Queer Comrades, Queer China: Hybrid Lesbian Identities in an Age of Social Media

By

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Abstract

Seeking to problematize the "global gay" versus "local cultural specificity" argument, this paper analyzes an emerging lesbian (*lala*) identity and culture in contemporary P.R. China through the content of webcasts on the social-media website Queercomrades.com (QC). Four female same-sex themed webcasts are explored in order to expose the issues pertinent to the Chinese *lala* community and examine reified female same-sex representations and self-representation.

Identifying elements of rapid cultural, social, and economic changes in the PRC, as well as surviving traditional Confucian cultural norms and influence from globalization, and recognizing Chinese queer culture and identity as amorphous and ever-evolving, this study finds that by participating in QC's webcasts, the guests on QC serve as role models of a new globalized reality that includes evolving hybrid sexualities. Through confession and storytelling that draws on new emerging Chinese identities, Western discourse and globalization and performances that mirror Confucian rectification of names and the tradition of exemplary biographies, the hosts and guests on QC participate in creating a new "exemplary woman" model for women who identify beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual symbolic at the turn of the 21st century.

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Chapter One: Introduction

With the development of postcolonial studies, many academic avenues shifted to deconstructing and analyzing the effects of globalization upon cultural discourses couched within "third-world" countries, compelling queer theorists to turn to transnational issues. Combining postcolonial and queer methodologies, researchers worked to peel back the transcendental signifieds[1] imposed upon "developing" and "colonized" people groups. As a result, a discussion concerning an expanding "global" culture and shrinking "locally specific" cultures, particularly concerning gay culture, materialized.

In his 1997 work, *Global Gaze/ Global Gays,* examining same-sex identities in Asia, Dennis Altman identifies a proliferation of individuals aligning with a politicized expression of a queer identity that shares "global" language, symbols, lifestyle, and self-stylization drawn heavily from the Western queer discourse. According to Altman, the reasons for the rapid development of a "global gay" culture "lie in both economic and cultural shifts which are producing sufficiently large and self-confident groups of men (and some women) who wish to live as homosexuals in the western sense of that term (i.e., expressing their sexual identity openly, mixing with other homosexuals, and having long-term primary relations with other homosexuals)."[2] Contributing factors include the growing HIV/AIDS discourse,[3] urbanization, developments in communication, commodification, and Asian diaspora.

Three dominant scripts in the creation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) identities and communities that Altman observed include a natural higher tolerance toward non-heteronormative sexualities and identities; the impact of colonization and tourism in

Asia; and the influence of modernization.[4] Based on Stephen Murray's[5] research on global queer

cultures, Altman argues:

> Sexual identity politics grows out of modernity but also shows the way to
>
> postmodernity, because it both strengthens and interrogates identity as a fixed
>
> point and a central reference. The claiming of lesbian and gay identities in Asia or
>
> Latin America is as much about being western as about sexuality, symbolized by
>
> the co-option of the word "gay" into Thai, Indonesian, etc., and by the use of
>
> terms such as modern (in Peru) and international (in Mexico) to describe
>
> "gayness."[6]

Chou Wah-Shan polarizes the global gay argument by suggesting that elements of queer

culture can be traced to locally-specific cultural norms—not dependent upon Western discourse.

Chou highlights Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China's *tongzhi* politics—or non-

confrontational queer politics—as an example of indigenous non-normative identity and

movement.[7] Arguments championing the progress and opening caused by globalization and

modernization often disregard the importance and contribution of local cultures, while arguments

heralding local cultural traditions over globalizing construction may circumvent oppression or

unjust practices.[8] By polarizing global and local specificity characteristics, we dangerously

ignore locales of interaction and intersections of development on the continuum between global

and local specificity.

Seeking to problematize the global gay versus local cultural specificity argument, this

paper analyzes the content of contemporary webcasts on Queercomrades.com (QC). Established

in 2007, QC is the only not-for-profit webcast-based LGBTQ organization in mainland China.

Four female same-sex themed webcasts are explored in order to expose the issues pertinent to

Chinese lesbians and ask the following questions: What is the relevance of QC's talk show content in post-reform China? In what ways does QC connect with both local and international discourse? What do the representations, performances and rhetoric on QC project about lesbian identity in China? What techniques does QC utilize to communicate with both straight and LGBTQ audiences?

From a feminist interactionist perspective[9], I employ summative content analysis along with conventional content analysis to examine four episodes from QC's talk show webcast program. I argue that QC's online format is highly relevant to both gay and straight individuals—specifically young, educated urbanites. QC's lesbian-related talk shows often utilize comparison and contrast between both the heterosexual perspective and the gay male perspective to emphasize the importance of sex, identity within the lesbian community, and social support and networking. QC draws on both local and global culture, as well as language, to communicate stories, ideas, and opinions to its national and international audience. In its talk show format specifically, QC utilizes personal and intimate confessions and story-telling—reminiscent of the Confucian tradition of biographies about virtuous individuals—to transmit information, meaning, and models—particularly through naming and defining identities. These new models participate in hybrid dialogue, drawing from both traditional Chinese and Western rhetoric, to demonstrate emerging sexual and gender identities.

In this exploration, I echo Evelyn Micollier's and Michael Connors' warning against focusing on comparison between the West and the East. Micollier urges scholarship away from an "Orientalist intellectual tradition" of researching based on a bias of "eroticizing" the other—positioning Asian culture and Western culture as opposites.[10] Michael Connors' cautions researchers embarking on global cultural studies, that it is of utmost importance to avoid a

narcissistic transitional narrative "in diffusion," whereby the trajectory of the Third World has already been transversed by the First."[11]

Altman also highlights the importance of resisting this discourse of a diffusing transitional narrative: "because of this belief, if we abandon the idea that the model for the world—whether political, cultural, or intellectual—need be New York or Paris, and if we recognize the emerging possibilities for such models in Bangkok and Harare, we may indeed be able to speak of a 'queer planet.'"[12] I argue that a polarization of global versus local specificity not only narrows global queer discourse into a dualistic model, which essentializes identities and sexualities, and encourages a supremacy of heteronormative standards, but also denies identity, and therefore agency, to populations positioned on the continuum between global and local, male and female, and hetero and homonormative. In a globalizing world, it is necessary to resist binary structures that essentialize, and instead analyze through a more complex lens such as Meena Khandelwal's cross-border feminism. Khandelwal emphasizes that a three-part methodology must be employed when pursuing transcultural and trans-global research stating, "Feminist scholars must simultaneously address both the heterogeneities within the site being compared and the historical linkages between them."[13] Her three-part methodology includes interrogating the vantage point of analysis, exploring the diversities between the two vantage points, and the transnational linkages between them.[14]

The relationship between transnational linkages give rise to the idea of cultural hybridity. In her work *Gay and Lesbian Subculture in Urban China*, Loretta Wing Wah Ho emphasizes the importance of hybridity in an increasingly globalized world. Ho cites Chris Berry's interpretation of cultural hybridity:

Hybridization consists in their simultaneous appropriation of the Western model of gay identity and its re-writing into established local (and possibly already hybrid rather than pure or authentic) narrative patterns. In this way, they counter both local and neo-colonial forces and discourses that objectify, oppress, or are simply blind to the existence and specificity of East Asia gay identities and cultures.[15]

Pulling on definitions from Kraidy and Pieterse,[16] Ho suggests that same-sex hybridity identity is not simply a mix of "local" and "global" but rather, it is "enacted by a measure of agency and subjectivity, and is constantly negotiated through the interplay between mimicry and resistance.[17] Furthermore, this hybridity is not static, but varies over time and cultures and it is intertwined both being influenced by and resisting Western discourses."[18] In analysis of Chinese LGBTQ culture, it is essential to recognize the hybrid nature of queer identities—not just a combination of local and global influences, but a creative force reimagining identities drawing from but not reliant upon the binary of global and local discourse.

This research contributes to the growing field of inquiry concerning female same-sex desire in China. My work adds a crucial element to cultural and sexuality studies by examining representations and self-representations produced and performed on a unique Chinese webcast talk show with elements of interactional social media—a newer genre in media studies. My findings build on efforts by Dennis Altman, Lucetta Yip Lo Kam, Loretta Wing Wah Ho, Chris Berry and Tze-lan D. Sang to encourage a movement away from polarizing global and local arguments and opposing homo and heterosexual identities; instead contributing to Altman's hope of a "queer planet" in which a continuum of locales and identities is valued over a hierarchy.

Heterosymbolic

I use "heterosexual symbolic" or "heterosymbolic" to identify a set of discourses in Chinese culture that are the central assumptions concerning gender roles; mainly, that there are two types (feminine and masculine), which are demonstrated through biological differences between male and female whose primary mode of intercourse is through penetrative sex. The heterosexual symbolic is a collection of narratives about which genders, sexes, sexualities, and acts of sex exist, as well as what and how we should think about them. This set of narratives makes up what Adrianne Rich calls "compulsory heterosexuality."[19] Members of a community living under the heterosexual symbolic are compelled to comply with this normative culture, as they will be judged critically for any deviation from this behavior ("heteronormativity").

Judith Butler describes this relationship between normative culture and performance: "The regulatory norms of 'sex' work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies, and more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative."[20] Butler highlights the normative and performative nature of gendered discourse and the importance of the examination of subjectivity. Butler suggests that biological and anatomical sex is not concrete, prelinguistic, and "natural." When sexual difference is materialized in this manner, individuals whose sexualities and bodies do not align with the heterosymbolic are labeled as abnormal.[21] Instead, Butler argues that power of the normative gendered discourses compels members of a community to acquire subjectivity—including a recognizable gender, sex, and sexuality—through these narratives.

The mosaic of narratives that encompass the heterosexual symbolic changes across time and space—each narrative is historically and culturally contingent. Jessica Durham suggests that they may be seen as an "intertextual pool" to which other discourses contribute, and from which other discourses draw.[22] Durham further connects the heteronormative symbolic to Berlant and Warner's theory that heteronormativity is not only compulsory, but institutional and epistemological, as well. The heteronormative symbolic is so integrated into the culture's production of knowledge, the social structure and systems of meaning, that it is "unmarked" and "idealized."[23]

Limitations

This study is in no way meant to be a comprehensive study of lesbian culture in China or Chinese lesbian representations. The representations examined in this study are selected from webcasts on Queercomrades.com dealing with female same-sex issues. The representations presented tend to be from urban paradigms, and are restricted to individuals possessing the agency and voice to form connections with QC, as well as identify within the broader context of the queer community.

In order to present a more comprehensive analysis of Queercomrades and the greater lesbian community in China, further studies are necessary. An analysis of QC's entire content, including other talk shows, documentaries, short films, blogs, and calendars of events would further enhance an understanding of the ways in which QC reaches and interacts with its foreign and Chinese visitors. Interviews with both QC visitors and members of the *lala* community would offer a more comprehensive analysis of the website's function and the accuracy and relevance of its representations and content.

Researching in translation, one can encounter pitfalls concerning the limits of the English language, misinterpretation, and the temptation to essentialize the original language—valuing the English translation over the original script. I caution readers to recognize this is research in translation, and as such the translations may not fully encompass the original meaning. Despite these dangers, the effort to more fully cognize queer culture, representation, and social constructs, in a modern Chinese context, through the lens of the English-speaking academy, provides rich, multi-faceted junctures through which we can further understand a globalizing world.

Chapter Two: Non-heteronormative Identities in an Age of Social Media

Introduction to the History of Female Same-Sex Desire in China

In understanding the history of same-sex love in China, Chou insists that sexuality in China's ancient history cannot be perceived of in the same terms as are used today:

> Strictly speaking, there were no heterosexuals, bisexuals, or homosexuals in Chinese history. The concept of sexual orientation, i.e., dividing people by the gender of their erotic object choice, did not exist. Chinese culture recognizes the differences between same-sex and opposite-sex eroticism, but sex is not a ground on which to classify people. The traditional Chinese world did not dichotomize sexual desire into a gender binarism of same-sex desire and opposite-sex desire.[24]

Chou argues that same-sex acts were imagined in a social context rather than a sexual context, and as such, Chinese culture has neither rejected nor accepted homosexuality. He suggests that it is only since the Republican period that Chinese began to re-imagine sexual identities. In her studies exploring the invisibility of lesbian representation in China, Tze-lan D. Sang agrees with Chou—suggesting that the emergence of same-sex female love as a problematic topic, came about at the end of the late-Qing period and the beginning of the Republican period when, for the first time, women were able to establish economic and emotional independence. Though same-sex female love has a long history in China, Sang argues it was not until traditional marriage was threatened by women's growing independence, that a same-sex female intimacy was demonized. The most notorious historical lesbian group, the Mirror-Rubbing Gang (*mojing dang*), is rumored to have existed in Shanghai at the end of the nineteenth century. This group was made up of married, unmarried, and widowed women who were known for their sexual skill and their

resistance to institutionalized marriage and heterosexuality. *Mojing dang* is still used as a euphemism for lesbians, and possesses a "negative and mocking" connotation.[25]

Simultaneous to the May Fourth movement of 1919, works of Western sexologists were translated into Chinese language, which influenced many Chinese intellectuals to champion the pathologization of homosexuality. Due to anxieties about intimate relationships among female students, as well as growing independence for women, female same-sex desire was given significantly more attention than male same-sex love. According to Sang, this brought with it unprecedented publicity and stigmatization towards female homosexuality, and increased endeavors to control intimacy between females.

Despite this flare of attention focused on non-hetero-normative love in journals and intellectual circles during the Republican period, the establishment of the PRC in 1949 drove the topic of same-sex love underground. It was not until a second wave of feminism, during the 1980s and '90s, in post-Mao China, that homosexuality re-emerged as a controversial issue in the public sphere. After Primer Deng Xiao Ping's "opening and reform" policy in 1979, increasing globalization, along with political changes, led to the increasing visibility of sexualities and identities outside of the heterosymbolic. The Marriage Act of 1981, which allows divorces on the grounds of "a breakdown in affection," and the national birth control policy both contributed to a growing pursuit of non-procreative sex and the right to have sexual pleasure. While Chou Wah-Shan argues that the romanticization of marriage and courtship has actually restricted same-sex relationships more than in the pre-Communist revolution period in China, Lucetta Yip Lo Kam suggests an expanding sense of the right to sexual pleasure is bolstering the emergence of sexually non-normative identities. Other factors contributing to this emergence are a more highly mobilized population and the deterioration of Confucian social norms (further discussed in the

section, Confucianism in China). [26] After the removal of "hooliganism" (a catch-all category for illicit behavior including sodomy) from China's penal code in 1997, and the depathologization of homosexuality in 2001, gay lifestyles and gay communities are becoming significantly more visible in urban areas, though visibility of sexual minorities in rural China remains infrequent.

Loretta Wing Wah Ho argues that while globalism has played a role in the increased visibility of non-normative sexualities and identities, it is still possible for lesbian and gay identities to "be actualized" while still maintaining an essence of what LGBTQ Chinese perceive is an "authentic" same-sex identity:[27]

> [These identities] are not necessarily 'modern' or 'indigenous', but claim primacy to an individual's social status, a fact that is often subtly manifested in one's use of language. What is more, they are always in tension with older forms of Chinese same-sex identity. To an extent, they are decentered from the local politics of identity and Chinese homoerotic/homosocial culture, and are often interpreted as a betrayal of 'authentic' Chinese traditions to the lire of global connections. Simultaneously, they are infused with a fresh form of Chinese nationalism and national identity.[28]

Ho suggests it is globalization and the state's "opening up" discourse that has fueled a paradoxical Chinese identity, and therefore a paradoxical Chinese same-sex identity—the paradox being couched in an openness to international discourse, while simultaneously promoting a deeply rooted nationalism influenced by political thought and action.[29]

While globalism and western discourse have certainly affected Chinese same-sex attracted identities, Ho points out that there is very little copying of mainstream Western politics that employ human rights rhetoric; additionally, the rivalry and competition for funds among

LGBTQ organizations complicates the "Western" model of NGO politics. Furthermore, Ho underscores Chou's argument that Chinese *tongzhi*-identity politics reject the "confrontational" idea of disrupting family and community ties as a result of coming out—that is, Chinese traditions prescribe that primacy should be given to family ties and social harmony over an individual's sexual identity or pleasure.[30] Instead, activism is connected to Western sexual health groups—competing for foreign funding rather than challenging existing law codes or encouraging human rights debates.

In China, 2005 was a notable year socially and publically for urban lesbians—the first *lala* organization was formed in Shanghai, the first national female *tongzhi* conference was held in Beijing, and the first grass-roots *lala* magazine *Les+* (www.lesplus.org) was established.[31] Despite these developments (and even more in the last eight years), public visibility of lesbians remains relatively low in comparison to gay men and heterosexual women.

Sang suggests the lack of lesbian visibility, and therefore the lack of research and understanding, of Chinese lesbians could be due to two factors. Sang supports Tamara Chin's argument that a lesbian sub-culture—at least one visible by Western standards—has not yet emerged and that, unlike gay men, Chinese women have no space within the public sphere that is clearly marked as "lesbian." Sang offers another factor concerning the limited visibility of Chinese lesbianism:

> A more provocative hypothesis, one suggested to me by women from the PRC on several
>
> occasions . . . is that close relationships are so common among Chinese women that
>
> intimate behavior is simply taken for granted—by women themselves and by society. No
>
> one knows whether it counts as homosexuality; hence, there is no special need to talk
>
> about it.[32]

Whereas in the West, females holding hands, sharing a bed, or cuddling might be labeled as "lesbian" behavior Sang suggests that in China, these homosocial behaviors among Chinese women are not delineated as "queer" and are encouraged through social norms. Euro-American influences have increasingly offered a different understanding of this performance, but relationships among many Chinese women continue to include intimate physical, emotional, and mental elements.[33]

Sang's observation problematizes the modern "scientific" way of categorizing and labeling sexual behaviors. Current methods polarize behaviors—erotic or platonic, hetero or homo, or feminine or masculine—based on the action itself, without taking into account cultural norms. In agreement with Sang, this paper endeavors to further problematize the socially constructed binary pairs of sexuality and gender.

Chinese Lexicon

Chinese possesses several different terms for "homosexuality" including *tongxing lian'ai*, *tongxing ai*, and *tonxing lian*. Each of these terms is a combination of terms for "same" (*tong*) "sex" (*xing*) and "love" (*ai*) with a slightly different emphasis in each case. According to Tze-lan Sang's research, early twentieth century Japanese sexologists first coined the term *tongxing ai* and, based on the loanword, the Chinese created the above-listed variants. When the term was introduced, China was in the midst of a revolution; breaking away from its imperial past and arranged marriage, May Fourth intellectuals heralded free-love and free-choice marriage as the symbol of a new and revolutionary China.[34]

Before European sexology was widely introduced to Chinese intellectuals, some May Fourth writers even protested the reification of male-female love as the ultimate category.[35]

Gradually, after the introduction of European sexology, *tongxing lian* developed both a medical and criminal stigma. By 1949, the Chinese Communist Party denounced homosexuality as either a feudalistic crime or a Western decadence[36] and the coinages disappeared from the intellectual arena of discussion.

On a visit to Beijing in 1998, Sang is introduced to a group of lesbian-identified women who call themselves *tongzhi*.[37] This term, as discussed in the introduction, began to be used as a connotation to same-sex individuals in early 1990s' Taiwan and Hong Kong, as an umbrella term for non-heteronormative identities, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, and queer. *Tongzhi* is also a loanword from Japanese, meaning "like-minded" and was originally used in China as "comrade" during the Mao-era, as a form of address. Chou points out that in 1997, the community adopted the "most sacred term" in Communist China to refer to themselves—claiming a desire to indigenize sexual politics and reclaim cultural identity.[38] He argues that the reappropriation of the word seeks to integrate the sexual into the social. Chou also suggests the reappropriation of the term is an indigenous strategy within a familial-cultural structure of proclaiming one's sexual identity whilst de-sexualizing the stigma of homosexuality. The use of *tongzhi* "achieves a similar political contribution as 'queer politics' does, but whereas queer politics confronts the mainstream by appropriating a formerly derogatory label, *tongzhi* harmonizes social relationships by taking the most sacred title from the mainstream culture."[39] Within a few years its use in connection to the LGBTQ community was common in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and was gaining popularity in urban mainland spaces.

Jin Zhao argues strongly against Chou's adulation of *tongzhi* politics. Zhao states that Chou, in an effort to praise local cultural/cultural purity identities over what he considers global sexual identities, actually suggests sexual minorities "surrender their sexual identities and sexual

freedom to their national/cultural identities in the name of local resistances to the 'globalizing' or Westernizing forces."[40] In their work "Reticent Politics, Queer Politics," Jen-Peng Liu and Naifei Ding discuss a "silent tolerance" of homosexuality (in line with *tongzhi* politics) present in Taiwan that rather than liberating LGBTQ individuals takes the form of a "ghostly position." The ghostly position of silent tolerance "demands of shadow beings the responsibility (at their expense) for the upkeep of the wholeness and harmony of the very continuum [the Chinese socio-familial continuum] wherein the do not have a place."[41] Zhao quotes Liu and Ding's warning against the exaltation of Chou's perspective arguing that the dismissal or suppression of Chinese LGBTQ individuals' quest for sexual rights can "easily slip toward the interests that include the very forces that [. . .] kill homosexual teenagers by forcing them to commit suicide—alone, in pairs, in threesomes."[42]

In Taiwan, *tongzhi* literature subsequently gave rise to *kuer wenxue*, or queer literature. *Kuer* is a Chinese neologism transliterated from the English word queer composed of two characters: *ku* meaning cool, cold, or extremely, and *er* meaning child, youngster, or son. Proponents for use of the term *kuer* reject Chinese tradition (seen as patriarchal and feudal) and tend to align themselves with the Western queer movement. D. E. Mungello suggests that the *kuer* movement is reminiscent of the New Culture movement in the early 1900s, in its condemnation of the old and championing of the new—particularly within a blended global context.[43]

Chou states that *tongzhi* is the most popular Chinese term for lesbigay individuals,[44] while Kam states in her research that Shanghainese Chinese use *tong xing lian* more frequently to label themselves;[45] in agreement with Kam, my research found individuals in Hangzhou most

frequently used the term *tongxing lian* (over *tongzhi* or *kuer*) to describe themselves and other same-sex individuals.

Aside from the addition of "female" (*nü*) to the terms *tongxing lian* and *tongzhi*, until recently, there has been no signifier for female same-sex identity in the Chinese language. *Lala* or *les* are the contemporary labels that lesbian-identified Chinese women claim. According to scholar and activist, He Xiaopei, the term, *lala*, came from the Hong Kongense term, *lazi*.[46]

Both of the terms draw directly from the English term "lesbian," indicating that there is no term in the Chinese lexicon for female homosexuality. In Judith Butler's reading of Jacques Lacan, she suggests that the social function of naming "is always to some extent an effort to stabilize a set of multiple and transient imaginary identifications."[47] She further suggests, based on her understanding of Lacan, and Slavoj Žižek's reading of Saul Kripke, that Lacan and Kripke agree that: "the name, as part of a social pact and, indeed, a social system of signs, overrides the tenuousness of imaginary identification and confers on it a social durability and legitimacy. The instability of the ego is thus subsumed or stabilized by a symbolic function, designated through the name."[48]

Based on Butler's statements, Aaron Ho argues that since the "Law of the Father" (the relationship between Lacan's Symbolic order and society) delineates the social pact and system of signs, and as there is no sign for lesbian in the Chinese imagination, then female same-sex desire in China takes place in Lacan's idea of the Real and not only stands outside the jurisdiction of the social, but is also always indefinable.[49] In his work, "The Lack of Chinese Lesbians: Double Crossing in *Blue Gate Crossing*, Ho examines the Taiwanese coming-of-age film in which teenaged Meng navigates the love offered by a male classmate and the love she offers to her best friend, a female classmate. In his analysis Ho suggests: "The lack of a name for

'lesbian' in Chinese societies and a willingness to co-exist without the desire to provide a name for 'lesbianism' create a tension in the Lacanian discourse that states naming as an act of taming the Imaginary through symbolic function and that the Law of the Father subjugates and suppresses the gaps in the Real to a great extent."[50]

He Xiaopei, however, highlights that the term and use of *lala* has actually been largely influential in the development of female homosexual identities: "[the emergence of the word '*lala*' has not only enabled *lalas* to identify with their own sexual identities, but more so, has given *lalas* an identity with which to build their own communities, to gather and to reach out to more *lalas* for new activities and for organizing such activities."[51] Despite the Chinese lexicon's lack of a sign for female homosexuality, in opposition to Ho's argument that Chinese societies are willing to co-exist without the desire to label lesbianism, I argue that lesbian-identified women in urban China are very concerned about the process of labeling and naming. While their naming and labeling draws heavily from Western LGBTQ discourse and language, they reject their status as invisible and are propelling themselves into the collective Chinese imagination.

Confucianism in China

For over two-millennia Confucianism has shaped and pervaded Chinese society. Despite fluctuations in Confucianism's public popularity and the level to which it was structurally imposed by the government, much of Chinese family life is still posited in relationship to shifting Confucian normatives. Filial piety (*xiao*) is of paramount importance among Confucian norms. The Chinese character itself (孝) is composed from two other characters: the top portion of old (*lao* 老) and the character for son （*zi* 子）, with "son" underneath "old" symbolizing the descendants' role of "carrying" their parents and ancestors.[52] Confucius states in the *Classic of*

Filial Piety that "In serving his parents, a filial son reveres them in daily life; he makes them happy while he nourishes them; he takes anxious care of them in sickness; he shows great sorrow over their death; and he sacrifices to them with solemnity."[53] A follower of Confucian philosophy, Mencius states that the greatest offense of filial piety is not producing posterity.[54]

Confucian filial piety casts different expectations upon sons and daughters. While both sons and daughters are required to defer, with the utmost respect and obedience, to their parents and elders, traditionally, daughters were absorbed into their husband's family upon marriage. Whereas sons were responsible for the continuing of their natal parents and ancestors, after marriage, a woman, along with her husband, was expected to serve, obey, and honor her spouse's natal parents as if they were her own. Confucian texts and local folk-traditions[55] codified the behavioral standards for virtuous Confucian wives, daughters-in-law, and mothers.

According to Ikels, five characteristics of modernization are causing a decline in the tradition of filial piety. These aspects include: the devaluing of land in relation to urbanization, widespread literacy, one's physical separation from one's parents, and the increasing importance of the nuclear family over the parents' natal families. The Opium Wars (1839, 1856), Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the influence of Western missionaries, and intensified diplomatic and intellectual exchanges disrupted the publically held Confucian view of what Joan Judge calls "a self-contained and correlative cosmos" in exchange for a "more secular recontextualization of notions of policy, society, and womanhood." Allowing women to participate in public education was one of the most profound acts of disembedding for Chinese women.[56] Judge argues that the secularizing shift was not a sharp rupture, but instead "a product of an intricate triangulation among myriad visions of the Chinese past, a plethora of imagined futures, and current global forces generally reified as 'the West' and largely mediated by Japan."[57]

Since Confucian traditions were refuted during the Maoist period (1949-1976) in China, state support of these norms remains divided. Through feminist movements and Marxism, women's role as second-class citizens has been theoretically leveled and women are now promoted as equals by the state. The government contradicts itself on the issue of women, however, relying on both traditional rhetoric and liberation rhetoric to promote its own agenda.[58] China's birth-control policy has also deeply affected both the role of women in families and Confucian traditions. Often, emphasis on aspects of Confucian culture that are seen as beneficial to the State–caring for one's elderly parents—are upheld and reinforced by law, while those seen as contradictions to Communist rhetoric—like funeral displays and ancestor worship—are restricted or discouraged.[59]

State and social rhetoric continues to encourage compulsory filial piety, heterosexuality, and marriage. State policy frequently rewards married individuals through housing, jobs, and other economic benefits.[60] Kam's Shanghainese *lala* subjects unilaterally speak of pressure from their families to marry a man as being a paramount stress. Kam underscores the importance of marriage as a signifier of "normal" and mature behavior in modern Chinese society. Frequently, even if a woman is successful in her career, it is not until she has formed her own conjugal family that she gains respect as an adult. Not only does this affect her personally, but due to remnants of Confucian perspectives, her status as an unmarried woman deeply reflects upon her family's—particularly her parents'—"face." Many of Kam's interviewees state that not getting married was an inconceivable prospect. One informant explains: "I had never thought of marriage as optional. I felt that everyone must get married . . . I didn't have any point of reference. I felt that everyone had to walk this path."[61] An unmarried status suggests an intrinsic personality, physical, or relational defect, and invited social surveillance from friends, neighbors,

and community members. As being single and being homosexual both transgress social norms, an unmarried lesbian is doubly stigmatized.[62]

In order to both appease their families and escape from constant pressure, many *lalas* choose to marry heterosexual men or form "cooperative" or "fake" marriages with gay men.[63] These options allow them to fulfill their duty to their parents and relieve themselves of social pressure and surveillance, as well as guilt from being unfilial. Advertisements for individuals interested in cooperative marriages are frequently posted on BBS sites, message boards, and chat rooms. Kam suggests that through cooperative marriage, "we can see that this silent force of repression within the contemporary Chinese family institution is met with the same silent force of resistance . . . It is a culturally specific strategy for *lalas* and gay people to survive in a culture where (heterosexual) marriage is not as much an option as an obligation to one's family and society, and a rite of passage to independence and adulthood."[64]

Internet as Cultural Discourse

Since its inception, the Internet is a progressively popular platform for media. In a 2011 study, Chei Sian Lee investigates the role of the Internet (particularly video content posted on social-media sites) in the phenomenon named by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur,[65] as Media System Dependency theory (MSDT). Lee purports that the public is increasingly dependent upon videos on social-media sites to not only quench their desire for knowledge, but also to meet their emotional needs.[66]

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's theory investigates the reciprocal relationship between an individual's heightened need for media (based on the emergence of crisis) and the information resources available. This relationship forms the key audience-media-society tripartite. MSDT

understands society as an "organic structure in which individuals, groups, organizations and other social systems are interrelated and an audience is affected not only by media content but also by the society or environment in which they consume the content."[67] MSDT studies suggest that, during times of heightened crisis, there is a corresponding increase of dependency upon media.[68] Lee notes that within MSDT, unstable and ambiguous social situations (those without precedent or prescribed social codes of response such as sudden tragedy or changing social norms) cause individuals to become increasingly dependent upon media to resolve the ambiguities.

MSDT's original analysis assumes a hierarchical relationship between media and audience, asserting that while individuals depend upon media for information about their social environment, the media and social systems do not require input from individuals. Lee points out that the development of the Internet and social media websites is changing the original power structure of MSDT. "By providing individuals with the ability to create information, social networking sites have changed the dependency relationship. Such sites allow users who have consumed content (i.e. content consumers) the freedom to interact with others as well as to create and disseminate information, thus becoming producers of content at the same time.[69]

The growing ease of both generating information and responding to information on social media websites empowers individuals and suggests a reciprocal relationship among the original audience-media-social system tripartite, heightening the validity of such websites as a medium for cultural research. As a social media website, Queercomrades.com's content and visitors are implicit in the MSDT model in which confrontation by non-heteronormative lifestyles (for oneself or others) creates the "unstable" social situation and the QC website is the space in which individuals can interact, create and consume information. To understand the decentralizing

power of alternate sexualities and genders, it is helpful to turn to Stevi Jackson's work "Sexuality,

Heterosexuality and Gender Hierarch: Some Reflections on Recent Debates". Jackson purports

that heteronormativity refers to how heterosexuality is culturally normalized and then endowed

with the power to define other sexualities as abnormal and marginal.[70] As non-heteronormative

embodiment suggests multiple bodily practices, then non-heteronormative bodies destabilize

heteronormative sexualities and expectations of genders and/or identities. This destabilization of

both personal sexual identity and social changes corresponding to non-heteronormative

embodiment forms a nexus of social or identity crisis, frequently resulting in a turn to media for

answers, further information, expression, or camaraderie. QC presents consumable and

interactional information through visual and social media for both hetero and non-

heteronormative audiences seeking a greater understanding of non-heteronormative

embodiments and identities.[71]

Internet in China

With the of advent of the World Wide Web in China in 1987, the number of Internet

users soared to over 546 million people in 2009 and continues to rise. In 1989, only a few

scientists had access to email addresses, allowing them to communicate internationally with ease

and speed. In 1994, China obtained full-function Internet connectivity, but it wasn't until 1996

that the Internet was available to the average urbanite.[72]

In his work, *The Power of the Internet: Citizen Activism Online*, Guobin Yang both traces

the history of online activism on the Chinese Internet and argues that its rituals and genres

provide a virtual mirror of "real" life: "The Internet revolution parallels the expansion of culture,

community, and citizen activism beyond cyberspace."[73] He defines online activism as "any form

of Internet-based collective action that promotes, contests, or resists change."[74] Yang argues that

the appearance of BBS (Bulletin Board Systems) forums in 1995 provided the first arena for

online contention. While BBS forums were originally formed in collegiate settings, *People's

Daily Online*'s BBS "Protest Forum" (created in the wake of the US's bombing of the Chinese

embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999) provided the first model of public internet space for netizens

(*wangmin*) to air their discontent.[75]

Yang divides online activism into two categories: one is a struggle for recognition and

against discrimination that is rooted in non-material grievances, while the other is a struggle

against oppression and exploitation that is rooted in material grievances.[76] While Yang points out

that these two types of online contention often overlap, the first type of contention represents

Queercomrades.com's quest to normalize non-hetero sexualities and relationships.

As a precaution, and in response, to such online contention, the State developed an

increasingly sophisticated system of Internet control, culminating in an unprecedented set of

principles that includes: "legal binding, administrative monitoring and management,

occupational self-discipline, and technical guarantees," and intends to "strengthen the building of

an Internet propaganda team, and forge the influence of positive opinion on the Internet."[77]

Chinese Internet is currently maintained and policed by government-related Great Firewall and

the censorship arm, Golden Shield. As foreign social-media websites are viewed as a threat to

social stability and government support, alternate Chinese versions of popular websites, like

YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, were created in order to more closely monitor internet trends

and memes—deleting any controversial or inappropriate content within seconds of being posted,

and detaining internet users deemed as responsible for posting the offensive material. Despite

these restrictions, the Internet provides an unprecedented platform for knowledge acquisition and

self-expression in China, and it has played an extremely important role in the development of

LGBTQ education, identities, and communities over the past thirty years.

In a 2009 study, Pierre Miege explores the role of the World Wide Web in the lives of

rural self-identified gay men in Hefei, Anhui. The place of the Internet in the lives and

experiences of these young homosexuals is far from insignificant. Miege explains:

> When they talk about their personal histories, around half of the participants
>
> acknowledge that before having access to the web, they were already conscious of their
>
> sexual orientation. Nevertheless, the Internet contributed to their becoming aware of what
>
> their desires meant, to discovering that other men shared these desires, and that therefore
>
> they were not alone.[78]

The subjects of the study illustrate Miege's observation. One interviewee says, "The Internet

helped me a lot . . . first of all I discovered that there were a lot of people like me . . . some of

them wrote about their experience and their feelings, or wrote short novels . . . I hoped that on

the Internet I could find out about this situation [homosexuality], and see if there were people

like me, and maybe get in touch with them, to escape my loneliness."[79]

Another interviewee, surnamed Guo, explains how the Internet played a role in his

process of self-identification: "For a very long time I had been attracted to boys . . . but I didn't

realize that that was being homosexual. Then, one day, I began to learn to use the Internet . . . I

went exploring and then I understood there was such a phenomenon. Of course there are lots of

other people who are also homosexual, but until that day I thought I was the only one."[80]

Miege goes on to argue that while the Internet may have initially played a crucial role in

many of his subjects' understanding of their own sexuality, the Internet's role quickly became

less significant. He states that the men he interviewed came from a medium-sized poor city

where main venues in which to access the Web were either in public internet cafés (where users must register with their photo identification (*shefen zheng*)) or family computers, generally placed in the main room of a home. As homosexuality remains largely taboo—especially in less urban areas—his interviewees had limited opportunities to browse this topic in the necessary privacy.[81] Miege concludes, "The 'cyberworld' is only a limited and fragile space in which they can live differently and express their desires and anxieties, but subject to constraints, and in fear of discovery. It is therefore not in any way a matter of constituting spaces of resistance or spaces in which alternative cultures can grow and in which dense and strong networks can be established. In this sense, the Internet reflects the other aspects of their social life, which is divided and precarious."[82]

Since his study in 2009, however, access to the Internet through laptop computer, tablets, and smart phones has proliferated across China, allowing increasing opportunities to browse privately. In her 2005-2010 research, Kam found that nearly all of her twenty-five urban lesbian informants in Shanghai used the Internet for information concerning their sexuality.[83]

While LGBTQ activists generally posted information and networked anonymously in the 1990s, websites specifically for *lalas* developed at the beginning of the millennium. One of the initial points of online contact for many gays and lesbians was on the message boards of popular BBS sites. According to Kam, an online BBS community set up by and for gays and lesbians in 1999 as a sub-forum of *Tianya.cn* was the most frequently mentioned BBS site among her informants. Three other lesbian-specific sites included *Shengqiuxiaowu*, *Aladao*, and *Huakaidedifang*—all based in Shanghai.[84] While acknowledging the Internet is not risk-free, Kam explains that the Internet has played a significant role in her interviewees' process of identity:

The Internet has provided a relatively safe space for *lalas* to search for and connect with

each other. It has not only encouraged the formation of online lesbian and gay

communities, but has also paved the way for the establishment of communities of greater

visibility in the offline world. The Internet remains the most important medium of social

networking for lesbian and gay people in China.

These and other online communities commonly network with activists in Hong Kong and

Taiwan due to shared geographic, linguistic, and cultural affinities among the three regions. Kam

highlights the importance of Hong Kongnese, Taiwanese, and other international LGBTQ groups

to mainland Chinese groups in modeling online community support and education.[85] Today,

there are an estimated 300 Chinese lesbian and gay websites that provide networking,

information and community space for Chinese LGBTQ individuals.[86]

Talk Shows in China

Mass media, including film, television, and Internet postings, is an essential

demonstration of popular culture as media posits itself in a reciprocally influential relationship

with society. Talk shows as a television genre materialized in China in 1996, with the debut of

the first talk show—"Tell it Like it Is" (*Shi hua shi shuo*) on CCTV (China Central Television).[87]

Along with the television documentary genre that emerged in 1993 with a daytime documentary

show—"Oriental Horizons" (*Donghang Shikong*)—the talk show genre marked a new era for

CCTV and its audience. In 2005, this combined genre was given its own channel—CCTV 12—

the first nationwide law and society channel dedicated to "diversification and liberalization."[88]

According to CCTV, the channel focuses on "China's rule of law and sharing a harmonious

society with the audience."[89] The CCTV 12 talk show, *Psychological Interview*, commonly deals

with marginalized groups, such as the floating migrant population or people groups classified as "ethnic minorities." In her work "Cultural Representations and Self-Representations of *Dagongmei* in Contemporary China," Justyna Jaguscik states that *Psychological Interview*'s format is far from innovative with a conventional model of a host (responsible for communicating meaning and message to the audience), guests who tell their stories and experts who analyze the guests' responses or offer advice to the guests and members of the audience in similar situations.[90] Though a predecessor to QC's talk show webcasts and a program that similarly invites members of more "marginalized" social groups to share their stories, QC's talk shows offer not only a different format from *Pschological Interview*, but also endow their guests with more agency, voice, and expertise.

Chapter Three: QueerComrades.com

This study examines data collected from the Chinese LGBTQ website, Queercomrades.com (QC), concerning issues central to Chinese lesbians. QC is the only not-for-profit LGBTQ webcast in China. QC's mission is: "to document queer culture in all its aspects in order to raise public awareness on LGBTQ matters . . . We aim to inform both the LGBTQ and the non-LGBTQ members of Chinese society in a relaxed and unrestrained way on the various aspects of queer culture, by sending out empowering images of queer life."[91]

Funded by the Ford Foundation, The Fund for Global Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and Beijing Gender Health Education Institution (BGHEI), QC's primary medium is a talk show produced three times a month by a team of eight Europeans and Chinese Operating under the name, "Queer as Folk - Beijing" (QAF), the team began broadcasting their first season in April of 2007, using Chinese social media websites, like Tudou, 56, Youku and Soku, to post talk shows, documentaries, and short films about LGBTQ issues in China. In 2009, as it grew in popularity, QAF changed their name to QueerComrades to distance themselves from the American television show, *Queer as Folk*. In 2010, QC launched its own Singapore-based website, queercomrades.com, in Chinese and English.[92] The website is now populated with a blog, calendar of LGBTQ events in Beijing, over fifty talk shows and documentaries, and over eighty news items archiving major LGBTQ happenings in China since 2007.

Queercomrade's audience has been growing steadily since 2007. According to Belgian QC producer, lawyer, and Chinese law professor, Stijn Deklerck, QC's first season (2007-08) drew over 1 million requests on the Chinese public websites, the second season (2008-09) identified over 6 million hits on public websites, and QC recorded that the third season (2009-

present) has drawn approximately 15 million hits on the public websites. The QC website has

also had approximately 15 million successful requests since its launch in January 2010.[93]

A QC questionnaire, distributed from November 2012 to April 2013, provides insight

into the demographic information of the audience, and clarifies what role the website plays in the

lives of the audience. The collected surveys demonstrated that the majority of respondents were

ethnic Han Chinese living in mainland China. The highest percentage of respondents included

individuals between 24-30 years of age, while the second highest percentage consisted of 18-24

year olds. Of the respondents, 54% live in a city with a population of 5 million, and none of the

respondents reported living in the countryside or in a village. Nearly 70% of respondents to the

questionnaire had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher; and students and private-sector

employees made up the majority of occupations reported. Men made up 54% of the respondents,

and women 35%, while transgendered and intersex individuals each made 8%, and 2% abstained

from specifying. The majority of respondents self-identified as gay, with percentages of lesbian,

bisexual, and heterosexual descending respectively.[94]

The largest percentage of respondents reported viewing the videos posted on QC. The

percentage of individuals who reported using the events, news, blog, about us, and featured queer

videos links fell in decreasing order. According to the questionnaire results, 62% of the

respondents said they used QC's content to find out more about LGBTQ issues in China—56%

said they used the website to find out more about LGBTQ organizations in China, and 48% said

they had used it for learning about LGBTQ activities. The results tabulated 38% who used the

website to learn about global LGBTQ issues and engage with like-minded people. The

percentage of respondents who claimed they used the website for viewing queer films and

gaining more information about Chinese society were both 35%. And while 16% reported

visiting QC to acquire a greater understanding of their own sexuality and/or identity, 25% had

used the website to learn more about others' sexuality and/or identity. The majority of these

respondents stated they were seeking a deeper understanding of either homosexuals as a whole or

their homosexual friends specifically, while one respondent reported turning to QC to learn about

his or her father.

From this sampling of QC respondents, it is clear that the majority of QC users are urban,

college-educated, Chinese, young-adult LGBTQ individuals whose primary uses for QC are

learning about global and local LGBTQ issues, Chinese LGBTQ organizations and events, and

viewing queer films. Respondents voiced that along with more talk shows and love stories, they

would like to see representations of LGBTQ lifestyles from "the lower strata of society," a

segment or film on an "out" gay family, and more emphasis on the legal rights of gay partnership.

One respondent suggested QC host a domestic queer film contest to promote the development of

interesting gay films.[95]

Legality of Queercomrades

China decriminalized homosexual acts in 1996 and depathologized homosexuality in

2001. While public media is publically broadcasting more information about LGBTQ issues than

in the past and presenting more balanced representations of LGBTQ individuals, the Chinese

Communist Party (CCP) remains relatively silent concerning the presence of homosexuality—

while no longer outlawing it, there are few legal guidelines that protect LGBTQ expression.

Deklerck shared with YAM magazine: "There are still rules, for example, that officially forbid

the broadcasting of homosexuality-themed movies. The silence also means that the legal status

and position of LGBTQ people is unclear, with varying official treatment throughout China.

LGBTQ people lack legal recognition and legal protection, and there's no legal certainty to their position."[96]

While information with homosexual content is technically banned from public forums like cinemas, television, and the Internet, QC has been able to broadcast from its Singaporean servers relatively unfettered. "Until now, we have been able to operate our website without problems," explained Deklerck. "We do have sometimes problems broadcasting our videos on the Chinese public websites. It happens quite a lot that they delete our videos after we upload them—it's happened many times that they say our video is 'unappropriate' (sic) or contains unappropriate images (sic)."[97] Deklerck asserts that QC has no relationship with the CCP, though government has intervened to shut down certain public events sponsored by QC. "The biggest hurdle is that you never know what's going to happen," stated Deklerck. "You can prepare all you want, but you never really know if, in the end, your event is going to be halted or not. That uncertainty is kind of haunting sometimes, gives a lot of stress, and makes it so you always kind of have to be on the tips of your toes, not prepare a plan A, but also a plan B and maybe even a plan C."[98]

Format of QC's Talk Shows

While QC's content was revolutionary in 2007, the talk show's format during season one (2007-08) and season two (2008-09) was only mildly innovative. QC producer Deklerck explained:

> We wanted to introduce the Chinese audience to new content, but keep it in a
>
> format they were familiar with [. . .] at the time there weren't very many Chinese
>
> people who were willing to appear on camera to speak openly about LGBTQ

topics. From the beginning, we decided that we wanted to show people without mosaics or other things blocking their faces – we wanted to present a positive representation of LGBTQ and wanted to disseminate a message that it was OK to be LGBTQ, that it was nothing you needed to hide or be ashamed of, that it didn't necessarily have to be a problem to be LGBTQ. The talk show format was a good way to really highlight these few openly out people.[99]

The first season, the set was makeshift in an individual's home. The second season shifted to a space in a photography studio, and by the third season the set itself had been updated to provide a more professional environment. The talk shows are filmed with two video cameras to reduce editing time, and there is no live audience.

The host of QC's talk show, publically gay actor and QC's founder, Wei Xiaogang, provides the narrative structure of the program and facilitates the form of utterances to be delivered. In season two, Xiaogang is joined by one of two co-hosts: Liang Ma during the first session and Eva during the following sessions. Liang Ma is a Chinese actor and Eva is a student then graduate who won the show's "reality TV" style competition for the next co-host during season two. Eva plays both the role of co-hostess and, having self-identified as bisexual, resident bisexual and lesbian expert. The format of the talk shows can be divided into personal narratives (*gushi*) told by "authentic" LGBTQ individuals on-site, or recorded outside the studio, and supplementary commentary offered by "experts" invited to take part in the dialogue. Xiaogang is responsible for asking questions and summarizing the personal narratives in an effort to ensure accurate understanding by the audience. Xiaogang's questions can also be divided into two categories: educational—representing questions held by the public usually based on incorrect

stereotypes or misinformation, and normalizing—probing questions that reinforce the humanness of the participating LGBTQ individuals.

During the third season, QC altered the talk show format to create a talk show documentary hybrid. According to Deklerck:

> With the talk shows, we always really focused on spoken content, and not so much on visual content or even emotional content. We felt that in order to continue raising awareness on LGBT issues in China, it was time to put more attention towards visual content and emotional connection to the viewer. It also kept everything fresh for us—the talk shows were getting a bit 'routine', and adopting a new view on things kept us sharp.[100]"

The new format included more on-site interviews—particularly focusing on activities happening in both Beijing and Shanghai, contributions from the general public, and attributing expert-status to interviewees and guests. In personal correspondence with Xiaogang in the spring of 2013, he revealed that the webcasts would continue to become more and more "documentary-like" in their format. He shared that it is becoming increasingly easier to find LGBTQ individuals who are willing to speak about their lives and experiences and therefore easier to film documentaries with several participants rather than the traditional one or two-guest format of a talk show.[101]

Chapter Four: Research Methods, Data, and Analysis

Research Methods: Introduction

As a feminist symbolic interactionist, I study the patterns of speech, interaction, identity, and meaning, recognizing the reciprocal relationship between myself as a researcher and the socio-historical circumstances and situational exigencies, while paying attention to the reproduction of structures of inequality, produced by society, government, and individuals.[102] I employed qualitative content analysis to examine the content of QC's videos concerning the representations of lesbians in China within the Confucian context. Qualitative content analysis is defined by Hsieh and Shannon as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes."[103] Robert Weber adapted Berelson's[104] examples of common purposes of content analysis, highlighting the reflection of cultural patterns, focus, and communication trends of individuals, groups, and societies as three important uses of content analysis.[105] I chose to use two of the qualitative content analysis methods acknowledged by Hsieh and Shannon, conventional and summative analysis, to examine the QC talk shows.

Conventional content analysis stresses the organic development of coding systems; in such, the researcher begins without a prior theory concerning the phenomena being examined. Through data immersion, the researcher first identifies common words or themes.[106] Then, he or she approaches the text through the lens of his or her own notes concerning initial analysis, thoughts, and impressions, allowing "codes to emerge that are reflective of more than one key thought."[107] The initial coding scheme comes directly from the text and the codes are sorted into categories based on linked meaning. These categories will eventually be organized hierarchically in order to analyze the data.[108] This method of content analysis is advantageous because it

enables the researcher to gain direct information from a text without imposing preconceived theories, perspectives, or categories.[109]

Summative content analysis combines manifest content analysis[110] and latent content analysis in order to focus on "discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content."[111] By first determining coding categories based on data immersion, summative analysis allows the researcher to interpret "the context associated with the use of the word or phrase . . . [and] explore word usage or discover the range of meaning that word can have normal use." This method allows for an unobtrusive and nonreactive way to study the phenomenon of interest. Combining these two types of analysis enables data triangulation and strengthens research findings.[112] Furthermore, according to Hawkesworth, "feminist inquiry probes absences, silences, omissions, and distortions in order to challenge the common sense understanding."[113] By using qualitative content analysis, one is able to examine not only what is being said, but also that which remains unsaid—a critical element for feminist research in understanding structures of inequality.

For this study, I selected six 30-minute talk shows produced by QC directly concerning female same-sex love issues. Out of forty shows, four dealt exclusively with lesbian-related issues. The talk shows are a selection from all three seasons, April 2007 through December 2012: "Les Talk About Sex" (*lala tan xing*), "Lesbian Toy Story" (*lala wanju zongdongyan*), "Lalalala Lesbians" (*lazixiu*), "Only P" (*po'de gaobai*). Using transcripts and translations from both QC and personal resources, this study examines the representations of lesbian identities on QC, extrapolates pertinent issues in light of the global and local specificity argument, and themes of relevant communication concerning audiences in China.

Data

"Les Talk About Sex"

QC's first episode dedicated specifically to lesbian issues, "Les Talk About Sex", aired on May 17, 2007. "Les Talk About Sex" features both foreign and Chinese co-hosts and guests and covers topics on lesbian social groups in China, history and media coverage, and discrimination, as well as issues of family pressure, fake marriage, and children.

The episode opens with on-site co-hosts Xiao Bei and Steven launching into Shanghai's lesbian scene. After the introduction, the episode cuts to an on-site interview with American, Han Ni, being interviewed by Xiao Bei. Xiao Bei establishes that Han Ni is the first person to start a major LGBTQ social group in Shanghai, particularly aimed at ex-patriots. While the organization, Shanghai LGBTQ, began as a forum for LGBTQ foreigners to chat online and participate in monthly activities, within six months the group grew to over 300 people, including Chinese participants and other individuals from all over the queer spectrum. "Our activities are different every month," explains Han Ni in Chinese. "Sometimes we go bowling, go out to karaoke, have brunch . . . go to a gay pub—first eating and drinking together and then having a pub quiz." Han Ni says that information for Shanghai LGBTQ easily comes up on a Google search and that it is a good place for both Chinese and foreigners to get to know the city and other people. She also plans to hold at least two charity events per year. "My only hope for the organization is that it will be a place where people can easily make friends and help people feel that Shanghai is a comfortable, passionate, and fantastic place to have fun," Han Ni concludes.[114]

The episode cuts to the traditional in-studio talk-show format. Steven returns to co-host with founder and director of QueerComrades, Xiaogang. They introduce their guest, lesbian Xian, stating that there has been a boom in support for QC from lesbians and also a lot of dialogue on the website by Chinese lesbians, leading QC to do a feature episode. Xian is the founder of a lesbian website, www.lalabar.com and organization, *Tongyu*, in Beijing. Xian explains that she and a group of friends hold themed "lesbian salons" every month to discuss different topics, like social pressure, partners, and sex. In addition, her website lalabar.com displays information on the history of female same-sex love in both Western and Chinese culture. She highlights famous lesbians in Western culture, like Sappho and Florence Nightingale, but admits very few Chinese females have been recorded throughout history. "The reason," she explains, "is that it was usually men who wrote history books. It's not that the tales haven't existed, but that they have been buried from future generations' discovery."[115]

Steven and Xiaogang suggest that despite the hidden history of female same-sex love, today's Chinese lesbians enjoy more positive media coverage and stronger public support. Xian agrees and suggests this is due to gay men's more public activities (cruising in public parks and toilets), higher profile for being arrested before the catch-all law forbidding "hooliganism" was removed from the law code, and also the mishandling of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon by the media. She says because of this a lot of "people say that the Chinese social environment is more tolerant of lesbians than gay men because there is no specific law against lesbians."[116] Xiaogang points out that Chinese social norms allow for relatively high levels of public intimacy between females, so many people think they lesbians suffer less public bias. But Xian refuses to admit that this reflects a more tolerant view of lesbians by the Chinese public. Xian believes that

whether lesbian behavior was included in the law code or not is not an important factor when considering discrimination. She suggests that at certain times in history, lesbian behavior was intentionally left out, as law makers feared inclusion would be acknowledging the existence of such a phenomenon, and its awareness of female same-sex behavior would incite more women to experiment.[117] Xian emphasizes that there are many different types of discrimination:

> It's just the form in which bias appears. Forms of discrimination are diverse. Sometimes the form can be direct violence. In the West, there are lots of hate crimes, and the person who commits these crimes will be arrested and sentenced. These instances in China, however, are rare. But is that to say Chinese lesbians have a more comfortable environment?[118]

Steve, Xiaogang, and Xian all agree that lesbians who fit the masculine stereotype (Ts), similarly to effeminate gay men, will receive less pressure from their family (as they will give up more readily on trying to change her) and be accepted more freely by the lesbian and straight community as homosexual. Xiaogang explains, "This kind of thing also happens with lesbians. If their daughter is a lesbian but feminine, her parents will be thankful she is not a tomboy and they will pray she will one day change and marry a man. If she is masculine, they will have a greater challenge."[119] Xian points out Ps, however, have a much harder struggle. Ps are thought to be more traditional in appearance and behavior than Ts and in Taiwan there is a movement called "Ps stand up" (to attract attention to the fact that not all lesbians look masculine). Xian states:

> They think that Ps are always misunderstood by heterosexual and homosexual society. A P is a lesbian, but because she has the traditional heterosexual female appearance the heterosexual community assumes she will return to the hetero-world one day and the queer community also assumes she will retreat back to the

hetero-world as a traitor. But actually, this is not true. So actually it is very

difficult for Ps, they have to continue to prove to everyone, both gay and straight,

that they are lesbians.[120]

Xiaogang, Steven, and Xian all agree that this social stigma, particularly within the heterosexual

community is fear-based. Xian explains:

The problem is—heterosexuals are used to interpreting homosexuals through

heterosexual gender roles. In fact, though, homosexuals don't correspond at all to

the gender and sex roles heterosexuals have constructed and defined. It's a matter

of interpretation that causes them to feel endangered if gay individuals don't

correspond to their heterosexual definition. Otherwise, they will think it is

horrible and bizarre.[121]

The existence of a gay woman with traditional heterosexual feminine characteristics challenges

the heterosexual society's normative definitions and forces them to recognize that they too might

be homosexual.

Xiaogang suggests that Ps use their appearance as self-protection. By "passing" as

heterosexual, Ps can go back and forth between the heterosexual world and homosexual world

depending upon the community's level of discrimination towards them. But Xian clarifies that is

a common misunderstanding of Ps. Ps do not, in fact, use their appearance to go back and forth

between communities; she says this is more of a bisexual issue. Ps are homosexuals, so in fact,

they will stay within the homosexual community, whether they are accepted or not.[122]

Steven and Xiaogang begin to explore various topics that have been the theme of Lala

Bar's past salons including: long-term relationships, fake marriages, and children. Xian explains

that the salon on sustaining long-term relationships was not necessarily advocating for long-term

relationships among lesbians. Instead, the salon was more of a "how-to" lesson in making a long-term relationship work without any protection or rights by law. "The point of the topic is that at the present, homosexuals have no legal protection," Xian explains, "so the discussion was about the skills needed to pursue a long-term relationship without legal protection. So in the salon it isn't as if we hold up a model of a relationship for everyone to copy. We want everyone to have the freedom to choose their own lifestyle for themselves."[123]

Xiaogang points out that Lala Bar's salon recently held a themed discussion on the topic of fake marriage—legal marriages between a gay man and lesbian for differing reasons, but usually to fulfill the wishes of their parents to get married and produce offspring. Xian begins by stating that fake marriage is not as frequently discussed as most people think.

> This is the first time in two-and-half years we have talked about fake marriage at the salon. This salon was actually hosted by a gay man because a lot of gay men want to find lesbians for fake marriages. So it is usually this way at the present because a lot of gay men have this kind of need. But in our salon, we have had several thousand lesbians who participated but actually very few of them are interested in having fake marriages so we always have to kindly decline the gay men who want to have a fake marriage.[124]

Xiaogang reasons that perhaps Chinese families and society place more pressure on men to produce offspring as a continuation of the family line than women. Xian neither agrees nor disagrees, but states the topic is still important to discuss because it is common for lesbians to fear that their fake husband might come home drunk some day and try to rape them. When gay men hear about this fear they think it is quite absurd. Not only have they never feared a fake wife

might rape them, but they also insist that as they are 100% gay, the idea of having sex with their fake wife will never enter their heads.[125]

The topic of fake marriage leads to lesbians giving birth—both with fake husbands and lesbian partners. Xiaogang mentions he has heard of lesbians who have refused to give their baby over to their fake husband once she has given birth. Xian points out that is actually a problem of surrogate birth mothers, not specifically lesbians. She states that in two weeks the salon will host a discussion concerning giving birth and raising children. As the topic of gay marriage is gaining more support, Xian says that the issue of having children needs to be discussed.[126]

The last topic the trio discusses, per the title of the episode, is sex. "Most people don't know how lesbians have sex," Xiaogang begins, indicating Xian should explain. Xian jokes, "I think I should invite the two of you to come to our salon to talk about how gay men have sex." She continues to clarify the salon's method of dealing with the topic instead of addressing how, specifically, lesbians have sex:

> Indeed, sex education is very important. No matter if it's gay, lesbian, or heterosexual people. In regard to lesbian sex, there is no book and your parents won't tell you about this, so you have to talk about this with your friends, but it is not a very thorough method. So, we try our best to connect people with resources and sometimes a guest-speaker will come to Beijing who is very experienced in lesbian sex and we will trap (*zhuazhu*) and question her about lesbian sex. Like last time, we invited a foreign guest; she has a PhD in gender and sexuality studies, so she has a lot of experience. I've found that every time we have a workshop on sex the resources are very rare. So someone to do this kind of job is very needed, because people can only find the resources on websites but no one is

satisfied with that. So that is why in our salon, we have the guest-speaker come to demonstrate how to . . .[127]

Xian emphasizes that it is very difficult to find educational resources about lesbian sex, stating that in rural areas many lesbian couples do not have sex simply because they do not know how. She says that while lesbian sex itself is not necessarily a more "open topic" than heterosexual sex, lesbians frequently discuss sex more freely with each other because the taboos and misunderstandings that exist between men and women are not present among women discussing the topic. Steven adds that it is the same among gay men, as well: "It's because we are able to understand each other very deeply since our bodies are the same."[128]

"Les Talk About Sex" concludes with a final discussion about which parts of the male body lesbian women, particularly Xian, find most attractive. As gay men, Liang Ma and Xiaogang frequently gravitate toward their own paradigms, particularly similarities and differences between gay men and lesbians and are very curious about the way lesbians view men—homosexual or heterosexual.

"Lesbian Toy Story"

"Lesbian Toy Story", aired on September 19, 2008, combines the traditional talk show format with an on-site interview and documentary-style film format. The episode focuses on different types of sex toys popular among Chinese lesbians, as well as topics concerning anxieties concerning sex toys and differences between heterosexual sex, male gay sex, and female gay sex. Host Xiaogang opens the episode by going on-site and entering a small sex shop. The camera pans the shop's various contents, and upon

introducing the shop's owner, Shang Xiao[129], the viewer learns that the shop is exclusively

for lesbians—both to shop and to find support and opportunities to meet new people.

Shang Xiao explains the background of the shop from its origins as an online

lesbian-themed film website, to an online store for purchasing sex toys, to its current status

as a full-fledged shop for lesbians to discover and buy new sex toys. Shang Xiao

emphasizes the store's dual nature, as both a place to find community and a place to buy

tools to enrich one's sex life. The store also hosts a website and blog for online discussion

and socializing: "When they arrive, it's just like they've found a group, you know? And

they'll share a lot—they'll share fun things and issues they're grappling with and it's

through these stories that you can see the issues and realities they are faced with and it's

these reflections that we put on the blog, perhaps to help encourage people . . ."[130]

After this introduction, the webcast cuts to the in-studio talk-show format. Xiaogang

is joined by co-host, Liang Ma, and guest, He Xiaopei. He Xiaopei introduces herself as a

founder of a new organization in Beijing for lesbians called Pink Space. She explains that

this group "mainly look[s] at issues around sex and sexuality."[131] Xiaogang directs the

conversation—guiding his guest to share her point of view concerning issues with lesbian

identity, lesbian relationships, and particulars of lesbian sex. Before broaching He

Xiaopei's perspective on and personal experience with sex toys, the episode returns to the

interview conducted by Xiaogang with Shang Xiao in her sex toyshop.

Shang Xiao pontificates on the anxieties she has encountered from lesbians buying

sex toys for the first time:

> She might buy it but not know how to use it—doesn't know where the
>
> batteries go or what not, or if you might have to add water," she explains.

"It's actually pretty obvious, but maybe she's the type where with a guy's

parts—she's afraid of handling it, doesn't know what to do with it . . . I'm

talking about those two objects right below—that imitate a guy's parts, you

know—testicles, we call them "little eggs" and that other part, we call it the

"big dragon."[132]

She also talks about the differences between lesbian and heteronormative sex, as well as the

differences between devices Ts and Ps buy and the growing market of lesbians interested in

purchasing sex toys. Shang Xiao's interview is followed by a documentary-style sequence

set to Chinese pop music demonstrating the ease of buying merchandise at Shang Xiao's

store. The camera follows a young woman who enters the shop, browses through the

products, and finally selects a toy to buy. After chatting inaudibly with Shang Xiao, the

young woman buys her selection and exits the store.

After this explanation, the episode returns to the in-studio talk show format a final

time to elucidate, with He Xiaopei's expertise, the particulars about using sex toys—

specifically the strap-on dildo. "I've got a good girlfriend," begins Xiaogang, "she's got a

friend and she says one day they're having sex and she's wearing a strap-on—she suddenly

realizes, after doing this—she discovered 'I really don't need a man!' My first reaction—I

thought it was really neat. Have you had the same experience?" He Xiaopei comments that

she doesn't need to wear a strap-on to know she doesn't need a man, before launching into

her personal experiences and emotions concerning strap-ons.[133]

Xiaogang, He Xiaopei, and Liang Ma continue their dialogue about lesbian sex, including

lesbians' tendency to climax more than once during a sexual interlude. "The orgasm is like this.

You climax, and for lesbians, for example, why I think it can be a little tiring. It's because

usually if you're with a heterosexual man, the woman climaxes, the guy climaxes and you're done. With two women, one climaxes, you've got to rest a bit, and then it's the next one's turn, so it's like 'me first, then you'," says He Xiaopei. "It's just after you finish you might not want to do it again."[134]

Xiaogang mentions he has heard that some lesbians bind their breasts, keep their clothes on during sex, or refrain from having certain parts of their bodies touched. He is particularly concerned about the mental and physical implications of these behaviors. He Xiaopei agrees that in some cases it could be a transgender issue, but she thinks it is not such an uncommon phenomena nor related specifically to lesbians:

> I think this actually happens everywhere with everyone. This idea of being
>
> touched or not being touched in certain places, or wanting to be touched at a
>
> certain time or a in a certain area—I think this happens to people all the time. I
>
> know for lesbians there are some who do not want their breasts touched
>
> sometimes and sometimes they don't want to be touched down there. You could
>
> say this is part of some kind of mood cycle. Or if something in a particular area
>
> has occurred—these things happen and I know for some "Super Ts"—it's a little
>
> unique—they might not ever be willing to be fondled.[135]

The dialogue moves on to resources and support for lesbians—particularly the *Lesbian Sex Bible* and the proliferation of lesbian bars in the Beijing area. Xiaogang mentions he recently ran across a copy of the *Lesbian Sex Bible*. "It's got a similar feel to the *Gay Sex Bible*," he says. "It instructs lesbians how to enjoy the entire process of sex." Liang Ma adds that it is complete with photos and explanations. As He Xiaopei has yet to read the book, the topic changes to places for lesbians to meet in Beijing: "I know of at least six or seven bars . . . I don't know if the

lesbian bars really outnumber the gay ones. But I do know of a place where they even have strippers." The three participants discuss the existence of female sex workers that specialize in female-female intimacy, the possible differences between how straight and gay men and women think about homoeroticism. He Xiaopei argues that from her standpoint, there really is no difference, "It's all the same," she says.[136] But, they all agree that there are groups of girls who may be particularly curious about gay male relationships. He Xiaopei brings up the growing "fag hag" (*tong ren nü*) or "single gal" identities, which leads Xiaogang to explain an identity he has recently heard of called "Rotten Girl" (*fu nü*): "They say 'Rotten Girls' are normal, everyday girls, who stay online and read gay comic books."[137]

The webcast concludes with a conversation about the nuances of a ban on homosexuals donating blood and the implications therein.

"Lalalala Lesbians"

The April 28, 2009 episode, "Lalalala Lesbians", is a reality-show-style contest to find a female co-host to join QC's host Xiaogang. "They came from all corners of China," announces the show's opening. "They all came here with one dream. They came here to be a co-host on Queercomrades." The episode then launches into an eclectic mix of shots, incorporating all the stages in the selection process including: candidates' personal introduction, interview, audition as the co-host, a talk-show style interview with an expert lesbian for advice on what characteristics the new co-host ought to possess, and shots of the judges making the difficult decision of which of eight girls should be the next co-host. The sequence is divided into the "First Screen Shot Test"—mostly the candidates' self-introduction, news report, and vision for

QC—and the "Second Screen Shot," which includes a chance for the candidates to assume the role of host on-air.

The judging panel consists of Dr. He Xiaopei of Beijing's "Pink Space" (featured in the episode "Lesbian Toy Story"); Shi Tou, famous lesbian actress, artist, and director; Liang Ma, actor and the previous season's co-host; Tu Jianping, lecturer and documentary producer; and Xiaogang, founder, co-host, and director of QC. After a survey of the panel, the focus shifts to a collage sequence of candidates proposing their ideas of what the role of a female co-host should entail, reading news stories, and introducing themselves. "I'm from Xinjiang," candidate Xiao Bai begins. "I think the new co-host should have a proper understanding of the gay movement and the gay culture. She should at least be very familiar with them. She should know which things to discuss and she should avoid errors when talking about the community. I'd like to express that we are a happy and cheerful community."[138] "My name is Xiao Qiong. I haven't come out to my parents," says another candidate. "But, almost all of my friends know. It doesn't have to do with courage; it's a matter of being honest to your friends. It's just a matter of principle. I got to know Queer Comrades through a group of closeted gay gays. Because they're a very different group in society, Queer Comrades is very important to them. Queer Comrades is like the bright ray of sunlight which pierces the darkness of their living environment."[139]

The news stories candidates report on vary widely, though all pertain to homosexuality. Candidates introduce an essay contest supporting same-sex marriage in L.A., a same-sex couple taking wedding pictures on a public street at Qianmen, an expose on Dr. He's activities with Pink Space, a homosexual penguin couple in Harbin Polarland Zoo, Japan's decision to acknowledge their citizens' same-sex marriages officiated abroad, and an LGBTQ film screening at Beijing Normal University.

The next section, "Second Screen Shot," displays the candidates, who have been narrowed done to four, playing a dual-role of both co-host and featured guest. "Today we will discuss why we want to find and recruit a lesbian host," states Xiaogang. "Yes. A lot of episodes in the first and second season did actually touch upon lesbian topics, but I am convinced that the third season will see a real breakthrough," adds the current co-host Liang Ma. "Vivian, what do you think of female topics on Queer Comrades?" queries Xiaogang. Candidate Vivian says, "I feel there are few lesbians in this program. By adding a lesbian host, this program will reach a wider audience."[140]

In the next second screen test, two candidates, Eva and Xiao Pei, serve as participants in the dialogue. Along with Xiaogang, Eva and Xiao Pei discuss the taboo concerning female sexuality; the minority audience of lesbians; the lack of lesbian symbols, images, and representation in queer communities; and bisexuality. The three also discuss the problem of recruiting a T or a P-identified lesbian. Xiao Pei states she feels like a P would be best, "I also felt she should be a very female person, maybe even extremely so, someone who matches the traditional female image, a regular woman. Otherwise, when recruiting a T, it will be like there's another man sitting in the studio." Eva agrees, "Recruiting a P might not be the best decision commercially, but Ps are the ones in the lesbian community that don't correspond to the common social stereotype of a lesbian. Choosing a P will change people's mentality and change the stereotypical image they have of lesbians."[141]

After a clip of the fourth candidate's self-introduction—emphasizing not only Xiao Bai's lesbian identity, but also her Tahur ethnicity, and previous accomplishments as a producer for an online video program—Xiao Bai joins host, Xiaogang, and judge, Shi Tou, for a second screen test as a co-host. Xiaogang, Shi Tou, and Xiao Bai continue to dialogue about the benefits of

adding a lesbian co-host to the show's cast. "Although Queer Comrades did talk about lesbian topics in the past," replies Xiao Bai, "I always felt it was strange to see gay men discussing lesbians. They were off the mark, they didn't cover the main points."[142] Shi Tou suggests the co-host and the host could change their appearance based on the topic for that episode. Xiaogang readily agrees, "When we talk about transgender or drag queens, we could become drag queens ourselves. Then we can forget about the differences between male and female." Shi Tou concludes, "If she is a rich and diverse person, she can come out in different disguises. She should have an open mind and she should be tolerant. That's very important, but she should also be sharp and intense. Someone who's not afraid to shake things up."[143]

The final scene cuts to the judges deliberating at a conference table. As a vague indication of the winner, a shot of Eva commenting on the possible outcome is inserted, "If they choose me, I'll do it. If not, then that's it. It's simple." The camera returns to the judges at work. "Can't they all be a host? That's my thought," laments one judge. The voice-over returns as the judges begin to disassemble and the episode concludes: "The age of the lesbians has arrived. Stand aside you members of the male population! But don't worry guys, it's easy to befriend the lesbians: they also like to talk about girls, they also wear pants and they also pick up chicks. Oh lesbians, you're amazing!!!"[144]

"Only P"

"Only P" aired on February 5, 2010, explores the Chinese lesbian identities, "P"—for *po* (wife) or princess, often labeled "femme" or "lipstick lesbian" in Western countries—and "T"— for tomboy, often labeled "butch" in Western countries. The episode begins with an in-studio shot of a conversation between host, Xiaogang, co-host, Eva, and a guest.

Dana immediately introduces herself as a P: "My close friends all think that calling myself a P is a form of self-mockery for me. I have a bold personality, a personality that could be described as manly. It's only my outward appearance that makes me a P."[145] Led by Xiaogang's questions, Eva and Dana continue to elucidate the differences between Ts and Ps—particularly the double-bind of the P. "Is there some sort of superiority connected to the P-label?" asks Xiaogang. "The idea that P lesbians retain some of the privileges and characteristics of straight girls is a big misunderstanding," replies Eva. "People think that there's always a possibility that P girls will go straight. There are actually a lot of Ps who only like girls."[146]

Xiaogang is curious if Ps are actually visible in the public lesbian scene. Eva states that Ps are no longer just a small percentage of the lesbian identities observable in Chinese circles. "That's not a question anymore. When I just entered the lesbian circle four years ago, it was a question. There were a lot of wolves but no meat. Now, when you go out, you see beautiful girls everywhere. They're all made up as Ps. Of course some Ps turn out to be Ts once you interact with them." Dana adds that her friends are not surprised she is a lesbian; just that she considers herself a P. Eva explains to Xiaogang, that typically, when lesbians get together, they love to talk about the P and T identities. For example, "When Dana and get together, we say: 'Ahyo, I can't stand those Ts. They're obviously girls, but they act like boys. They act like macho [guys] but they're actually very weak inside.'"[147] Dana emphasizes this seemingly contradictory connection between outward appearance and personality: "Actually, among the Ts I've met and among my T friends, the following applies: the more they look like a T, the more feminine they are on the inside. It is very strange [. . .]"[148]

The discussion moves toward the complications that come with T and P identities during sex and the privileges afforded to Ps because of their ability to act "coy or coquettish" to get

what they want from Ts. After Dana shares that she tends to be most P when she first meets new people, the scene changes to an on-site interview with two lesbians, Xiao Bai and Maria, about their P status. Maria is a Chinese language student from Denmark, and Xiao Bai is a journalist and a self-identified P who was also a finalist in the QC co-host competition. Both Maria and Xiao Bai explain their understanding of the P/T bifurcation and their experiences within lesbian social settings in China. Maria introduces herself and notes that while she was not very integrated into the Copenhagen lesbian scene, preferring to spend time with gay men, drag queens and transsexuals, most of her friends are lesbians in Beijing and she is quite involved in their activities and discussions. Maria points out the differences between Chinese and Danish lesbian culture:

Here it's very divided into what they call T and P. T is Tomboy and P is princess and it's sort of like the Western culture. In the Western culture we have "femme" and "butch", and it's sort of the same but it's very integrated in lesbian culture. I think you can only be either or, and I'm not really clear about the middle one called H—I think it's a person who can swap, but all the lesbians I've met here are either identifying themselves as T or P.[149]

Maria explains that Chinese Ps and Ts have a very distinct style: the Ps dress very girly, have long nails and long hair while the Ts shop in men's stores and usually wear jeans. She adds that Ts tend to look "very manlike."[150]

Xiao Bai's interview is interspersed throughout Maria's. She discusses the differences between the typical coming out process for a P and that of a T. "Normally, Ps only find out they're lesbians after being pursued by a T. They fall in love and then they state their process of self-identification. The process of self-identification starts earlier with Ts.[151] Xiao Bai

emphasizes that Ps commonality with heterosexual women's appearance, leaves them to self-identify as heteronormative for a longer time than Ts, because most Ts tend to realize from a very young age that they are different from heterosexual females. Xiao Bai tells her own story to illustrate this point. She explains that from a very early age she never wanted to marry or become a "guy's wife" but when her brother pointed out she walked like a boy she was thrown into an identity crisis. "I didn't feel like it was a problem that I didn't look like a girl, but I couldn't stand looking like a boy. Boys were too naughty, they were dirty, stupid and idiotic, and they always got into trouble. I thought it was a very messed up thing to look like a boy. From that moment on I started to pay attention to my walk."[152] After Xiao Bai went to college, she came out as a lesbian and expressed: "I was really happy, I felt I had found a way to be a woman."[153] In the beginning, she self-identified as a P, having mostly "girly Ts" as girlfriends. Xiao Bai preferred "charming" and "handsome" Ts over more "manly" Ts. She notes that Ps generally play a more passive role during sex.

The episode cuts back to the interview with Maria, who explains her usual experience when going to lesbian bars with her Danish girlfriend:

> People were like: "Oh, are you a couple?" and they just wanted to label us: "Oh she's T and she's P," but we didn't really identify any of us like that. And then my girlfriend said: "Oh it's easier if you just tell them that I'm the T." Because here in China she's too big to buy women's clothes anyway, so she bought men's clothes and was wearing men's jeans all of the time and has short hair so, the Chinese just put us in that box: I was the P and she was the T.[154]

Maria recalls that she challenged the stereotype once by trying to convince some Chinese Ts she had just met at a bar that the was also a T, but concluded that they wouldn't believe it because of her feminine appearance.[155]

The camera returns to Xiao Bai who tells the story of her metamorphosis from handsome P to a girly T. When a girlfriend asked to her to cut her long hair, she realized she loved the androgynous style short hair granted. "People said that I looked neither male nor female and I took it as the most beautiful compliment. I felt really pretty inside when hearing their praise."[156] After participating in a gender bender party where she had been encouraged to wear a Chinese-style dress, though her friends found her beautiful in that type of clothes, Xiao Bai felt quite uncomfortable. "[. . .] I really don't want to have that kind of feeling again. I felt really awkward, I felt that it didn't belong to me," she expresses. After that experience, she realized that her brother's comment when she was younger, and her corresponding feelings had hindered her from recognizing that she was actually more of a T than a P. "That thing my brother said is not so important anymore now. By remembering the encounter with my brother, I was able to let go of my inhibitions and I finally acknowledged that I am a T," she explains.[157] She highlights that is it actually more of an ideological shift than a physical shift as she is still very feminine in her appearance. She also emphasizes, as Eva, that P lesbians are not necessarily bisexual despite their ability to more easily "pass" as a heterosexual woman. "When I was still a P, I really hated these theories stating that all Ps were bisexuals or that all Ps were going to marry a man eventually. When I heard these sayings, I always thought: Even if [sic] all of my T girlfriends want to retreat towards mainstream society, I'll still be firmly planted inside of the gay community as a P."[158]

Xiao Bai explains that while most things have not changed now that she is a T, she now binds her breasts. When she was a P she wanted to have larger breasts, but now that she is a T she feels more handsome when she wears a breast-binder. She states that in the Chinese lesbian community, Ps do not have a voice, as the lesbian culture is a "T culture." Furthermore, she echoes Butler's theory of gender performativity by stating, "T and P are just two different sets of clothing. I can change out of my T clothes and immediately become a P again."[159]

The scene changes again to the final portion of Maria's interview. She compares the current T/P polarization to the '70s in many Western countries, in which the lesbian culture was very divided into butch and femme lesbians, and butch lesbians tended to be the most visible. She says in Denmark now, however, that while butch and femme lesbians still exist, it is common to see two lesbians more feminine in appearance together as couple or two women more masculine in appearance together. Maria states that she personally prefers a partner who is not strictly confined in one category, but that under the Chinese Ts influence, her girlfriend is becoming more and more "T" while in China. She says she has always been uncomfortable with labels, but she admits categorization is difficult to avoid. She says she is still unclear why Chinese need to define themselves clearly as one or the other and suggests: "They're maybe still in an early stage of development of their homosexual community and their identity and I think that maybe they just look at the straight couples and sort of imitate man-woman relationships. I don't really know. You will have to ask the Chinese lesbians about that."[160]

The episode takes on a third format as the scene changes to a large conference room filled with people listening to a woman at the microphone. She is illustrating her struggles with the T/P polarization: "When I met a person, I might change my own personal self. I will change myself according to her TPH identity. My disposition changed and I changed from an iron T into a

person who is T on the outside and P on the inside." Though she supports this fluidity, she notes

that the LGBTQ community is not open to it. "When I wanted to become a mixture or *bufen*, the

lesbian circles discredited mixtures and a lot of Ts and Ps discriminated against mixture. My

only option was to say that I was looking for a T because I was an outside-T, inside-P."[161] In a

private interview filmed with the same young woman before the conference, she elaborates on

the discrimination among lesbians, stating: "There's always talk about equality between lesbians,

but in reality there is a lot of discrimination . . . between the T, P, and H lesbians. People should

pay attention to this discrimination."[162]

     The next scene returns to the same conference-room discussion. Another woman has

taken the microphone and begins to analyze the TPH social construction, highlighting that the T-

P dichotomy was not invented by the Chinese lesbians—that the distinction exists in other

countries and cultures as well. She compares the T-P polarization to the butch-femme structure

in Western queer discourses. According to this speaker, "In queer theory, in and outside of China,

in the gay movement, the lesbian circle, the gay circle, there's always a period in the beginning

when there's an imitation of straight relationships."[163] The speaker compels individuals to resist

the urge to mimic heterosexual models in their same-sex relationships. While acknowledging

that it is understandable, she hopes queer individuals can align themselves with the radical nature

of the gay movement—otherwise, she warns that chaos can follow when people adhere too

strictly to a set of norms. She illustrates this with an example: "If someone were to say, 'I am a

manly T, but actually like my partner to do me, yet I can't tell her.' Why can't you tell her? Does

it have to do with saving face? Concepts kill and imprison people," the speaker states. "That can

be more effective than knives and guns—the fact that she can't get past this stage. Why doesn't

she acknowledge herself? What is wrong with that?"[164]

The episode cuts back to Xiaogang, Eva, and Dana in the studio. They begin to cover the weakness associated with the P identity. Dana suggests that most Ps experience more pressure from their families to live within the norms of the heterosexual symbolic. As Ps bear more resemblance to a large percentage of heterosexual women, their families and other members of society may assume there is a larger chance they might "switch back" to a heteronormative role. Dana suggests that families give up more quickly on daughters who are Ts. "Being a T, your family will often say: 'Well, that's how she is, we can't change her, we can't make her beautiful so let's just stop our efforts.'"[165]

The talk show's focus shifts from family and social pressure to roles during sex. Eva admits that she used to wear the P label even while having sex—she remained the more passive partner. Recently, however, she "ripped that label off" and her attitude has changed. Dana says the P/T distinction is relevant to her mainly in the area of choosing a partner, and not her role during sex, "No matter how I act in bed, I always insist on calling myself a P."[166] She says she prefers women who aren't too manly, but who look androgynous on the outside and have very feminine traits on the inside. Dana insists that she doesn't have too many demands concerning a woman's figure, but is generally more attracted to their androgynous clothing and hairstyles—as long as she possesses "all the feminine attributes."[167] Eva, however, states she has many demands as far as a woman's figure: "I need to have some volume. A very beautiful yet flat T once chased after me, but after seeing that she had no breasts at all, I told her that it wouldn't work."[168]

Eva's comment serves as to segue to Xiaogang's next question about the use of breast-binders. He notes that it is becoming more and more common for Ts to bind their breasts. Dana and Eva both agree that the main purpose for the binders is to look more androgynous or

handsome. Xiaogang begins to wrap up the episode, emphasizing the show's desired message of challenging the public's stereotypical view of lesbians. "Everybody can see that these two lesbians don't look like men," Xiaogang says. "Lesbians are no different from other people," an off-stage voice-over agrees, "We just like partners of a different sex. There might be a lot of lesbians living right next door to you, don't be surprised!"[169]

Data Analysis

As mentioned in my introduction, as a feminist, symbolic interactionist researcher, my goals are two-fold. The first goal is to use the study of patterns of speech, interaction, identity, and meaning, and link them to the reproduction of inequality, including racism, sexism, class inequality, and heterosexism.[170] The second goal is to recognize that my research is inevitably shaped by my own experiences and subjectivities. Sherryl Kleinman connects her gut-level awareness that she is in a "situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice or danger" with what Alison Jagger calls "outlaw emotions."[171] I do not suggest that my research does not have an agenda. As Sherry Gorelick suggests, "all science, knowingly or ignorantly, expresses a perspective."[172] My experiences as a lesbian in China while researching has had a large impact upon my perspective and understanding (and lack of) of the language, concerns, and most pressing issues among young, Chinese lesbians in urban Hangzhou. My experiences as an American lesbian in China while researching has had a large impact upon my perspective and understanding (and lack of) of the language, concerns, and most pressing issues among young, Chinese lesbians in urban Hangzhou. Shortly after arriving in Hangzhou I was introduced to and joined in the activities of Hangzhou's LGBTQ group—"Sunflower." Though a small sampling of the Chinese queer community, through my interactions and friendships with other Sunflower members (mostly female) and my participation in Hangzhou's first production of *Vagina Monologue* (produced by

Sunflower) my understanding of what being queer and living in China greatly expanded. These women's stories, concerns, and curiosity about my own lifestyle and identity revealed complications of family, workplace and future plans as well as self-confidence, pride in being part of a movement they viewed as liberating movement, and hope for the future of LGBTQ individuals. Meeting and corresponding with individuals who produced QC as well as visiting the Beijing LGBT Center also further deepened my concept of the progress and complexities of the Chinese queer movement. My relationships with these individuals precipitated a natural emotional tie to not only their personal journey, but that of the Chinese movement as a whole. Alison Jagger reminds us of the usefulness of our emotions when researching as there is a "simultaneous necessity for an interdependence of faculties that our culture has abstracted and separated from each other: emotion and reason, evaluation and perception, observation and action."[173] One's emotions are neither more basic than nor secondary to observation, reason, or action in constructing theory.[174]

A month after my arrival in Hangzhou I was connected with Chen Yan, the leader of Hangzhou's only LGBTQ social group, Sunflower LGBTQ (*Xiangyang Hua Kai LGBTQ*). Chen Yan is a 24-year-old professional who self-identifies as a bisexual P. Meeting Chen Yan opened a door for me to meet several dozen native and transplanted lesbians in Hangzhou. I frequently participated in their social activities, English corners, and even performed in a Chinese version of The Vagina Monologues (*Yindao Dubai*) in April of 2013. My observation of and relationships with these women have deeply informed my perspective of Chinese lesbians, and I frequently tested the information broadcast on QC against my own experiences. My connections with Sunflower LGBTQ also pushed me to consider viewpoints that were not represented on QC, informing my category of themes not prominently included in the episodes' coverage, but

frequently discussed among the individuals in Sunflower. I do not suggest that my experiences with Sunflower individuals represent an accurate representation of all Chinese lesbians. I include it in my research methodologies to highlight a representation and acknowledge its influence upon my perspective. All of the women and men I met in Sunflower LBGT were between 18-30 years old. All of them are either university or graduate students or young professionals, working in areas of law, accounting, import/export, banking, etc—professions generally considered middle or upper-middle class. The majority of these individuals currently live in urban Hangzhou. Most have not told their parents or families about their sexuality, and all have enough financial stability, either from their parents' or their personal income, to participate in Sunflower's frequent social activities.

Aside from the first question asked by nearly everyone I meet in China, "Where are you from?" the second question usually asked by the new LGBTQ individuals I meet is, "Are you a P or a T?" I first encountered this question before I had probed the issue academically and I was startled to have to make a choice between "princess" (as it was describe for me the first time I heard of it) and "tomboy." After explaining that I could hardly make such a distinction about myself, feeling comfortable with neither the princess nor tomboy categorization, the next question meant to clarify my identity is almost invariably, "Well, then who do you like? Ps or Ts?" In my case, this question only further complicates the designation, rather than clarifying it, as I cannot accurately describe "my type" as either P or T. My label was generally designated by others based on my long hair—P, my willingness to be single and living abroad—T, or my inability to decide between T and P—H (for "half"). As Maria states in "Only P", the designation H has never been fully explained to me. In that episode, H is described as someone who can switch roles between P and T.

The problem of P/T categorization became poignant when I decided to cut my hair short. Though it was something I had been considering for a while, after encountering the P/T polarization, I balked—knowing that by cutting my hair, my identity among Chinese lesbians would be less of a question—I would automatically be a T. When I shared my decision with Chinese friends, they responded with comments like, "Oh, so you will be a T?" or "Are you comfortable with looking like a boy?" While the T/P categorization remains foreign to me— something I do not fully identify with—based on my research and experiences, I did not want to be categorized as a T. I love being a woman and deeply identify with traditional markers of femininity. I tried to uncover what elements about being a T were so difficult for me to accept that I would let a concept that is not native to me control my actions. I finally conceded that I was afraid of being seen as someone who is not proud to be a woman. By getting my hair cut, and consequently becoming a T, I would be seen as rejecting my femininity and I would be clearly placing myself into a category. In the end, I cut my hair, but I make overt efforts to be more feminine in other aspect of my appearance when I am socializing, to counteract my short haircut. This experience, more than any reading or interviewing, has helped me understand Judith Butler's theory of performativity and the urban Chinese lesbian's relationship with performativity and identity.

Summative Content Analysis Coding

In order to elucidate themes from the text, two forms of content analysis were employed: Summative content analysis and conventional content analysis. Using summative content analysis first, "Lesbian Toy Story", "Lalalala Lesbians", and "Only P" were transcribed from existing subtitles translated by QC staff. The earliest lesbian-themed webcast, "Les Talk About Sex" was not subtitled, therefore the webcast was first transcribed in Chinese then translated into

English.[175] The transcripts were then converted to spreadsheet format (using sentences as the

recording unit)[176] which were color-coded based on their relationship to the definitions of the

nine coding categories. The categories were formed based on the aforementioned theories of

global gay culture versus local specificity and cross-border feminism, media systems dependency

theory, and the heterosexual symbolic. These categories include: global discourse, T/P/H identity,

appearance and behavior (as it relates to T/P/H identity), heterosymbolic, and discrimination.

Two a priori categories emerged during the content analysis process: "sex" and "male same-sex

comparison" based on the prevalence of references. Coding trees were established to further

clarify the relationships between categories and subcategories and provide supporting details

concerning the categories' definitions (Figures 1.1-1.5). Themes that were noticeably absent

were education, career, and rural signifiers. The following table illustrates the definitions of the

nine codes derived organically from the text. Recording units could be coded with multiple

categories.

Table 1.1 – Coding Definitions

Category	Definition
Identity	
Labels	T- tomboy, P- popo or princess, H- half
Appearance	
	Style of clothing, types of clothing, accessories, make-up, hair style, nails related to T/P/H identity
Behavior	
	Emotions, sex roles, choices in sex toys, personality, choice of partner, interpersonal skills related to T/P/H identity
Global Discourse	
English	English references, subtitles, names
Appearances	Foreign guests or co-hosts
Concepts	Ideas or items identified as originating abroad
Sex	
	Sex acts, sex toys, categories of sexualities different than gay and lesbian
Heterosymbolic	
Parental/familial pressure	Pressure from family members to acquiesce to normative standards of marriage, family life, and children

P/T structure	Mimicry of symbolic norms
Social norms	Public's attitude toward female same-sex intimacy, unmarried women
"Coming out"	Reference to "coming out" or being "closeted" because of social environment
Discrimination	
Prejudice	Concepts, examples, words used to discriminate both inside and outside the lesbian community
Categories of Minorities	Acknowledgement of cultural and social divisions based on sex, sexual preference, gender, race, class, etc.
Social Support	
Social groups	Clubs, groups, salons, activities, organizations, organized performances for Chinese lesbians to meet one another
QC.com	References to QC as a space for support and networking
Male Same-Sex Comparison	
Gay Men/Male	Gay or straight men/male culture, sexual experiences, phallus, used as a measuring stick for or as a counterpart to lesbian women

Identity

Dennis Altman's theory of a growing global queer culture and Meena Khandelwal's

emphasis on cross-border feminism provides the structure for five different coding categories of

global discourse and discourse. The category of "global discourse" describes allusions to

language, concepts, theories, and items in English or specified as "foreign" or from "abroad."

The fact that the talk shows have featured English subtitles since the second session illustrates

QC's influence by and dedication to being active in the global queer discourse. The coding

category broadens to include English names of participants, foreign participants, and the frequent

use of foreign terms and loanwords pertaining to LGBTQ identities and sexualities.

A phenomenon that demonstrates the interconnectivity of global and local discourses as

described by Altman[177] and Khandelwal[178] is the semantically unique Chinese T/P identity

binary structure. The coding category for T/P/H identity original included references to

appearance and behavior as it relates to T/P/H identity. It quickly became clear that comments

about appearance and behavior were often used in the episodes as markers of T/P/H identity but

not explicitly stated. Appearance and behavior themselves are linked to several subcategories—including clothing, hair style, personality, and desired partner respectively—necessitating more highly specified categories. I created the following coding tree diagram to include the various aspects of identity present in the episodes.
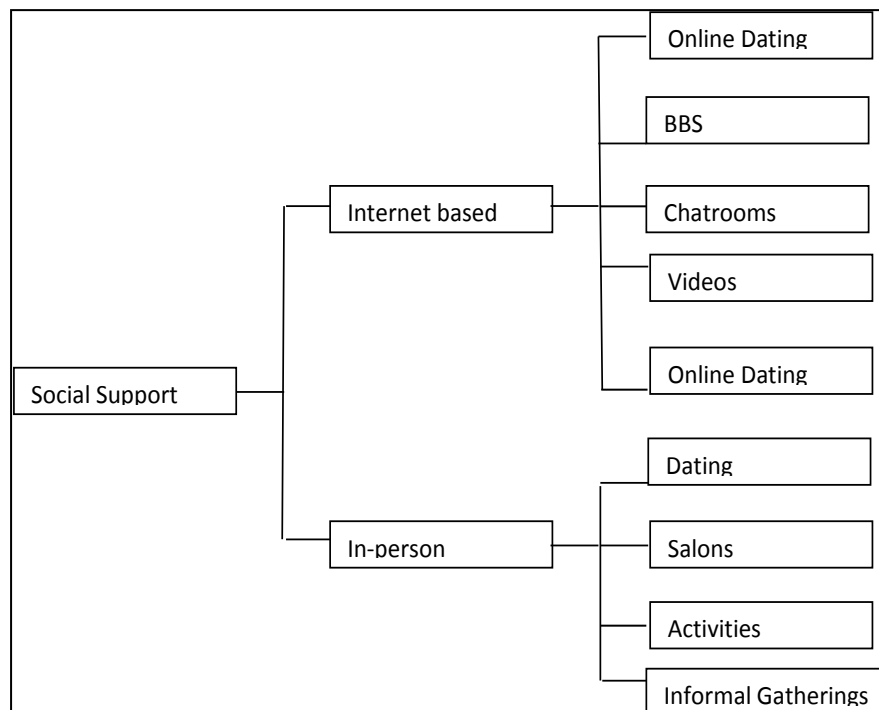
Figure 1.1- Identity Coding Tree Diagram
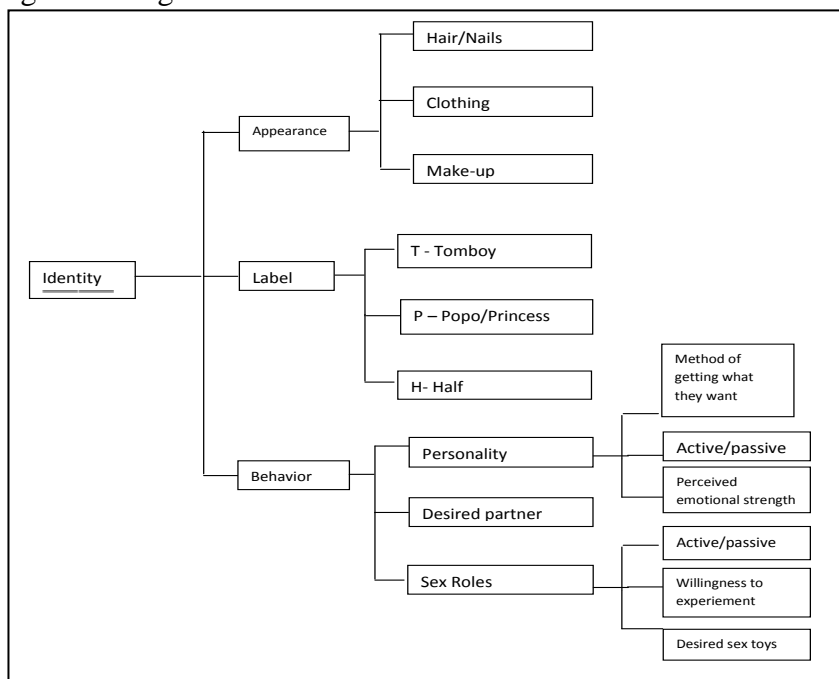
Social Support

Jackson's theory of a culturally normalized and hierarchical heterosexual symbolic[179] and Ball-Rokeach and Defleur's media systems dependency theory[180] provide the framework for the coding category, "Social Support." Jackson suggests non-heteronormative bodies destabilize heteronormative sexualities and expectations of genders and/or identities. According to MSDT, individuals will turn to mass media sources during times of crisis for support. The definition for the coding category, "Social Support," includes references to QC's website as a virtual support system and references to both physical and virtual spaces for LGBTQ or LGBTQ-curious

individuals to congregate, network, and receive and give support and/or education. Figure 1.2 illustrates the subcategories within "Social Support.

Figure 1.2- Social Support Coding Tree Diagram.

Social Support
- Internet based
  - Online Dating
  - BBS
  - Chatrooms
  - Videos
  - Online Dating
- In-person
  - Dating
  - Salons
  - Activities
  - Informal Gatherings

Heteronormative Symbolic

As mentioned in the introduction, J. Durham's theory of the influence of the heterosexual symbolic[181] is the theoretical backing for the "heteronormative symbolic" and "discrimination" coding category. This category is used to identify references to a set of discourses in Chinese culture that include central assumptions concerning gender roles—that there are two types (feminine and masculine), which are demonstrated through biological differences between male and female whose primary mode of intercourse is through penetrative sex. The heterosexual symbolic is informed by and perpetuated by narratives about which genders, sexes, sexualities and acts of sex exist as well as what and how we should think about

them. This coding category includes the theoretical "shoulds", includes both pressure to conform to or mimic heterosexual roles, marriage, children and patriarchal family structure. Based on Adrienne Rich's theory of compulsory heterosexuality, this category also includes heteronormative society's general perspective on and attitude toward non-conformist, and the necessity of a "closest" and therefore the phenomenon of "coming out."

Durham points out that in a society in which heterosexuality is compulsory, institutionalized and epistemological, members whose sexualities and bodies do not align with the heterosymbolic are labeled as abnormal.[182] Based on this understanding, and due to a high volume of occurrences, a separate category for "discrimination" was created. This category not only includes references to discrimination based on the heterosymbolic, but also prejudice within the increasingly institutionalized homosymbolic—including discrimination against individuals not clearly situated in polarized categories like bisexuals, H's, or transgendered individuals.

Figure 1.3 – Heterosymbolic and Discrimination Coding Tree
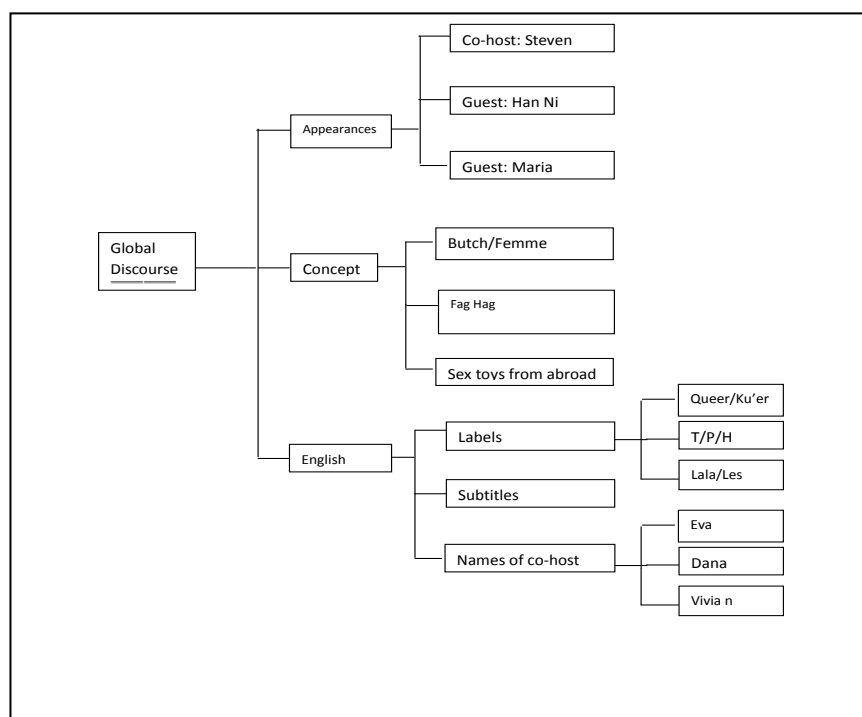
Sex

"Sex" as a coding category emerged organically from frequent references within in the text. This category includes not only references to traditional sexual intercourse, but to sex with toys, sex toys, and sexualities varying from the gay-lesbian binary. The QC episodes were chosen based on their emphasis or focus on lesbian identity and a coding category specifically related to male same-sex references formed organically—negating inclusion of references to gay or lesbian sexualities. Occasions mentioning sexualities outside of the lesbian-gay, homo-hetero binaries occurred frequently enough to oblige recognition and inclusion in coding category.

Figure 1.4 – Sex Coding Tree Diagram
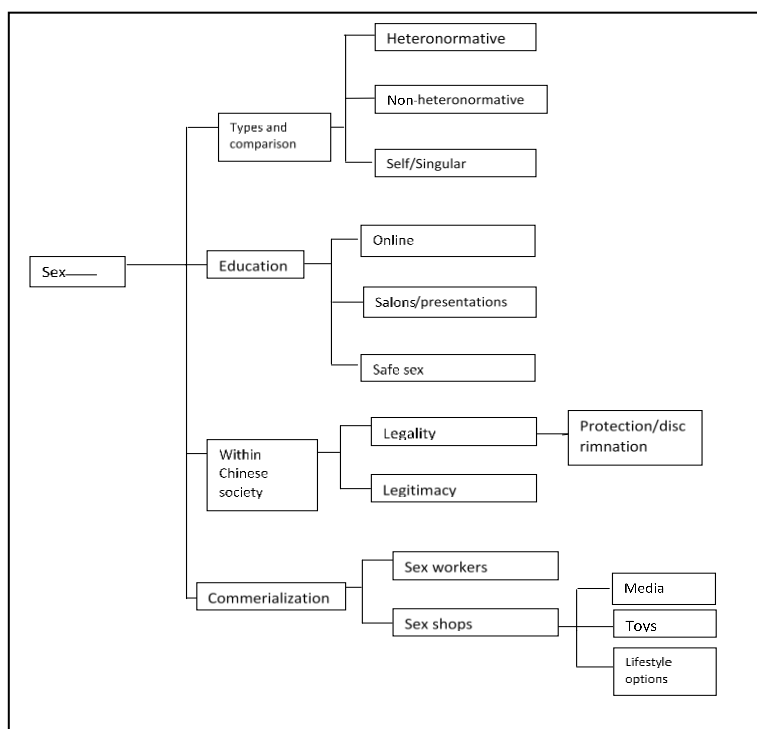
Male Same-Sex Comparison

Coinciding with the heightened visibility of gay men in China[183] is QC's more comprehensive coverage of issues stemming from male same-sex relationships and intimacies.

As the founder, director and host, Xiaogang, the producer, Stijn Deklerck and the show's first-

season co-host, Ma Liang, are all male, male and gay male cultural references are frequently

used as comparison, and in some cases a measuring stick for female and female-same sex culture.

The definition includes contrasting references to gay male culture, sex, behaviors, appearances

etc. These associations are often tempered by a female guest's perspective and by QC's second

season's co-host Eva, but nevertheless contribute to the concept of a male-female, gay-lesbian

identity binary.

Fig. 1.5 – Male Same-Sex Comparison
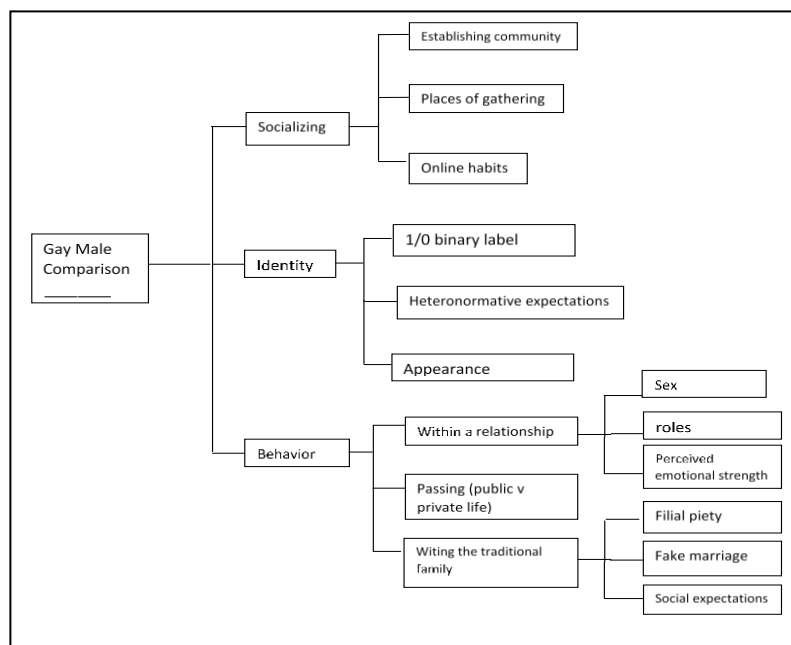
Absent Categories

From my experiences with the Sunflower LGBT members, my notes have been affected

by conversations on topics not covered in the selected QC episodes: family, violence and career.

Family is briefly discussed in "Only P" and "Lalalala Lesbians". In "Lalalala Lesbians" several

of the candidates for co-host mention that they have not been open with their parents or family about their sexuality. In contrast, many of them agree that essential characteristics for the new co-host are openness and honesty. This is a telling illustration of the tension between theory and reality. While these women desire openness in a representation of themselves, their own stories speak of the difficulties in being honest with their families. ("Lalalala Lesbians") Parental and familial pressure is mentioned again in "Only P" when Dana suggests that because Ps retain many of qualities of heterosexual women, they may experience more pressure from their parents to marry because their parents believe they are not fully queer. Dana says that parents and families of Ts may give up more easily because she does not fit the traditional image of "attractive."[184]

In my conversations with queer women in Hangzhou, however, the relationship between themselves and their parents is much more of a central problem. An individual in Sunflower expressed that upon telling her mother about her sexual identity, she experienced violence from her mother to the point at which she had to call the police. Other members of the group fear the same physical or emotional violence if they tell their parents they are gay.

Their sexual identity has an effect on their careers as well. In the Sunflower women's situation, they are looking at an uncertain future that is not necessarily dependent upon someone else's income. Therefore, their current careers are much more important than something they are doing for the time being until they get married. Furthermore, they are more concerned with their salaries, as many of them are or plan to be financially independent from their families and may be the primary source of income for a partner and/or their parents and partner's parents in the future. Many of these women expressed discontent with their careers and the bleak prospect of toiling away at their current job years into the future. In my analysis of the four QC episodes,

there was minimal coverage of lesbians' careers and financial security. Several lesbian guests mentioned their careers when introducing themselves. In ""Lalalala Lesbians" competitor The voice-over states that Shi Tou is a famous lesbian actress, artist and director and that Dr. He Xiaopei is the founder of Pink Space—though it is unclear whether or not her NPO is also her career. In "Only P", Maria mentions that her girlfriend was able to join her in China on a 6-month visa for "work." Otherwise, the topic of lesbians and careers in China is relatively untouched.

The issue of violence among lesbian couples is also conspicuously missing. While it is widely discussed in Western academic circles that female couples often have a high percentage of domestic violence,[185] QC does not broach this topic. In my conversations with Sunflower lesbians, violence between partners was frequently discussed. Break-ups, misunderstandings and jealousy could lead to violent fights. Physical blows, along with broken lights, broken windows, broken screens, broken computers and belongings being tossed from 7th floor balconies are just a few of the incidents that came up. One woman drew a butcher knife to protect herself from her partner in a rage. Another had to go to the emergency room to get stitches due to cuts from a light bulb that shattered during a fight over communication with another woman. From the women I spoke with, they recognized this behavior as dangerous and alarming, but frequently stayed with or went back to violent partners or violent situations.

Violence in childhood is also a topic that divided Sunflower members that was not discussed in the QC episodes. When preparing for the *Vagina Monologues*, a discussion arose about the portrayal of childhood rape in a lesbian monologue. I was against the inclusion as Americans frequently believe a queer lifestyle is a result of rape or molestation in childhood and felt that inclusion perpetuated this misunderstanding. I was surprised to encounter a percentage

of members who agreed with the stereotype and said they believed a homosexual lifestyle does indeed result from sexual violence in childhood. The subtext of this conversation alarmed me as observed the dozen or so women around me—some debating the topic, others remaining silent.

Summative Content Analysis Results

In "Les Talk About Sex" 294 sentence units were recorded. Out of these recording units, references to the heterosymbolic had the highest percentage at 91 units (31%). 83 (28%) of sentences were coded as social support, and 71 (24%) were coded as male same-sex references. The categories of both sex and discrimination had 56 units (19%) with global discourse having slightly less, 48 (16%). Appearance, T/P/H identity and personality had the least amount of units, 13 (4%), 12 (4%) and ten (3%) respectively.

Fig.2.3 – Coding Percentages for "Les Talk About

Sex"
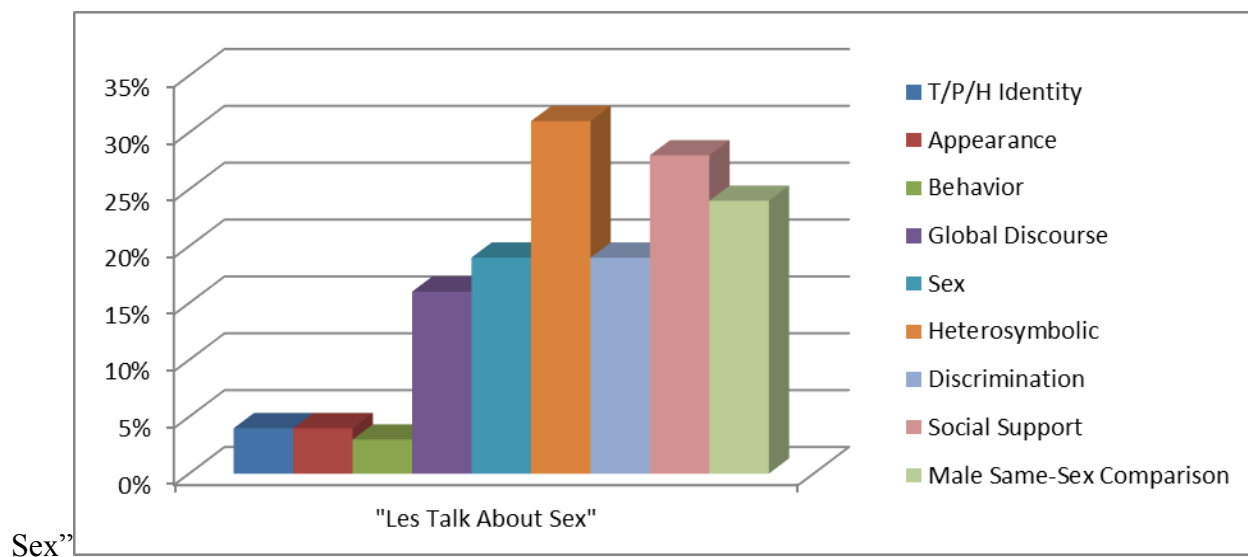
In "Lesbian Toy Story", 301 recording units were coded. Sex and male same-sex comparison carried the highest percentages of coding categories with 124 (41%) and 72 (24%) respectively. 43 (14%) units were coded for T/P /H identity while appearance had 33 (11%) and behavior—36 (12%). The category of global discourse had 10 units (3%). 33 (11%) of the

recorded units were coded as social support. The category of heterosymbolic had 32 (11%) and discrimination had 21 (7%).

Fig. 2.2 - Coding Percentages for "Lesbian Toy Story"
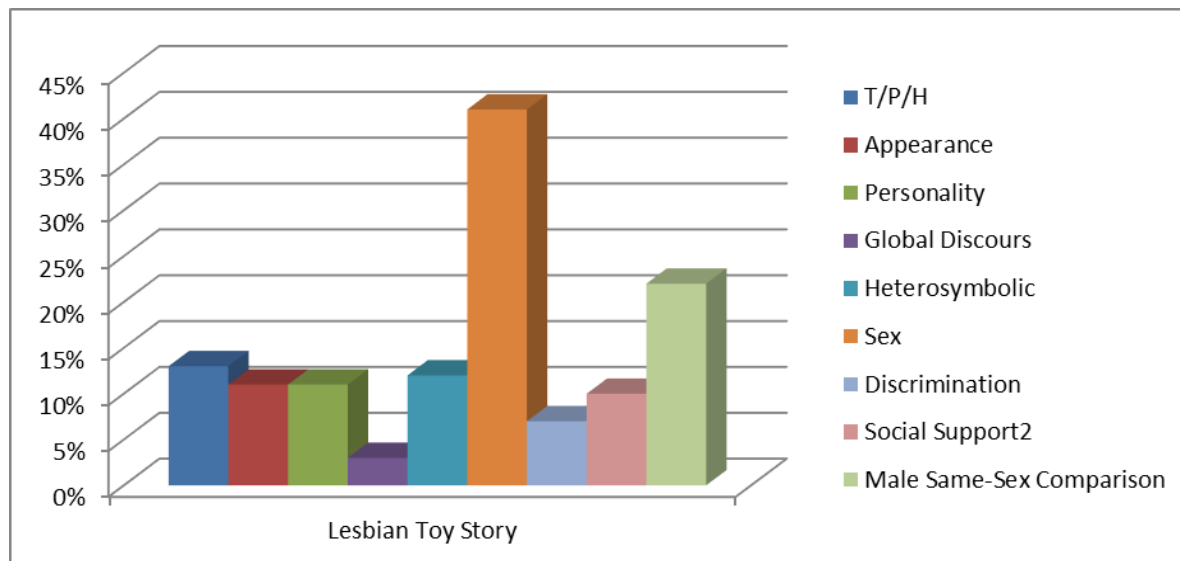
345 units were recorded from "Lalalala Lesbians". Out of these, behavior and social support had the highest portion of units—46 (13%). Heterosymbolic and discrimination had 42 (12%) and 40 (12%) respectively. 22 units coded for appearance (6%), while global discourse had 21 (6%). The category of sex had 16 (5%), male same-sex comparison had 13 (4%) and T/P/H identity had the least amount of units coded—eight (2%).

Fig. 2.3 – Coding Percentages for "Lalalala Lesbians"
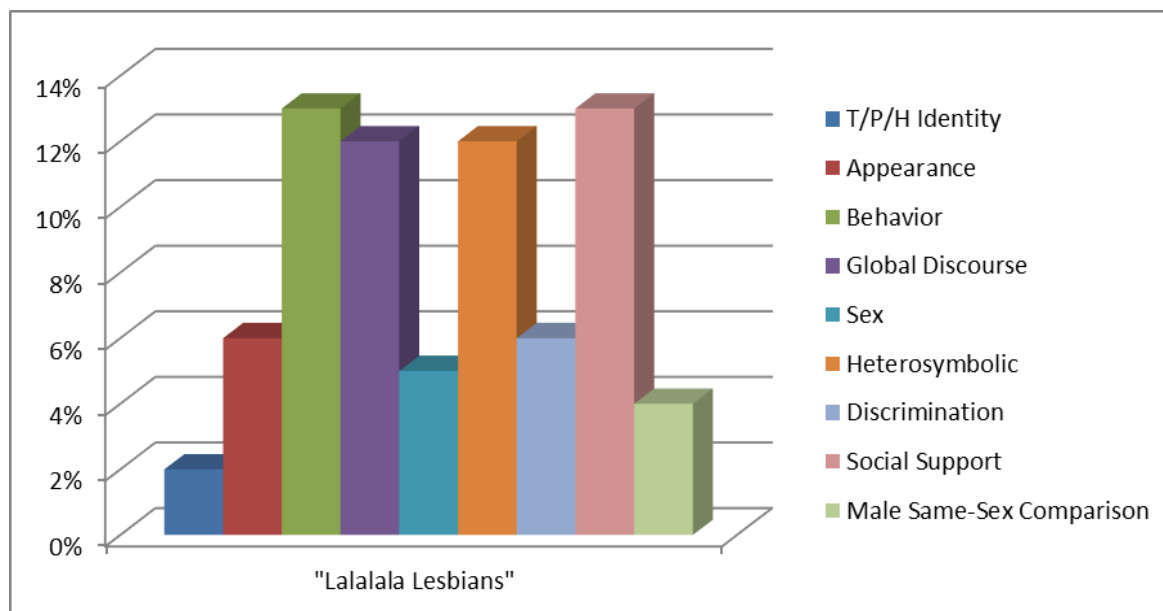
In "Only P" 328 sentences were recorded. Out of these recording units, 58 (18%) were coded as global discourse and 118 (36%) as T/P/ identity. 111 (34%) units were coded as appearance, while 92 (28%) were coded as behavior. 22 (7%) sentences were coded as heteronormative symbolic, 8 (3%) as discrimination, and five (2%) as sex. The smallest percentage of units were coded as male same-sex comparison—two (1%)

Fig. 2.4 – Coding Percentages for "Only

P"
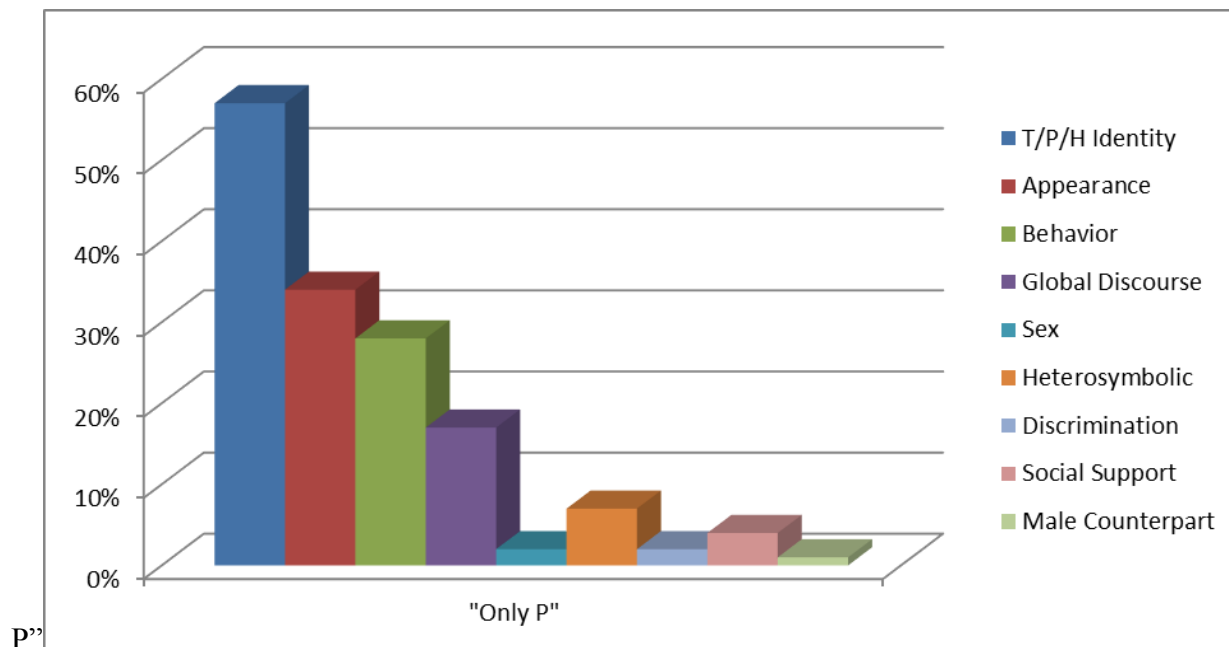
Analysis

When analyzing the combined data from the four episodes, the percentage of units coded (1,268) among the nine categories is relatively evenly distributed. Both T/P/H identity and sex had the highest overall percentages at 16%. Varying by only one percentage point, at 15%, were the codes of behavior and heterosymbolic. Again, only decreasing by one percentage point, at 14%, was appearance, followed by male same-sex comparison and social support at 13%.The coding category for global discourse assumed 11% of the recording units, and references to discrimination had the lowest percentile, 7%.

Fig. 2.5 – Percentage of Units Coded for "Les Talk About Sex", "Lesbian Toy Story", "Lalalala Lesbians", and "Only P"
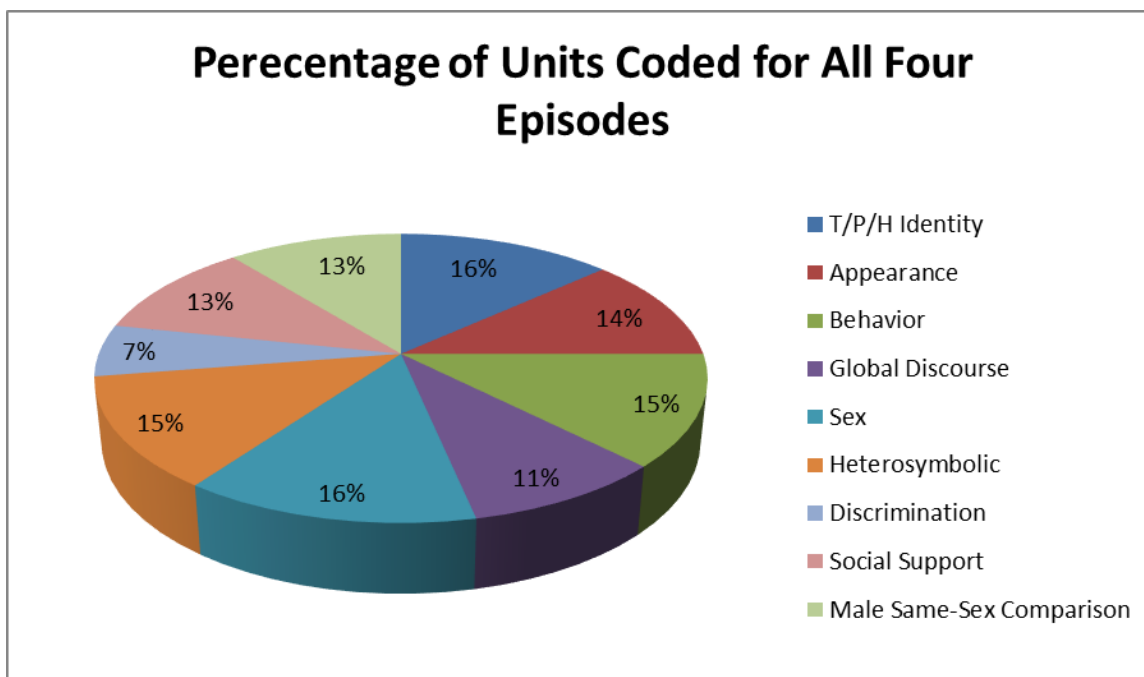
Comparing the four episodes with each other, there is a large amount of fluctuation in the percentage of codes employed among the episodes. T/P/H label has the highest percentage— expectedly—38% in *"Only P"* and the lowest, 2% in "Lalalala Lesbians". The trends of heterosymbolic and social support correspond with each other's patterns: reaching their height in "Les Talk About Sex" at 31% and 28% and their lowest at 7% and 1%, respectively in "Only P" with fluctuations in "Lesbian Toy Story" and "Lalalala Lesbians". Percentages for appearance and behavior also have corresponding trends. Appearance and personality rocketed to 29% and 28% respectively in *"Only P"*, but appearance dipped to 4% and 3% in "Les Talk About Sex". The sex category's trend reaches its peak in "Lesbian Toy Story" at 41% and its lowest point in *"Only P"* at 5%. The coding categories for both declined according to a linear timeline from 2007 to 2010. Discrimination plateaued at 24% in "Les Talk About Sex" and "Lesbian Toy Story", but plummeted to 4% in "Lalalala Lesbians" and bottomed-out at 1% in "Only P".

Fig. 2.6 – Comparison of Coding Percentages in "Les Talk About Sex", "Lesbian Toy Story", "Lalalala Lesbians", and "Only P"
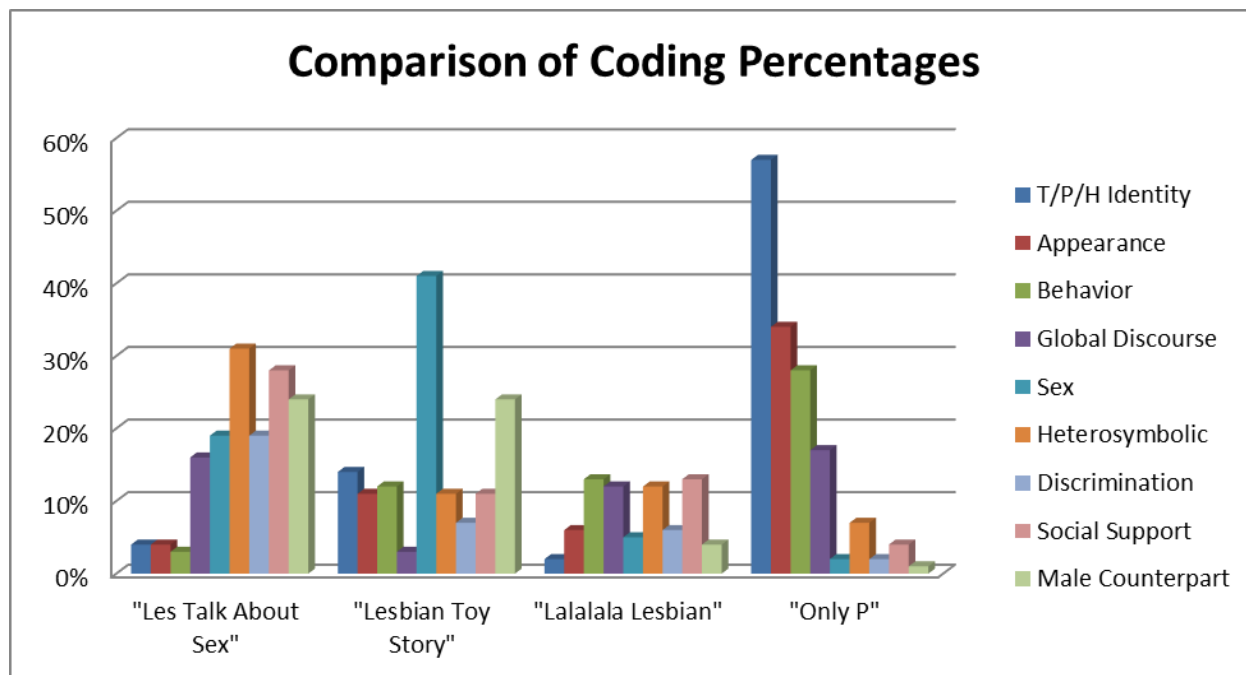
Conventional Content Analysis

To elucidate further themes from the text, the data was read repeatedly to "achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the whole."[186] After textual immersion, I reviewed the notes I took of my first impressions, thoughts and initial analysis to further understand the prominent themes, and to clarify my own lens of presumption and cultural perspective.

My notes can be divided into three categories. The first categories are my notes taken in the initial stages of research. These notes mainly contain assumptions and guesses at what the material might cover based on my reading before immersing myself in the webcasts' text. These

notes include an emphasis on Confucian roles and norms, familial and social pressure, a sense of "true" Chinese identity,

The notes taken while immersed in transcribing and translating the texts and during the interview process form the second category of notes. These notes are centered on the P/T identity dichotomy and the infusion of foreign discourse (predominantly Western, with occasional inclusions of pan-Asian countries) in each episode. In my notes, I emphasized the educational nature of the talk-shows and the intimate details described.

The queer guests and candidates for co-host who appear in selected QC episodes participate in a Foucaldian model of confession: confessing for transgressing the heteronormative symbolic and, in turn become moral role models of a newly represented global society. I took note of the presence of global/Western discourse in every episode—including the use of English subtitles in all episodes except for the earliest one, "Les Talk About Sex", the inclusion of foreign guests, a foreign co-host, frequent references to English words and identities as well as comparisons between China's LGBTQ culture and that of the West.

After immersion in the data and exploration of notes concerning first impressions, initial thoughts and initial analysis, labels emerged that are reflective of more than one key thought. The codes were sorted into categories based on connections and relationships among them. These emergent categories were used to group and organize codes into "meaningful clusters."[187] These clusters were then organized into hierarchical tree diagrams to further illustrate the relationship between coding categories. Codes that emerged organically as prominent descriptors were confession, Confucian concepts of the rectification of names and models of virtuous women

My notes and observations after the completion of translation, transcription and conventional content analysis form the third and final group of notes. My notes during this final period focus the dominant T/P discourse, mimicry of heterosexual relationships and the role each episode's guest has of both Foucaldian-style confessor and role model.

Confession

Michael Foucault understands cultures to have endowed themselves with one of two ways of transmitting sexual knowledge: *ars erotica* or *scientia sexualis*.[188] He suggests that countries like China, Japan, India, and Arab-Muslim regions traditionally explore and transmit sexual knowledge via *ars erotica,* or erotic arts, while Western countries use the science of sexuality, or *scientia sexualis*.

Similar to knowledge in the Confucian tradition, this knowledge is passed from master to student. It is formed in secret and must remain a secret, as dissemination reduces its effectiveness and virtue. As such, the relationship between the master and student is of paramount importance as "only he, working alone, can transmit this art in an esoteric manner and as the culmination of an initiation in which he guides the disciple's progress with unfailing skill and severity."[189] By following the master's prescriptions, the disciple can transform him or herself and experience the privileges of "absolute mastery of the body, a singular bliss, obliviousness to time and limits, the elixir of life, the exile of death and its threats."[190]

Foucault understands Western society to have embraced the development of *scientia sexualis*—rejecting *ars erotica*. He argues the West is the only civilization "to have developed over the centuries procedures for telling the truth of sex which are geared to a form of knowledge-power strictly opposed to the art of initiations and the masterful secret." He believes that the pursuit of this knowledge-power has fueled a culture of confession.[191]

By intimately confessing all that is within, pastoral power in the form of forgiveness, counsel, punishment, judgment and salvation can occur. In return for one's confession, one is offered a mirage of a lifetime of soul-security and health. Even more compelling, however, is the illusion that through confession, one will be finally able to uncover the truth of one's identity and purpose—the heretofore veiled self.

Whereas the Church was once solely responsible for the distribution of pastoral power to confessors, pastoral power can now be found in a multitude of secular forms. While the Church offers the human soul salvation in the next life, Western society proposes a new salvation found by taking care of one's mental and physical health and well-being. In both cases, Christian and secular, a lifetime of salvation for the soul is provided at the cost of one's intimate confession as this pastoral power "cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it."[192]

Foucault states that confession, in terms of *scientia sexualis* is very different from *ars erotica*. For centuries, confession contained no elements of education or initiation. The power structure in confession is also far removed from that of *ars erotica*. While in *ars erotica*, power-knowledge is hierarchical, being passed from above, from master to disciple, in the form of confession, the power-knowledge comes from below—"as an obligatory act of speech which, under some imperious compulsion, breaks the bonds of discretion or forgetfulness."[193] In confession, unlike *ars erotica* the revealed truths affect the one who from whom is it wrested, not the one who hears it. Foucault argues that "with these confessed truths, we are a long way from the learned initiation into pleasure, with their technique and their mystery."[194]

Though Foucault strongly asserts *scientia sexualis's* position in opposition to *ars erotica*, QC's guests exhibit a hybrid model by acting as both confessors and masters. Confession as means for elucidating truth and authenticity, particularly as it is related to sex, has an implicit relationship to the transmission of power-knowledge in the format of the QC episodes and it is evident in its content. Understood in light of China's tradition of *ars erotica* and the introduction of *scientia sexualis* to China by sexologist like Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis in the early 1900's[195], QC's content can be analyzed as a means of public confession and transmission—a hybrid model of *scientia sexualis* as *ars erotica* (or *ars erotica* as *scientia sexualis*).

Conventional Content Data Analysis

Guided by Xiaogang and the co-host, these women reveal their most intimate sexual details, from experiences with sex toys, to maneuvering among heterosexual expectations to failed relationships. For example, in "Lesbian Toy Story", Dr. He talks about her experience with a strap-on: I don't need to put on a strap-on to know I don't need a man . . . When I put it on, I had this feeling like I didn't even need to have sex. Like the act of putting it on was exciting in and of itself. And because, I don't know, I just had this feeling—putting it on just excites you from the inside out."[196]

QC's guests' awareness of both how they are perceived and labeled by the general public along with a self-awareness of their true identity suggests an initial model for the combination of confession and the transmission of knowledge. For example, in "Only P" Dana reveals the bifurcation in her self-concept and that which her friends project onto her: "Most of my friends think that calling myself a P is a form of self-mockery for me. I have a bold personality, a personality that could be described as manly. It's only my outward appearance that could be

described as P . . . When I say I am a P, I have my own reasons for doing that. I like girls that are a bit more T, that is why I call myself a P."[197]

Unlike Foucault's idea of traditional confession, the QC's guests and hosts are not forced to confess, but volunteer their personal stories and experiences. Understood as experts and leaders in the field of sexuality, the participants act as teachers for the webcasts' viewers—the students. Xiaogang, as the founder, director and host of QC is also a film and theater actor and was one of the first Chinese actors to publically come out; he presides over the webcasts, acting simultaneously as master, catalyst for confession, and joins the viewers as a receiver of confession/transmitted power-knowledge. Co-hosts Steven and Liang Ma support Xiaogang as fellow catalysts and receivers, though through their more limited participation defer mastership to Xiaogang and/or the guest(s). Due to her self-identification as female and bisexual, Eva, the co-host of the third season, plays the role of both co-host and guest expert. In this position, she acts as catalyst and receiver for Dana's and her own confession, and also as a confessor—her knowledge being received by Xiaogang and the webcast's viewers.

Guests on the show are identified as experts in sexuality, and therefore perform as "masters." In "Les Talk About Sex", both interviewees, Han Ni and Xiang, are qualified as leaders. Han Ni is acknowledged as the first person to begin an LGBTQ social organization in Shanghai, and Xian is known for founding Lala Bar, a successful Beijing organization that provides both themed salons for discussion, as well as virtual support and community online.

In "Lesbian Toy Story", the guests, Shang Xiao and Dr. He Xiaopei are also labeled as experts. Shang Xiao produces female same-sex films and owns a store exclusively dedicated to lesbian sex toys and Dr. He Xiaopei is the founder of Pink Space, an organization dedicated to research that challenges the institute of heterosexual marriage. In the third episode, "Lalalala

Lesbians", the guest judges, rather than the contestants (vying for the position of QC's third season's co-host are) are the experts. Joining Xiaogang and Liang Ma are Dr. He, Shi Tou, famous lesbian actress, artist and director, and Tu Jianping, lecturer and documentary producer. Shi Tou also performs as a guest on the show, providing her opinion of what qualities a female co-host ought to have.

In "Only P", Eva plays the role of co-host and female bisexual expert, while Dana is the lesbian P expert. "Only P" has several interviews in locations outside of the studio setting (or "on-site" interviews). Danish lesbian Maria, Chinese P-turned-T lesbian and Xiao Bai are interviewed at Xiaogang's home. Two unnamed women are also featured on-site at an informational salon/discussion: one who identifies herself as a *bufen*, or mixture of P and T and one who is filmed lecturing about foreign queer theory and the dangers of P/T categorization. These guest-experts' stories, perspectives, and experiences concerning their sexuality are extracted and recorded in the method of *scientia sexualis* but transmitted through modern technology to QC viewers world-wide for consumption and internalization. The value of such public confessions is highlighted by Xian in "Les Talk About Sex", she states that in rural areas some lesbians do not have sexual intercourse due to lack of knowledge. "In regard to lesbian sex, there is no book and your parents won't tell you about this, so you have to talk about this with your friends, but it is not a very thorough method. So, we try our best to connect people with resources and sometimes a guest-speaker will come to Beijing who is very experienced in lesbian sex, and we will trap and question her about lesbian sex."[198]

Through this lens, the QC episodes are endowed with much more meaning than being simply educational broadcasts. According to Zygmunt Bauman:

Chat-shows are public lessons in an as-yet-unborn-but-about-to-be-born language. They offer the words which may be used to 'name the problem' – to express, in publicly legible ways, what has been so far effable and would remain so if not for that offer . . . Chat shows render the unspeakable speakable, the shameful decent, and transform the ugly secret into a matter of pride. To an important degree, they are rites of exorcism—and very effective ones.[199]

These rites of exorcism or confessions play a role which is both intrinsically Western and Chinese—obscuring the line between local and global influences. By participating in QC's public dialogue, the guests and hosts become both *ars erotica* masters and *scientia sexualis* subjects of confession. Accordingly, the viewer becomes both an *ars erotica* student and the cataloging *scientia sexualis* hearer of the confession. This hybrid structure can be examined in relation to China's 2000 year-old tradition of transmitting stories of exceptional Confucian women as text to be studied and replicated in order to achieve the highest accomplishment— being a virtuous woman.

While exploring the significance of politics and the authority of the past in Chinese women's lives, Joan Judge highlights history of female biographies in China.[200] In the Confucian tradition, biographies serve commemoratively as well as function as "technolog[ies] of the self."[201] Judge states, "Individuals were enjoined to seek moral improvement not by following the rites but by following the example of former paragons."[202] While biographies of exemplary people have been published, studied, retold and rewritten for over 2000 years, at the turn of the 20th century, writing and overwriting of biographies experienced a resurgence. Due to the increasing secularization of Chinese society, the elements of an "exemplary woman" (*lienü*) or "virtuous woman" shifted from traditional Confucian standards of chastity, good wife, wise

mother and "custodians of the ritual order"[203] to characteristics of a "modern woman", including being educated outside of the home, "free-thinking" and financially independent. The telling and retelling of female biographies became a tool of national transformation and the "modern woman's" new education. Due to increasing globalization, the canon of these tales grew to absorb Western models as well. According to Judge using biographies as a "technology of self-creation and no longer exclusively of emulation, they shifted the emphasis in the reader/biography encounter from the self-sacrificing model of the past the self-constituting subject of the future."[204] By participating in the rectification of names and confession, these lesbian women are not only finding social and epistemological salvation through confession, but they also become moral models of a new globalized society as they participate in the naming and ordering of emerging sexual identities.

In Jaguscik's research on *Psychological Interview* talk shows featuring rural female workers that exist in urban areas among the "floating population" of Chinese migrant workers, she suggests that the Chinese talk show format of confession and exorcism can also be studied through another Confucian apparatus—the rectification of names.[205] The "rectification of names" (*zhengming*) is a Confucian process in which society and the world can be ordered and assigned meaning by being given the proper label. The Confucian *Analects* highlights the importance of naming:

> If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone; if this remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate; if justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything.[206]

Hall and Ames suggest that the rectification of names is essential as "the performative force of language entails the consequence that to interpret the world through language is to impel it towards a certain realization, to make it known in a certain way."[207] Naming, according to according to Confucius, is a way to make a certain reality proper—that is to make it real. In Jaguscik's study, the act of naming itself is not hierarchical but becomes such due to the nature of the talk show she is examining. In *Psychological Interview,* naming becomes hierarchical because it is first performed by invited experts—who are not, themselves, migrant women. Language is invoked by the experts and then performed by the "authentic" migrant women (migrant women invited as guests on the show), who in an effort to be perceived as authentic actually reestablish the symbolic hegemony through their performance.[208]

Naming is of paramount importance in these four QC episodes—seen both from coding and research notes, the effort to clearly define sexualities through labels of lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual, T, P, H, fag hag, rotten girl, 1, 0 (terms used for masculine and feminine gay men) pervades all four episodes—particularly the codification of T/P identity. Dana emphasizes this in in "Only P": "I understand the TP distinction as a practical distinction to indicate my partner preference. In the lesbian circle, some people call me a manly P because a have a very manly personality. No matter how I act in bed, I always insist on calling myself a P." Host Xiaogang asks, "So are you a pure P?" "Yes," Dana responds, "a very pure P."[209]

Jaguscik argues that due to the structure of *Psychological Interview*, by retelling their life-stories, the migrant women do not achieve greater agency but are simply taking part in the hierarchical power structure. She states that the migrant women "are using the vocabulary coming from above; it is much more a tool of assuring the already established symbolic hegemony." In this way, though the language of naming used in the episodes of *Psychological*

Interview dedicated to migrant woman "is itself not hierarchical, it becomes such due to the fact that it is first performed by the invited experts."[210] While the QC hosts and guests are surely participating in a wider hierarchical lexicon through their involvement in the talk show, QC's episodes challenge the traditional talk show format Jaguscik describes. In the QC webcasts the "invited experts" who are also the ones telling their stories. In this way, the language of naming arises organically. It is the hosts and co-hosts who attempt to draw out the definitions for labels, appearances and behaviors rather than assigning them. At the beginning of "Only P" host Xiaogang begins: "Together we'll discuss an interesting and mysterious topic: P lesbians, also known as 'femmes'.I think you two might know more about this topic than I do." Guest, Dana, immediately begins to describe her reasons for calling herself a P: "My close friends all think that calling myself a P is a form of self-mockery for me. I have a bold personality, a personality that could be described as manly. It's only my outward appearance that makes me a P."[211] This organic effort to establish names or labels consumes over 25% of the combined recorded units of the four QC's episodes.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Queercomrades.com's talk-show content is meeting a growing Internet audience—both gay and straight, international and Chinese—interested in non-heterosymbolic topics, lifestyles and identities. Within the context of the global gay versus local-cultural specificity argument, this paper analyzed the content of contemporary webcasts on Queercomrades.com in order to expose the issues relevant to Chinese lesbians and ask the following questions: What is the relevance of Queercomrades.com talk-show content in post-reform China? In what ways does QC connect with both local and international discourse? What do the representations and discourses on Queercomrades project about lesbian identity in China? What techniques are utilized to communicate with both straight and LGBTQ audiences? How does this discourse interact with global gay and local specificity arguments?

QC's online talk show format is highly relevant to both gay and straight individuals—particularly young, educated urbanites. Drawing on both local and global language and culture, QC talk shows communicate stories, ideas, and opinions to its national and international audience. Hosts and guests on this sample of talk shows utilize a hybrid model of both *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica* through forms of personal and intimate confession and story-telling, reminiscent of the Confucian tradition of publishing stories of virtuous individuals, to transmit information, meaning and models to its audience. These stories and confessions not only offer a "truth" that can only be associated through personal testimony, but also present models of *lala*s

in a globalizing and urbanizing culture. QC's lesbian-related talk shows frequently pose comparison and contrast between both the heterosymbolic culture and the gay male culture to highlight the importance of sex, identity within the lesbian community, and social support and networking.

By participating in QC's webcasts, these women serve as role models of a new globalized reality that includes evolving hybrid sexualities. Through confession and storytelling that draws on new emerging Chinese identities, Western discourse and globalization and performances that mirror Confucian rectification of names and the tradition of exemplary biographies, the hosts and guests on QC participate in creating a new "exemplary woman" model for women who identify beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual symbolic at the turn of the 21st century.

Notes

[1] Derogatory term used in some post-structuralist writing to denote an external, objective, language-independent point that fixes reference or meaning

[2] Dennis Altman, "Global Gaze/Global Gays" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3:4 (1997): 425.

[3] Ibid., 425.

[4] Ibid., 429.

[5] Stephen O. Murray, "The 'Underdevelopment' of Modern/Gay Homosexuality in Meso-America," *Modern Homosexualities,* ed. Ken Plummer (London: Routledge, 1992) 29 in Altman, 429.

[6] Altman, 429.

[7] Chou, Wah-Shan, "Homosexuality and the Culture Homosexuality and the Cultural Politics of *Tongzhi* in Chinese Societies," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40.3-4 (2001): 27-46.

[8] See discussion of Chou's *tongzhi* politics argument for further information.

[9] A term I've borrowed from Sherryl Kleinman in her work "Feminist Fieldwork Analysis" explaining that it allows me to study patterns of speech, interaction, identity and meaning while recognizing the reciprocal relationship between myself and my experiences as researcher and the socio-historical circumstances around me and that which I am studying while also paying attention to the reproduction of structures of inequality produced by society, government, language, and individuals.

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[11] Michael Conners, "Disordering Democracy: Democratization in Thailand," unpublished paper, Melbourne University, 1995:12 cited in Altman, 432.

[12] Altman, 433.

[13] Meena Khandelwal, "Arranging Love: Interrogating the Vantage Point in Cross-Border Feminism," *Signs* 3.4 (2009):584.

[14] Ibid., 584.

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[17] Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture,* 18.

[18]Pieterse cited in Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture, 18.*

[19]Adrianne Rich

[20]Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (London: Routledge, 1993) xii.

[21] Jessica Durham, "Lesbian Mermaids? *Vagina Monologues* Runs Aground," *Macquairie Matrix*, 2.2 (December, 2012): 53-54.

[22] Ibid., 54.

[23]Ibid., 54.

[24]Chou, 29.

[25] Lucetta Yip Lo Kam, *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013) 19-20.

[26] Ibid., 25-26.

[27] Loretta Wing Wah Ho, *Gay and Lesbian Subculture in Urban China* (New York: Routledge, 2010) 1.

[28] Ibid., 3-4.

[29] Ibid., 5.

[30] Ibid., 10.

[31] Kam, 3.

[32]Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire In Modern China* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003) 170.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 102.

[35] Ibid., 10.

[36] Ibid., 106.

[37]Ibid., 171.

[38]Chou, 27-28.

[39]Ibid., 28.

[40] Jin Zhao, "Imagining Queerness: Sexualities in Underground Films in the Contemporary P. R. China," thes., *Georgia State University Digital Achieve* (May, 2011) Web. 13 June 2013.

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[42] Liu and Ding, "Reticent Poetics, Queer Politics," 35-36 qtd. in Zhou, 14.

[43]D. E. Mungello, *Western Queers in China: Flight to the Land of Oz* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2012) 39.

[44]Ibid., 27.

[45] Kam, 3

[46] Xiaopei He, *Talking about Their Love: An Oral History of Women Who Love Women in Shanghai* (2008) 136, qtd. in and translated by Kam in *Shanghai Lalas*, 20.

[47] Butler, *Bodies,* 152, qtd. In Aaron K. H. Ho, "The Lack of Chinese Lesbians: Double Crossing in *Blue Gate Crossing*," *Genders* 49 (2009) online, Web 13 June, 2013.

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[49]Ho.

[50]Ibid.

[51] He in Kam, 20.

[52]Ikels, 3.

[53] Eds. and trans. Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai, *The Sacred Books of Confucius and other Confucian Classics*, (New York: University Books, 1965) 331 qtd. in Charlotte Ikels, *Filial Piety and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) 3.
[54] James Legge, ed. *The Works of Mencius* (New York: Dover Publications, 1933) 725 qtd. in Ikels, 3.
[55] Ikels, 20.
[56] Joan Judge, *The Raft of Precious History: The Past, the West and the Woman Question in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) 1.
[57] Ibid., 6.
[58] Ikels, 24.
[59] Ibid., 22.
[60] Kam, 62.
[61] Ying in ibid., 63.
[62] Ibid., 65-66.
[63] Ibid., 82.
[64] Ibid., 101.
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[74] Ibid., 3.
[75] Ibid., 30.
[76] Ibid., 4.
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[78] Pierre Miege, "In My Opinion, most *Tongzhi* are very Dutiful Sons! Community, social norms, and construction Hefei, Anhui Province," *China Perspectives* 1 (2009): 40.
[79] Ibid., 45.
[80] Ibid., 46.
[81] Ibid., 46.
[82] Ibid., 47.

[83] Kam, 22.

[84] Ibid., 29.

[85] Ibid., 21.

[86] Ibid., 53.

[87] Barry and Zhu, 74 in Justyna Jaguscik "Cultural Representations and Self-Representations of *Dagongmei* in Contemporary China," *Deportate, Esule Profughe* 17 (2011): 130.

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[89] "Focusing on China Under Rule of Law for Sharing a Harmonious Society: CCTV 12 'Society and Laws' Channel." *CCTV*. China Central Television, 3 Feb. 2009, Web. 4 April 2013.

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[91] "About Us," *Queercomrades*, QueerComrades.com, 2011, Web, 20 March 2013.

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[102] Sherryl Kleinman, *Feminist Fieldwork Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishing, 2007)1-2.

[103] Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon, "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis," *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (2005)1278.

[104] Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research (*Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952) cited in Hsieh and Shannon, 1278.

[105] Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis* Beverly Hills: Sage Press, 1990) 9 in Hsieh and Shannon, 1278.

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[115]Ibid.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Ibid.

[127]Ibid.

[128]Ibid.

[129] According to Deklerck, the shops location and details about contacting Shang were provided in the original episode, but QC removed the information upon reports of Shang being harassed and stalked (YAM magazine).

[130]Xiaogang Wei (writer and director), (16 September 2008), "Lesbian Toy Story" (Talk show webcast episode), in Stijn Deklerck (producer) *Talk Shows,* Beijing, China: queercomrades.com. Online. 21 Jun 2013

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Ibid.

[134]Ibid.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Ibid.

[137]Ibid.

[138] Xiaogang Wei (writer and director), (28 April 2009), "Lalalala Lesbians" (Talk-show webcast episode). In Stijn Deklerck (producer) *Talk Shows,* Beijing, China: Queercomrades.com. Online. Web. 21 Jun 2013.

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[140]Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Xiaogang Wei (writer and director), (5 February 2010), "Only P" (Talk-show webcast episode). In Stijn Deklerck (Producer) *Talk Shows,* Beijing, China: Queercomrades.com. Online. Web. 21 Jun 2013.

[146] Ibid.

[147]Ibid.

[148]Ibid.

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[151]Ibid.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Ibid.

[156]Ibid.

[157]Ibid.

[158]Ibid.

[159]Ibid.

[160]Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164]Ibid.

[165]Ibid.

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[170]Sherryl Kleinman, *Feminist Fieldwork Analysis*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007): 2.

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[174] Ibid., 165.

[175] "Les Talk About Sex" was transcribed by my colleagues Jin Meng Xi (金梦曦) and Xiao Qi (小七) and translated by myself and Jin Meng Xi.

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[177]Altman, 430.

[178]Khandelwal, 584.

[179]Jackson, 2003.

[180]Ball-Rokeach and Defleur, 1976.

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[182]Ibid., 53-54.

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[184]"Only P".

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[189]Ibid., 57.
[190]Ibid., 57.
[191]Ibid., 58.
[192]Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (Summer, 1982): 783.
[193]Ibid., 62.
[194]Ibid., 62.
[195] See the discussion of Krafft-Ebing and Ellis the Introduction of this paper.
[196]"Lesbian Toy Story".
[197]"Only P".
[198]"Les Talk About Sex".
[199] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) 69 qtd. in Jaguscik, 135.
[200]Judge, 2.
[201]Ibid., 11.
[202]Ibid., 11.
[203] Ibid., 10.
[204]Ibid., 12.
[205]Jaguscik, 132.
[206]Arthur Waley, trans., *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989) 161.
[207]David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany: New York State University Press, 1987): 268-69 qtd. in Jaguscik, 132.
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