this issue and contribute new observations. The result of the work will serve as a source for researchers or the broader public, interested in the topic of homosexuality in China, by providing them with the historical outline and analyses of topics and challenges which are relevant today.

1 The first known mention of homosexuality in Chinese texts until the late Qing dynasty

Historical context is very important in order to better understand the history of homosexuality so we can contrast periods of absolute acceptance and rejection which appeared throughout China's long history.

The first chapter deals with the oldest remarks of homosexuality in Chinese texts until the fall of imperial China in 1911. It is very important to include it into the thesis, because it gives a testimony that homosexuality was widely accepted in the society (except for one short period during the Ming dynasty and laws during the Qing dynasty). It was common that some emperors, including the last emperor of China, even had male favors (lovers) in their palaces. Homosexual acts were as common as, for example, in Roman Empire. Although in Europe the practice was soon disapproved by religion, in China the tradition of homosexuality continued and became the longest in the world's history.

1.1. The first mention of homosexuality

Seeking the very first mention of homosexuality in China, we have to trace back to the era of the fabled Yellow Emperor (2697?–2597?). He is considered an originator of Chinese civilization and also set a precedent for sexuality, which was very open. He had a tremendous number of wives and concubines. Also, according to the bibliographer Ji Yun and his Hermitage (1800), the Yellow Emperor was the first to receive male bedmates. However, the Chinese history before the 8th BC cannot be trustworthy. The period of the Spring and Autumn (722−481 BC), the Warring States (403−221 BC) and during the Han dynasty are the first to provide some genuine pieces of historical sources. Every period has its famous stories regarding the ruler's male lovers (Crompton 2003). Most of the sexual interactions happened in certain social hierarchies such as rulers, favorites, older and younger noblemen, theatre patrons and actors. „The superior ones usually took the active role in sex and the socially inferior usually took the passive role. Their relationships were often characterized by strong emotional bonds" (Bao 2010). Eunuchs, castrated men in the service of the ruler, were very preferred as sexual partners mainly because their passivity (Hinsch 1992).

1.2. Zhou dynasty

It is important to begin with the most important representative of homosexual love of Zhou dynasty, which was between the Duke Ling of Wei (534−493 BC) and Mizi Xia. This story is published in the ancient philosophic work *Han Fei Zi*. Mizi Xia won the favor (*chong* 宠) from the ruler of Wei. When the mother of Mizi Xia fell ill, he took a carriage and went to help her. Using the carriage was forbidden and punished by amputating his feet. However the ruler was happy and praised Mizi for his filial piety. Once in the orchard, Mizi took a peach and found it very sweet and tasty, therefore he gave another half to his beloved ruler. It was a genuine expression of love and since then the "half-peach" has become a symbol for homosexuality (Hinsch 1992).

1.3. Han dynasty

As for the Han court, records of Sima Qian, Grand Historian of China, provides us with the picture of the lives of that period (Crompton 2003). The most important ruler, who represents the culmination of this tradition, is the emperor Ai (real name Liu Xin). As the term for homosexuality was absent in Chinese history, such men who became bedmates of the ruler were merely described as men who received a favor (*chong*), which was also equally bestowed to women. In The History of the Former Han Dynasty (92 CE), Ai was even characterized as the one who did not care for women at all. The story of emperor Ai and a married man called Dong Xian is one of the most famous stories of a profound love of two men. The story shows the influence of homosexuality over Chinese society. Homosexual love was not only accepted, but was a part of high-class life. Dong Xian had a great career and according to scholars, it was mainly because of his relationship with the emperor. An idiomatic expression from this period, which survived until this day, is „the passion of the cut sleeve"(*duanxiu zhi pi* 斷袖之癖). When they were sleeping on a straw mat, Ai woke up while Dong was still sleeping and emperor's sleeve was stuck under Dong's head. In order not to wake him, the emperor preferred to cut his sleeve to let him continue sleeping.

The first story as well as the latter show that the use of sex, for men equally as for women, could be a mean to achieve higher social and political status. (Hinsch 1992).

The question is whether a wife could have disagreed with anything that had to do with husband's extramarital sexual interactions. After marriage, the husband held a supreme position. A woman could not question her own husband about whether he has any other sexual partners or not. In fact, a husband could divorce his wife if he found her jealous. Jealousy was actually one of seven reasons a husband could divorce his wife. Therefore, lots of couples must have been incompatible for each other in the sense of different sexual orientation. „As in previous periods, homosexuality continued as part of the sex lives of the social elite. Famed emperors, poets, and philosophers openly professed their attachments to other men"(Hinsch 1992).

As for lesbianism, any mentions are very rare since the literary world was in charge of men. Therefore there are only a few records on this topic. Hinsch notes that lesbianism was common inside the huge palace with the emperor and eunuchs. Some of them must have developed stronger bonds to one another. Such women formed couples, known as "paired eating" (*duishi* 对食), the term represented cunnilingus. Traditional books even described intercourses combining lesbian and heterosexual elements (Hinsch 1992).

1.4. The end of Hans until the Ming dynasty

When the Han dynasty fell in 220, China experienced great instability until the Tang dynasty was established. Right after the fall of Han, a club called "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" was formed. The society was a symbol of freedom and nonconformity in the third century. Some members included a poet and a musician Xi Kang (223–262) and Ruan Ji (210 – 263), considered the greatest poet of the period. The relationship between these two men was very strong, described as „stronger than metal and fragrant as orchids". Ruan Ji even wrote a poem „Poems from My Heart", which detailed a male love (Crompton 2003). Xi Kang's wife Shan Tao even used the peephole to spy on her own husband while he was spending the night with Ruan Ji. She was well aware of the homosexual activity of that period and she openly discussed that with his husband and even praised the skillful bed practices of these two men (Hinsch 1992).

Book of Wei, a classic Chinese historical text compiled by Wei Shou from 551–554, gives an example of another term used for homosexuality *nanfeng* (男风) which literary means „male wind", but more accurately „male practice". For the first time in Chinese history there was a term describing the homosexual act itself. The previous terms described

only social relationships („passion of the cut sleeve“, „half-peach“). *Nanfeng* was popular amongst Chinese male homosexuals until now. *Nanse* (男色), translated as „male eroticism“, is another term that appeared in the official history of Northern Qi dynasty (550–577) and became a new part of the homosexual lexicon. Again, it described only the act itself (Hinsch 1992).

In contrast to the West, under the influence of religion, homosexuality was banned and considered sodomy. However, the situation in China was quite different, because Chinese religion had always had a neutral attitude towards homosexuality. Under Taoist faith (4th–3rd century BC with further influence), the universe was based upon two vital elements: the yang (active male energy) and the yin energy (passive female energy). „The fundamental sexual problem was to keep these two elements in proper balance“, so that men would not lose too much energy during intercourse, become weak, and die subsequently. At that time, sexuality was not a taboo in the society at all. The example of this practice was the Yellow Emperor, who allegedly attainted the immortal state. As for homosexuality, the act was only about exchanging yang essences, without any loss or gain (Crompton 2003). Crompton describes that Confucianism was certainly little concerned with homosexuality. The system stressed the importance of family, but male friendships were highly encouraged, a factor that facilitated intimacy between men. Although, Confucian or Buddhists texts regarding homosexuality were very rare, Wolfram Eberhard's Guilt and Sin in Traditional China, is a text that originated in India (the country where Buddhism was born), where homosexuality is punished in the third hell. Finally, when Buddhism reached China in the 7th century, homosexuality was officially discouraged (Crompton 2003). Tang dynasty and the succeeding Song dynasty (960 – 1279) were periods of huge flourishment and the capital Xi'an was the world's richest and most splendid city. Along with the urbanization of Xi'an, commercialized sex grew as well. During the reign of Zhenghe (1111−1118), men's prostitution was punished with "one hundred strokes of a bamboo rod and a fine of fifty thousand cash". This is the first recorded restriction against any act regarding homosexuality (Crompton 2003).

1.5. The Ming and Qing dynasty

With the rise of the Ming dynasty in 1368, official historical works issued by the state no longer portrayed emperor's male lovers. Emperor Wuzong, who died in 1521 at

the age of twenty-nine, and whose record was written by the historian, Mao Qiling (1623 – 1716), was a good example of a ruler with a taste for men. Amongst his favorites was a Muslim eunuch Sayyid Husain, who had also some privileges to control the power. In the Jiajing era (1522 – 1567), there was a first law in the history of homosexuality ever that explicitly forbade sex between men. However, the tradition of the passions of the cut sleeve does not end here. Xizong, the sixteenth Ming emperor, had two palaces, one for each gender of lovers. It is important to note that homosexuality was not only limited to rulers, traditional Chinese family were not an exception. In Fujian, south-east China, homosexual couples (as in the story of Ruiji and Jifang) even lived together in a kind of civil union known as *nanfeng* (南风). The southern version of this is living as "sworn friends" (*qiyou* 契友) (Hinsch 1992). They could have chosen the partner of their taste and orientation regardless of class or appearance, but the end of the day they still had to marry a woman. They finally had to fulfill the Confucian familial duties, such as maintaining the lineage and the cult of ancestor worship. The older man in such relationship was called "bond elder brother (*qixiong* 契兄)" and the younger of the two was called the "bond younger brother (*qidi* 契弟). The younger went to the family of the older and he was treated as parents' son-in-law (Crompton 2003). Feng Menglong (1574 – 1646), a Chinese writer, wrote about love between men and women as well as between men and men known as *qingwai* (情外) ("the other love"). As for lesbianism, similar was observed in the Guangdong province between women in the late Qing era due to the expansion of the silk trade. Women were employed and gained independence from patriarchal life. The association was called the Golden Orchid Association (*jinlanhui* 金兰会). Two other lesbian associations are known from various texts: Ten Sisters, funded by Buddhists nuns and Rubbing-mirrors Party. If women were forced to stay with a husband, they often committed suicide instead. Such relationships lasted for the lifetime and they could have even adopted children from strangers. As for their sexual practices, the term "grinding bean curd" (*mo doufu* 磨豆腐) exists, which symbolizes the contact of genitalia. Another practice demanded the use of a dildo (usually silk dildo filled with bean curd). As for famous stories portraying lesbian love, the play *Loving the Fragrant Companion* by Li Yu (1611−1680) is one of the best examples. The lesbian love is also described in the Dream

of Red Chamber by Cao Xueqin (1715 – 1763) in the story of two actresses Oukuan and Dikuan, who fall in love (Ruan 1991).

When the West came into China, the sodomity observed left them in disgust. "The Dutch soldier Hans Putnams, who attacked the Fujian coast in the early seventeenth century, confirmed this fact in calling men of the region "filthy pederasts". Chinese found their condemnations as a sign of Western barbarism. There are cases where Chinese traders in Philippines were burnt at the stake after being accused of buggery (Hinsch 1992).

During the reign of Manchus, the Qing dynasty, the openness towards homosexuality changed. The emperor Kangxi was hostile to the homosexual practice and put forward a law punishing the rape of males and homosexual relations (*jijian* 鸡奸) in 1679. This law wasn't enforced until 1740 with subsequent slight changes in the nineteenth century. His intention was to stress the importance of traditional Confucian families (Hinsch 1992). However, his grandson the emperor Qianlong (1736-1796) felt in love with a man called Henshen at the age of 65 and gave him a position of authority. The seventh Qing emperor, Xianfeng, had homosexual affairs as well. Puyi, the last emperor, was also involved in the "male practice" (Crompton 2003).

In the nineteenth century, when China opened its ports, contact with the west had increased, which also brought their prejudices against homosexuality. Their homophobic behavior could not appreciate the openness towards "the passion of cut sleeve" in China, while Chinese society still considered it an inescapable fact of human being. "China, indeed, provides us with the longest documented period of tolerance in human history" (Crompton 2003). The period of tolerance throughout the Chinese history is remarkable.

Although Hinsch (1992) and Shamshasha in his History of homosexuality in China (1984) claim that homophobia was imported solely by the western culture, other sources contradict this saying. Sommer in his Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China (2002) stands a point that the norms changed due to heightened conservatism in late imperial China. Dikkoter contradicts Hinsch's and Shamshasha's claim and writes that homosexuality was not considered a deviation even in the 20th century, it was only undesirable for the society, because it did not lead to procreation and therefore thrown into the category of extra marital sex (Brownell 1997).

2. Period of the late Qings until the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949

After some times, Qing dynasty implemented very important laws that banned homosexuality. However, it was not because homosexuality was something unnatural or that it was some sort of western corrupted behavior. Qing adopted Neo-Confucian doctrine which strengthened the importance of family and children and homosexuality was therefore perceived as an extramarital act and therefore punished. Also, a penetrated male was considered a threat to Confucian society as well as, for example, unchaste woman. Polluting gender inversion was a problem. Elites were generally excluded and continued with their passions of the cut sleeve without any sanctions.

After the fall of empire, the homosexual scene was still flourishing, especially in theatres in big cities. However, during the May Fourth Movement, the western culture significantly permeated Chinese culture and many new ideas and concepts were formed. For example, China re-conceptualized their idea about love based on western norm. From that time on love was exclusively for heterosexual couples, even though Confucianism does not specifically oblige a man being involved only with the opposite sex.

2.1. Qing anti-homosexual laws

Sommer in his work presents laws regarding bans of homosexual sex during the Qing era and provides examples of actual legal cases. The term sodomy (*jijian* 鸡奸) referring to homosexual anal sex was used for the first time in 1655 and in 1679 the first law punishing sodomy was enacted as I mentioned in the previous part. In case of consensual sodomy (*he jian* 合奸) of a boy at the age between 10 and 12, the punishment would be a sentence to strangulation. If a man consented to be sodomized (*he tong jijian* 合同鸡奸), then the punishment would be 100 blows of the heavy bamboo and a month in the cangue (square wooden collar worn day and night). If a man was gang raped, then the leader of the gang would be sentenced to immediate beheading, the others in the gang would be sentenced to strangulation, those who did not sodomize the victim would be send to Heilongjiang to serve as slaves for the armored troops there. If a man was murdered and then sodomized, such offender would be beheaded too. If the offender injured the victim, but the victim did not die, the beheading is inevitable too. Whoever attempted to unconsensually sodomize a

man, but did not succeed would receive 100 blows and life in exile at a distance of 3000 li[1] in case there were no injuries. If there was an injury, but the victim did not die, offender would be sentenced to strangulation. If an offender was killed by the victim, then the victim would be also sentenced to death. If there is a false accusation that someone committed an act of sodomy and the truth came out at the court, then the offender would be deported into military exile at the maximum distance of 4000 li under the "law of evil characters who cause trouble and commit violent acts" (Sommer 2002).

Dikotter argues that the Manchu's laws did not aim to utterly disapprove homosexuality, but rather disapprove non-procreative extramarital sex (Dikotter 1995). Manchus and Neo-Confucians felt that extramarital sex violated filial piety and expectations of chastity. Another reason for implementing of these laws was to fix gender roles. Gender inversion (a penetrated male was considered inferior and not manly) became a threat to the Confucian society as well as unchaste behavior of women. Qing laws attempted to maintain family values and wanted to support social stability, but at this point the homoerotic tradition was already shaken (Meijer 1985).

2.2. The period of Beijing theatre scene

Theater scene in China and its golden age was from the middle of eighteenth to nineteenth century. Because women were forbidden to play on the stage, all the female roles had to be played by men. Such men were called *dan* (旦). Amongst most famous actors were for example Bi Yuan, Li Guiguan and Mei Lanfang, the latter even toured Europe and United states in 1930 with his performance (Crompton 2003). The appearence of beautiful-boys on stage could have easily spurred homosexual fantasies and *dans* often became lovers of theatre patrons or other prominent persona (Wu 2012). Despite the Qing laws prohibiting officials of visiting brothels, a loophole in the law allowed them to find a lover amongst cross-dressed theatre actors. Keeping company with a famous dan (xia xiaodan 狎小旦) was very important and signalized the status and taste of patrons. Often, it lead to a romantic relationship. The relation between penetrating and penetrated was determined by the social status of both men.

The first half of the twentieth century was the period of shift of the perception towards actor-patron relationships in the Beijing opera field. In the past, it meant a refined

[1] Chinese unit for lenght, equals half a kilometer

taste for literati, but with a deeper national crisis, the masculine image of men became an important public concern. Therefore the image of same-sex relationship was shifted by conservative intellectuals and literati as a source of national shame and finally the topic was gradually deleted from tabloids and literature (Kang, 2009).

2.3. The Republic and May Fourth Movement

The end of imperial China (1911) and the beginning of republican era were accompanied with the flow of western ideas, which permeated into the Chinese society in a great extent. The new modern nation was built. Western science such as Darwinism, medical discourse and western notions of sexuology were introduced to China. At this period, terms such as same-sex love (*tongxing'ai* 同性爱) along with sex, gender and sexuality, appeared in Chinese literature. Works of European writers such as German Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the Englishmen Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter were translated and freshly introduced to the Chinese society (Bao 2010). These authors had several theories how to explain same-sex desire, whether it was biologically determined or it resulted from environmental factors from the early stages of life. Western scientists travelled to China to give an insight of western sexuality to the Chinese society and they eventually influenced Chinese intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement (Testa 2010).

The May Fourth Movement was originally a protest on 4th May 1919 against the weak Chinese response towards the Treaty of Versaille after the First World War. However, the whole period of the movement contained the period from 1915 to 1921. Chinese youth aimed to abandon old China and tried to build a new modern Chinese society, beginning with the style of writing. The shift from classical Chinese (*wen yan* 文言) to modern Chinese (*bai hua* 白话), contributed to the liberalisation of Chinese society. The western literature was widely available to the public and the progressives perceived Western culture and its ideas as a salvation (Testa 2010).

China was exposed to many theories about homosexuality, some of them could have supported the traditional view on sexuality in China to freely choose an object of desire. Chinese did not exactly adopted all western in order to become stronger and modern, they rather re-conceptualized the old and made a new own version of China. Therefore, it is possible that western influence played only a secondary role in the shift of the perception of homosexuality in China. Chinese wanted to keep things Chinese, they only used new

conceptions and ideas to support a new understanding of Chinese values. For example, they did not incorporate traditional Judeo-Christian doctrines which consider homosexuality a sin, instead they only heterosexualized their own Confucian values. Confucian values originally do not specifically state that sexuality occur solely amongst a man and a woman, or that the object of desire can be only of the opposite sex. The most important was the filial duty, but as China used to be a polygamous society, not fulfilling the duty was not common. The gender discourse adopted from the West lead to the definition that opposite-sex desire is the primary desire and themes of romantic love became extremely important in the society. ¨They adopted western standards of love, engagement, marriage and therefore also sex. Procreation was the primary role for two people. Successful marriage and children became the pillars of the healthy nation and the other forms of eroticism were considered unnatural and abnormal. China adopted western ideas on sexuality without adopting the main reason, why the western society perceived so – the religion. Instead, Chinese use the philosophy of yin and yang in order to justify, that only these two forms combined create a harmonious couple (Testa, 2010).

Even though the Republican government, in contrast to the Qing dynasty, did not criminalize same-sex acts, homosexuality was not desirable. Along with scholars and their new concepts of sexuality and love, there were also these highly conservative Chinese tabloid writers who often stigmatized homosexuality. They were very concerned about the future of China, therefore they accused men having sex with other men from not being manly enough and marked them as one of the reasons for the weak China (Kang, 2009).

Several conclusions were made on this topic. Frank Dikotter in his *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China* claimed that Chinese in this period believed that "like germs, sodomy could spread rapidly to 'contaminate' the social 'organism'" (1995). Therefore, this lead to a perception that sodomy results in mental illness. Gui Zhilian, a republican gynecologist, argued that homosexuality occurred in the male young individuals as a natural part of their lives. He described it as a stage everybody has to go through before marriage. The normal person would pass it and then marry a woman, but he also noted that some individuals can easily get blocked (*zu'ai* 阻碍), or get bogged down (*tingzhi* 停滞). The latter state he described as an abnormal homosexuality (*bu putong de tongxing lian'ai* 不普通的同性恋爱). If someone had the inclination towards homosexuality even after, it was impossible to correct such man. They developed an addiction and it could not be healed even through the marriage. He described that such man strayed from the right path and entered the wrong

way and thus developed abnormal sexual desires (*xingyu biantai* 性欲变态). It was not considered a different sexual preference, it was considered a bad habit, which finally lead to a semen waste[2] (Testa, 2010).

Homosexuality during the republican era was believed to be the opposite of the normal sexuality and the opposite of manly behavior. Literature usually disapproved homosexuality. For example, in Cheng's *Sexual Life of Mankind* (1934), the author regarded homosexuals as females in male bodies. He even claimed that homosexual males have developed breasts to the point of secreting milk.

As for female homosexuality, this topic was not discussed, because women were, according to the sources, endowed with a passive instinct for reproduction and therefore considered of being incapable of own any sexual desires. Dikotter (1995) concludes the topic by claiming that China was in such a miserable state that they were very motivated to embrace western science, medicine and culture in order to further the way to modern greater China. Owing to being exposed to new views about homosexuality, they equally adopted homophobic beliefs. Despite all the changes presumed negative perception of homosexuality in China, in reality the homosexual sex scene in bigger cities such as Shanghai was flourishing. Male prostitutes were highly available in the bars, brothels and bathhouses. The capital Beijing was also a center of homosexual community along with foreigners visiting the city and becoming involved in the local scene (Brady 1995).

2.4. Terms linked with homosexuality in the Republican era

From old times, various terms regarding same-sex already existed and were commonly used, some of them until today. The variety of lexicon suggests that the issue had not been silent at all. These terms included: passion of the cut sleeve (*duanxiuzhipi* 断袖之癖) and sharing a peach (*fentaozhihao* 分桃之好) as terms for same-sex love; male favor (*nanchong* 男宠); male eroticism (*nanse* 男色); southern practice (*nanfeng* 南风) or male practice (*nanfeng* 男风), the first describing the same-sex eroticism which was widely practiced in the south; young gentleman or Beijing opera actor who play female roles working as male prostitutes (*xianggong* 相公), rabbit (*tuzi* 兔子), ass expert (*pijing* 屁精), fairy[3] (*renyao* 人妖), sodomy (*jijian* 鸡奸); and finally the most recent one which appeared

[2] in old Taoist practices, semen waste was linked with diseases
[3] Nowadays term for a transvestite

first after western publications were translated: homosexuality or same-sex love (*tongxinglian'ai* 同性恋爱). The actual usage of the character for love (*ai* 爱) suggests an emotional intensity of such relationship. All these terms appeared in tabloids at that times, newspapers and other were parts of local slangs or colloquial language (Kang 2009). Very interesting are these two characters: *renyao* (人妖). Such individuals represented a threat to the country. It referred to men such as sexually prematurely developed boys, cross dressers, Beijing opera actors, male prostitutes and generally every man who possessed feminine manners and had sex with other men. According to writers of that time, *renyao* was one of the reasons causing Chinese social and political crisis (Kang 2009).

3. The People's Republic of China until 1980's

Maoist China was a very disadvantageous period for Chinese homosexuals, because homosexuality was believed to be a western import of unnatural behavior and such individuals often faced discrimination. The act of sodomy was considered a crime and had to be corrected by labor or imprisonment. Moreover, officials were stressing the importance of getting married and having many children, therefore many homosexuals entered heterosexual marriages and lived secret lives. In the 80's, the situation did not change and homosexuality was put under the crime of hooliganism and was very harsh until 1997 when homosexuality was finally decriminalized.

The description of this period is very important, because with the Communist party on the throne, the perception of homosexuality rapidly changed. This period is marked as the cruelest towards homosexuals in the whole Chinese history.

3.1. Homosexuality during the Maoist era

The huge change in the perception of homosexuality in China occurred after the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. There is almost no evidence of any word regarding homosexuality in literature from that period. The authorities usually denied that the homosexuality even existed. The fact that the society was silent about the topic proofs that homosexuality was highly oppressed (Testa, 2010). Chinese authorities were stressing out the importance of marriage and bearing children. Therefore, it was very common that people, who were attracted to the same-sex usually married the opposite-sex so that they could fulfill their obligations and avoid any public suspicion (Jeffreys: Li Yinhe, 2006).

China enacted New Marriage Law in 1950 which gave, for instance, equality to women. Also, remnants of patriarchal and feudal system were finally brought to the end. Since 1950, everybody has been allowed to choose whom they want to marry, but of course only limited to the opposite sex. The roots of the law can be traced back to the Republican era (1912 – 1949), which also included the right to divorce or ban on child marriages. Couples has had to register at state institution. In case of the same-sex marriages, it would not have been allowed to be registered, therefore they would have been considered invalid (Landsberger, 2016).

As for the sexuality in general, it was not completely a taboo. Several articles related to heterosexual relationships during this era existed, including topics as love, sexual satisfaction in marriage or even adultery (Evans, 1995). However, Dikkoter in his book *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China* (2002) says that "premarital or extramarital sexual practices like adultery, masturbation and homosexuality were declared to be 'shameless' or 'abnormal'". Official publications present that love in between married couple was the primary goal. Even though there was no direct political campaign against homosexuals, many people suffered persecution and harassment from the society, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976). So called "errors" could have been corrected through education and/or labor. The sodomy (*jijianzui* 鸡奸罪), understood as a non-consensual or violent homosexual act, was considered a crime. Comparing to the same term before the PRC, the Chinese word for sodomy was made only from two characters, the PRC added one more (*zui* 罪) which symbolizes a crime. In case of consensual relation, the subjects were usually criticized and oppressed. The worst cases record beating to death of the victim. For example, Yinhe mentions that an art teacher in Beijing was beaten to death in 1966 after it was discovered that he had sex with his male students. There are also known cases that people were driven to commit a suicide, because they could not have handled a life full of oppression and humiliation (Jeoffreys: Yinhe, 2006).

As I mentioned before, to find any references from prior to the 1980s regarding this topic was extremely difficult. The majority of people found homosexuality distasteful and the general perception was hostile. To the greatest extent, a very famous Chinese attorney from that period claimed that homosexuality affects social order and leads to criminality. Another interesting idea came from the director of the Institute of Marriage and Family who expressed his opinion by saying: "It is not a sin, but it is abnormal and it is a mental disease, and it can be cured." Earlier in the first part of my work, I have mentioned regions of Fujian and Guangdong, where same-sex unions were very common during the Qing dynasty. However, these unions were only customary, they did not have any legal confirmation. These customs most likely disappeared after the PRC was established. For example, the lesbian association in Southern Guangdong, described in the first part, declined after the Japanese invasion. Even though some of them survived to the PRC, they were forced by the government to marry bachelors and widowers. Other mentions about lesbianism were not to be found from the Mao era (Ruskola, 1994).

Even though the general situation seemed to be very anti-homosexual, same-sex intimacy did not disappear. In fact, the oppression of homosexuality proves that it was present in the society. Homosexuality exists in any society of the world. Only political and religious structures of often act as if it does not concern them.

3.2. Chairman Mao and his desires according to Dr. Li Zhisui

Nevertheless, the most interesting story provides Mao Zedong's physician, Dr. Li Zhisui, who wrote personal memoirs *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* and published it in 1994. He shared that "Mao's sexual activity was not confined to women. The young males who served as his attendants were invariably handsome and strong, and one of their responsibilities was to administer a nightly massage… Mao insisted that his groin be massaged too". One of Mao's guards once told him that he would not do this, because it is a job for a woman, not for a man. Another story he shared is during the fare in the train while his guard was preparing Mao for sleep. He grabbed the young man and tried to pull him into bed. "For a while I took such behavior as evidence of a homosexual strain, but later I concluded that it was simply an insatiable appetite for any form of sex. In traditional times young men, often effeminate and pretty, played the female roles in Chinese operas, and many were brought into the sexual service of wealthy merchants and officials. Both *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and *The Golden Lotus*, China's classic pornographic novel, and another of Mao's favorites, contain stories of such liaisons. Catamites are part of Chinese tradition", Li explains. In general, Mao Zedong was sexually very active and in 1953 and again in 1957 he was accused of having 3000 concubines, despite the new law in China regarding polygamy. Obviously, the law did not confide to country's leader. As he got older he wanted to maintain his health and became involved in old Taoist sexual practices. It gave him an .excuse to have a sex not only for a pleasure, but most importantly to extend his life. According to this old practice, he needed as much of woman's energy yin as possible to strengthen his declining yang male essence. He often went to bed with more women in the same time (Li, 1994).

Dr. Li immigrated to the United States in 1988 and finally gained the freedom to speak out about Mao's cruel regime and the general situation in China during that period. The book was first published in 1994 and immediately banned in China (Foster, 2009).

3.3. Homosexuality: An Unsolved Puzzle

In 1985, a very important article was published in the health magazine in China – *To Your Good Health*. The article was titled "*Homosexuality: An Unsolved Puzzle* (*tongxinglian: yige weijiezhimi* 同性恋:一个未解之谜)", written by Ruan Fangfu. He brings the subject on the table by saying that homosexuality exists in every nation and throughout all the human history. He further claims that the status of homosexuals should be reasonable and that they are not different from heterosexuals speaking of intelligence, strength or creativity. He received altogether 60 letters reacting on his article and 56 of them came from homosexual individuals, all of them were men. Ruan, together with his colleague Tsai published a research in *the Archives of Sexual Behavior* (Ruan, Tsai, 1988) based on the analyses of received letters. They analyzed the letters and revealed some interesting results and patterns. The research regards the recipients' geographical location (mostly from Shanghai, but also from other parts from China); age; suffering of being unable to find a partner legally; difficulties of having to live double lives and also their hope for an improvement of this issue amongst society in the future. The research is unique and provide us with the information of lives of homosexuals from the period before 1988. Both authors conclude that the gay population in China is far from scarce.

I would like to share the content of some of the letters which show the gay life in that period. Out of 60 letters, 56 letters approved the author's statement. Two letters (5,6) disapproved of author's view on the issue, one from a medical college in the northwestern China and the second from a teacher in a factory training center in northeast China. The third was suggesting the way of converting homosexuals back to heterosexuals and the last one was written by a transsexual man. Twenty two recipients from 56 revealed their marital status. Eight were married and 6 of them even had children; 2 were divorced. Married homosexuals admitted that they married because of the social pressure and they are not at all interested in their spouses. The only choice for them is to live a life full of lies. In the same time, they feel very guilty, because they cannot give a true love to their wives. There are some examples of the letters' contents:

1. I am a 29 years old young man I am not interested in the female sex at all. I do not even want to have any physical contact with them. However, among the men that I encountered, some of them would stir my feelings. I am particularly interested in one and my love for him is beyond description. He is a little bit smaller than me, but I fall for him completely. This feeling deepens every day. It has been ten years, but my

feeling for him has not changed. Of course I wish I could live with him, be with him. Even if I just sit with him quietly, I would be very happy. Of course 1 wish to have a sexual relationship with him, but my mind stops me from doing it. When I think of him I would masturbate to fulfill my sexual desire. In the last 10 years, my life has had an unexpected turnaround. When I was 25 years old, a woman fell deeply in love with me. I could not have told her about my true feelings. She insisted on marrying me no matter what. I was not able to disappoint her. I was living in a completely different world. I seldom had sexual relations with her. Once when it happened, we successfully conceived a child. She knows nothing about my deep secret. This relationship has caused sorrow in my life. 1 have been in love and devoted my love for him all these 10 years and I think my love for him will never change for the rest of my life. I pretended to be happy in front of others but when I was alone I shed my tears.

2. I am an agriculture college student. I will be graduating this year. In 1981 I fell in love with a senior student. I was only 17 then and had no understanding at all about homosexuality. I was eventually diagnosed having a "reactive psychosis." In 1983 still quite confused about homosexuality I overdosed myself with sleeping pills and was hospitalized for four days.
3. The greatest pain for us, the homosexuals, is our inability to express our deepest feelings. We have to hide our feelings in front of others. I therefore beg you to fulfill my wish and to give me names and addresses of other homosexuals. This may help me to want to continue my life. The pain in my heart makes me extremely despair.
4. I was forced to marry a woman partially because of the obligation to have a child and partially to stop the rumors. I have a child but I have been seeking homosexuals for more than 20 years. I dislike sex life with women.
5. Homosexuality is an evil product of capitalistic society. Homosexuality brings with it bad influence on our socialist society. It is our obligation to point out our view in stopping this product of spiritual pollution.
6. We should absolutely prohibit homosexuality. Widespread homosexuality will lead to deterioration of our racial spirit and destroy our society. The reason why people despise, prohibit, punish and persecute homosexuals are precisely because the behavior is evil, ugly, against human morality, an insult to human dignity, it promotes crime among youth, ruining their mental and physical health. It leads to the destruction of our race and civilization (Ruan, Tsai, 1988).

The answers from the several homosexuals prove that the main source of pain was the fear of punishment such as arrest, sentence, labor camp or prison. Even though, the status of homosexuals in the Criminal Law of the PRC was not specified, it was put under the common term of „revolting behavior". The law was clear: „All revolting behavior should be subjected to arrest and sentence." Some individuals found the only way in taking their own lives, because of the huge unbearable pressure. Their families and friends all condemned them. Many homosexuals were already imprisoned at the time the article was released and therefore these people did not have a chance to read it and react. However, after the publication of the *Homosexuality: An Unsolved Puzzle,* many people had a chance to read something constructive and positive about this topic. This article most likely also lead to a slight shift in the perception of the homosexuality of that time and helped Chinese society to start contemplating about it (Ruan, Tsai, 1988).

Information regarding homosexuality during the Mao era were almost none. They appeared on the surface long time after Mao Zedong died. Even though information are nowadays available in China, homosexual men and women are still stigmatized by the society. Therefore stories and secrets from many people die with them. Individuals are still afraid that if they share some of their stories and actually come out, they can bring shame to themselves as well as to their families (Testa, 2010).

From after the 1980s, various publications call homosexuality a "western social disease". Therefore, many politicians believed that the effect of homosexuality on society was that it lead to Chinese political weakness. They associated homosexuality with the western and bourgeois culture and CCP used this argument to spread homophobia (Dikkoter, 2002). Such attitudes in the society and the New Marriage law, which centered the procreative marriages, lead to the oppression of homosexuality. These official changes in administration along with the people's re-conceptualized beliefs in Confucian values strengthened the idea that homosexuality had no more its place in China.

4. The period of 80s until today

Although the economic situation began to improve and China opened to the world, this progression failed to include homosexuals, whosesituation stayed unchanged for another 19 years. It was not until 1997 when homosexuality was finally decriminalized and in 2001 was also deleted from the list of mental diseases. While the situation might sound positive for Chinese homosexuals, this shift in perception did not occur instantly and homosexuals still face discrimination even until today. The pressure for marrying and having children is still very strong and the older generation, unlike the younger generation, is still very traditional and does not understand homosexuality or think it is natural.

4.1. New era of acceptance of homosexuality?

The Chairman Mao died in 1976 and it was a beginning of political and economic reforms in China. In 1978 Deng Xiaoping launched the Economic Reforms and Openness (改革开放) program which was basically based on a capitalist system. Chinese rapid economic development lead eventually to widespread corruption, wealth disparity and environmental pollution. In 1979 the government announced one child policy in order to control the increasing population (Fairbank, 2006). It was a huge turnover for the Chinese society based on Confucian values and ideas of having many children to take care of their parents and ancestors. Having a baby girl was often undesirable, because there was not a chance she could continue the family lineage.

As for the homosexuality in the eighties, as expected, no positive change occurred instantly. People accused from homosexuality were regarded as "bad elements" (*huai fenzi* 坏分子) and were exposed on the street with a derogatory signs on their neck and humiliated or sent to labor camp (Sang, 2003). Prior to the 1st January 1980, there was not any specific law in the PRC outlawing homosexuality, each case was handled in a divergent way. Homosexuals were usually called "errors" and had to be corrected through education or labor (Jeffreys: Li Yanhe, 2006). The new criminal code from 1980 established a new umbrella term "hooliganism" (*liumangzui* 流氓罪) which included consensual as well as non-consensual homosexual acts (Sang, 2003). Homosexuality was officially considered a social perversion. In 1984, although there was a request from the

Chinese legislative organs to remove the crime of sodomy from the criminal code, such was not approved until 1997.

Before 1997, when homosexuality was decriminalized, homosexuals lacked any legal prosecution and could nothing but to live closeted lives full of lies, most likely married to an opposite sex and having no other chance but producing a child. In the meantime in the West, the question of homosexuals was much more discussed referring to the history of Greek and Roman empires, where homosexuality was widespread. China could have referred to the similar history of the homosexual tradition from old times, but the problem might have been that China was no more using classical Chinese (*wenyan* 文言). Therefore, ordinary people were not able to read old stories regarding the passions of the cut sleeve. Even though the government translated texts, they provided people with incomplete facts. Unlike the western world, ordinary Chinese attracted to the same sex could not have found their places in the society and identify with the long homoerotic Chinese tradition (Testa, 2010).

Li Yanhe (李银河), the famous Chinese lawyer, well known as an iconic advocate for LGBT rights, conducted a research which directly revealed the real situation in China during that time (Jeffreys: Li Yanhe, 2006). The reform-era (1978+) in China was known for so-called raids on homosexuals. A "strike-hard" campaign against criminal activity was launched in 1983. They focused on places as public parks and public toilets, where the homosexual scene was saturated. They arrested those, who they caught having a sexual intercourse. If someone was suspicious, they checked their ID card and usually let them go. One of the interviewed said that the most important was to remain nonchalant as if nothing was happening and stay relaxed. They knew that the chance they could be caught in action was small. However, the policemen used a strategy and checked these places in their plain-clothes. Some, who did not recognize it was a policemen, ended in the police station for an interrogation or were beaten up. Their biggest fear from being caught was that the police could report their behavior to their workplace. Administrative sanctions could have influenced their position in work. Even though, some of the work units would not take any further steps, others could have, for example, lowered wages, cut on bonuses, relocated or in the worst scenario the could have been expelled. The majority of respondents claimed that taking such risk was very dangerous. But in reality, in most of the cases, they usually obtained "only" reform through education, rather than imprisonment.

Another bad scenario would be a report to their family members. The greatest fear of respondents was that their family would find out about them. A threat of reporting the information to the work unit or family could have caused many people to commit a suicide. As already mentioned, homosexuals faced one big issue and that was filial piety. Having children and continuing the family lineage are the crucial aspects of Chinese social life. As Mencius (*Mengzi* 孟子) once preached: „There are three ways to be unfilial; having no sons is the worst (*buxiaoyousan, wusuoweida* 不孝有三，无后为大)". In general terms, it stresses the importance of being good to one's parents and bringing a good name for one's family, carrying out sacrifices to the ancestors, showing respect and support, etc. Filial piety is one of the most important virtues in China. (Chan, Tan, 2012). Filial piety goes hand in hand with marriage, because it ensures that the couple would bear a child, desirably a son. Therefore, no parent ever wishes her child to be homosexual. Parents feel little concern about their child's sexual orientation, for them the most important is to fulfill the duty. However, they also want to protect their families, because they fear that their family could lose face, be stigmatized and lose *guanxi* (关系), an important Chinese system of acquaintances. The risk of the family tragedy could be very high. (Liu, Choi, 2006)

4.2. Homosexuals and homowives

In order to escape the social pressure, homosexual men and women usually finally marry the opposite-sex partner without revealing their true feelings and desires. Such individuals feel extremely guilty, because they do not cause pain only to themselves, but most importantly to the one they marry. They feel extremely guilty, because they are not able to satisfy their spouses. Some of the marriages last only for a short time and a homosexual in the couple sometimes soon asks for a divorce. They marry mainly in order to please their parents. In the same time, they eliminate any possibilities that their friends and colleagues would find out. One man got divorced after six months, after he was pretending to be wounded so that his relatives and friends could not introduce him to a new prospect (Testa, 2010). A term describing a woman who married a homosexual man actually exist in Chinese lexicon. The term is "homowive" (*tongqi* 同妻). Homowive is a social phenomenon in contemporary China. Li Yinhe said that there are 20 million male homosexuals in China and 80 percent of them marry a woman, therefore there are

approximately 16 million of homowives in China. In other countries, homosexuals would remain single or in some countries even marry same-sex partner. Due to the Chinese importance of marriage and bearing a child, this possibility is almost impossible (Li, 2009).

Therefore, such marriages usually lead to the situation where the homosexual partner tried to satisfy certain desire outside. This situation is what many scholars are afraid of, because the illicit sexual behavior outside the marriage can cause spread of the diseases such as HIV. It concerns usually men, they meet another gays outside and then also have sex with their (homo)wives at home. This disease could then be transmitted on their children as well (Liu, Choi, 2006). Amongst the most popular cruising spots (places were gay people meet for sex) are parks or public toilets. It has always been popular in the biggest cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, where there is higher chance to meet somebody and where people do not know much about each other and can get easily lost in the crowd. It was impossible for homosexuals to enter the healthy relationship with a same-sex partner, because they were all afraid of being discovered by their wives or families. This is the reason why many gays seized whatever opportunity that came to have a sex. Unfortunately, illicit, promiscuous sexual behavior often leads to the spread of HIV (Liu, Choi, 2006)

Because HIV is claimed to be initially spread amongst homosexuals and Chinese linked homosexuality with western disease, they started to believe that homosexuality is a "bourgeois Western import" (Jones, 1999). Homoerotic stories from the traditional times were usually not available within the society.

4.3. Homosexuality in rural China

The situation for homosexuals in the villages must have been always very hard, everybody knows everybody there and everybody cares about others businesses. Relationships in villages are generally closer comparing to cities. Villages does not offer any privacy. That is why being gay in rural China is so difficult. If someone comes out of the closet, everybody knows it, but usually nobody can understand it. Especially in the village, it is very important to marry, bear a child, have someone to look after them when they are old and honor the cult of ancestors. Chinese customs are generally more traditional in villages than in cities. Homosexual couples cannot get married and cannot bear a child and therefore for the majority of population homosexuality is unacceptable.

In 2014, there was a very famous case of a gay couple living openly in the village of Hubei province. Their names are Yebin and Anwei. When Yebin first came out to his parents, they knew he was sick and called for an exorcist to cure him and forced him to drink a "potion" made of burning pieces of spells. Such things eventually did not help and they had no option but to accept his lifestyle. He also received an approval from his parents to live with his boyfriend Anwei. They not only lived in the same village, they lived just next door. The couple say that they sometimes hear people gossiping about their relationship, but usually no one would attack them or insult them directly. An example of Yebin and Anwei is a very interesting one from the point of the perception of homosexuality in China. Usually, many gays do not even come out to their parents, marry an opposite sex partner and live the whole life in a lie. Homosexuals often try to pursue their freedom in big cities such as Beijing or Shanghai, where the gay community is flourishing. As an example serve a man called Luo, coming from the small village, who moved to Shanghai after telling his parents about his sexuality. His mother did not accept that, ignored his sexuality and still wanted him to marry a woman and have children. After taking her to participate in PFLAG conference (community of parents whose child is homosexual), she eventually made a peace with him, although his father still does not approve. By letting parents know about their sexuality and by trying to educate them about homosexual life, many people can make a huge impact on the future society. As soon as parents, family and friends do some research about homosexuality or are willing to listen, then they can truly understand and accept. In case of Yebin's mother, she even initiated the contract between two partners that if one of them dies or they split up, they would had a right to claim an inheritance. She also became a sort of LGBT advocate and was willing to help and guide those in need (Zhang, 2014).

The situation described is some form of double happiness (*shuangxi* 双喜) as we know it from married couples where the family accepts their son's boyfriend or daughter's girlfriend as another son or daughter. The same-sex partner enters the family and the whole filial hierarchy status becomes unchanged. With such cases arising, possibly the situation in rural China where the term homosexual or gay evokes usually disgust or denial, could gradually improve (Engebretsen, 2013).

Even though the situation in big cities is more open, especially in the terms of finding the community, the coming out is still very difficult. According to the research on 16,690 LGBT people all around China in 2015 released by a non-profit network WorkForLGBT, some interesting data were revealed. (Light Blue, 2016). There was a

major improvement in the question of coming out to parents of homosexual or bisexual individuals. The total number of 22 % of men and 12 % of women said that they would not plan to come out in front of their parents or friends. However, in comparison to 2014 it was 30% and 16 %. 23 % of men and 39 % of women are already ready to come out. The rest is still unsure about their decision. From this pattern is obvious that women has fewer problems with revealing their sexuality than men. 70 % of respondents admitted that their biggest obstacle to come out of the closet is the fact that they are under the pressure from their parents to marry and have a child. Consequences of this situation are sometimes that due to the pressure from their families and the fear of losing a job, they come to the conclusion that a better choice would be to marry an opposite sex partner. The total number of homosexuals in China vary from 70 million and 140 million people (Light Blue, 2016). In order to escape all the obstacles aforementioned, homosexuals in China found a new solution. The solution is a contract marriage.

4.4. Contract marriages as a solution

Recently in mainland China, a new phenomenon has appeared. This phenomenon is called marriages of convenience or contract marriages (*xingshi hunyin* 形式婚姻). The main idea is to create a legal bond between a man and a woman who although they are homosexually oriented, they marry only because they want to fulfil the wish of their families or hide public suspects. Such nonsexual marriage maintains psychical, economical and personal independence. In reality they are married, but they have their own same-sex partners.

In China, there are several online weblogs, chatrooms with ads where people look for a partner to fake a marriage. Also, an app called iHomo exists and serve to people in order to find a suitable husband or a wife. Lala Salon, Tongyu, and Logoclub are the main social networks which organize events where people can choose a partner for their contract marriages and also get some pieces of advice from people who already live this life. Dating parties introducing gays and lesbians for a possible marriage also exist. It is very important to note that such marriages are common only in mainland China. Hong Kong or Taiwan are generally known for higher degree of acceptance of homosexuality. In Taiwan there is a quest for legalizing same-sex marriages and it definitely looks like it could be possible in the future. Moreover, Taipei is considered an Asian capital of homosexuals (Huang 2011).

In China, there is a Contract Marriage forum called *xingshihunyinba* 形式婚姻吧, gays and lesbians put their advertisements there in hope of finding the „ideal“ partner for their contract marriage. The forum has over 60 thousand followers and over 600 thousand postings with the first one posted on 31st March 2006. In brief, the ad said that a man, 30 years old, already in a stable homosexual relationship, is looking for a woman to marry, make friends and family together. Also that he would like to have an own child with her. He did not have any high requirements for the woman's appearance, he just wanted her not to be too masculinized. (Xingshihunyinba Baidu forum, 2006). Another ad from 2007 was from two women in love who were looking for their partners. They briefly described themselves and mentioned their requirements towards their future husbands. They should consider getting married in 2008 or 2009 and they could possibly live together but without any personal interferences and they should be willing to attend family gatherings (Xingshihunyinba Baidu forum, 2006). Between the most recent ones I found an ad from a young gay called Ron who lives in New York and because he is very filial to his parents, he wants to find a lesbian women whom he can marry. As he is from Fujian province, he adds that it would be amazing if the potential wife is from the same province as well. They would eventually live their lives in the US together (Xingshihunyinba Baidu forum, 2016).

This is a genuine insight into the situation and how it works in practice. The most natural way is always to get married and have a child, because that is the way how to make their parents proud and happy and as the social code has it, they certainly do not want to wound their beloved parents.

As for conceiving a child in such marriages, a desire to have a child is usually big. Lesbians (lalas) in contract marriages are often concerned about their health and safety. Manly gay men may sexually assault them in order to get what they want and that is a child. It is questionable if in such marriages a man has a right for that. Officially they do, but the whole contract marriage is official only in front of the administration, in reality it is a secret contract between two people who naturally do not want to be married together. In addition, men in such marriage are more likely to have many sexual partners, which is something lalas are afraid of. Not only because of possible disease transmission, but also because if their husbands possibly getting ill, they would have to pay a lot of expenses for their treatment. It is therefore important that every detail should be discussed before the actual marriage and both should consent with everything.

To sum up, the biggest problems gays and lalas face are discrimination, pressures, and traditional and from the western point of view backward norms in the society. In

addition, the government stands a neutral position towards homosexuality. However, with further opening up and better social welfare (because parents always fear nobody would take care of their child when they are old), the situation would improve in ideal case with legalizing same-sex marriages (Engebretsen, 2013). The topic about Chinese homosexuals, coming out of the closet and contract marriages is very well projected in the movie "Inside the Chinese Closet" by an Italian filmmaker Sophia Luvara (O'Hara, 2016).

4.5. Important milestones and media

It was not until 1997 when homosexuality was decriminalized. It became legal as a consensual act between less than three adult people. Group sex is still forbidden and that applies on homosexual as well as heterosexual practices. Furthermore in 2001, the Chinese Psychiatric Association (中华精神科学会) deleted homosexuality from the list of mental diseases. However, these two important milestones did not instantly change the general situation of the perception of homosexuality amongst the Chinese population. Homosexuality and sexual topics in general were considered a taboo in Chinese society and the neutral attitude of Chinese government toward this issue is also not improving the whole impression. The policy of government is very neutral, they do not encourage it, do not discourage it and do not promote it either (*buzhichi, bufandui, butichang* 不支持, 不反对, 不提倡) (Mountford, 2009). The question of legalizing same-sex marriages stays also under the table. The famous sociologist and LGBT advocate Li Yinhe has already tried to put forward a bill legalizing same-sex marriages several times, but she has always been unsuccessful. She is strongly in favor in legalizing same-sex marriages by saying that in case of legalizing this type of marriages, people would create longer and stronger relationships and therefore the number of sex related diseases would decrease. Moreover, homosexuals would presumably not enter traditional marriages and therefore they would avoid marriage tragedies such as, for example, a recent suicide of a homowife (Light Blue, 2015).Same-sex marriages could also solve the problem with discrimination either on the workplace or in the private life. The present Labor Law does not protect workers against discrimination based on their sexual orientation. It protects them only on the basis of gender, ethnicity and religion. There are many cases of blackmailing as a consequence.

Furthermore, homosexuality still remains a topic which is not discussed publicly. On the other side, the community is being more and more vocal on the internet, where the

freedom of expression is much higher. (Mountford, 2009). There are many online discussion forums, LGBT centers and meeting places such as bars. The biggest and most used platform for homosexual is Blued, which is the biggest dating app for gays in the world with 27 million registered users. The app Blued is under the company Blue City, which also owns a very famous Chinese website regarding LGBT issues called the Light Blue (*danlan* 淡蓝) (Hudson, 2015).

Although the internet might seem as a safe haven for homosexual population, it was not that long time ago when a special filtering software called Green Dam was installed into to computers. The software automatically restricted the access to those websites containing the word homosexual (*tongxinglian* 同性恋) (Mountford, 2009). A recent ban of homosexual TV series is also a proof that Chinese government still perceives homosexuality as something corrupted. At the beginning of the year 2016, China pulled a popular drama, Addicted (*shangyin* 上瘾), from streaming websites. The main reason was the exposure of homosexuality on the screen. The official reason was that "No television drama shall show abnormal sexual relationships and behaviors, such as incest, same-sex relationships, sexual perversion, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, and so on." The cultural censorship still perceive homosexuality as an abnormal sexual behavior. With this approach any hope for an improvement is therefore slowed down (Ellis-Petersen, 2016). Chinese officials are still very conservative.

In 2008 and 2011 there were oppressive raids on places where homosexuals meet publicly. Especially, before the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, in order to make the gay scene invisible in China, several anti-gay crackdowns were reported (Dailykos, 2008). In 2009, there were cases of raids in Beijing Dongdan Park, a famous spot for gay cruising, and in Guangzhou People's park taken by the police for questioning. (Mountford, 2009). In 2011 in Shanghai, a crackdown on a gay bar happened by taking 70 employees and patrons under investigation (Rouhala, 2011).

Organizers of the first Shanghai Pride in 2009 were also very careful. Despite one intervention of officials during the film projection activities, the whole event passed smoothly and was marked as a milestone for Chinese LGBT. It was organized by two Americans. Firstly, it was meant to be only an event for foreigner with a hope that it could attract some of the locals, but eventually, the popularity of the festival was huge and it was also positively covered in the leading Chinese newspapers. Writer of the article Chen

Weihua, for example, expressed his disgust of Chinese officials, because of the intervention during the festival (Weihua, 2009).

The image of LGBT community in media is also experiencing a shift. For example, in July 2011, Chinese anchor Qiu Qiming was speaking in favor of LGBT community by saying that "The sexual orientation of certain people in our midst are different from the rest of us, but they are also diligently contributing to society. Gay people, like us, have the right to exist and develop themselves in society, and this right should not be overtaken by any other concept." His aim was to make Chinese media to be engaged in LGBT issues. In 2016, he was picked as a person of the year in Rainbow Media Awards in 2016 which is held every five years. He is trying to promote the issue and lead the society to the diversity and eliminate stigma and prejudice. Five years before, in 2011, this award received who else than the well-known Chinese LGBT advocate Li Yinhe.

The coverage of LGBT related issues in media is increasing. In comparison to 2012 when there were only 365 reports on LGBT issues, in 2015 there were 867 reports. Several LGBT related lawsuits were also covered in media including a gay couple that were suing for the right to get married or a student who sued, because she found in university textbooks that homosexuality is still described as mental disorder. She won the case. The filmmaker of *Mama Rainbow* also sued government for banning his documentary and he also won the case. Legal lawsuits are increasing mainly because of the new legal code valid from 1st May 2015. (Leach, 2016).

These cases are very important milestones in Chinese LGBT history and contribute on making more positive the general perception of the population towards homosexuality. The more vocal the community is, the more topics are covered, the more support and recognition they get. In the end of this struggle, they might also eliminate Chinese homophobia.

4.6. Conversion therapy

The practice of conversion therapy in China is already forbidden, yet many clinics still offer this cruel method how to possibly convert homosexuals into heterosexuals. A lawsuit against conversion therapy was also held in China recently. The lawsuit was held in Chongqing by Yang Teng, 30, against the Xinyu Piaoxiang clinic. The treatment involved hypnosis and electric shocks and the whole 30-hours session costed 30,000 RMB. Yang won the case. He decided to try to change his sexual orientation after his parents

gave him pressure to marry and have a child, which is a common expectation in the Chinese society. Such conversion clinics are still widespread in China and this law case will possibly spread the awareness about these cruel and in fact ineffective methods. The view on homosexuality amongst the population, that it is a disease, still remains deeply rooted in the society (Kaiman, 2014).

Another case from 2015 involve a man named Yu Hu from northern China who was held against his will at the Zhumadian No 2 People's hospital. He was forcedly taken to the hospital by his wife and family to undergo the therapy which included medication, needle injections and psychical as well as verbal abuse. All in order to change his sexual orientation, which as the hospital claimed, were able to achieve. After he was released with the help of his friend, he decided to sue the hospital (Chao, 2016).

Conversion therapies have been common in many countries all around the world, but many of them already realized that they are ineffective, because of scientific discoveries about the nature of homosexuality.

4.7. LGBT surveys in China

The term LGBT, as described in the introduction, stands for LesbianGayBisexualTransgender community. It became an umbrella term for any non-heterosexual sexual minority individuals, especially homosexuals. For the purpose of this study, I continue using this term as well.

This part is dedicated to three studiesconducted on the LGBT community in China. Li Yinhe is the most prominent LGBT advocate in China and she is actively fighting for just LGBT rights in China. She conducted her own research on this issue and helped to bring the topic to the public awareness. However, the most extensive and the most important is the research conducted in China recently by cooperation of United Nations, Peking University and Beijing LGBT Center.

4.7.1. Li Yinhe and her research

Li Yinhe, as mentioned earlier, the sociologist and the leading advocate for LGBT rights in China has already submitted several times a proposal for legalizing same-sex marriages in China. Unfortunately, she has not succeeded so far. Her latest study aimed to find out how many people are in favor of marriages and how many are against. The

questionnaire was distributed on the internet, therefore it can be assumed that the majority of respondents were young internet users and therefore possibly more open-minded. The number of 63.6% (12179 people) were in favor, 26.7% (5122 people) were against and 9.7% (1855 people) did not know. The result for the community seem to be very positive (Light Blue, 2015).

Earlier, in 2008 Li Yinhe also conducted a research. On the sample of 400 people she found out that 20% of Chinese think that there is nothing wrong with homosexuality, 30% people are more or less neutral and 40 % think it is completely wrong. Only 7.5% of people said that they knew someone from the LGBT community. The half of respondents would change a teacher if he/she was a homosexual. As for homosexuality and television, 55% were against displaying homosexuality in TV. However, 91% of respondents said that homosexuals should have equal employment rights, even though they were against homosexuality in general. In case of finding out about someone from the family members, only 10% would be accepting, 75% would be tolerating, but would wish for a change and 10% would be totally unaccepting. Regarding the same-sex marriages, 30% were in favor and 70% against. (Pococurante, 2008).

This is very interesting, because comparing the last point in the survey from 2015, the percentage was completely reversed. Surveys on the internet are often very tricky, because people on the internet might not have to always do everything conscientiously. Moreover, it also depends on what type of people respond, the age, social status and education play a huge role. 400 young people with university education, living in the biggest cities would certainly have more open-minded views than middle aged people from the remote Chinese village.

4.7.2. United Nations, Peking University and Beijing LGBT Center - The biggest survey regarding LGBT in China

United Nations Development Programme along with Peking University Sociology Department and Beijing LBGT Center with great support of national and local community, business and media organizations, gathered nearly 30,000 completed questionnaires from all around China of which one third is from non-minority population (heterosexuals). It is the biggest survey in the history of LGBT in China. It reflects lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community in regards to many aspects of their lives. It served as a baseline to government and international institutions and other sectors. Their objectives include, for example, elimination of misconception about LGBT people in the society, which means especially the depathologization of homosexuality in health services and also wiping out all the disinformation in textbooks for schools. Next objective is to promote the awareness about the issue amongst government officials, medical professionals, social services, professors etc. It also aims to improve cultural and social environment for minorities by encouraging media to cover these topics more and educate social services about the importance of providing help to LGBT people, who are often stigmatized by the society. Last but not least, promoting the adoption of anti-discrimination laws for sexual minorities and speeding up the process of their legalization.

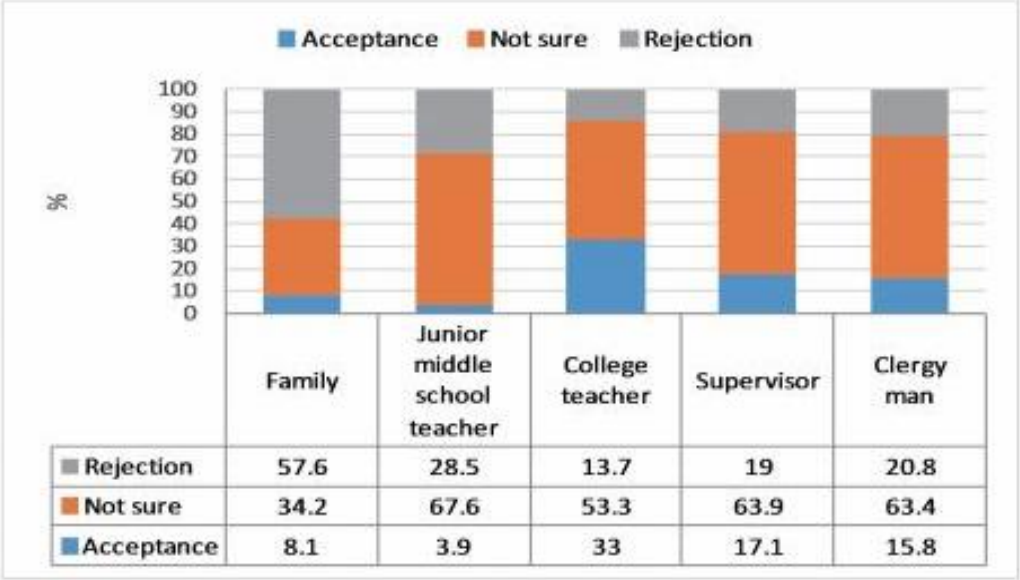
However, the survey contains some weak points. First of all, it is difficult to reach a true variety of respondents, for example, those who do not use the internet, older people, people who live in rural areas, and people with lower cultural and/or economic status. Moreover, people who are not interested in these issues might probably not even participate in the survey or forward it. This leads to a limited sample of people, who are somewhat interested in these topics.

All the charts were provided by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016).

There is a higher percentage of male participants in the survey (62.2%). The average age of respondents is 22.7 and most of them (77.0%) were born in the 1990s, with those born in the 1980s making up only 20% of the total, and those born in the 1970s or before making up less than 3%. The sample's majority is very young and also their average education level is very high. More than half of respondents already received a bachelor's degree or above. One half of respondents are students and the other half already work. More than 80% of people live in the city and less than 5% in rural areas. The sample

covers all provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions of Mainland China, with some respondents also living in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, or abroad. Guangdong and Beijing make up over 10% of the total sample size. Generally speaking, the geographic distribution is concentrated in eastern and central areas, the most developed and densely populated areas in China.

As for social environment for LGBT people (Fig. 1), respondents were asked what is the degree of acceptance within families, school, workplace or religious community towards LGBT like. From the chart it is obvious that families have the lowest degree of acceptance for minorities. Schools, workplaces or religious communities differ in responses. Situation at universities is the best as for accepting the professor's sexual



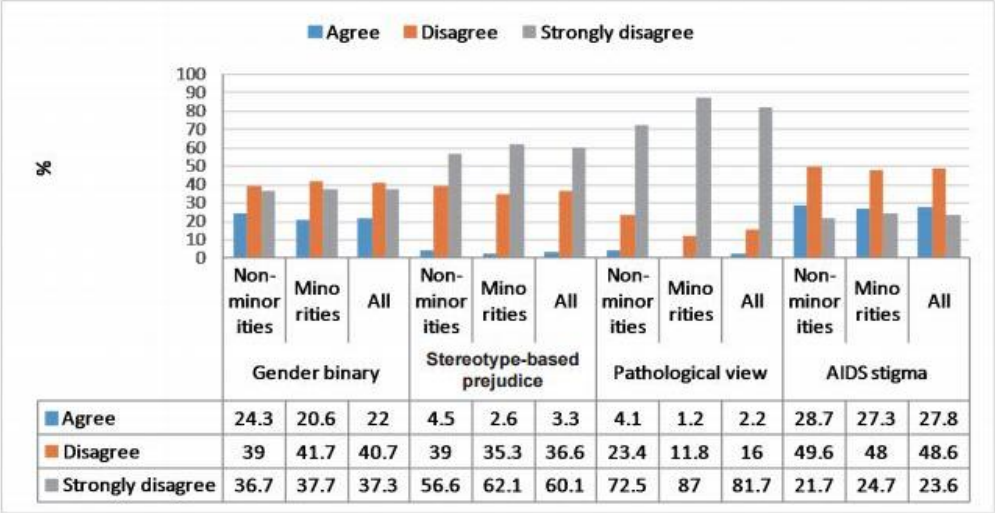
	Family	Junior middle school teacher	College teacher	Supervisor	Clergy man
Rejection	57.6	28.5	13.7	19	20.8
Not sure	34.2	67.6	53.3	63.9	63.4
Acceptance	8.1	3.9	33	17.1	15.8

orientation.

Figure 1: Acceptance of minorities in daily life in %, (UNDP, 2016)

As for public opinion towards LGBT community, the chart shows (Fig. 2) that respondents are generally accepting in their attitudes towards sexual diversity. 70% of non-minority respondents do not support the pathological view of homosexuality, stereotypes, gender binary or gay-related HIV stigma. Only 2.2% agree with the idea that homosexuality is a mental disease, while 80% strongly oppose this idea. On the contrary, gender binary[4] and gay-related HIV stigma[5] is more complex, one in five respondents said that they agree with this idea and only one in three respondents opposed it.

[4] Gender Binary defines roles for men and roles for women.
[5] HIV is a gay disease



	Gender binary			Stereotype-based prejudice			Pathological view			AIDS stigma		
	Non-minorities	Minorities	All	Non-minorities	Minorities	All	Non-minorities	Minorities	All	Non-minorities	Minorities	All
Agree	24.3	20.6	22	4.5	2.6	3.3	4.1	1.2	2.2	28.7	27.3	27.8
Disagree	39	41.7	40.7	39	35.3	36.6	23.4	11.8	16	49.6	48	48.6
Strongly disagree	36.7	37.7	37.3	56.6	62.1	60.1	72.5	87	81.7	21.7	24.7	23.6

Figure 2: Respondents attitudes towards minorities in % (UNDP, 2016)

As for hypothetical questions such as whether they would accept their child being part of LGBT community or if they would mind getting close to the minority or if the minority is suitable for raising children, they are quite conservative in these aspects (Fig. 3). Significant number of respondents would not accept their child to be the minority, especially to be transgender and intersex.

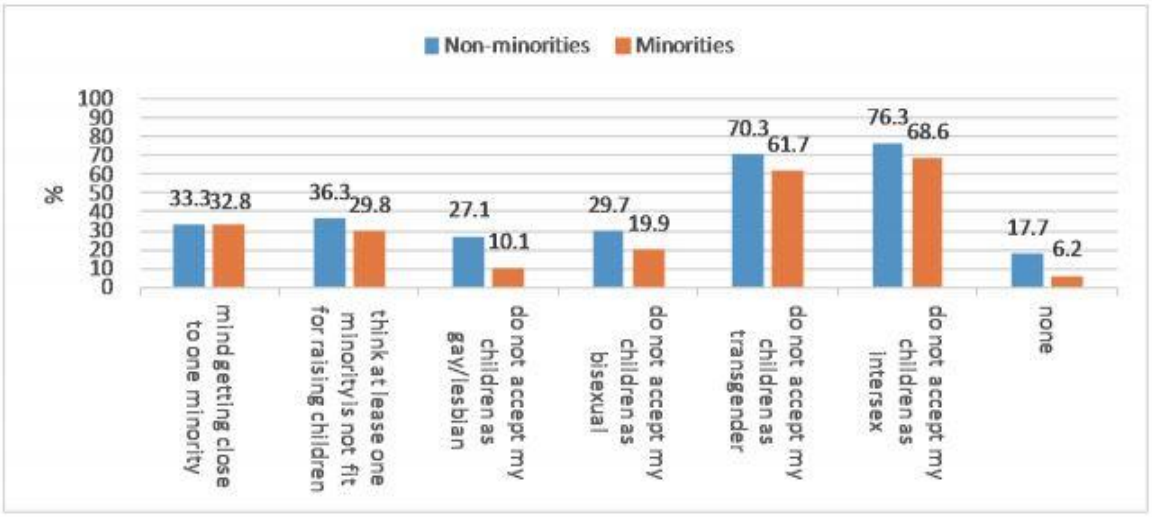


Figure 3: Respondent's answers to minorities-related hypothetical questions in % (UNDP, 2016)

Figures 4 and 5 regard respondent's attitudes towards these four aspects according to the age. The youngest group is the most open and accepting, while the oldest group of respondents is more biased.

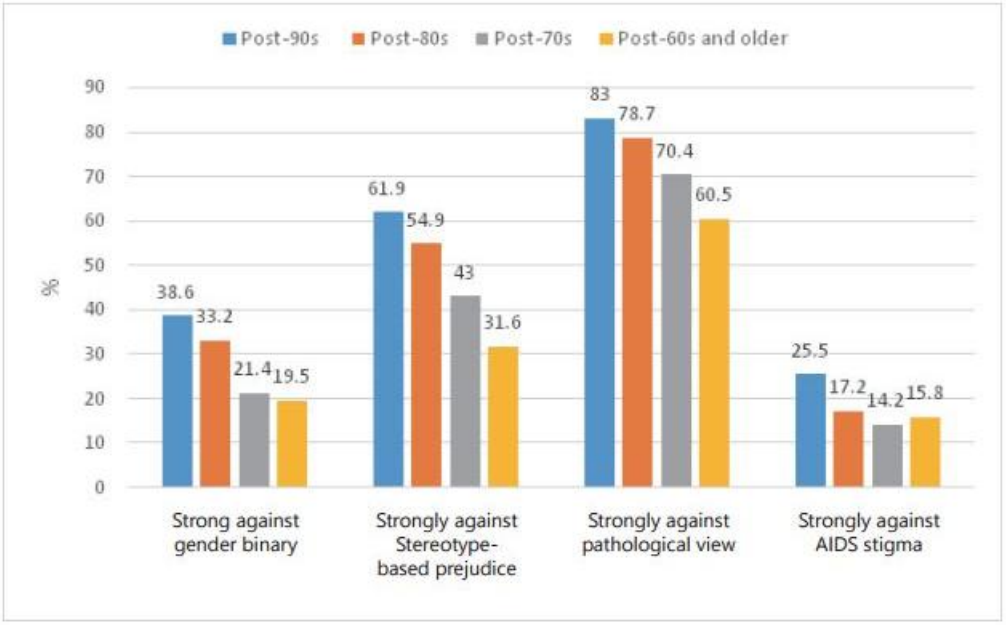


Figure 4: Respondent's attitudes towards minorities by age group (scale of rating) in % (UNDP, 2016)

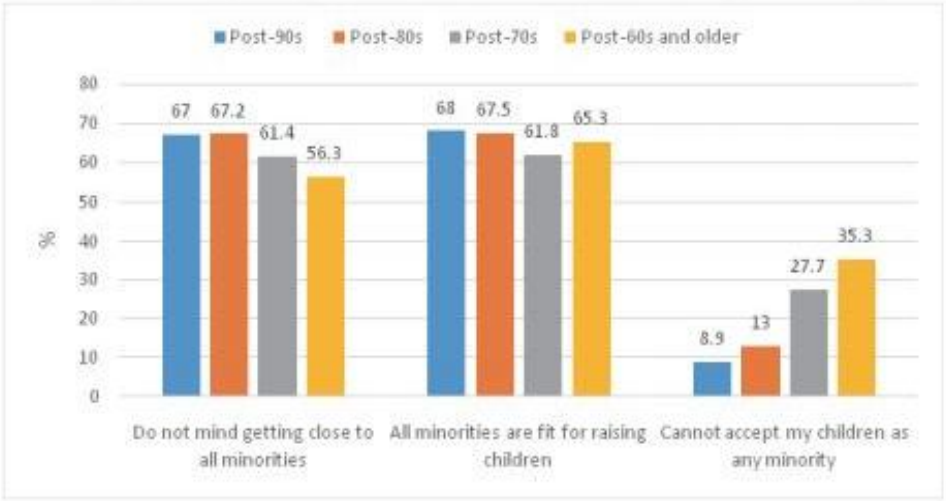


Figure 5: Respondent's attitudes towards minorities by age group (hypothetical questions) in % (UNDP, 2016)

The perception of homosexuality in the society start with a good knowledge and education. China does not protect gender minorities against discrimination and unfair treatment. At school the comprehensive sexual education is seldom available. On the workplace the situation is even worse, any sexual-minority related knowledge and explicit rules are very rare, except for foreign owned companies and social non-profit foundations. These patterns can be seen in Figures 6 and 7.

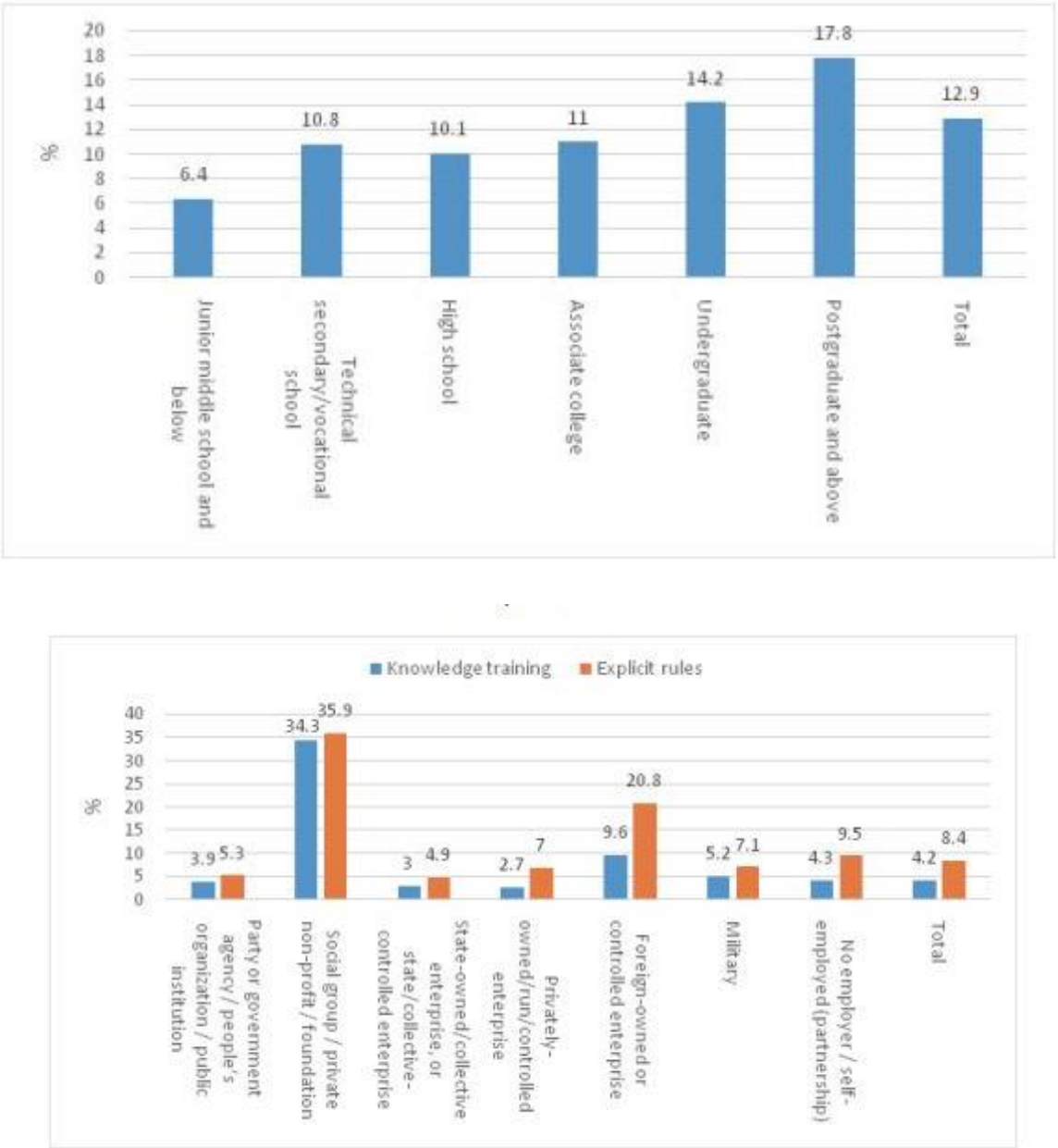
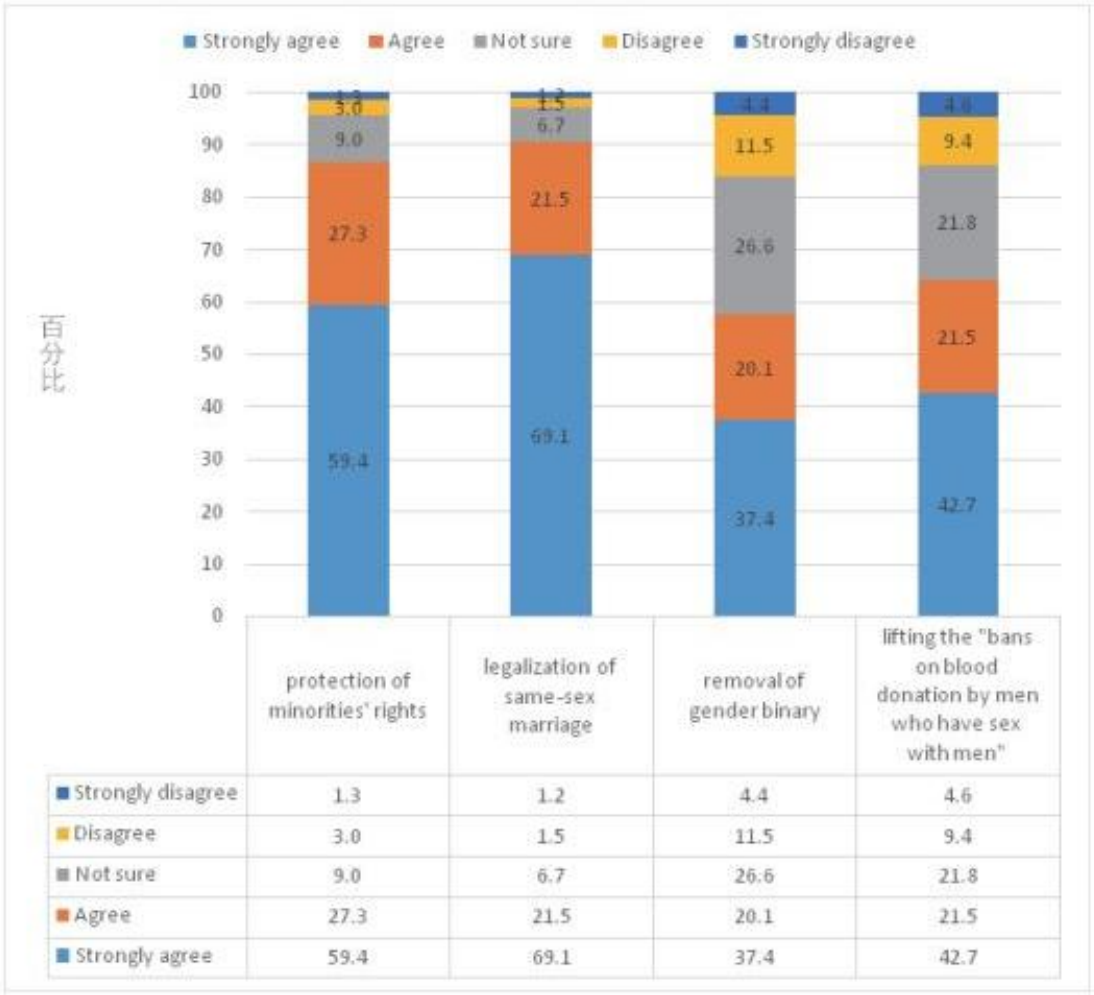


Figure 6: gender diversity education at school in % (UNDP, 2016)

Figure 7: Minorities-specific knowledge training and anti-discrimination rules at workplace in % (UNDP, 2016)

The question about equal rights policies (Fig. 8) was also responded by non-minority respondents. They mostly agree that minorities should have access to all social services and have an equal treatment. However, many people are still unsure about the possibilities for transgender people. Non-minorities are also generally in favor of equal rights policies, 85% support legalization of same-sex marriages, 80% agree that the law should clearly state that rights of sexual minorities are protected. Over half of the non-minority sample would lift the ban on blood donation from gays. Less than 50% think that the law should not include transgender people. Transsexuality is still regarded by many as a disease. Most of the time, they still perceive gender as a binary concept, which means that man has to be masculine and woman has to be feminine, which is why transsexuality is unacceptable.



	protection of minorities' rights	legalization of same-sex marriage	removal of gender binary	lifting the "bans on blood donation by men who have sex with men"
Strongly disagree	1.3	1.2	4.4	4.6
Disagree	3.0	1.5	11.5	9.4
Not sure	9.0	6.7	26.6	21.8
Agree	27.3	21.5	20.1	21.5
Strongly agree	59.4	69.1	37.4	42.7

Figure 8: Non-minorities' attitudes on equal rights policies for minorities in % (UNDP, 2016)

Another interesting chart concerns marriages (Fig. 9), usually formed because of the pressure from their families. This reason concerned two thirds of minority respondents. Minorities have lower proportion comparing to non-minorities as for entering marriages. 84.1% of married minority respondents are married to heterosexual partner, while 13.2% are in contract marriages and 2.6% in same-sex marriages abroad.

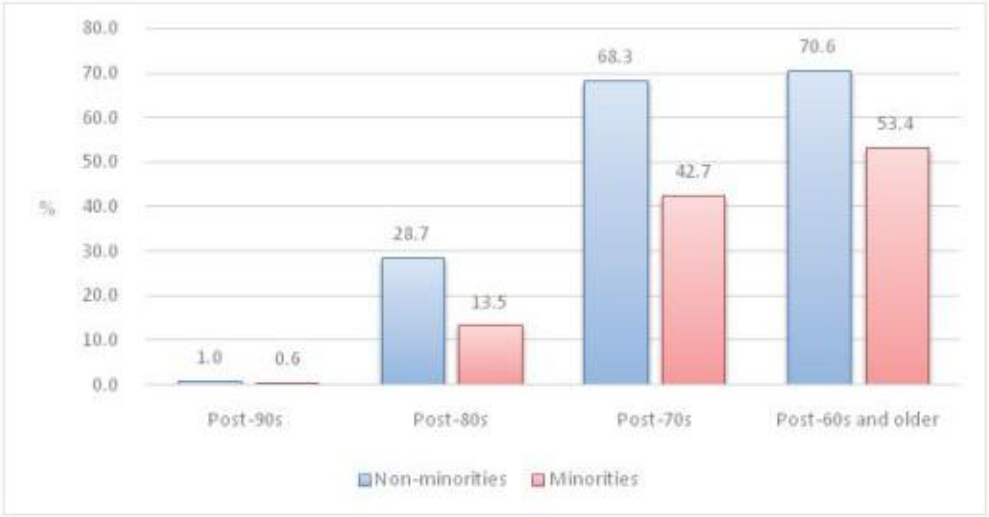


Figure 9: Marriage rate compared between non-minorities and minorities by age group in % (UNDP, 2016)

Another question regarded the issue of coming out (Fig. 10). The survey was trying to find out the degree of coming out in the family, in the workplace and in the religious community. Only 5% fully opened about their sexuality at school, workplace and in the religious community. Amongst families, the number was slightly higher and made up 15 %. In places with higher level of daily communication, the openness is higher than other

places.

Figure 10: „Coming out" of minorities in different daily life environments in % (UNDP, 2016)

Figure 11 concerns discrimination in the society of sexual minority. Occurrence of discrimination in the family and school is much higher than on the workplace or religious communities. They are especially reminded to watch their appearance and way of speaking. Generally it also includes verbal abuse and judgement. Within families, judgement and forcing into heterosexual marriages is very common, followed with verbal and sometimes even psychical attacks. From this chart it can be assumed that coming out is usually a very dangerous decision in LGBT people's lives and that is why they usually try to avoid it. Transsexual people are certainly the most discriminated group. With the proper law regulations and legalizing same-sex marriages, the situation would certainly improve and excessive degree of fear would disappear.

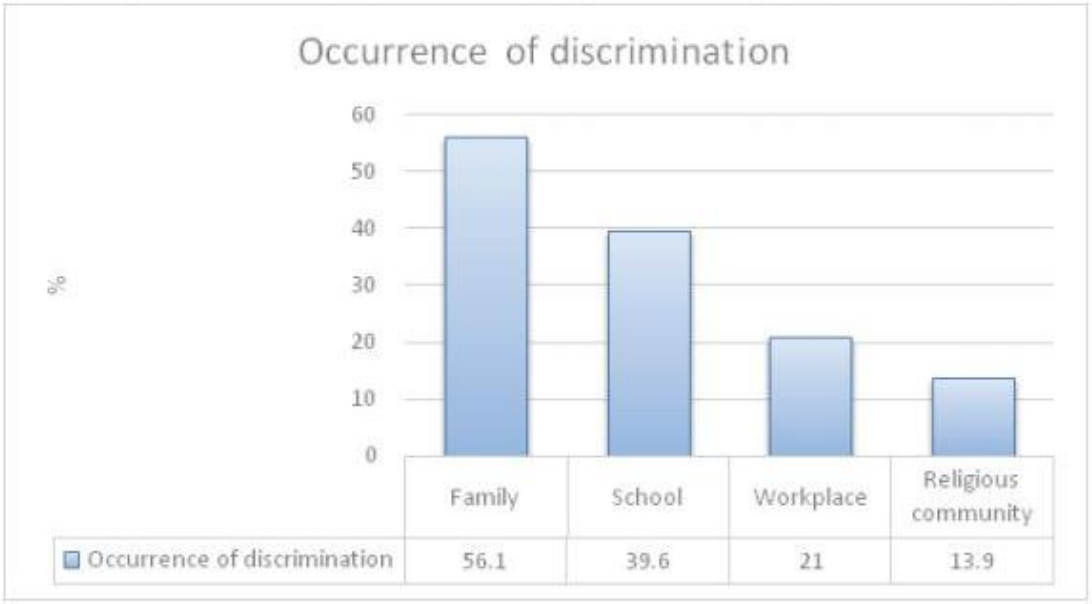


Figure 11: Occurrence of discrimination of minority respondents in daily life environments (UNDP, 2016)

In case the minority respond the most important questions regarding themselves (Figure 12), they are mostly in favor of every aspect, especially in the point of legal protection of LGBT rights and same-sex marriages.

Figure 12: Minorities respondents' attitudes towards equal rights policies in % (UNDP, 2016)

5. Conclusion to the theoretical part

In the theoretical part of the thesis, the author provides with the historical context and illustrates the most important periods leading to shift in perception of homosexuality in China. In spite of the open society in the old times, the situation rapidly changed especially after the establishment of the PRC in 1949. At its worst point, homosexuality was criminalized under the umbrella term of hooliganism and was included on the list of mental diseases. In addition, homosexuality was automatically associated with western world and therefore considered a problem in the society which must be removed. The general situation is improving after China began opening to the world. This change was accelerated once homosexuality was decriminalized and no longer considered a mental disease. People slowly become more aware about terms such as homosexuality, same-sex love, gay, lesbian, etc. These terms slowly found their way into Chinese society through many mediums, such as foreign movies, music, etc. Internet, Shanghai pride festival, LGBT related organization and foreign influence are main contributors that mutually work on the better situation for LGBT community in China.

In the practical part of my thesis based on the questionnaire and interviews I conducted in China, I analyzed gathered data based on the case study of 640 homosexual individuals so as to come up with an improved understanding of the issue. I made a synthesis to present a claim about this topic. In order to do so, I compared my own data with various resources which are presented in my theoretical part.

6. The practical part: author's own research

The research was conducted during my study program in Shanghai, China. Apart from the questionnaire aiming to discover the situation of the Chinese homosexual population in the society, I also conducted video-interviews with some of representatives of the minority in order to collect more personalized data. The questionnaire, containing 37 question, is available in appendix 1 and transcriptions of interviews are available at author.

The questionnaire was distributed on Chinese social platforms Sina Weibo and WeChat. On Weibo, I was asking LGBT organizations, communities and even magazines to help me with distribution. My post on Weibo was seen 92 000 times and shared 238 times. Data were assembled especially thanks to the help of the magazine GaySpot (点杂志) and popular website Light Blue (淡蓝) which shared my post on Sina Weibo. The questionnaire itself was opened 2685 times and the number of fully completed questionnaires that I received back was 640. The average time needed to complete the questionnaire was 8 minutes. Additional interviews were conducted on Wechat platform using video call.

The research did not include the territories of Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan, where the situation of the LGBT community is much more open and relaxed. The comparison of the situation between Mainland China and other Chinese territories can make for another research study in the future.

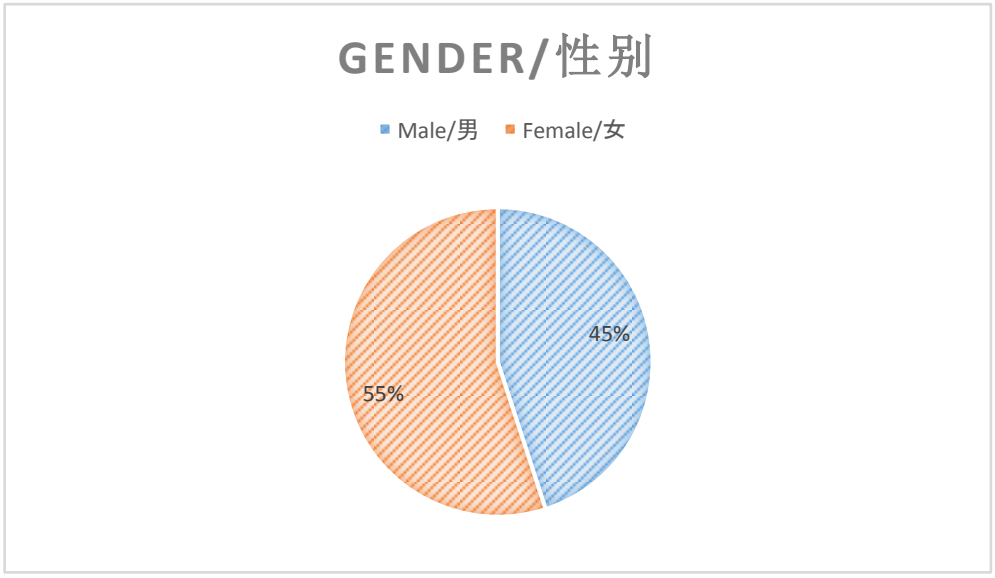
6.1. Advantages and limitations of the survey

The advantages of the survey are that I managed to assemble quite high number of random respondents from many areas all around China and also from Chinese living abroad. All the respondents are part of the LGBT community. Another advantage is the comprehensiveness of the research, as it covers many aspects of the homosexual community. I researched their personal information, education, workplace, religion as well as the degree of their openness in the society and their families. Finally, if they prefer to stay in China or move to some other place. As for gender balance, the sample of respondents is very well balanced, with slightly more female respondents than male.

The limitations of the research are that subjects tend to be very young, mostly born from 1980 to 2000 and older generations are more or less absent in the research. There are only 19% above 25 years old. Another limitation is that most of the subjects are from cities and there are no subjects who currently live in rural China. Finally, the majority of respondents in this case study are still students, there are 416 students out of 640 respondents.The sample is not representative.

6.2. General distribution, age and living situation

The gender balance is shown in the Figure 13 with female respondents slightly overcoming the number of male respondents. The research covers many areas around China, but the biggest number of respondents come from big cities. Sixty six people come from Shanghai, 65 people from the capital Beijing, 36 from Chengdu and 32 from Guangzhou. 242 people out of 640 still live in the same place where they were born and 164 out of 242 still live with their parents. Because the majority of respondents are still students, the most of them live still in dormitories (266 people, 41.5%) or with parents (244 people, 38%). Eighty two people (13%) live already alone and 43 people (7%) with a partner. The rest of the respondents (0.5%) chose the option “others” and it constitute 3 people. One lives only with a brother, the second lives in a hosting family and the last one lives with her parents and husband under one roof. The living situation of subjects is further shown in the Figure 14. The number of 27 people already live abroad, but 22 of them are still students, therefore I can assume that they will come back to China after their



studies.

Figure 13: Gender (%)

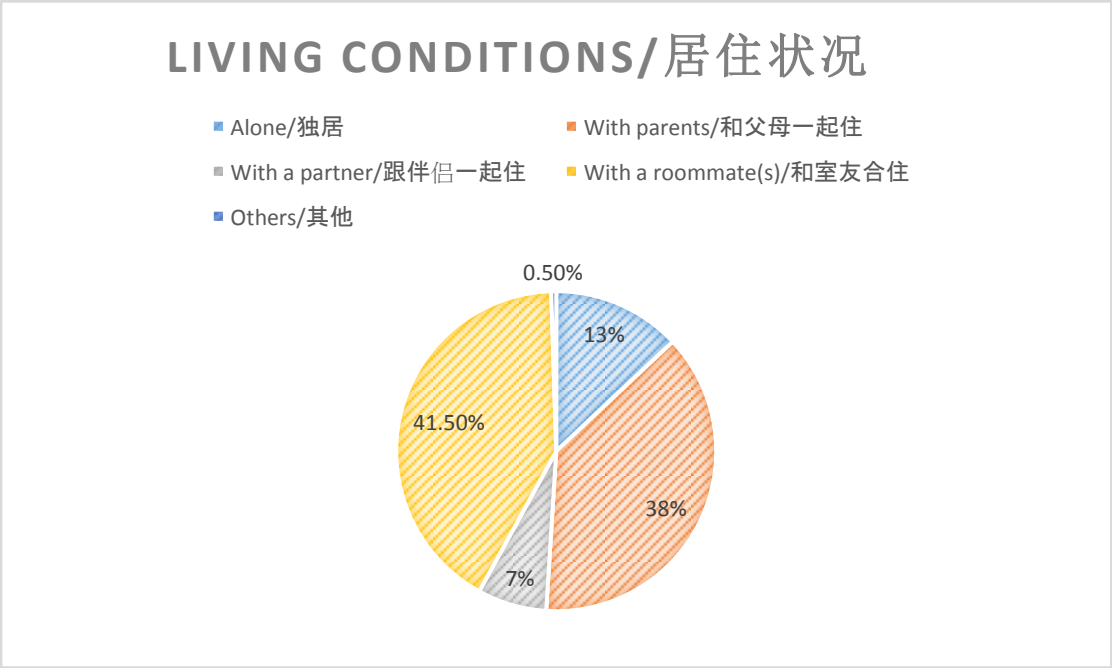


Figure 14: Living conditions (%)

The age of subjects can be seen in the Figure 15. As I already mentioned, the overwhelming majority are young people, usually still students. If we look at the youngest sample of people from 15-20, the percentage is 44%. Older generations were less involved in my survey.

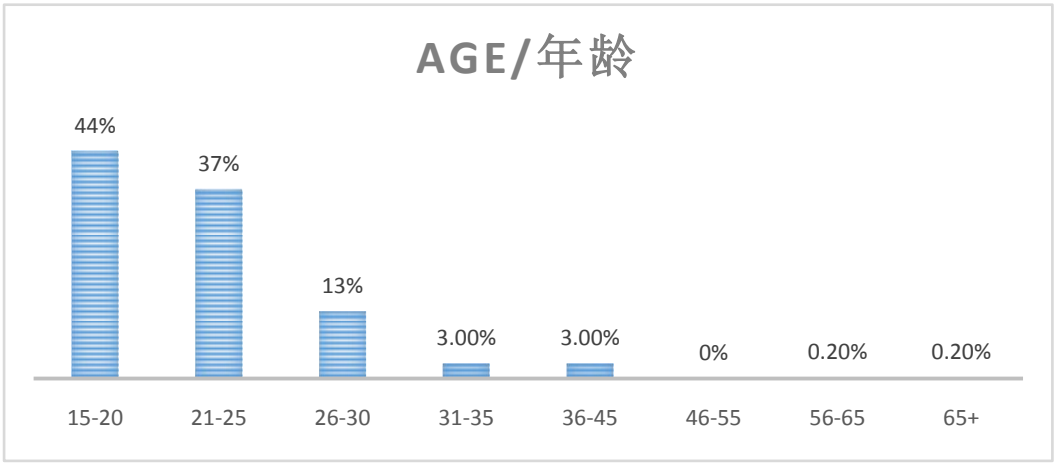


Figure 15: Age (%)

6.3. Acceptance of homosexuality within family

Generally speaking, it is apparent from the results that most of families rather do not accept homosexuality, especially if a member of their own family is homosexual. This observation corresponds with the survey described in the last chapter of my theoretical part (UNDP, 2016). Only 8% of all respondents' families can accept homosexuality and only tiny 4% thinks it is a natural state.

I was trying to find some link between the degree of acceptance and the education of parents. I divided family statuses into two categories: LEP (lower education profile) and HEP (higher education profile). LEP contains both parents with only elementary education or one parent with elementary and one parent with high school. HEP contain either parents both with high school degree, or at least one of the parents graduated from university. According to the analysis of the sample, I found out that the link between education and the degree of acceptance of homosexuality is relevant. With higher education, the acceptance increases.

Data contain 266 LEP (Fig. 16) families and 374 HEP families. Out of 266 LEP families, only 15 families can accept homosexuality or think it is completely natural, which constitutes 6%. On the contrary, 43 families (16%) still think homosexuality still must be cured. The rest of the respondents selected either "It is unnatural", "Do not accept it", or "What is homosexuality?" which makes total of 70% of all LEP families. The rest of respondents (8%) stated that they do not know about their parents' attitude.

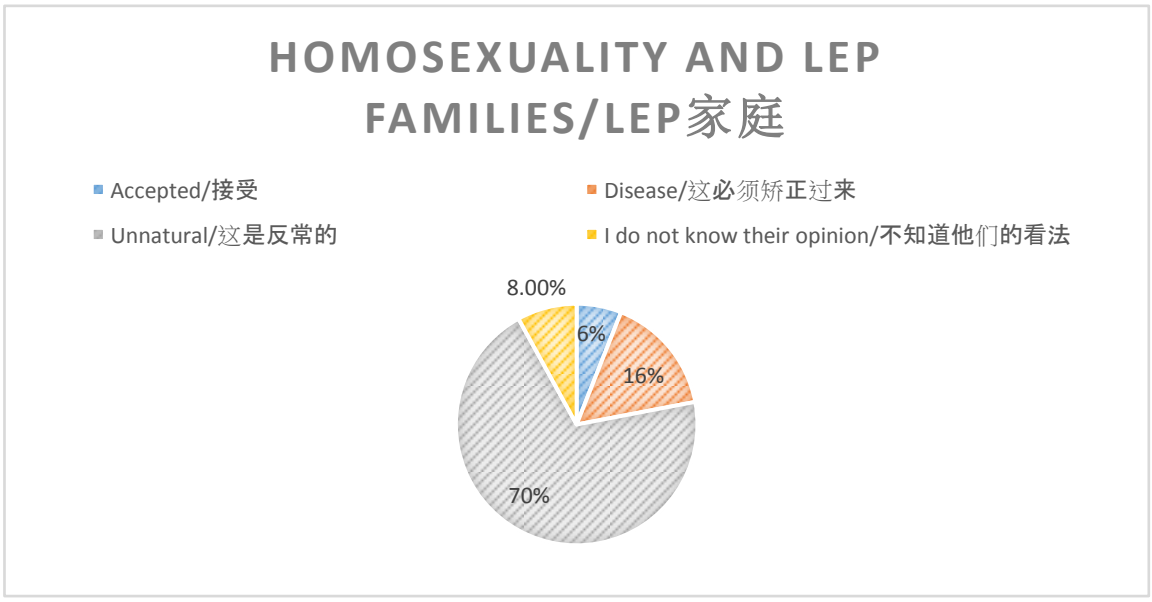


Figure 16: Homosexuality and LEP families (%)

As regard to HEP families (Fig. 17), the percentage is slightly different. Out of 374 families, 63 (17%) can accept homosexuality or think it is completely natural. In contrast, 53 families (14%) still think it has to be cured and even 5 of HEP families (1%) still consider homosexuality a crime. The rest of the sample, 253 families (64%), think it is either not natural, not acceptable, or they do not even know what homosexuality is. The following 4% do not know about their parents' view on this topic.

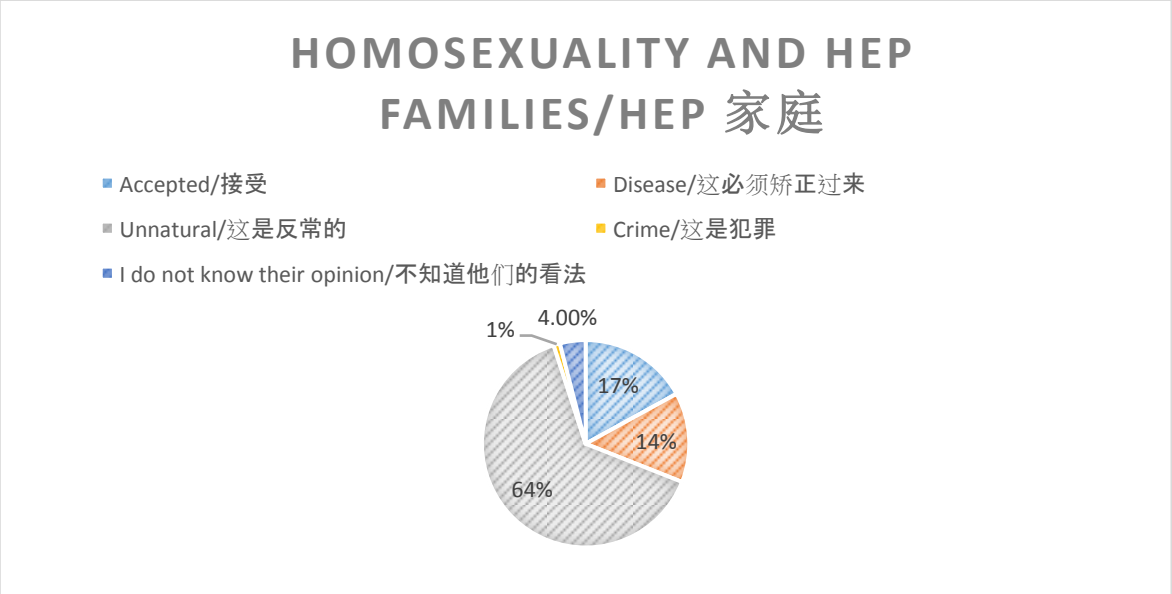


Figure 17: Homosexuality and HEP families (%)

More generally speaking, according to the analyzed sample, the most common view on homosexuality from the point of view of Chinese families is that it is an unnatural state. The education is very important in order to change the perception of homosexuality. However, as I described in my theoretical part, the general perception of homosexuality has already been hostile in China for a long time. We cannot expect that the situation would change rapidly as homosexuality is still taboo in China and education institutes mostly do not, did not and does not cover this topic at all. The sample of respondents actually does not feel positive about their sexuality, only 53% of respondents would not change their sexuality, 33% would think about it and 14% (90 people) would definitely change it if they could (Fig. 18).

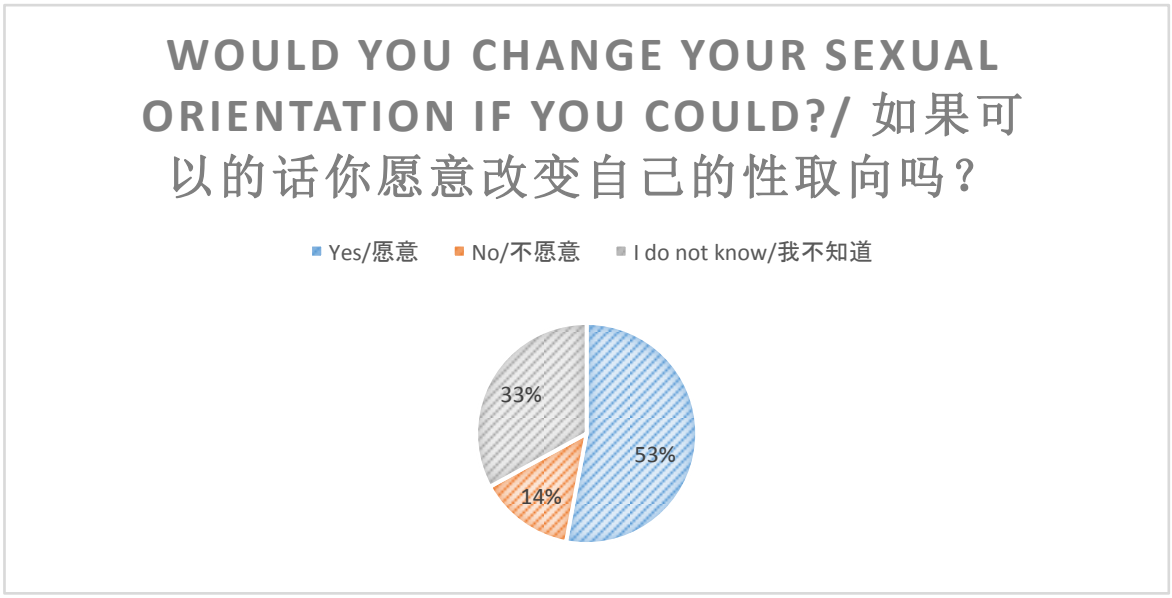


Figure 18: Would you change your sexual orientation if you could? (%)

If we look at the acceptance within the families, the following question "If you came out already in front of your parent what was their reaction?" provides us with another interesting facts. The total of 268 people (42%) from the sample still have not came out from the closet to their parents. Another 229 subjects(36%) belong to the category where subjects faced rejection, unacceptance or confusion. Previously, I was analyzing the perception towards homosexuality from the parents' point of view. Usually, the rejection comes from the perception that homosexuality is something unnatural or it is a disease which must be cured. On the other side of the scale, 107 (17%) people were accepted by their parents, even though in 59 cases the acceptance came with some amount of time (Fig. 19).

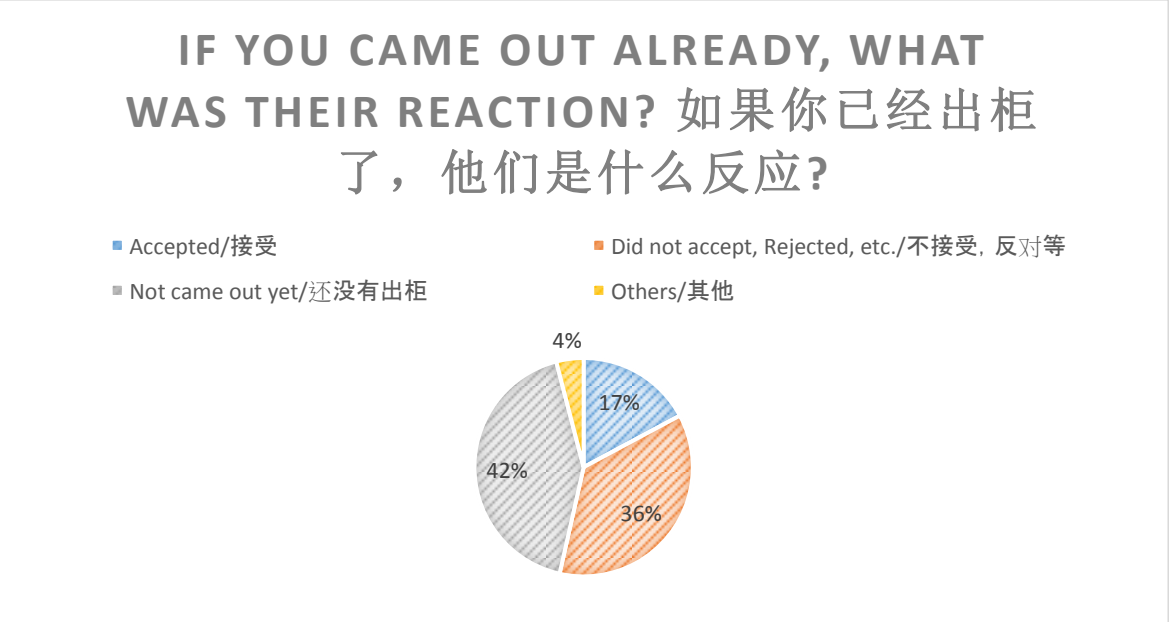


Figure 19: If you came out already, what was their reaction? (%)

The rest of the respondents belong to the category of "others" where there was a space for open answers. Besides answers like for example that parents fear that their children stay alone when they are old, the subjects for example stated the following: "My parents just took it, but I wouldn't say they accepted it"; "Now I don't feel like being a lesbian, so I don't have to come out in front of them"; "They were shocked and about to cry, so I said I was kidding", said a female subject in her twenties from Chengdu; questioning own sexuality is a normal thing, a female student from Xi'an said "I don't know, I think I am maybe straight"; another female subject from Xi'an said that her parent would probably kill her; another interesting case comes from medical family in southern Foshan, both parents are doctors and their homosexual daughter as well. Father accepted her, but mother was trying to persuade her to undergo a session with psychologist and wished she could be heterosexual again.

According to my additional interviews, they reacted in this manner: "My parents feel sorry for us, maybe they understand that people like us would have much harder life. My grandparents don't even wanna talk about it". (Interviewee 1, Melbourne – originally from China, 27); "Before my mother knew that I was a lesbian, she was very curious about homosexuality, she found it kind of funny. But now, both of my parents are fully aware of the gravity of the situation. My dad wants to have a grandchild, but he is not eager about it, because I am a girl". (Interviewee 2, Nanjing, 33); "I came out in front of my parents, but I don't feel very good about it, they absolutely rejected it. They think it's very very very strange". (Interviewee 3, Beijing, 40 years); "I wish I could come out in front of my parents one day, but they are very traditional people, I can't even picture their reaction. However, my mother knows some gay people in China. She is ok with gay relationship, but not ok with her daughter to be lesbian. My father thinks it is sick". (Interviewee 4, Auckland - originally from China, 29); "I haven't come out if front of my parents yet, because their way of thinking is very traditional, and they will refuse the fact that I am gay, moreover they will feel hurt as well. I tried to discuss with them and tried to find their view on homosexuality. Unfortunately, they think it is kind of sickness, which needs to be cured. Actually, they are fine with me not having children, because my younger brother already have children. For me is not very important, the earth is full of people already." (Interviewee 5, Macau - originally from mainland China, 40 years); "Of course I want to come out in front of my parents once, but I am nervous. I know they must be very shocked and sad, but I will never change. So take it or leave it. I love my family, but I won't compromise even if I lose them forever. I actually don't know their opinion about

homosexuality, we never talk about it. As for kids, I think it's very ridiculous that somebody urge you have a son and continue the family lineage. It's 21st century now for god's sake. I don't want a child, it's not important to me at all. I don't care whether it is important to my parents to have a grandson. If they want a grandson, then they should ask my younger brother to have one." (Interviewee 6, Guangzhou, 24)

Again, I was trying to find the link between parents' acceptance and education. In comparison to the previous part of the survey about the parents' perception towards homosexuality, in this case the results are quite the same at both sides. Out of 266 LEP families, 40 (15%) accepted their child who came out. In case of HEP families (374 families), 67 families (18%) accepted. The difference in this case is not that significant. However, one fact must be taken into consideration, one third of respondents has not come out in front of their parents, and therefore the chart could be completely different if they already did came out. In the part of "others", subjects were often stating that parent's probably do not mind that homosexuality exists, they can accept it or tolerate it, but what they do not accept is their child to be one of them. That is why the degree of acceptance between these two types of families are similar. According to the sample, higher education although is linked with broader knowledge and openness, accepting their own child to be homosexual seems to be the same problem for both no matter what education they have.

Another aspect, which could play an important role in perception of homosexuality within families, is religion. The majority of the sample, precisely 515 people, does not believe in any god. As for traditional Asian religions such as Taoism or Buddhism, not many respondents follow this philosophy. As for Judeo-Christian religions and Islam, 22 respondents claimed to believe in one of these religions and I also suppose the faith was passed on them from parents. Only 18 people believed in Christianism and 5 in Islam. The purpose for asking this question was to find out any link between the religion and acceptance of homosexuality, because in these religions homosexuality is considered a sin. Results are not very reliable due to the limited number of respondents. Three Christian families (14%) accepted homosexuality as well as their child as homosexual. In Muslim families, nobody accepted homosexuality, although one woman responded that parents let her go her own way. This woman is divorced and lives in Changsha with her father and her girlfriend.

Despite the limited number of respondents, from this pattern I can state that families of these religions rather do not accept homosexuality and their child to be homosexual, but it is not because they would think it is a sin. However, in reference to the theoretical part,

during the exposure of China to the world, Chinese re-conceptualized western doctrines and ideas, created their own and put traditional family to the center. Chinese ancient philosophy based on cult of ancestors blended with western image of traditional family and love limited only to heterosexual couples, and oppression of homosexuality in the past are the main reasons why the society today have problems accepting homosexuality.

6.4. Coming out, relationships and social interaction

Another interesting fact is that more than half of the sample have experienced a heterosexual relationship (51%) (Fig. 20). However, I was also asking how long such relationship lasted. The whole 33% ended very quickly, did not last more than one month and another 27% did not last more than half a year (Fig. 21).

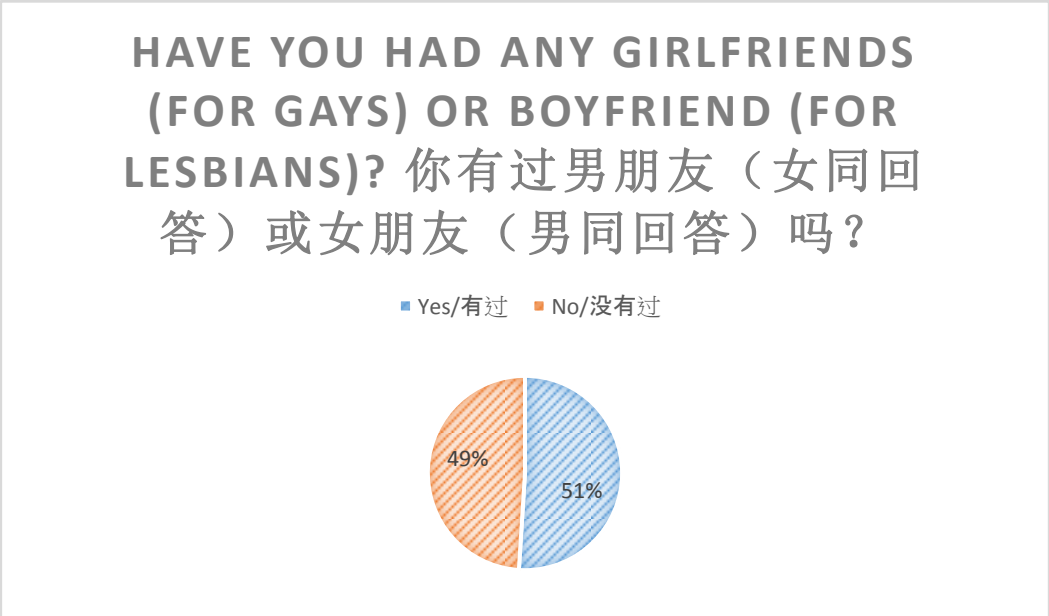


Figure 20: Have you had any girlfriends (for gays) or boyfriend (for lesbians)? (%)

In the following question, I was asking if they experienced heterosexual sexual intercourse. Three thirds of the respondents never had a heterosexual sex. If I sum up the situation and try to draft a conclusion, 326 people (51%) had already a heterosexual relationship in their lives, 40% of these people (130 people) had a relationship that lasted for more than half a year. However, only 25% from stated that had sex with the opposite sex partner. Chinese homosexuals tend to go into heterosexual relationships from several reasons, but an actual intercourse rather does not occur.

According to my additional interviews with Chinese gays and lesbians, they are describing their situation in following words:

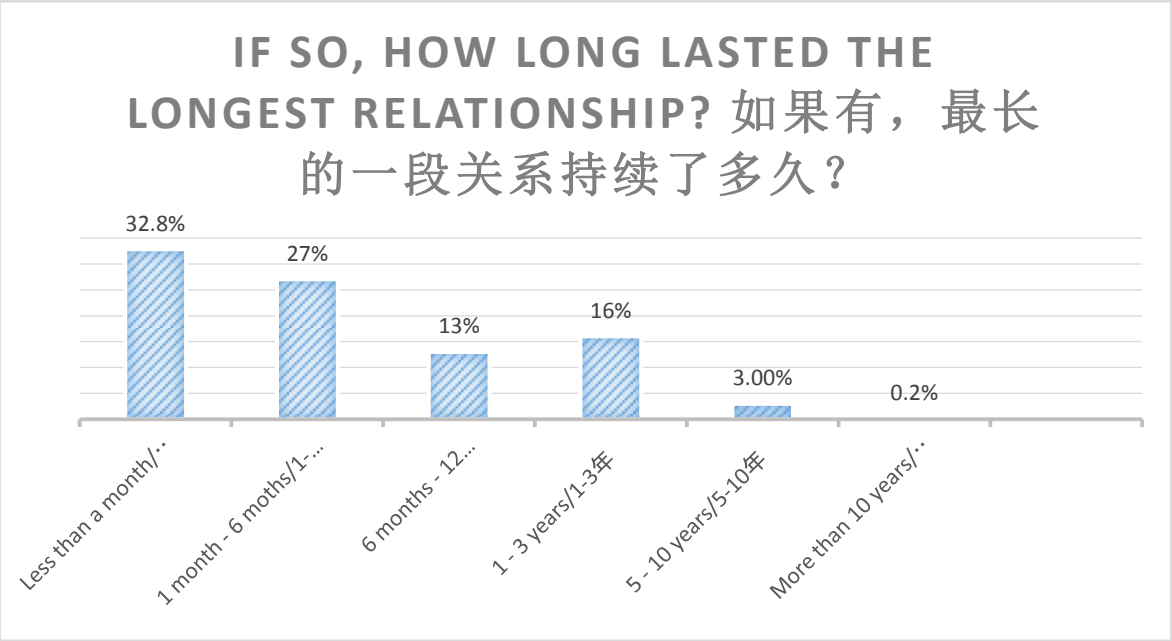


Figure 21: If so, how long lasted the longest relationship? (%)

"I never had any girlfriend in my life, and yes my parents and relatives push me to get a girl when they are having a conversation with me. They say that if I don't get married before 30, I will be seen as an abnormal man. But I know I'm 100% gay since 5th grade. In Chinese culture it is very important to maintain the lineage continuity and it is also very important for my parents. I am thinking of coming out to them every single day! Sometimes, I even feel like they have already found out. I'm anxious, I think I will break their heart". (1); "I am a lesbian, I had a boyfriend when I was in high school. My relatives have been pushing me to have a boyfriend, I haven't told them about my sexual orientation. I never had sex with man though (4); "Yes I had 3 girlfriends before, because I didn't know that homosexuality existed, and I didn't meet any homosexual until I was 22 years old, because the society didn't show it. I had sex with women at around 10 times. (5); "I never had a girlfriend and I never had sex with a woman". (6)

These interviews are very important, because they provide us with more detailed picture of the general situation in China. In addition, the interviews cover various age groups. The age of respondents ranges from 24 – 67 years. The interview with the oldest interviewee was the most interesting one. It was also different from all the others I conducted. He was sharing his life story from the times he was young and suffered lots of discrimination until today when he even became an advocate for LGBT rights.

"When I was in high school (1966), the Cultural Revolution started and homosexuality was considered a huge crime. I was expelled from school and all my previous achievements were automatically cancelled. That time, the discrimination towards

homosexuals was huge. Later at work, I was suffering a lot, because I was bullied by my colleagues. I didn't even get higher salary and others did. The unit didn't provide me with accommodation, but did provide for others. Sometimes, I suffered from the verbal abuse. I am Catholic and I also suffered the discrimination from the church. The only way how to avoid it was not to go to church to pray. For so many years I was treated unjustly, I also wanted to die, I hated myself for the way I was. One day, I found on the internet that homosexuality is natural and everybody is born this way. We came to the point that if society can't accept us, we are those who have to change the society. Recently, I visited PFLAG conference, and with friends, we were together fighting for our rights. However, in order to be a filial son, I wanted to continue my family lineage. I married a woman that I didn't like and had a child together. In China, many homosexuals choose to marry the opposite sex partner, because they don't want to suffer discrimination and want to satisfy their parents. I married in 1978, but my wife had many extramarital affairs, because I couldn't sexually satisfy her. In 1990, I wanted to divorce, but she didn't want to. Eventually, we separated." (Interviewee 7, Wuhan, 67)

These women are called homowives and are big victims. Before the Economic reforms in 1978, many homosexuals stayed hidden, but with internet everything changed. Also, many people started to have lots of sexual partners and spread HIV.

Today, the situation in China is changing very quickly and the position of LGBT community in the society is becoming more visible. Many homosexuals can easily find a partner thanks to the internet and pink industry, which runs a significant number of gay bars. When I was asking questions regarding homosexual relationships and homosexual intercourse, according to the sample they have good access to find either sexual partner or relationship. The total of 62% of respondents have already had a same-sex partner in their lives (Fig. 22).

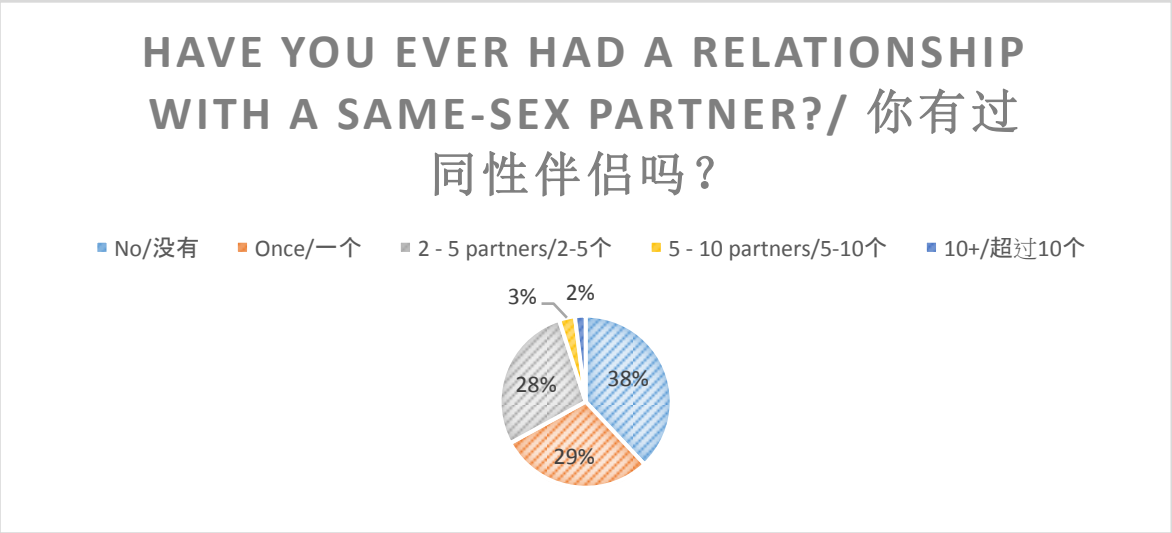


Figure 22: Have you ever had a relationship with a same-sex partner? (%)

The results show that 92,5% came from China, 6,5% stated they dated both Chinese and both foreigners and 1% dated only foreigner so far (Fig. 23).

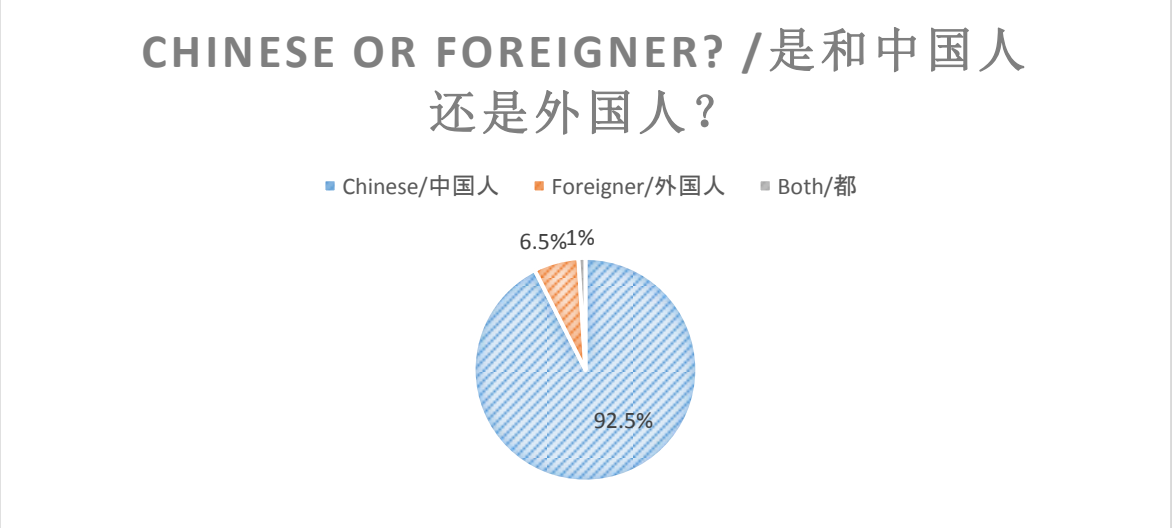


Figure 23: Chinese or foreigner? (%)

Figure 24 naturally shows that homosexual-homosexual relationships last longer. When Chinese homosexuals engaged in heterosexual relationships, the majority of them lasted less than 1 month (33%) and in case of homosexual relationships only 18%. If I compare long lasting relationships, homosexual ones always lasted longer.

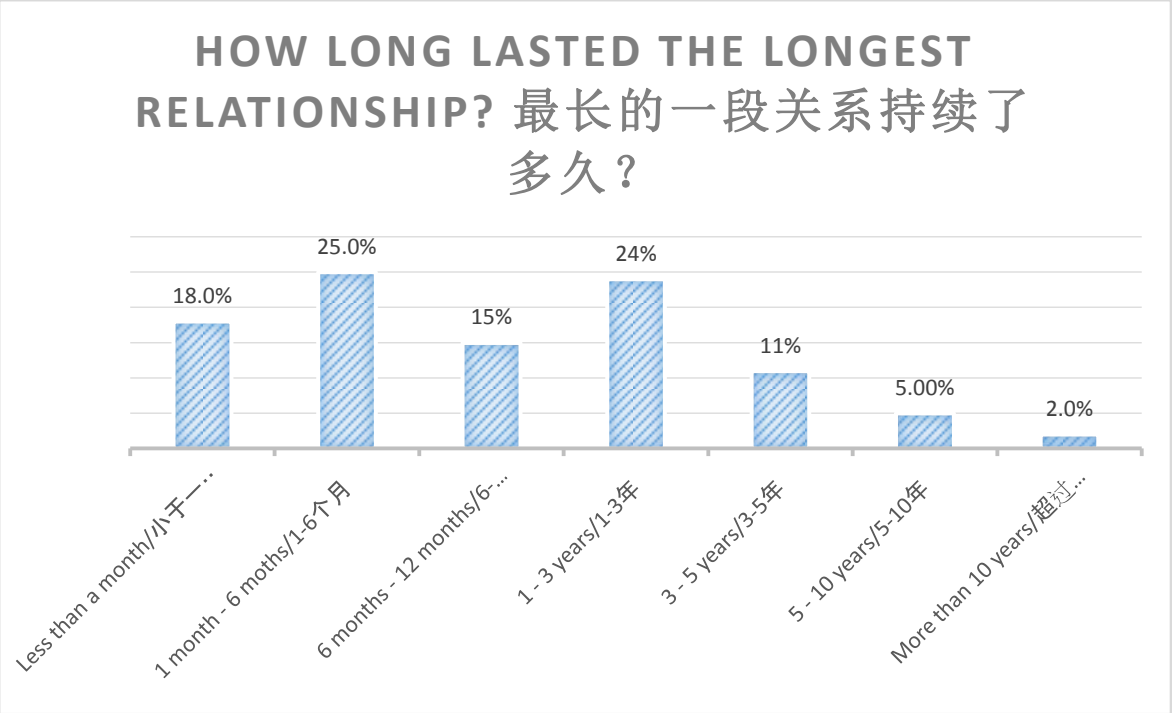


Figure 24: How long lasted the longest relationship? (%)

According to my survey, homosexual relationships tend to be rather open and they would also show their love in public, which is a significant sign of openness. As my second interviewee mentioned: “Of course I would show my love in public, love is pride”. More than a half (55%) of respondents who had a same-sex partner would show their love in public (Fig. 25).

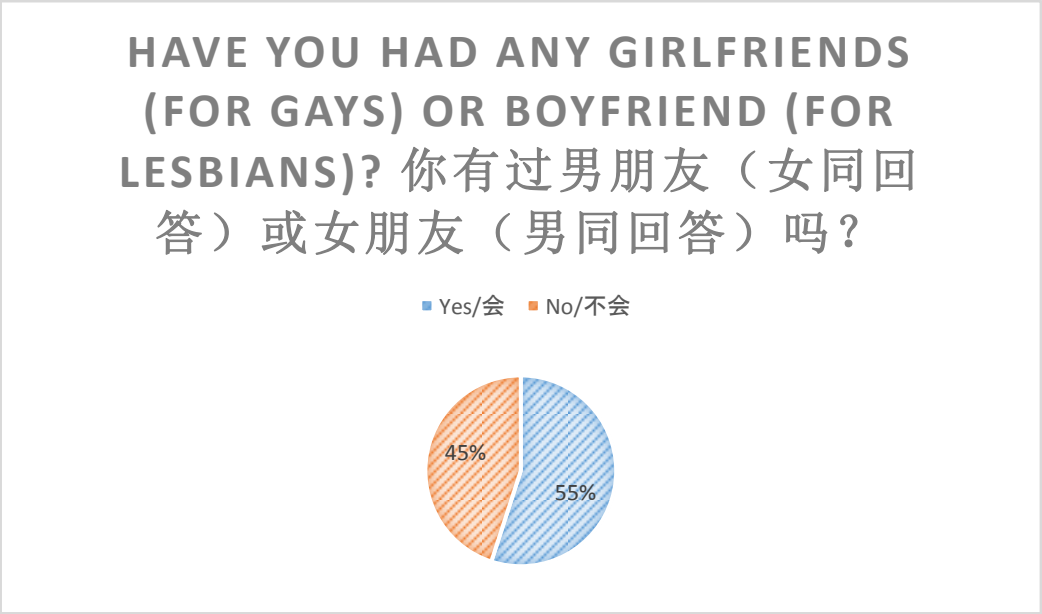
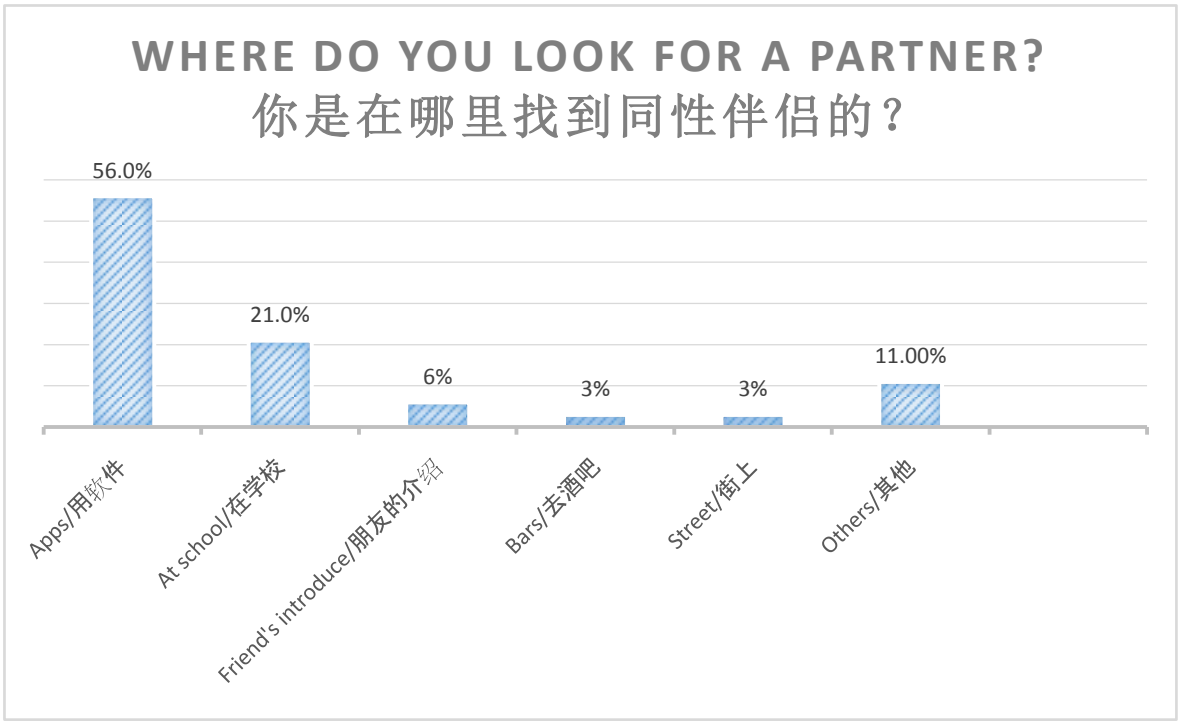


Figure 25:Have you had any girlfriends (for gays) or boyfriend (for lesbians)? (%)

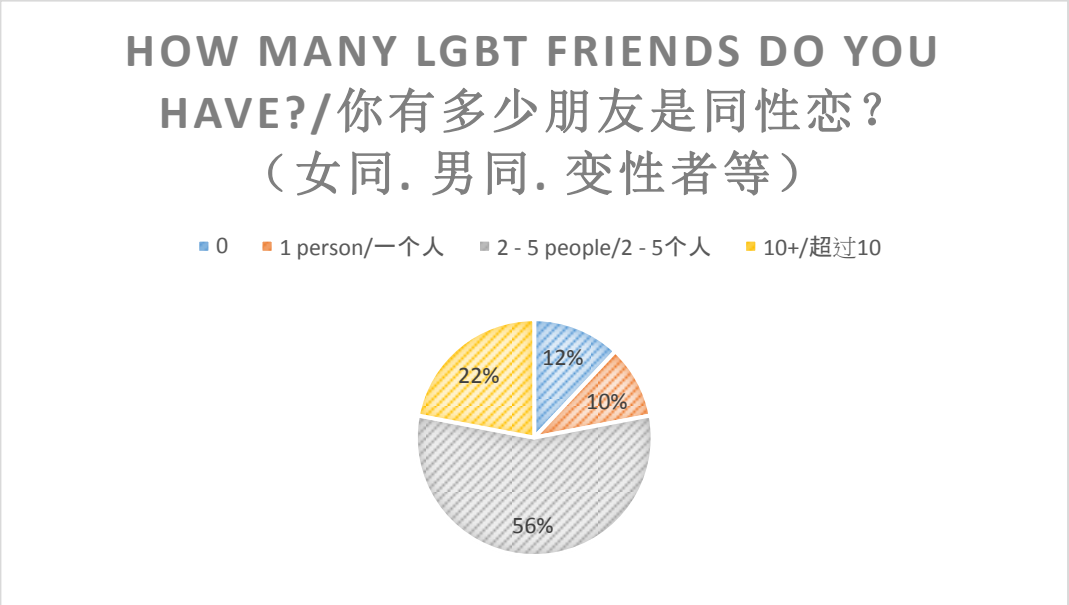
When respondents are trying to find a partner, they usually use dating apps. The total of 56% would choose this option. Another 21% meet their partners in school, 6% of encounters happen from friends' introduce. Only 3% meet directly in bars and 3% by the coincidence on streets. 11% chose the possibility "others", which included for example a comic convention (*manzhan* 漫展) which is a huge event dedicated to the world of comic books. Other options included knowing each other from work or also from online games



(Fig. 26).

Figure 26: Where do you look for a partner? (%)

The social interaction inside the LGBT community is also quite abundant, 88% of respondents have at least one friend from the community. From that more than a half (56%) have between 2 – 5 friends and 22% have more than 10 LGBT (Fig. 27). This chart shows that being out of the closet in China is more and more common and the social interactions in the community are very strong and numerous. The perception of homosexuality must be shifting, because more and more homosexuals come out, albeit only to members of the



community.

Figure 27: How many lgbt friends do you have? (%)

The sample represents the trend that Chinese become open in revealing their own sexuality. The majority of subjects (74%) already disclosed their real sexuality to someone. Only 24% have never told anyone and another 2% are firmly determined to never come out to anyone (Fig. 28).

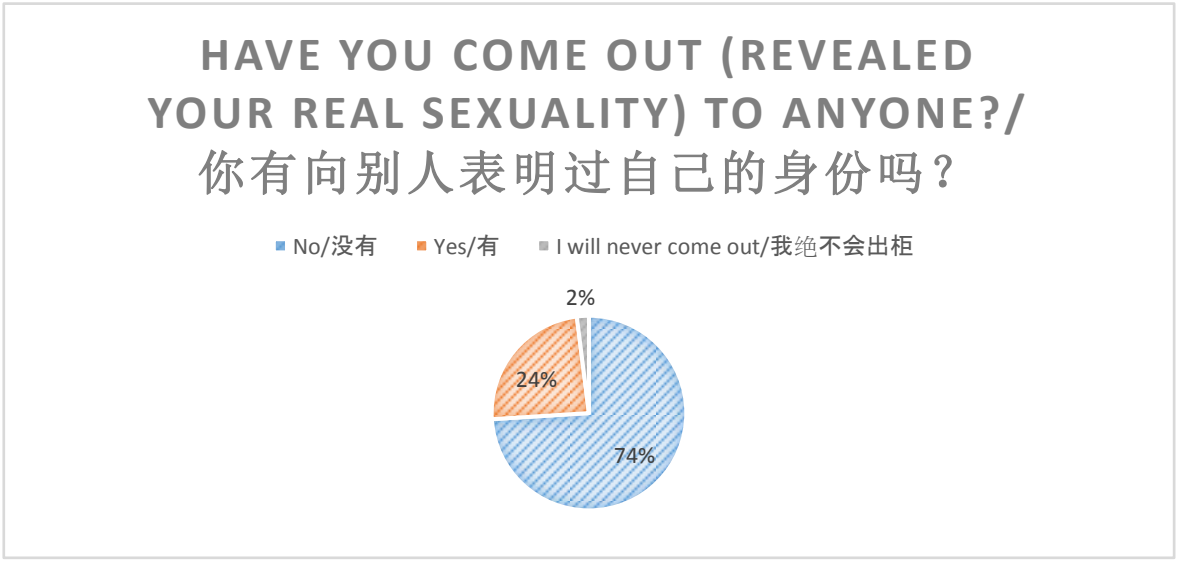


Figure 28: Have you come out (revealed your real sexuality) to anyone? (%)

However, considering that respondents have many friends amongst homosexuals, the coming out occurred probably mostly within the community. On the workplace and in schools, 45.5% of people are open with their sexuality and their colleagues or classmates know about them. Another 5% constitutes the number where the information is confided amongst classmates/colleagues as well as amongst teachers or bosses. Total number of 45% are closeted at school or at workplaces (Fig. 29).

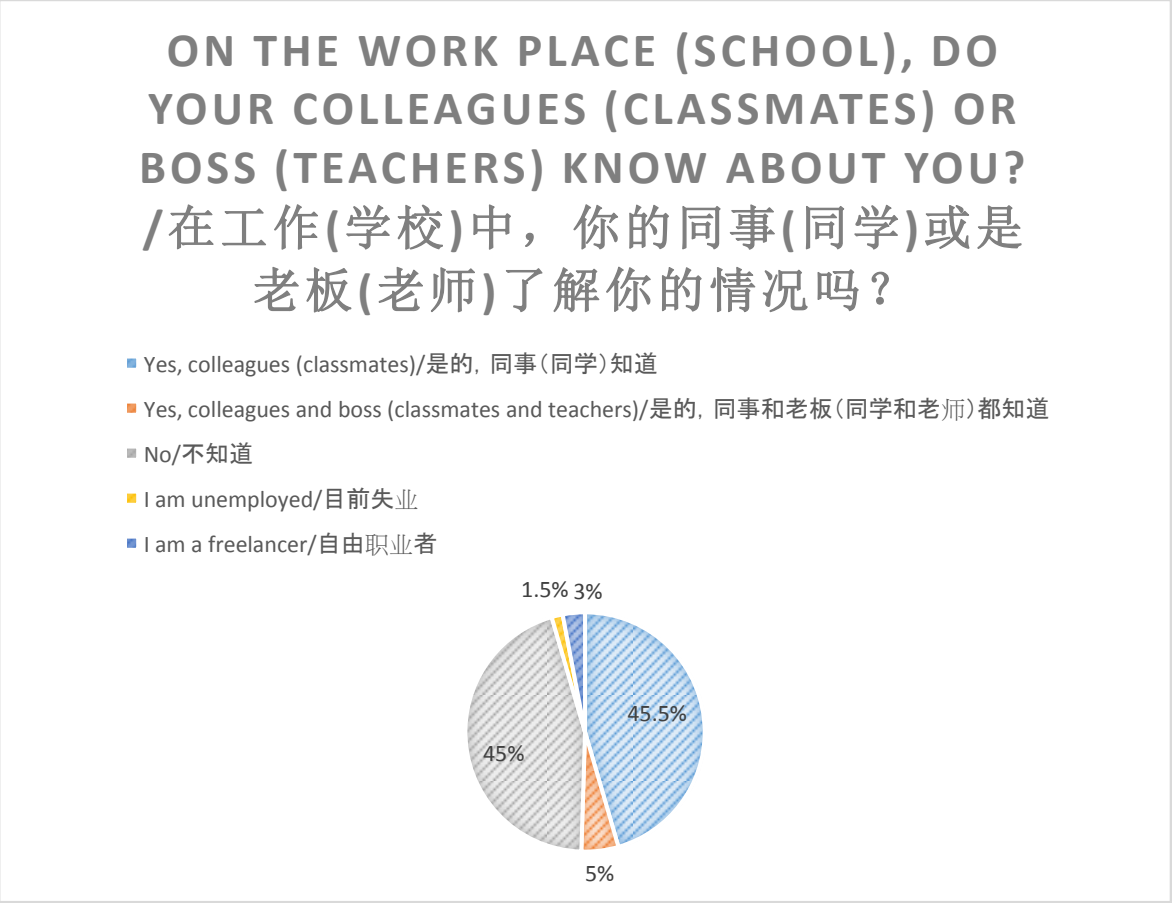


Figure 29: On the work place (school), do your colleagues (classmates) or boss (teachers) know about you? (%)

The number of people that had to change school or workplace because of their sexual orientation is not high in the sample. The majority (97.5%) has never experienced this situation, but 2.5% (16 people) have already had that experience. (Fig. 30).

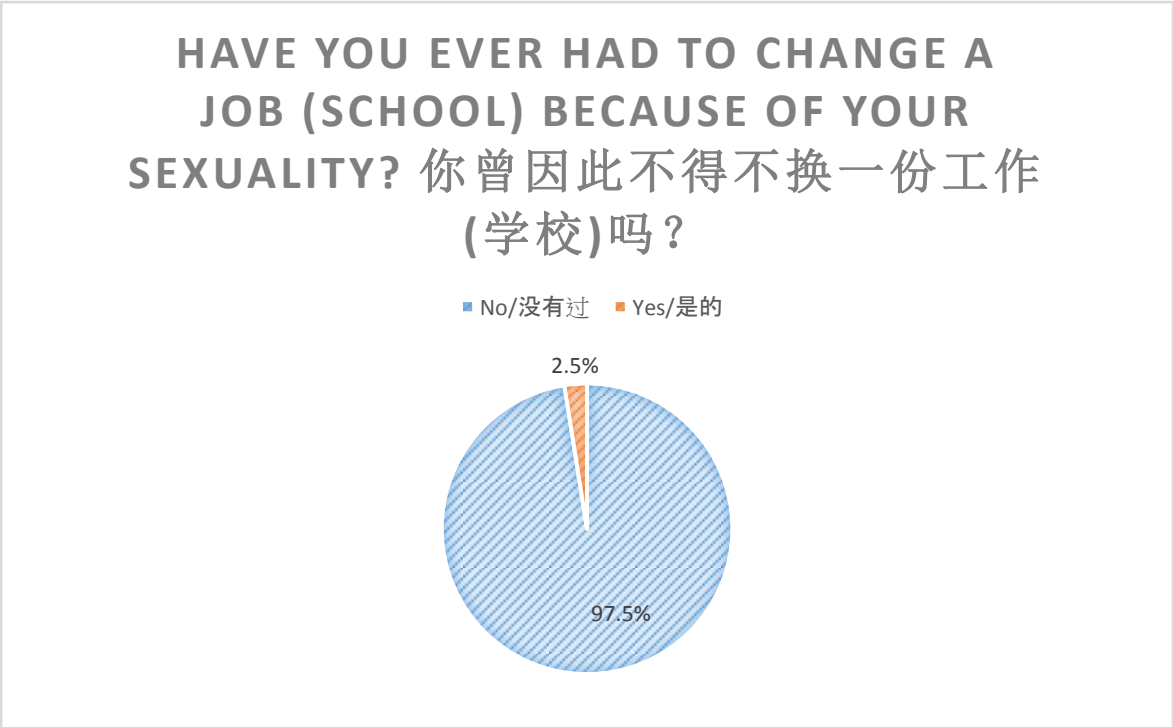


Figure 30: Have you ever had to change a job (school) because of your sexuality? (%)

In the process of applying for a job, 1.25% of the sample were rejected because of their sexuality and another 1% rejected even more than once (Fig. 31)

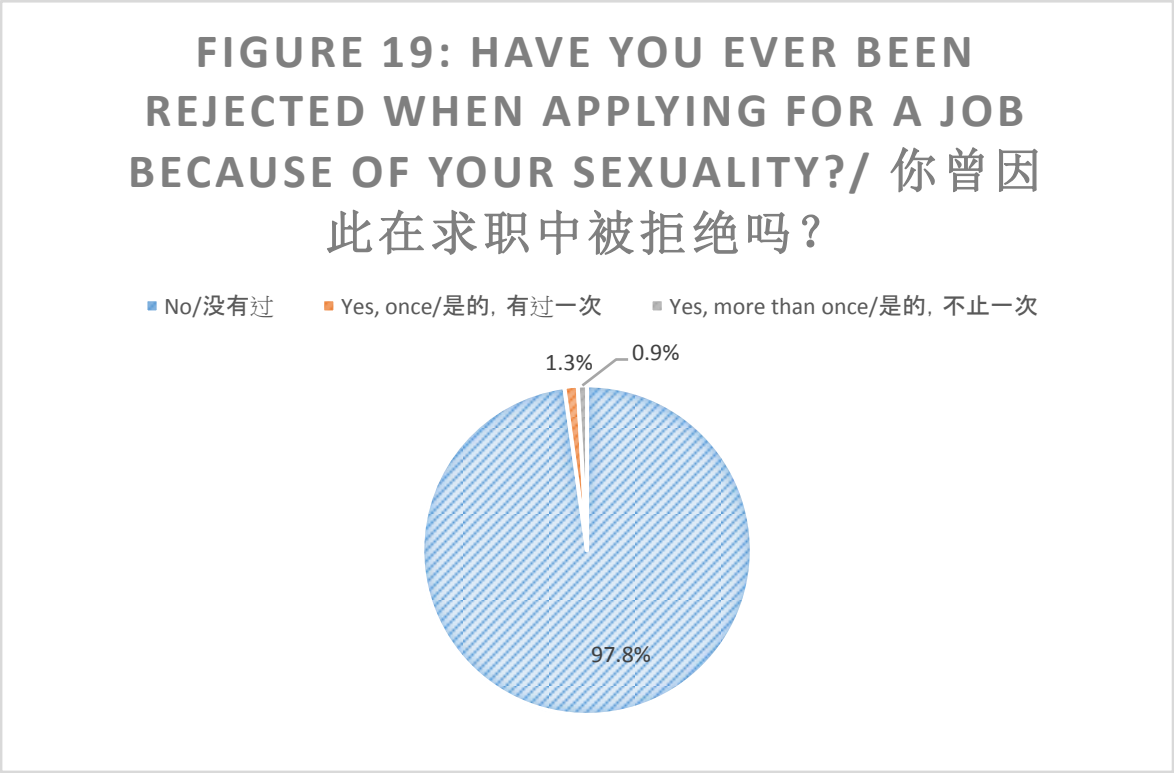


Figure 31: Have you ever been rejected when applying for a job because of your sexuality? (%)

6.5. Marriage and children

In this part, I am going to analyze the importance of getting married and bearing children. Same-sex marriages are still not possible in China and pressure from their families to marry and bear a child is huge. This survey contains usually very young people, who still have time to get married or even cannot get married yet, because it is not legally possible. The issue of the pressure is generally more urgent at older subjects (25+), but there is only 19% of the people over this age included in my survey.

From the Figure 32 we can see that the majority of respondents are still single (74%), 24% are in a relationship and 2% are already married. From 11 married people, only one person, who lives in the New York City, is in the legalized same-sex marriage.

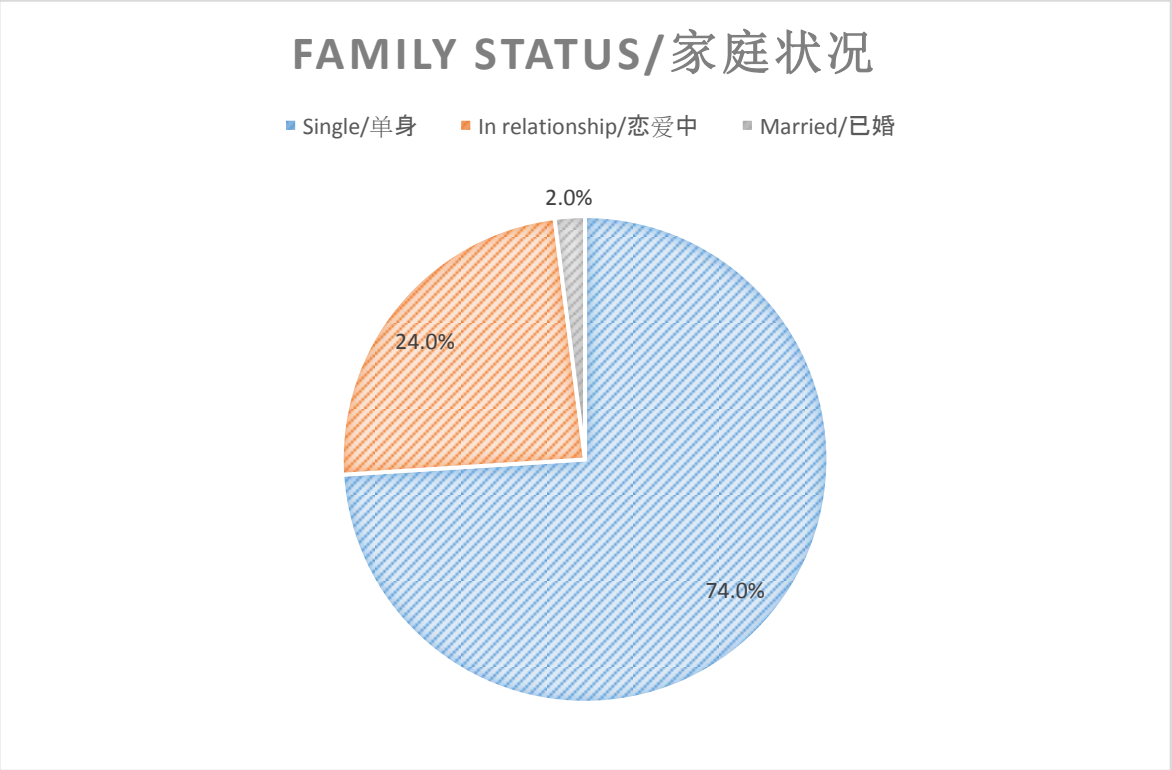


Figure 32: Family status (%)

Because the same-sex marriage is impossible in China, homosexuals often enter traditional marriages, most likely because of the pressure to marry or because they fear public opinion. In my survey, when I asked the question if they would think of entering the traditional marriage just in order to satisfy their parents and live “normal” life, one fourth of respondents would think of this possibility (Fig. 33).

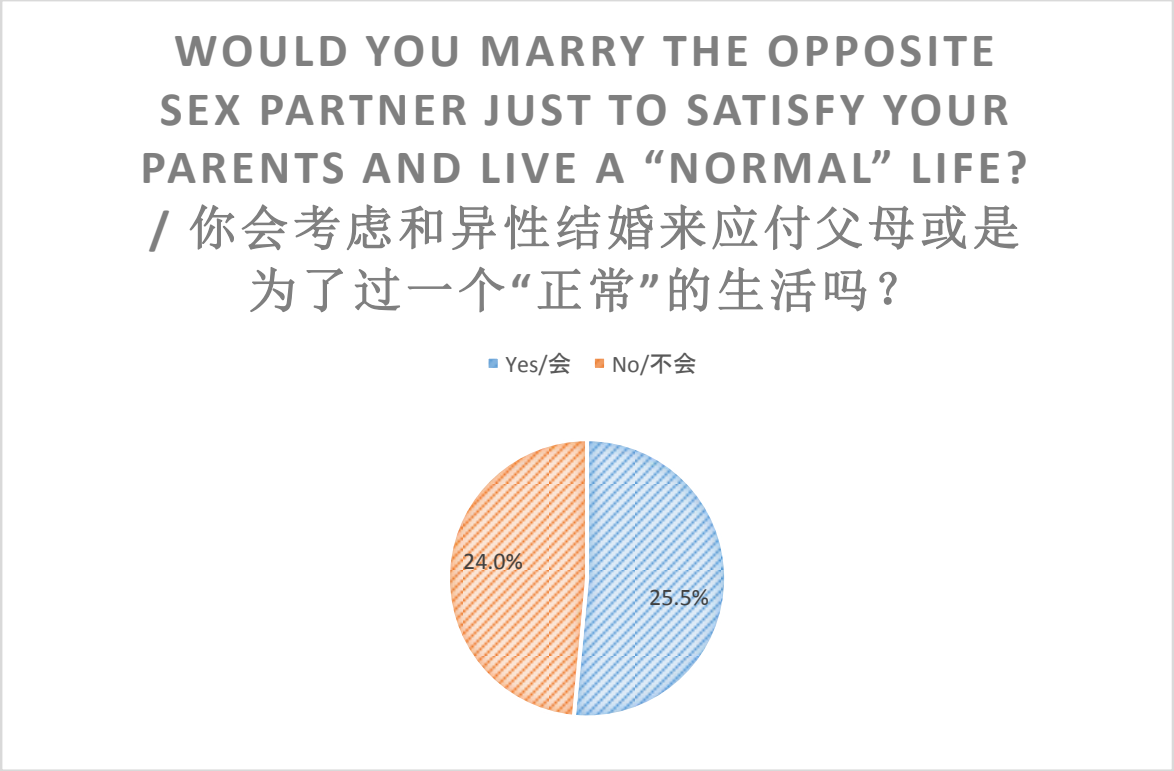


Figure 33: Would you marry the opposite sex partner just to satisfy your parents and live a "normal" life? (%)

The whole number of 262 people (42%) in my survey responded positively on the question if they know some homosexual being married to opposite sex (Fig. 34). I do not have the precise number of people they know living this life, but many people responded that they know more than one person and 18 know even more that 10 people in such a marriage. In the theoretical part I was already describing the phenomenon of contract marriages (or marriages of convenience), where a gay and a lesbian enter the marriage just to escape the public opinion and the pressure from their parents. It is possible that some of these people, which respondents mentioned, entered exactly this type of marriage. Moreover, according to the study of United Nations that I provided in the theoretical part, 84.1% of married minority respondents were married traditionally, while 13.2% are in contract marriages and 2.6% in same-sex marriages abroad. Therefore, it is more likely that the majority entered a traditional marriage.

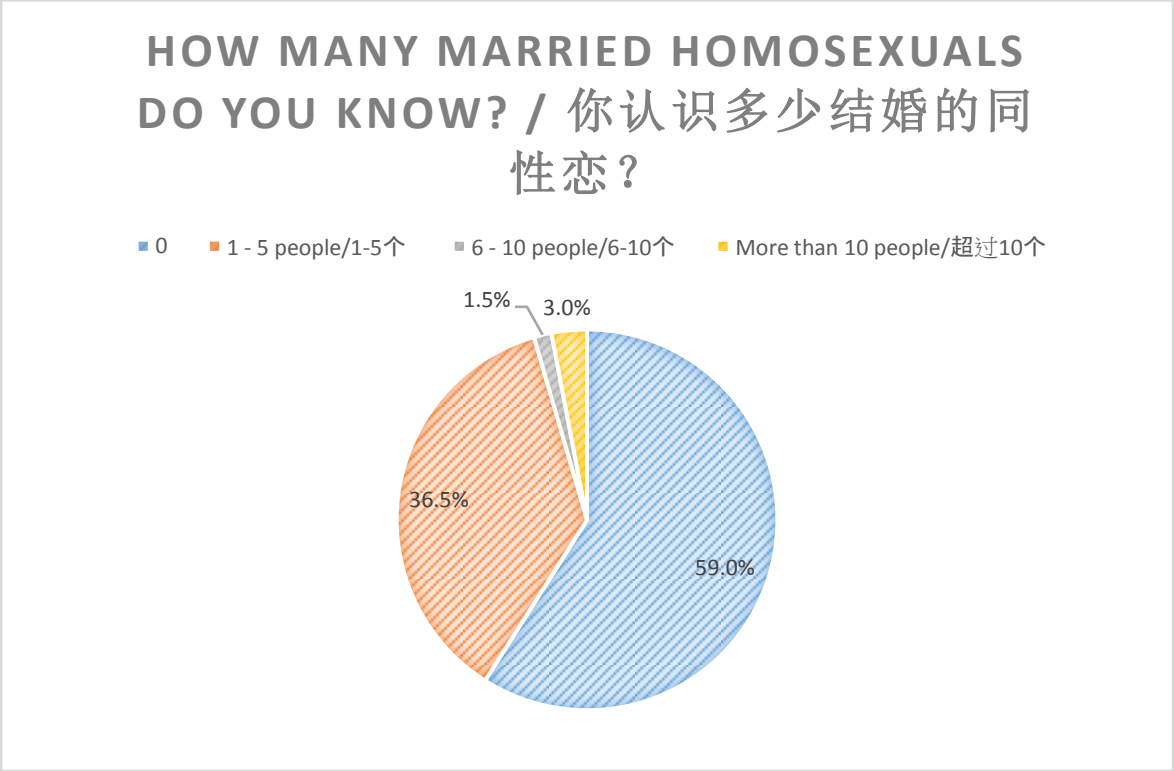


Figure 34: How many married homosexuals do you know? (%)

One of my interviewee (7) stated that he has been married for almost 40 years, but he separated with his wife after 12 years, because he could not satisfy her sexually and therefore she has had many extramarital affairs. Especially in the past, but even now, homosexuals have had no other option but to enter the traditional marriage.

Some parents in China are even pushing their child to find a partner in order to get married. The number of 29% responded that parents were active in finding a partner for them. However, the majority is still free in their choice, which might be also due to the low age of my respondents (Fig. 35).

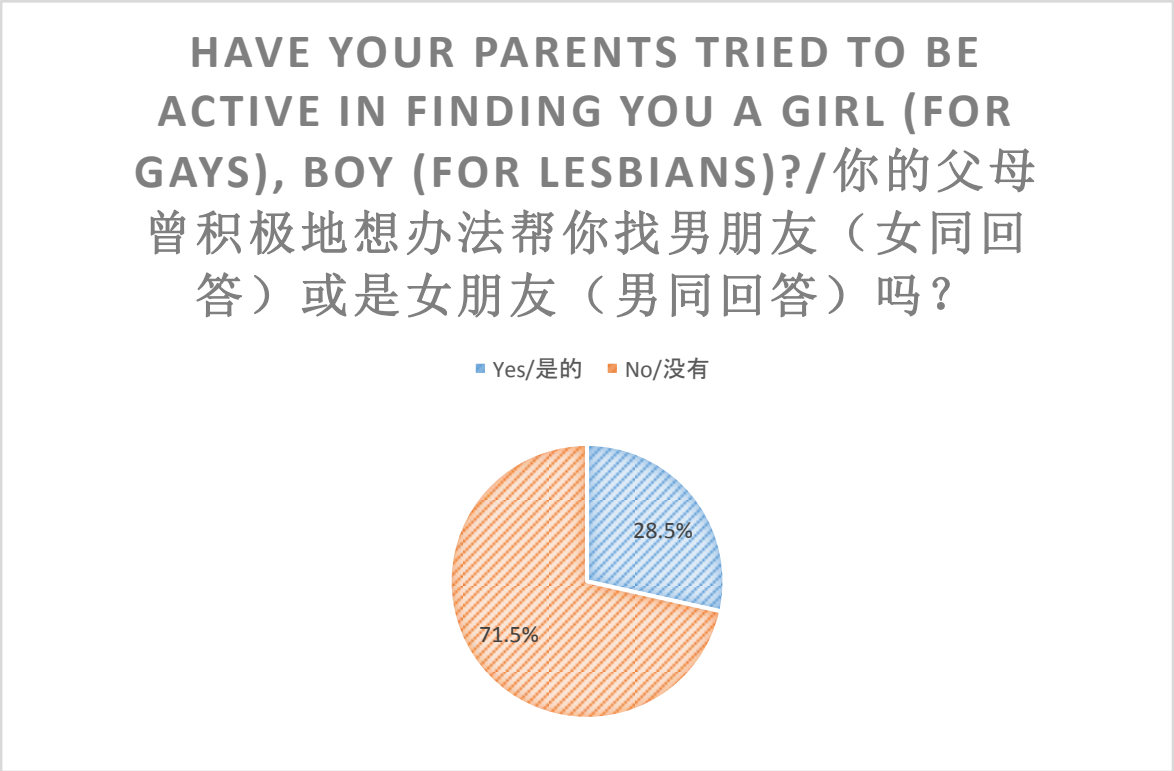


Figure 35: Have your parents tried to be active in finding you a girl (for gays), boy (for lesbians)? (%)

In China, it is hard to become unfilial. Two of my interviewees shared their stories: "Nope, I would never enter the traditional marriage just to satisfy my parents and escape the public opinion. Maybe it's because I am not good at acting. Actually, one of my best friends is doing this right now, and maybe more are about to do this. This might be the only way for those who are turning 30 now. For me I chose to quit my job in China and move to Australia." (1); "No never thought about that. I know someone who is living a "normal" life, and he does one night stand to fulfill his need." (5)

In reference to my theoretical part, another extremely important aspect in Chinese culture is to produce a child and many parents push their children to have one. In the reference to the theoretical part, couples in contracted marriages often consent to produce one. According to my research, 36% of respondents definitely want one, 16% do not know, 18% do not mind having one and only 29.5% do not want a child (Fig. 36).

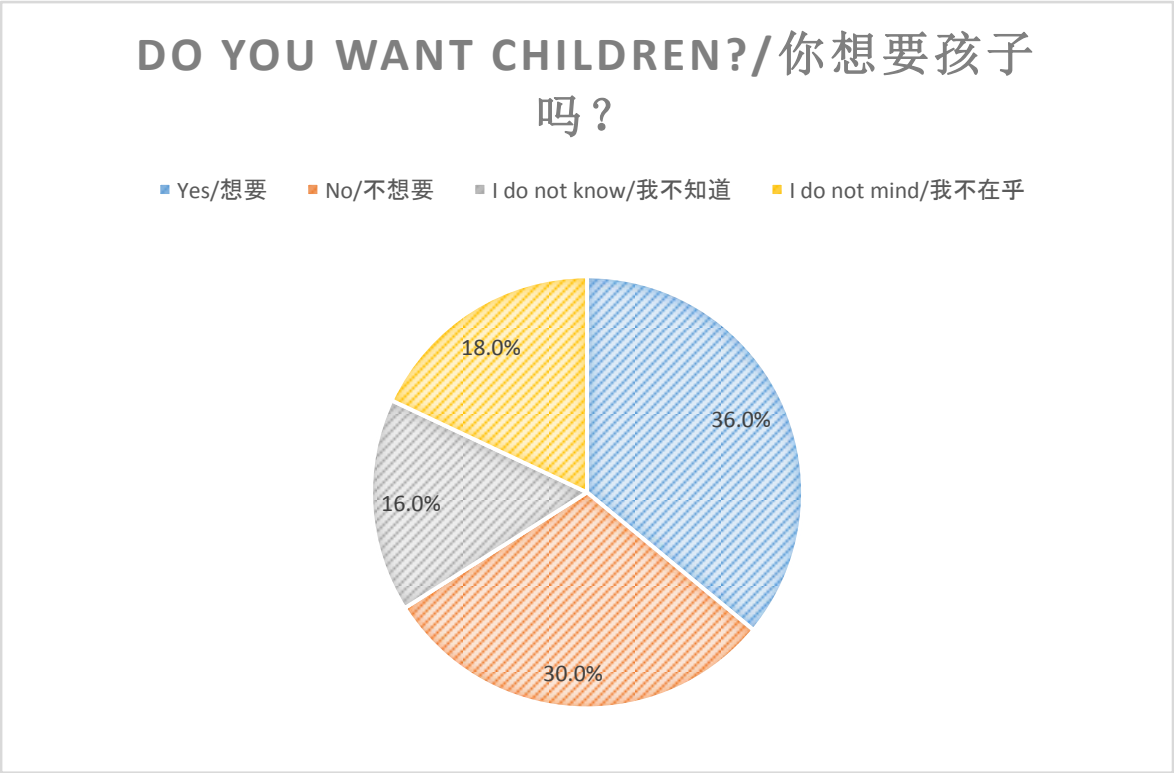
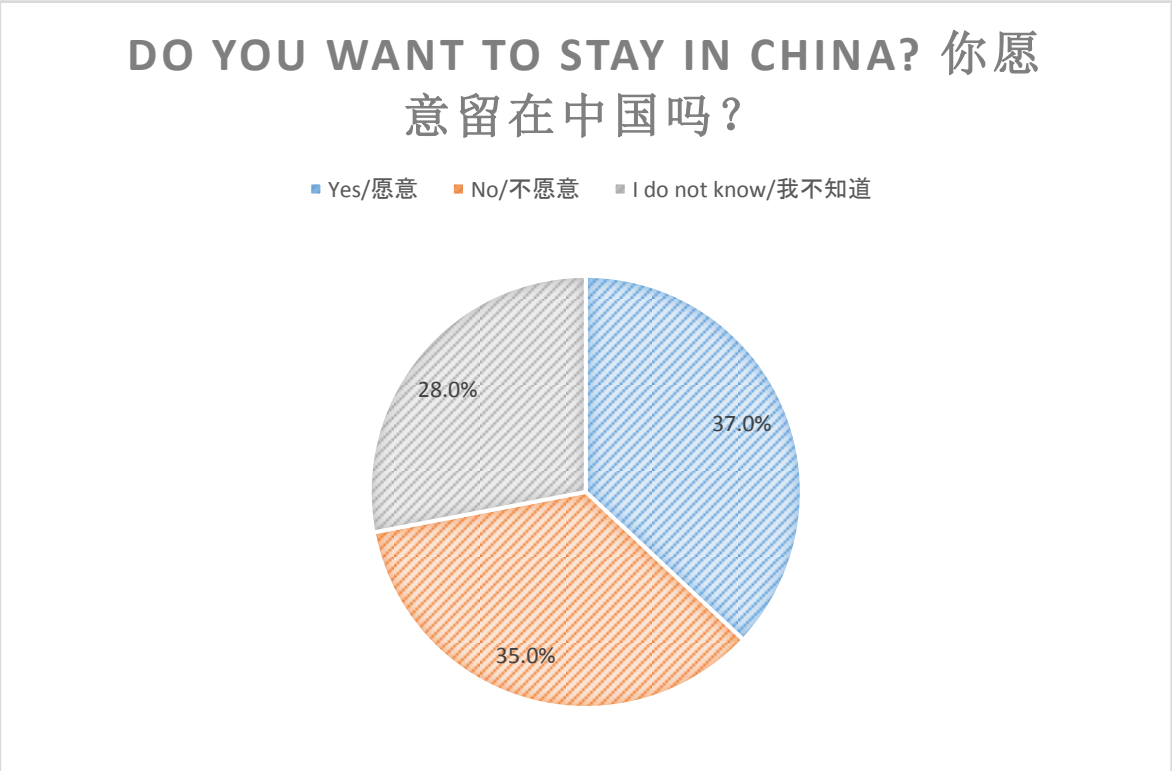


Figure 36: Do you want children? (%)

6.6. Moving to the different country

Many subjects in my survey would prefer to leave China, mainly because they would like to live in a gay-friendly environment. On the other hand, many of them stay loyal to the homeland of their parents and ancestors. Even though same-sex marriages are not legal in China and homosexuals do not have any legal protection, they still want to stay there. More than one third (37%) would prefer to stay in China, 35% want to leave China and 28% still do not know (Fig. 37).

I was also trying to find out where they would move if they had a chance to change the country. The most popular "destination" was the Europe which would choose 185 people, followed by the USA with 105 and Australia with 50. Another 21 subjects were attracted by Taiwan. Some other responses included simply a wish to move somewhere where they can marry the one they love; the place with no air pollution; the place with less people; a democratic country; some would first travel the whole world and find the right



place; and one respondent would like to move to the Czech Republic.

Figure 37: Do you want to stay in China? (%)

6.7. Remarks from respondents

At the end I was asking for some comments to my survey and many people were adding various remarks and ideas. Many people expressed their dissatisfaction with the society's perception of homosexuality and very often people wished for better right for LGBT. "Homosexuality is taboo in China, in normal live, nobody talks about it"; "U know that not many people are interested in the LGBT community here in China, most people don't know about us and the ones who do know something are usually ones of us, the others rather ignore it. Hope things will get better in the future"; "Maybe one day this questionnaire will help LGBT community in China"; The big problem is that there is

limited access of medicaments for people suffering from HIV“; „Dear David, Thanks for your concern. I'm the only child in my family, the only boy. According to Chinese conventions, it is my responsibility to carry on my family lineage. Being gay means I cannot have my own baby, which makes me unfilial and guilty. This sounds ridiculous, but it is what most of my relatives believe. I am afraid that once I come out, my relationship with my parents will be over, and this is not what I hope for. I'm still struggling between maintaining my family relationship and expressing my true self. I really appreciate your questionnaire. Wish you good luck“. ; “The government is too conservative, homosexual practice is not evil or abnormal. I want to be treated equally as others”. ; „Thanks for your attention on this issue in China, but this is a most conventional country and it's hard to change the present situation. Most people that support LGBT are young and most of them are from big cities“. ; “I was never thinking of coming out to my parents. Chinese traditions are deep-rooted in the society and it’s hard to change it. Of all virtues filial piety is the most important, says one Chinese saying. One of the most important is to have a son and continue the family lineage. In our society, what is important is family and our relationships are extremely close to each other. If a person comes out, the whole family talks about it, which is also uncomfortable”. ; “The biggest obstacle for LGBT in China is traditional perception of having your own children. Although, traditional Chinese culture shows impressive tolerance towards homosexual. As you might know lots of kings in our history were gay, but they were forced to "make" kids. I don't like our folk culture, where everyone is comparing themselves to others and judging others. In China, the smallest social unit is a family, while I'm more into individualism”. ; “I think everyone needs to be free to express his true feeling, it’s natural and it’s a human right. I think in 5 years China will accept LGBT, because of the economy (Pink money) which is a big thing in China.”; “Old thoughts of many old people who control some important government departments are obstacles for LGBT rights in China. I think when these old people die in the future, and the young population will come into power, the LGBT community in China will move a huge step forward”.

7. Discussion and hypotheses

The sample, representing the Chinese LGBT community, generally feels unsafe living in their homeland and their reasons for this are numerous. I can assume that the biggest obstacle is that China does not support LGBT rights and that same-sex marriage is still illegal. People often suffer from discrimination and they must be very careful and cannot express themselves to the fullest. Moreover, they have to often obey to their parents. In China, people have a collective way of thinking, family is very important and relationships within the family are usually very strong. That is why having a homosexual child is often considered a tragedy, because it will negatively influence the whole family. Besides, homosexuals cannot naturally bear children and therefore the family lineage becomes endangered.

The future of LGBT in China is still hazy, but maybe one day the rainbow will finally find its way to China.

On the basis of the analyzed answers from the questionnaire several hypotheses were formed:

1. The young population have a tendency to be very open-minded in questions of LGBT.
2. I found more homosexuals come out to their parents when compared to similar studies.
3. Common view on homosexuality from the point of view of Chinese families is that it is an unnatural state and it is complicated for them to accept it.
4. As for Chinese parents, a degree of general acceptance of homosexuality increase with higher education, but none of the two groups (HEP, LEP families) accept their child to be a homosexual.
5. Parents fear that their children will be alone when they get old.
6. Satisfying family (being filial) as well as escaping the rejection from public is still important for Chinese homosexuals, so they decide to get married.
7. Level of self-acceptance amongst Chinese homosexuals is quite low (the majority would change their sexual orientation if they could).
8. Chinese homosexuals tend to go into heterosexual relationships from several reasons, but actual intercourse rather does not occur.
9. Homosexual relationships last longer than homo-heterosexual relationships.
10. Showing love in public amongst homosexuals becomes a common sign.

11. Most of the time, Chinese homosexuals use dating apps to find a partner.
12. Chinese would rather leave China than stay in order to be accepted by the society.
13. Many respondents express their dissatisfaction with the society's perception of homosexuality.

8. The synthesis of results of case study compared with other studies

On the basis of analyzed data from my own research in China and various resources from my theoretical part, I present a claim about the whole topic. The purpose of the synthesis is to compare data from my work by using my hypotheses and available literature and studies in order to verify my observations and possibly come up with something new.

The fact that the young population have a tendency to be very open about questions of LGBT is justifiable, because the young generation (millennials) were brought up in the more open social environment with a daily access to the internet where they can easily browse and form their own ideas about the world. Therefore, they can easily accept homosexuality. In my research, my respondents are usually open about their sexuality at school (see fig. 29), which shows certain degree of acceptance amongst young population. Besides, the UNDP research confirms a similar statement (see figures 4 and 5).

Another hypothesis deals with Chinese families. This concerns the generation born in the sixties and seventies to young parents during the Cultural Revolution. They were born during the country's instability which moreover opposed everything western and acted as if homosexuality did not exist. Individuals brought up in such an environment certainly did not have a chance to come into contact with these topics at all and therefore it seems to them very strange and unnatural. Figure 13 and 17 in the last part of the theoretical part can justify this observation. Even though they could somehow tolerate homosexuality, they cannot accept their child being part of LGBT community. In the research done by the United Nations and in my research, this observation is comparable. I humbly contributed that education and degree of acceptance of homosexuality has a link, but as for accepting one's own child to be a homosexual, no matter the education, the majority of parents does not accept their child to be homosexual. Moreover, parents fear that their children would stay alone when they get old.

Being filial to one's parents is also very important in the Chinese society and many people are frequently pushed to find someone to marry and have children. Due to the pressure, many homosexuals would rather marry than face discrimination. One fourth of my respondents responded positively on whether they would consider traditional marriage just in order to satisfy their parents. Although, they may consent to marry someone, the marriage is harmful for both sides - wife and husband. In order to avoid this painful

experience, marriage of convenience seem to be a good solution. However, according to the United Nations' research, amongst the married respondents, 84% were in traditional marriages and only 13% in marriages of convenience. In my research I was asking a question on whether they know a homosexual living a life in a traditional marriage. Although the exact number is not clear, more than one third responded positively and 18 people know more than 10 people living this life. As the results from the UN research may confirm, these marriages were more likely to be traditional marriages than marriages of convenience.

Homosexuals and their degree of self-acceptance is still quite low. The fear of discrimination haunts them all the time and the pressure of families to marry and bear a child is huge. In addition to this, a high percentage of the LGBT community suffer from unfair treatment and discrimination. (UNDP, 2016). According to my research and the data acquired, it is not surprising that more than three fourths of my respondents would change their sexuality or at least think about this possibility.

Even though, the visibility of Chinese LGBT community is still low, media covers this topic more than in the past (see chapter 5.5.). The awareness of the issue is being spread amongst the population. According to more than half of my respondents, they are also more liberal in showing their love in public such as holding hands, hugging or kissing.

As for looking for a partner, China developed several apps, amongst them the most popular is a gay application called Blued with more than 27 million users (see chapter 5.5.). Based on my research, the majority of respondents choose this option in order to find other homosexuals. An actual existence of such app shows a sign of gradual openness in the society.

Revealing one's sexuality, also known as coming out, is becoming more common. But I assume that the percentage (74%) of my respondents who came out to someone is because they disclosed their sexuality mostly to their friends and acquaintances from the LGBT community. However, according to my research, the percentage of those coming out to parents increased comparing to some studies in the past (see. 5.3.).

My results, compared to the results of the research conducted by the UN, are quite similar. The degree of openness within the family according to the UN is 52.4% and according to my research, the percentage is 58%. The United Nations claim that the majority is only selectively opened, which means they disclosed their sexuality only to someone within the family, most likely only amongst their peer relatives. In schools 44.5% of respondents are selectively opened according to United Nations and according to my

research it is 45%. Being fully opened both between classmates and teachers made up only 5% in both studies. On the contrary, the results from workplace show much lower openness.

Many people from the LGBT community express their dissatisfaction with the situation in China, especially in the area of legal protection and awareness of this topic amongst the whole society. Many people still suffer discrimination in their social lives, at schools, at works, at hospitals etc. It is vital that the protection becomes law. LGBT community is still stigmatized in China and lack any legal protection against discrimination and just treatment of LGBT people. The main objective of the UN research is to encourage the government to take action. It is, for example, important that inaccurate and outdated perceptions of homosexuality in the society are eliminated andhomosexuality is no longer considered a mental disease as many people still think. It is necessary to eliminate any false attempts of medical centers to cure homosexuality through conversion therapy. Medical staff along with teachers at schools, should receive special training on these topics.

The government itself is finally beginning to speak out about this topic, for example Ms. Mu Hong, deputy director of the National Working Committee on Children and Women of the State Council (NWCCW), stated that “Chinese citizens are protected by law regardless of their sexual orientation and nowadays in China the attitude towards homosexuality has become more liberal than in the past.” Yang Jian, a representative of the Chinese Ministry of Justice made a statement during the official review of the UN Commission against Torture (CAT) that “China does not view LGBT as a mental disease or require compulsory treatment for LGBTI people. They will not be confined in mental hospitals either.“ (UNDP, 2016). With more statements like these, China’s perception of homosexuality is slowly progressing and obtaining a more positive image within the society.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, the main objective of this thesis was to describe and analyze the contemporary situation of homosexuals in China. The first mentions of homosexuality in Chinese texts, as well as today's situation,are described in the thesis. The period of the past 4000 years was marked with quite a positive perception towards homosexuality, with exceptions of last century when there were many turbulent changes in the world which also influenced and affected Chinese society. Chinese society is originally based on the cult of ancestors and Confucianism, which requires producing children (especially boys) in order to continue family lineage and in order to have someone who would provide care for one's old parents and ancestors. When the Qing dynasty strengthened the Neo-Confucian doctrine, homosexuality amongst ordinary people was discouraged. They put homosexuality aside and labeled it as an activity which did not lead to procreation, degraded the role of men and therefore had to be punished. The twentieth century was the most turbulent period, as anti-homosexual foreign influences penetrated China and gradually changed the perception of homosexuality within the society. Due to the West, the word love was also re-conteptualized and from that time on it has been limited only to heterosexual couples. After 1949, when the PRC was established, homosexuality was highly oppressed and considered a bourgeois western element which had no place in communist China. Since reforms in 1978 and more notably after homosexuality was decriminalized (1997) and deleted from the list of mental diseases (2001), the general perception is slowly moving in a more positive direction.Thanks to the internet, coverage of LGBT issues in media, foreign positive influence and the vocal community, the situation has been changing. Generally, China has been developing very fast. This fast pace led to many new additions to the society that most people did not expect, such as, for example, gay bars on the streets. Calls for same-sex marriage are present in China these days, although Chinese government is still quite silent on this issue. Because the transition into modern China was so fast, many people, especially older generations, are still not prepared for the challenges of today and still perceive homosexuality a disease, something unnatural or even a crime.

As for my own research, in order to assemble data I created a questionnaire (see attachment), collected data from a random sample of 640 people from the minority and analyzed them. I drafted hypotheses and also compared my results with other research studies on this topic and formulated my observations in the synthesis. The most important

observations in my research is that young generations are more open to the questions of LGBT than their parents. The general and most common perception of homosexuality of older generations is that homosexuality is unnatural and they usually cannot understand it and accept it. In some cases they can tolerate it, but the overwhelming majority of parents of LGBT individuals cannot accept having an LGBT child. Besides bringing shame to the family, homosexuals are unable to naturally produce a child and as a result, this becomes a big problem for Chinese traditional conservative families to accept it. The research also show that the pressure from the family is so high that some of the subjects would think of marrying the opposite sex just to satisfy their family and live a "normal" life. An unmarried person over thirty is considered a leftover person, which is quite a derogatory label in China. Many homosexuals live in traditional marriages, which is harmful for both partners. This can therefore lead to extramarital affairs and spreading diseases. Three fourths of respondents would even change their sexuality or at least think about it.

As for the question of coming out, three fourths of my respondents disclosed their sexuality to somebody. Considering the fact that homosexuals have many friends amongst the LGBT community, coming out is definitely most widespread within this community. As for coming out to parents, the number in my research was higher than in the survey conducted by WorkForLGBT (see chapter 5.3.). According to the survey from 2016, 46% of Chinese homosexuals came out to their parents and in my research the percentage was 58%.However, they were not met with acceptance. Only a tiny number of parents were able to accept their child to be homosexual and even higher parental education did not play a role here. In the question of general acceptance of homosexuality, education is a factor. According to my research, awareness and understanding of homosexuality is higher amongst those parents that are well educated.

Due to the general dissatisfaction with the environment in China towards LGBT, lack of discrimination laws, and no possibility of same-sex marriages, my respondents would think of moving to a different, more open country to pursue a free life. I believe that the key to this problem lies in education and wider coverage of this topic. Several studies in China spread the awareness of LGBT issues in the society and provide government with important data that can encourage them to take some more action in this field. The general objective of these studies, as well as mine, is to spread awareness and educate others. With an active participation in this field, old and outdated perceptions might be eradicatedonce and for all, not only in China, but in the whole world.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá pojetím homosexuality a posunem v jejím vnímání během dlouholeté čínské historie. Čína je považována za civilizaci, která v celkovém historickém součtu období, po něž akceptovala homosexualitu, stojí na prvním místě na světě. Aby bylo možné tento fakt ilustrovat, je třeba popsat všechna historická období Číny od prvních zmínek homosexuality v literatuře až po současnost. Historický kontext napomáhá zmapovat všechna období, kdy byla homosexualitaspolečností přijímána a naopak odmítána. Výsledkem je analýza hlavních důvodů, které vedly k negativnímu vnímání homosexuality v Číně a které afektují postoj většinové populace vůči homosexuální menšině až do současnosti.

První kapitola se věnuje nejranějšímu období čínské civilizace až po pád císařství a nastolení republiky v roce 1912. První psané zmínky popisují homosexualitu jako přirozený jev, kdy například k životu některých císařů automaticky patřili milenci. V provincii Fujian se pak dokonce uzavíraly svazky mezi muži, které se vzdáleně podobaly dnešnímu institutu registrovaného partnerství. Za dynastie Qing nastal zvrat a homosexualita byla trestaná. Příčinou byl Neokonfucianismus, který stavěl do popředí prokreaci a také odmítal, aby se muži řadili do podřadné role (v případě penetrovaného jedince). V kruzích elity však zůstala homosexualita akceptována i nadále. Druhá kapitola pojednává o období konce císařství až po nastolení vlády komunistů v roce 1949. Tato doba byla poznamenána především Májovým hnutím a v důsledku západních vlivů vnímání homosexuality degradovalo. Maoistické období, o němž pojednává třetí kapitola, již staví homosexualitu do absolutní opozice. Byla považována za zločin a mentální chorobu. Komunistický režim homosexuály diskriminoval, věznil a snažil se o jejich převýchovu. Od osmdesátých let, kdy se Čína znovuzrodila, přicházela postupná liberalizace. V roce 1997 byla homosexualita dekriminalizována a v roce 2001 vyňata ze seznamu mentálních chorob. Modernizace v Číně proběhla velmi rychle, nicméně myšlení lidí je stále ještě silně poznamenané dobou, která jí předcházela, a proto i témata jako homosexualita jsou, především pak starou generací, vnímánastále negativně. Mladá generace, díky přístupu k internetu a ke vzdělání, je již v otázkách LGBT mnohem otevřenější.

Praktická část bakalářské práce obsahuje případovou studii vypracovanouza pomoci dotazníku a rozhovorů, jejichž analýza zprostředkovala popis společenské situace dnešních homosexuálů v Číně. Hypotézy, které z výzkumu vzešly, pak autor porovnal s dostupnými

studiemi na obdobná témata.Z autorovy případové studie vyplývá, že rodiče dnešních homosexuálů obecně neakceptují homosexualitu a vnímají ji jako něco nepřirozeného, častokrát i jako chorobu, kterou je nutno léčit. Částečnou toleranci k homosexualitě vykazují v rámci této skupiny rodiče s vyšším vzděláním, ti ovšem nejsou schopni akceptovat, že by měl homosexuálem být jejich potomek. Ze studie také vzešlo, což mimo jiné potvrdilo informace z teoretické části, že rodiče po svých dětech požadují sňatek a zplození potomstva. V některých případech dokonce svým dětempartnery sami vybírají. Homosexuálové tak často končí v tradičních svazcích. Jako odpověď na tyto společenské tlaky se v nedávné době objevil fenomén smluvních svazků (viz kapitola 4), kde se gay a lesba oficiálně sezdají a před rodinami a společností vystupují jako standartní manželský pár. Někteří partneři dokonce zplodí dítě, aby naplnili oddanost rodičům, na což je v čínské společnosti stále kladen velký důraz. Předmětem výzkumu jemimo jiné i tzv. „coming-out“ v rodinách i mimo ně. Případová studie odhaluje, že oproti minulosti dnes homosexuálové svou orientaciv mnohem větší míře odhalují rodině i společnosti. Studie také poukazuje na nejpopulárnější způsobyhledání protějšku v komunitě. Výzkum se zabývá i partnerským a sexuálním životem jak mezi homosexuály, tak i v situacích, kdy homosexuál vstoupil do vztahu s opačným pohlavím. Ze strany respondentů výzkum ukázal výraznou nespokojenost se stávající situací a 1/3 z nich by dokonce opustila Čínu jen proto, aby získalaplnohodnotnější život v plnohodnotnější společnosti.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

University research questionnaire regarding the LGBT community in China

一份关于中国 LGBT 团体的大学调查报告问卷

My name is David and I am from the Czech Republic. I made this questionnaire in order to do a research about LGBT situation in China.

Homosexuality in today's China is a very hot topic as the country is developing very quickly, but traditions are still very strong.

Besides LGBT situation in China is in the center of my interests, this questionnaire is also important for my final thesis. It may also give an outlook about Chinese society to others.

Thank you for your cooperation!

我的名字是 David，来自捷克。我做这份调查问卷的目的是为了研究 LGBT 这个特殊的团体在中国的现状。

随着中国的迅速发展，同性恋在当今中国已成为一个十分热门的话题，但是中国的传统观念依然根深蒂固。

研究 LGBT 群体在中国的现状不仅是我的主要兴趣所在，这个问卷对我的毕业论文也起着重要作用。同时，它也给其他人提供了一个关于中国社会的概况。

谢谢您的合作！

1. Gender/性别 (单选题 *必答)
   - ○ Male/男
   - ○ Female/女

2. Age/年龄 (单选题 *必答)
   - ○ 15-20
   - ○ 21-25
   - ○ 26-30
   - ○ 31-35
   - ○ 36-45
   - ○ 46-55
   - ○ 56-65
   - ○ 65+

3. Family status/家庭状况 (单选题 *必答)
   - ○ Single/单身
   - ○ Married/已婚
   - ○ In a relationship/恋爱中

4. Religion/宗教 (填空题 *必答)

   _____

5. Living/居住状况 (单选题 *必答)

○ Alone/独居
○ With parents/和父母一起住
○ With a partner/跟伴侣一起住
○ With a roommate(s)/和室友合住
○ Others/其他 _____

6. Occupation/职业 (填空题 *必答)

_____

7. Place you currently live in/现在居住的城市 (填空题 *必答)

_____

9. Place of origin (where you were born, your parents live)/ 出身地（你父母的居住地，你的家乡） (填空题 *必答)

_____

10. The highest education of father acquired/父亲学历 (单选题 *必答)

○ Elementary school/初中
○ High school/高中
○ University/大学

11. The highest education of your mother acquired/母亲学历 (单选题 *必答)

○ Elementary school/初中
○ High school/高中
○ University/大学

12. When and how did you know about your sexuality?/ 你是什么时候又是通过什么方式认识到自己的性征的？ (填空题 *必答)

_____

13. Did you learn at school about different sexual orientation and sexuality in general?/ 你在学校接受过有关不同性取向和性别的一般性教育吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/是
○ No/否

14. Would you change your sexual orientation if you could?/ 如果可以的话你愿意改变自己的性取向吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/愿意
○ No/不愿意
○ I do not know/我不知道

15. Have you had any girlfriends (for gays) or boyfriend (for lesbians)? 你有过男朋友（女同回答）或女朋友（男同回答）吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/有过
○ No/没有过

16. If so, how long lasted the longest relationship? / 如果有，最长的一段关系持续了多久？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Less than a month/小于一个月
○ 1 month - 6 moths/1-6 个月
○ 6 months - 12 months/6-12 个月
○ 1 - 3 years/1-3 年
○ 3 - 5 years/3-5 年
○ 5 - 10 years/5-10 年
○ More than 10 years/超过 10 年

17. Have you ever had a sex with a woman (for gays), with man (for lesbians)? / 你和男性（对于女同）或女性（对于男同）发生过性关系吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/有
○ No/没有

18. Have you ever had a relationship with a same-sex partner? / 你有过同性伴侣吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ No/没有
○ Once/一个
○ 2 - 5 partners/2-5 个
○ 5 - 10 partners/5-10 个
○ 10+/超过 10 个

19. Chinese or foreigner? /是和中国人还是外国人？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Chinese/中国人
○ Foreigner/外国人
○ Both/都

20. How long lasted the longest relationship? 最长的一段关系持续了多久？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Less than a month/少于一个月
○ 1 month - 6 moths/1-6 个月
○ 6 months - 12 months/6-12 个月
○ 1 - 3 years/1-3 年
○ 3 - 5 years/3-5 年
○ 5 - 10 years/5-10 年
○ More than 10 years/超过 10 年

21. Would you show your love in public? (holding hands, hugging, kissing, etc.)/ 你会在公共场合中表现出你们的亲密关系吗？（比如牵手. 拥抱. 接吻）(单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/会
○ No/不会

22. Where do you look for a partner? (Have an application, going to bars, on the street, others) / 你是在哪里找到同性伴侣的？（用一个应用软件. 去酒吧. 在大街上或其他）(单选题 *必答)

○ Apps/用软件
○ Bars/去酒吧
○ Street/街上
○ Others/其他 _____

23. Do you have friends between LGBT people (gays, lesbians, transgender, etc.)? /你有朋友是同性恋吗（女同. 男同. 变性者等）？(单选题 *必答)

○ No/
○ 1
○ 2 - 5
○ 10+

24. Have you come out (revealed your real sexuality) to anyone?/ 你有向别人表明过自己的身份吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/有
○ No/没有
○ I will never come out/我绝不会出柜

25. Do you want to come out in front of your parents? 你想在父母面前出柜吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/是的
○ No/不想
○ I will come out soon/我将要出柜
○ I will never come out/我绝不会出柜

26. If you came out already, what was their reaction? 如果你已经出柜了，他们是什么反应？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Accepted/接受
○ First, did not accept, now accepting/一开始不接受，现在接受了
○ Have not accepted yet/还没有接受
○ Did not understand/不能理解
○ Rejected/反对
○ Others/其他 _____
○ Haven't yet/ 还没有出柜

27. What do your parents think about homosexuality? / 你的父母对同性恋有什么看法？ (单选题 *必答)

○ It is unnatural/这是反常的
○ It is a crime/这是犯罪
○ It must be cured/这必须矫正过来
○ Do not accept it/不接受
○ What is homosexuality?/ 同性恋是什么意思？
○ Do accept it/接受
○ It is natural/这是正常的
○ Others/其他 _____

28. Have your parents tried to be active in finding you a girl (for gays), boy (for lesbians)?/你的父母曾积极地想办法帮你找男朋友（女同回答）或是女朋友（男同回答）吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/是的
○ No/没有

29. Would you marry the opposite sex partner just to satisfy your parents and live a “normal” life? / 你会考虑和异性结婚来应付父母或是为了过一个“正常”的生活吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/会
○ No/不会

30. How many married homosexuals do you know? / 你认识多少结婚的同性恋？(单选题 *必答)

○ 0
○ 1 - 5 people/1-5 个
○ 6 - 10 people/6-10 个
○ More than 10 people/超过 10 个

31. Do you want children?/你想要孩子吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/想要
○ No/不想要
○ I do not know/我不知道
○ I do not mind/我不在乎

32. On the work place (school), do your colleagues (classmates) or boss (teachers) know about you? /在工作(学校)中，你的同事(同学)或是老板(老师)了解你的情况吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes, colleagues (classmates)/是的，同事（同学）知道
○ Yes, colleagues and boss (classmates and teachers)/是的，同事和老板（同学和老师）都知道
○ No/不知道
○ I am unemployed/目前失业
○ I am a freelancer/自由职业者

33. Have you ever had to change a job (school) because of that? 你曾因此不得不换一份工作(学校)吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/是的
○ No/没有过

34. Have you ever been rejected when applying for a job because of that?/ 你曾因此在求职中被拒绝吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes, once/是的，有过一次
○ Yes, more than once/是的，不止一次
○ No/没有过

35. Do you want to stay in China? 你愿意留在中国吗？ (单选题 *必答)

○ Yes/愿意
○ No/不愿意
○ I do not know/我不知道

36. If not, where would you like to settle down?/如果不愿意，你想在哪里定居？ (填空题 *必答)

_____

37. Any comments or suggestions?/ 有什么评论或是意见吗？ (填空题 *必答)

_____

Thank you very much for your time!/ 非常感谢你的时间和帮助