
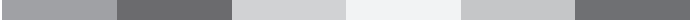


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## **Chinese University Students' Commitment to Social Justice and Their Willingness to Confront Sexual Orientation Prejudice<sup>1</sup>**



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### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

**F**rom ancient times through many dynasties, Chinese society tolerated and, at times, even encouraged same-sex eroticism.<sup>2</sup> In texts that have survived millennia, most recorded encounters involve members of the male ruling classes. While accounts of “amours among commoners” are understandably rare,<sup>3</sup> Crompton notes that the sexual attitudes in many stories “tacitly assume bisexuality as the human norm.”<sup>4</sup> All of this changed dramatically in 1911 with the fall of the Qing Dynasty. China experienced its first “opening to the West” and welcomed Western science,<sup>5</sup> Christianity, sex education, and psychology<sup>6</sup>—including their negative views about same-sex relations. When their own traditions and values conflicted with those of the West, Chinese reformers judged their own to be signs of the weaknesses that had contributed to the collapse of the dynasty.

Hinch claims that within a few generations “China shifted from a relative tolerance of homosexuality to open hostility,”<sup>7</sup> but cautions that “the reasons for this change are complex and not yet fully understood.”<sup>8</sup> When the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, the Communist Party banished Christian agencies but retained

their abhorrence of homosexuality, declaring it a sign of bourgeois decadence. In good Marxist fashion, it substituted economic and cultural factors for biological determinism and predicted that homosexuality would evaporate as the new proletarian society emerged. Same-sex relations were never explicitly criminalized in post-1949 China. However, the charge of “hooliganism” has been applied to many forms of deviation and thus undesirable behaviour,<sup>9</sup> and has been used as a convenient tool to assist authorities in their attempts to hasten the process of “evaporation.” Treatment of suspected homosexuals during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) was particularly harsh.<sup>10</sup>

With the second “opening to the West” initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, Western influences once again penetrated the Bamboo Curtain and with them came new ideas about social and sexual relations. At the same time, China experienced a resurgence of Confucian priorities, particularly the emphasis on maintaining social order and the obligation of all children to maintain the paternal family line. The value placed on preserving social harmony does give “tongzhi”—the most popular contemporary word for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals—some protection from the intrusion by the state into their private lives. At the same time, “les-bi-gay” people are under enormous pressure from parents to marry and produce offspring, especially since the “one-child policy” was introduced in 1978.

Thus far, research on how tolerant contemporary Chinese society is of its sexual minorities has been inconclusive. Commenting on a 2007 national telephone survey, Li concluded that “Chinese society, on the whole, is tolerant,”<sup>11</sup> yet only about 20 percent of the respondents were prepared to say that there was nothing wrong with being homosexual. She reports that “30 percent said there was something wrong with homosexuality, and nearly 40 percent said it was wrong.”<sup>12</sup> The view of our own participants was less charitable. When asked whether they thought the attitude of most Chinese toward gays and lesbians was positive or negative, their response was overwhelmingly negative (F=93%, no.=70; M=86%, no.=101).<sup>13</sup>

Research among university students on sexual orientation issues has grown steadily in the last twenty years and, by and large, reveals a trend toward greater tolerance. In their early groundbreaking 1992 study, Dalin Liu et al. found that 79% of his large student sample regarded homosexuality as a form of “sexual deviancy” and an illness

that doctors might solve or alleviate.<sup>14</sup> Almost a decade later in 2001, Cui and Liang reported similar numbers: almost 80% of male and female students considered homosexuality to be abnormal and half of them also believed it to be immoral. The majority would recommend that a friend who was attracted to members of the same sex should visit a doctor.<sup>15</sup> In 2002, Higgins et al. concluded that “Intolerance of homosexuality ... was pervasive among our Chinese student sample with 78.6% of men and 66.4% of women disapproving of the statement ‘homosexuality should be allowed’.”<sup>16</sup> However in the same year, a survey conducted at three universities in Shanghai reported a very different view in which “about 60 percent of the students hold a tolerant view about homosexuality, thinking it should be permitted openly.”<sup>17</sup>

By 2005, Cen Guozhen, a professor of psychology at Shanghai Normal University, was able to report that a recent survey “indicate[d] young people are more broad-minded about homosexuals as a group, with 75 percent of those polled accepting homosexual acquaintances, 37 percent among their friends, and 21 percent among their relatives.”<sup>18</sup> Finally, a loosely conducted survey of students in “around ten universities in Beijing” conducted by Jiang Qiuyu and five classmates at Beijing’s China University of Nationalities in 2006 concluded that “universities are becoming much more liberal.”<sup>19</sup>

#### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research explores Chinese university students’ commitment to social justice on public policy issues and their perceptions of sexual orientation prejudice on their campus. In a 2006 survey, 200 students (M=117; F=82) from a large university in southeastern China were asked about their stance on seven social policy issues and then how often they heard homophobic comments from their peers, when they did hear them whether they intervened and, importantly, if they did intervene, why they would have done so.

#### **PROCEDURE**

Our survey instrument was developed in English at the University of Saskatchewan. Two Chinese social science professors—one in China and one in Canada—were consulted about the cultural appropriateness of the questions as well as the Chinese slang equivalents for words such as “fag,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “queer,” “lezzie,” and “gay.” The following substitutions were used: “tongxinglian” (“same-sex relations/love”), “tongzhi” (“comrade”), “boli” (“from ‘BL’, “Boy Love” and so a boy who loves another

boy and refers to gay men), “niangniangqiang” (“men who speak with a womanish accent,” and so, effeminate), “lala” (transliteration of the English “lesbian”), and “biantai” (“perverted”). The survey was then translated into Mandarin, back-translated into English, and field tested on eight Chinese graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan.

To gauge the liberalness of our participants, we placed our questions in the context of social policy issues. This, we believed, would sharpen their perception and move responses beyond simple attitudes. Thus, we selected seven “hot-button” issues for their consideration: same-sex marriage, adoption, child custody in the event of divorce, housing, jobs, police harassment, and immigration.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Of the 200 students who were surveyed, 82 were females, 117 were males (one was undeclared). Participants were chosen randomly by contacts made over a four-day period in dormitories, cafeterias, and around recreational centres. When invited to complete the survey, they were informed immediately about the nature of the research and were offered ten yuan (about \$1.32 US)—the cost of a good lunch—to participate.

Nearly 80% of our female (65/82) and more than 90% of our male (107/117) participants were 21 years or younger. Because we were visiting the university in June, most third- and fourth-year students had completed their examinations and had left campus. As a result, almost 80% of the females (63/81) and more than 90% of our males (108/117) were in their first two years of university. Less than 25% of them (45/200) had chosen the humanities as their major field of study. Students were not asked to reveal their own sexual orientation.

Participants were asked about three conditions that in the West are thought to influence attitudes towards gays and lesbians. A high degree of religious belief (sometimes referred to as “religiosity”) is often associated with higher levels of homo-negativity.<sup>20</sup> So few of our participants—particularly males in the sample—claimed to be religious to any significant degree that it was safe to conclude that religion would not be a significant factor:

	<b>Very religious</b>	<b>Somewhat religious</b>	<b>Not at all religious</b>
<b>Females</b>	2% (no.=2)	16% (no.=13)	82% (no.=66)
<b>Males</b>	0% (no.=0)	5% (no.=6)	95% (no.=109)

We concur with Pan Suiming's observation that "homosexuals in China do not ... have to deal with the problem of "sin" in the context of the Christian Church, as their counterparts in the West."<sup>21</sup>

We also discounted the possible "broadening-of-the-mind" effects<sup>22</sup> of international travel because so few of our participants had studied abroad<sup>23</sup>:

	No travel outside China	Less than 3 months	3 months to one year	More than a year
<b>Females</b>	93% (no.=67)	6% (no.=4)	0% (no.=0)	1% (no.=1)
<b>Males</b>	97% (no.=98)	2% (no.=2)	0% (no.=0)	0% (no.=0)

Research in the West offers abundant evidence that having a gay or lesbian relative or close friend is the most significant factor in a heterosexual's acceptance of sexual-minority persons.<sup>24</sup> Once again, this could not have been a major influence on our participants, as relatively few of them claimed knowingly to have a gay or lesbian acquaintance and even fewer claimed to have a close gay or lesbian friend or relative:

	No lesbian acquaintance	No gay acquaintance	No close lesbian friend or relative	No close gay friend or relative
<b>Females</b>	83% (no.=68)	89% (no.=73)	96% (no.=77)	95% (no.=78)
<b>Males</b>	91% (no.=106)	86% (no.=99)	97% (no.=112)	96% (no.=111)

Li's research led to a similar conclusion: "Whether we admit it or not, homosexuality is a reality across the world, and the visibility of homosexuals reflects how accepting a society is toward them. But the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) survey found that only 7.5 percent of the respondents admitted having known any homosexual."<sup>25</sup>

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE RESPONSES**

The liberalness of our participants surprised us. While they gave us somewhat lower scores on the more personal issues—same-sex marriage, adoption, child custody in the event of divorce—than on the others, they were still considerably higher than results reported by other researchers in China. Specifically, we asked our participants whether they agreed that gay and lesbian individuals:

**1. Should be allowed to marry their same-sex partners.**

In our survey, 82% of our female and 70% of our male participants agreed.<sup>26</sup> We regard these numbers as highly significant because same-sex marriage has not been approved by the state and there is little prospect of it happening in the near future. As Li, a tireless advocate for same-sex marriage, has said: “Gay marriage is not something that our country can accept at this stage of its cultural development. History will change when it must. And perhaps I will only be able to be a bystander when the change comes, rather than a participant.”<sup>27</sup> The results of a national phone survey in 2007 were discouraging: “On legislation for same-sex marriage, the CASS respondents seemed ... conservative with 70 percent rejecting the idea.”<sup>28</sup> She also reports on a second CASS online survey, which found that 60 percent of the Chinese respondents approved of same-sex marriage. She speculates that the difference in the results between the two surveys may be attributed to the fact that “a large percentage of Chinese ‘netizens’ are young, well-educated, and urban dwellers.”<sup>29</sup> We see our research as corroborating her interpretation. A younger generation may be looking at same-sex marriage differently from its forebears.

**2. Should be allowed to adopt children.**

In one of his studies, Herek concluded that “overall, heterosexual women [in North America] were more supportive than men of ... adoption rights for gay people.”<sup>30</sup> In a 2005 study on medical students in Hong Kong, Hon et al. found that “less than half (46%) thought they (homosexual partners) should have equal rights in adopting children.”<sup>31</sup> In another 2005 study, Cen Guozhen, a Shanghai Normal University professor of psychology, reported that “few (young) people agree with allowing homosexual couples to adopt children.”<sup>32</sup>

Our results are markedly different. First, both our male and female participants strongly supported the right of sexual minority people to adopt children. Second, the parity between the positive responses of our female and male participants (F=70%; M=68%) was remarkable. Though these results are the lowest we recorded on our seven social-issue questions, they are higher than other available research results in China.

### **3. Should be eligible for child custody in event of divorce.**

With China's divorce rate surging,<sup>33</sup> the issue of how to resolve child custody cases has become significant. Again, our participants strongly supported the right of gays and lesbians to apply for custody. Interestingly, this is the one category of social issues in which our male respondents scored higher ( $M=76\%$ ) than our female respondents ( $F=70\%$ ), though both scores are relatively high.

### **4. Should be free from discrimination in housing.**

Our participants resoundingly rejected discrimination in housing ( $F=91\%$ ;  $M=88\%$ ).

### **5. Should be free from job discrimination because of their sexual orientation.**

In one study, Herek concluded that, "Overall, heterosexual women were more supportive than men of employment protection ... and more willing to extend employment benefits to same-sex couples."<sup>34</sup> While China has no law protecting sexual minorities against job discrimination,<sup>35</sup> our female and male participants were overwhelmingly opposed to job discrimination and with near identical percentages ( $F=94\%$ ;  $M=91\%$ ).

These numbers are very close to those compiled by Li. Recalling a 2007 CASS telephone survey, she wrote that "with respect to equal employment rights for homosexuals, 91 percent of the respondents offered their support." She offered this explanation: "Although many Chinese people disapprove of homosexuality, they favor equal employment rights for homosexuals, because working is the basic means of a human being's survival, and our moral baseline entails the respect for another's right to work."<sup>36</sup>

### **6. Should be free from police harassment because of their sexual orientation.**

As in many Western countries, the police in China play a forceful role in "the regulation of desire." Li sketches the situation that prevailed in China for many years. Despite the introduction of market reforms and China's shift to a "rule of law" in 1979, the Chinese police continued to apprehend, search, interrogate, and even detain people for engaging in consensual homosexual acts throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In the

absence of any specific laws on homosexuality, persons apprehended for engaging in acts of same-sex love tended to be caught up in general policing campaigns to ensure “public security” and were generally charged with the more generic crime of hooliganism.<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, in a state where the heavy hand of the police is widely felt, our participants gave this position the highest approval rating of all seven issues (F=94%; M=94%).

**7. That same-sex persons from foreign countries should be allowed to immigrate to China to join gay and lesbian partners (provided the former meet all the other usual conditions for immigration).**

Our female (F=81%) and male (M=80%) participants strongly favoured the right of same-sex partners to be reunited in China.

The parity between the responses of our female and male participants across all of the issues is worth noting because they run counter to a “gender gap” that runs through most of this research in the West. On only two issues was there any noticeable difference: our female participants scored 6% less than their male counterparts on the question of child custody in the event of divorce and our females scored 12% higher than our males on the right of same-sex partners to marry.

Surprised by these findings, we looked for background factors that might suggest explanations. To do this, we stipulated that students would be defined as “liberal” if they answered affirmatively on at least five of our seven issues. The results of this exercise also surprised us:

	Females	Totals	Males	Totals
<b>7 out of 7 times</b>	40% (no.=33)		44% (no.=51)	
<b>At least 6 out of 7 times</b>	24% (no.=20)	65%	18% (no.=21)	62%
<b>At least 5 out of 7 times</b>	15% (no.=12)	79%	16% (no.=19)	78%

Almost 80% of all participants were found to have chosen the liberal options at least 5 times out of 7. Li has said that a CASS “survey found that Chinese society, on the whole, is tolerant.”<sup>38</sup> Our results would lead us to believe that this young generation is very tolerant. For each issue, we developed a hypothesis which might explain the trends we were uncovering. We based our hypotheses on Western research and experience, as very little research of this kind had been undertaken in China.



**HYPOTHESIS 1. Those with more years in university are likely to be more “liberal” on social policy issues.**

Several studies support our belief that university experience broadens the mind. Kim et al., for example, concluded that “as the students gained more educational experiences, they tended to develop more liberal values leading to greater acceptance of homosexuality.”<sup>39</sup> Lambert et al. asked, “Does education open students’ minds and in doing so increase their acceptance of diversity in others?” and answered, “The results of this study suggest yes, at least in terms of attitudes towards gays and lesbians.”<sup>40</sup> In a Canadian study, Schellenberg et al. confirmed that “attitudes toward homosexuals improved with time spent at college.”<sup>41</sup> Our hypothesis was not completely confirmed in our study:

	Liberal	Not liberal
1st year students	75% (no.=88)	25% (no.=29)
2nd year students	85% (no.=46)	15% (no.=8)
3 years or more students	77% (no.=20)	23% (no.=6)

What is notable, however, is the high percentage (75%) of first-year students who fall into the “liberal” category. This rises to 85% for second-year students and falls back to 77% for third-year students.<sup>42</sup>

**HYPOTHESIS 2. Those who have one or more gay or lesbian acquaintances, close friends, or relatives are more liberal on policy issues than those who do not.**

Many researchers point to this factor as perhaps the most significant in producing a tolerant populace. Altemeyer “highlights the beneficial effects of knowingly knowing a homosexual.”<sup>43</sup> Kardia concludes that “getting to know lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people was a primary mechanism through which students’ attitudes changed.”<sup>44</sup> And Herek and Glunt found that “interpersonal contact was a powerful predictor of attitudes toward gay men.”<sup>45</sup> Very few of our participants claimed to know a gay or lesbian person, yet those who had neither a relative nor close friend were frequently as liberal as those who did.

	Liberal	Not liberal
Has a close friend/relative	79% (no.=11)	21% (no.=3)
Has neither a close friend/relative	77% (no.=118)	23% (no.=35)

Our hypothesis was not confirmed.

**HYPOTHESIS 3. Female participants are more liberal on social policy issues than male participants.**

Western research has demonstrated overwhelmingly that in our culture females are more liberal than males. Altemeyer’s clear statement can stand for a generation of researchers: “Females have always proved more tolerant than males toward homosexuals in my studies.”<sup>46</sup> In a comparative study involving British and Chinese students, Higgins et al. reported that “although the British students held more permissive attitudes toward homosexuality than did their Chinese counterparts, it appeared that women seemed to be more accepting than men of homosexuality in both countries.”<sup>47</sup> In our study, the percentage of females and males in the liberal category is virtually identical.<sup>48</sup>

	Liberal	Not liberal
Females	79% (no.=65)	21% (no.=17)
Males	78% (no.=91)	22% (no.=26)

Our hypothesis was not supported.

**HYPOTHESIS 4. Those most liberal on social policy issues come from major cities (defined as 10 million or more) and, the corollary, those least liberal on policy issues come from smaller cities and towns.**

It is commonplace in North America to believe that those who live in rural areas are more homo-negative than those in urban areas. That is what Higgins and Sun believed they had confirmed in their research in China.<sup>49</sup> By contrast, we found that those who came from cities like Shanghai and Beijing were not as liberal as those from smaller cities and towns. In fact, when we moved from the top of our population list—“10 million or more”—to the bottom—“less than 5,000,” we found the degree of liberalness rose:

	Liberal	Not liberal
10 million or more	70% (no.=37)	30% (no.=16)
10 million to 1 million	81% (no.=25)	19% (no.=6)
1 million to 100,000	87% (no.=52)	13% (no.=8)
100,000 & 5,000	91% (no.=10)	9% (no.=11)
Less than 5,000	88% (no.=22)	12% (no.=3)

Our hypothesis was not supported.

**HYPOTHESIS 5. Those in the humanities are more liberal on social policy issues than those in the pure and applied sciences.**

Kim et al.'s research led them to conclude that "students who studied education scored significantly higher than those students who studied business,"<sup>30</sup> and Schellenberg found that "compared to science and business students, students in the faculties of arts and social science had more positive attitudes toward gay men."<sup>31</sup> In our study, students in the humanities and the pure and applied sciences had identical scores for liberalism:

	Liberal	Not liberal
Students in the humanities	78% (no.=35)	22% (no.=10)
Students in the pure and applied sciences	78% (no.=69)	22% (no.=20)

Our hypothesis was not supported.

**HYPOTHESIS 6. The most liberal on social policy issues come from families whose parents have higher levels of education.<sup>52</sup>**

We placed a parent with some post-secondary education ("higher level of education") as an "A" and a parent whose education did not include any secondary education as a "B."

Liberal participants whose fathers were "A's":	74% (no.=52)
Liberal participants whose fathers were "B's":	80% (no.=93)
Liberal participants whose mothers were "A's":	77% (no.=41)
Liberal participants whose mothers were "B's":	78% (no.=105)

What we see is that the level of education had no bearing on whether their child was liberal on sexual orientation policy issues. Our hypothesis was not supported.

We then turned to assess our students' perceptions of sexual orientation prejudice on their campus, their willingness to intervene in the presence of negative comments, and factors that affected their perceptions and their actions. We began by asking how often they hear "fag talk" and where.

	Females	Males
Frequently/Often	18% (no.=14)	14% (no.=19)
Sometimes	38% (no.=31)	30% (no.=35)
Rarely/Never	44% (no.=36)	55% (no.=63)

While females and males reported just about the same level in the “Frequently” and “Often” categories, males responded more often than females in “Rarely” and “Never” categories. Overall, the incidence of “fag talk” is considerably lower than levels reported for North American universities and high schools.

Where did students hear most “fag talk”? Participants reported the highest frequency on university grounds and dormitories. Interestingly, little of it was heard around sports facilities.

	Classrooms		University grounds		Dorms		Sports facilities	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
<b>Frequently</b>	0%	2%	2%	5%	2%	11%	0%	3%
<b>Often</b>	10%	1%	11%	4%	10%	17%	7%	6%
<b>Sometimes</b>	29%	11%	50%	34%	53%	27%	13%	15%
<b>Rarely</b>	42%	42%	34%	37%	29%	26%	36%	41%
<b>Never</b>	19%	44%	3%	21%	7%	13%	44%	35%

Did our participants regard the use of this language as offensive? If it could cause pain, there could be moral grounds for intervening.

	Not offensive	A little offensive	Quite offensive	Extremely offensive
<b>Females</b>	1% (no.= 1)	44% (no.= 36)	22% (no.= 18)	12% (no.= 10)
<b>Males</b>	3% (no.= 4)	33% (no.= 38)	32% (no.= 40)	7% (no.= 8)

Only 5 of our 200 participants were prepared to claim that such slurs were “not offensive.” When we combined “quite” and “extremely” categories, 34% of our females and 39% of our males agreed such language was offensive. One wonders what the numbers would be if our sample had been made up entirely of gays and lesbians.<sup>53</sup>

We asked our participants how often they thought anyone would intervene in the presence of “fag talk?”

<b>Always</b>	0%
<b>Most of the time</b>	3%
<b>Some of the time</b>	17%
<b>Rarely</b>	39%
<b>Never</b>	41%

Clearly, general intervention rates are low: 80% of the time, intervention rarely or never occurs.

How often did our participants claim they intervened?

	Female	Male
<b>Always/Often</b>	21% (n=12)	9% (n=7)
<b>Rarely/Never</b>	79% (n=46)	91% (n=69)

These numbers are no better than their estimation of intervention rates from the general populace whether on or off campus—this in spite of the fact that they understood that the language was offensive and likely to cause pain.

We wondered whether those in the humanities intervened more often than those in the pure and applied sciences. The differences were not appreciable:

	Humanities	Pure and applied sciences
<b>Frequently/Often</b>	19% (n=6)	12% (n=7)
<b>Rarely/Never</b>	81% (n=26)	89% (n=54)

However, those who had a gay or lesbian friend or relative intervened four times more often than those who did not have such relationships. Conversely, those who had neither relationship seldom intervened:

	Has close friend/relative	Has neither
<b>Frequently/Often</b>	30% (n=5)	71% (n=12)
<b>Rarely/Never</b>	8% (n=7)	92% (n=92)

If our participants intervened in a case of homophobic remarks, did they think they would receive support for intervening?

<i>From their friends?</i>	Yes	No
<b>Females</b>	68% (n=55)	31% (n=25)
<b>Males</b>	65% (n=71)	36% (n=39)

<i>From classmates?</i>	Yes	No
<b>Females</b>	68% (n=55)	32% (n=26)
<b>Males</b>	61% (n=67)	39% (n=43)

<i>From professors?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Females</b>	57% (n=45)	41% (n=32)
<b>Males</b>	46% (n=50)	46% (n=50)

<i>From family?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Females</b>	35% (n=27)	60% (n=47)
<b>Males</b>	41% (n=44)	54% (n=58)

<i>From onlookers?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Females</b>	21% (n=16)	72% (n=54)
<b>Males</b>	28% (n=31)	65% (n=71)

In large numbers, our students felt that they could turn to their friends and classmates for support, but, as one moves down the list, support from professors, family, and anonymous bystanders drops dramatically.

Was there any correlation between scores on our “liberal index” and rates of intervention? We found that 19 (14%) of “liberals” would intervene “always” or “most of the time,” while 84 (62%) would “rarely” or “never” intervene. This is not particularly encouraging. On the other hand, when we looked at those who were not “liberal” in our sense, all claimed that they would rarely or never intervene. A high degree of liberalism would appear to be one positive variable.

Given these background conditions, we were interested to learn the reasons students would give for the actions they would or would not take if they heard words such as “fag,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “queer,” and/or “gay” directed at someone on campus.

In cases where they would intervene, the most common explanations given by both males and females were grounded in the language of ethics and human rights (principles of respect for persons, equality, freedom, and the dignity of all persons). For example, they wrote:

People have no right to discriminate against gay and lesbian people due to their sexual orientation. Everyone should show respect for each other. Gay and lesbian people have a right to love and choose the one they love. We cannot treat them differently because of their sexual orientation. I wish that everyone would respect gay and lesbian people.

It's people's freedom to choose their sexual orientation. Even if we do not support gay and lesbian people, we cannot offend them. We do not have the right to insult or disturb their lives. Using words to insult gay and lesbian people infringes greatly on gay and lesbian people's rights. No matter what kind of sexual orientation they have, their rights should be protected. Everyone should show respect for each other. I did not realize this issue before, but now I am more attentive to it.

G&L behavior is a normal social phenomenon and it is nothing strange. I feel gay and lesbian people are as normal as heterosexual people. There are a lot of people who do not really know gay and lesbian people, but just follow others in insulting them. I feel they are ignorant, and they do not know what is right and what is wrong.

Long live understanding! Everyone has their freedom to choose their life styles, and gay and lesbian people do no harm to the stability of society. Oppression is not the only way to deal with this problem and it is definitely not the best way either.

G&L people are as equal as others. It is a basic norm to respect others.

Several simply took the position that being gay or lesbian was just normal:<sup>54</sup>

G&L people are normal. Maybe after several years, they will be accepted by others.

Some thought that being gay or lesbian was a matter of choice while others thought that it was biologically determined. Either way, they produced arguments to support tolerance:

Everyone has the right to choose their sexual orientation. We cannot insult others because of their different sexual orientation.

It is their freedom to choose their sexual orientation and it has nothing to do with others.

I definitely will intervene because G&L people are born to be so and they have no choice and we should not insult them.

Sexual orientation is determined by many factors and we cannot insult G&L people because of something they cannot control.

Finally, many said they would intervene simply on grounds that insulting people is rude:

I look down on those who insult others no matter who they are insulting. It is definitely rude to humiliate others.

I feel it is really rude and boring to insult others and I feel sorry for G&L students, so I will intervene.

We were just as interested to learn the reasons given by our participants for not intervening in the presence of homo-negative language. Three positions were frequently repeated:

- It has nothing to do with me.
- Most times, students are just joking around.
- The terms are sometimes not insulting.

The first reflects a Kohlbergian level-one “moral argument”: actions are evaluated only by how they affect the speaker/agent. In the second, an action is not reprehensible if it is not meant seriously (no matter what hurt it might cause). The third is reminiscent of the defense many teenagers offer in this country when they are challenged about their use of “That’s so gay.” Several female participants argued that, if they intervened, they would be taken to be lesbians themselves and this was not a prospect they relished. Another group defended not intervening because it would be ineffective and, what is more, it might disrupt social harmony yet change nothing. In their own words:

Although I know it is wrong, I do not want to meddle in it.



I do not think I have the right to intervene because it has nothing to do with me and it does not hurt my position.

The G&L issue is very sensitive. Although I have sympathy for them, if I intervene, people will think I am gay. What's more, intervening ... will not provide G&L people with a better life. My intervention can change nothing.

If I intervene, others will think that I am gay as well, or others will think I have a mental problem.

Sometimes when we mention these words, it is just a joke and we do not truly mean it. It is not necessary to intervene when it is a joke.

First, insulting gay and lesbian students does not happen very often. We talk about this phenomenon in our dorms, and we do not talk about a specific person. It has nothing to do with whether or not it is insulting. Second, if I do see that someone is insulting gay and lesbian people, I will not intervene because it has nothing to do with me. I will feel sorry for gay and lesbian people, but I will not intervene.

We asked our participants whether they thought an “out” student felt *safe* on their campus. More than one-third of our males and a fifth of our females thought their campus was unsafe.

	<b>Extremely/quite safe:</b>	<b>Quite/Extremely unsafe</b>
<b>Females</b>	16% (no.=13)	Females 22% (no.=18)
<b>Males</b>	14% (no.=16)	Males 35% (no.=41)

When asked a more pointed question—Would an “out” student feel *welcome* on your campus?—the results were generally more negative:

	<b>Extremely/quite welcome</b>	<b>Quite/extremely unwelcome</b>
<b>Females</b>	0% (no.=0)	41% (no.=32)
<b>Males</b>	3% (no.=3)	51% (no.=52)

For both females and males, the welcoming numbers drop precipitously and the unwelcome numbers climb sharply from those recorded in answers to the previous question. The prospects of a positive experience for an out gay or lesbian student entering this university are bleak indeed.

Our participants caught the difference between their university being “safe” and it being “welcoming.” For example, one of many students wrote in this vein:

My university is very open. Everyone is treated equally, at least in public. Therefore, an openly gay or lesbian person will not be discriminated against, at least I don't think so. It is a safe place, but it is not very welcoming for G&L students.

Another echoed:

No one will care about G&L people's privacy that much and it is safe for G&L students. But it is surely not a welcoming place.

By contrast, one student spoke eloquently and positively about his university:

My university welcomes diversity. Different thoughts and values are respected and accepted here. In this kind of liberal atmosphere, students are open, tolerant, and understanding of all kinds of diversity ... G&L students can make friends and join campus activities just as others.

But many others presented a dark side of student opinion, referring to gays and lesbians as “abnormal,” “weird,” “different,” “psychological deviants,” and “disgusting.”

One offered a general assessment of universities and aimed criticism at their own administration:

Most people cannot accept G&L people, even in some so-called advanced universities. What's more, univer-

sity administrators do not want to accept new ideas and they have more negative perspectives on G&L students.

One was even more pointed and personal in her criticism of what she perceived as a leadership vacuum in her university:

Sigh! People at this university have been so cowardly. Even (the name of a senior administrator) is too timid to be open about his sexual orientation.

### **CONCLUSION**

In response to one question on our survey, one student wrote, “Chinese society is developing very fast and people’s perspectives on G&L people are changing, too.”

Changes in the past twenty years have been sweeping and the pace is accelerating. Some landmark indicators have been very public:

- 1997 Law reform decriminalized “homosexuality” by eliminating it from the “hooliganism” statutes.
- 2001 The Chinese Society of Psychiatry removed “homosexuality” from its Chinese Classification and Diagnostic Criteria of Mental Disorders manual.
- 2001 The first Gay and Lesbian Film Festival was staged in Beijing—although it was closed by the police after three days.
- 2003 Fudan University offered a course entitled “Homosexual Health Social Sciences” for medical students—the first of its kind.
- 2005 Fudan University offered an optional undergraduate course entitled “Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Studies”—a first for non-medical undergraduates.
- 2005 Hong Kong Judge Michael Hartmann ruled that laws against gay sex for men under 21 who engage in sodomy are unconstitutional; the government decided not to appeal the court ruling.
- 2006 Sun Yat-Sen University in Zhuhai officially approved the Happy Together club, an on-campus forum that organized lectures and movies on gay culture.

- 2009 The Beijing Queer Film Festival went off without a hitch (it had been closed by authorities in 2001 and 2005 and police harassment continues<sup>55</sup>).
- 2009 The Shanghai Gay Pride Festival was successfully launched.

Our research tells us that beneath these very visible events a seismic shift in public opinion is taking place—at least among a new generation of university students. Our most dramatic and surprising discovery was the very high percentage of students who took a liberal stance on sensitive public policy issues. We proposed a number of Western-derived hypotheses designed to offer possible explanations for our participants' liberal judgments and were amused when our hypotheses were confounded in all but one case. We were impressed by the number of students who relied on human rights principles to justify their positions.

We were disappointed, but not surprised, by low intervention rates in cases where students were confronted with anti-gay slurs, but we reminded ourselves of the very high priority Chinese people place on maintaining social harmony. To challenge someone is to disrupt social peace. Intervening is a very uncommon practice in Chinese society, so much so that one male student said, "I have never seen anyone intervene, so I won't intervene either." Finally, we wondered about a sentiment that many students shared with us: "University students are open and they respect G&L people. G&L people do not need to worry about being discriminated against." The next generation of research should consult directly with sexual minority students to see if they concur.

#### NOTES

- 1 "Homophobia" is a relatively new term in Chinese. It does not appear in the 1986 and 1999 editions of the *Concise English-Chinese Dictionary* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986, 1999). For this reason, we have used "sexual orientation prejudice" in the title. See, for example, Yinhe Li recounting the view of one of her "informants" in "Regulating Male Same-sex Relationships in the People's Republic of China," *Sex and Sexuality in China*, ed. Elaine Jeffreys (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 82–101 at 99: "While previously unaware of the existence of homophobia, (he) said that he now saw that it permeated all of the print and broadcast media.... (He) concluded, "I do not know how the English-language term 'homophobia' should be translated into Chinese. But it seems to me that China is 100 percent homophobic." A new term, "tong xing lian kong ju zheng," which

- literally means “the symptoms of being afraid of gays,” can now be found in the *Online Chinese-English Dictionary* at [www.iciba.com](http://www.iciba.com) (accessed August 27, 2011). In English, Gregory M. Herek recommends the use of “sexual prejudice” because it conveys no assumptions about the motivations underlying negative attitudes (“The Psychology of Sexual Prejudice,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (American Psychological Society) 9, no. 1 (2000): 19). Similarly, Colleen R. Logan argues for “homo-prejudice” as an alternative to “homophobia” because “there is little, if any, evidence to support anti-homosexual characterizations as a phobia” (“Homophobia? No, Homoprejudice,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 31, no. 3 (1996): 31).
- 2 Louis Crompton, “Imperial China 500BCE–1849,” *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Bret Hinch, “China,” *Gay Histories and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. George E. Haggerty (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 2002), 184–88 and Fang-Fu Ruan, “China” in *Sociolegal Control of Homosexuality: A Multi-nation Comparison*, eds. Donald J. West and Richard Green (New York: Plenum Press, 1997), 57–66.
  - 3 Though in “Ming Tales,” Crompton (*Homosexuality and Civilization*) is “struck by the range of social classes involved: students and school inspectors, merchants, a porter, and a common soldier” (219).
  - 4 Crompton, “Ming Tales,” 217.
  - 5 See Frank Dikotter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995) and Erick Laurent, “Sexuality and Human Rights: An Asian Perspective,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 48, no. 3/4 (2005): 163–225.
  - 6 For a fascinating account of the transfer of Western thought about sexuality, see Howard Chiang, “Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China,” *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 629–657. See also Jin Wu, “From ‘Long Yang’ and ‘Dui Shi’ to ‘Tongzhi’: Homosexuality in China,” *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy* 7, no. 1/2 (2003): 117–143.
  - 7 We accept Chou Wah-shan’s rejection of the term “homosexual” when characterizing same-sex eroticism in the pre-1911 era: “Chinese culture recognizes the differences between same-sex and opposite 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. In traditional China, same-sex desire activities are portrayed in predominantly social, rather than sexual terms....” “Homosexuality and the Cultural Process of *Tongzhi* in Chinese Societies,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 40, no. 3/4 (2001): 27–46 at 29.
  - 8 Hinch, “China,” 187.
  - 9 In *Sociolegal Control* (63), Ruan cites the *Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China*, Article 106 that read: “All hooliganism should be subjected to

- arrest and sentence.” The inclusion of homosexuality within the scope of article 106 was removed in 1997 about the time Ruan’s article was published.
- 10 See Li, “Regulating Male Same-sex Relationships,” 86: “The harsh treatment and excessive administration penalties that were meted out to homosexuals during the Cultural Revolution period was a product of the time. As is well known, this was a period in which the rule of law was non-existent and Chinese society was plunged into chaos. Although that era has past, just like the passing of a nightmare, it has nevertheless left a deep scar both in the minds of the people and on social consciousness in general. Certainly, the harsh treatment that was meted out to many homosexuals during this period has had a continued impact on their lives. Moreover, it promoted the existence of homophobia in Chinese society. This problem has yet to be resolved....” For an account of the extent to which all manifestations of love and sex were repressed during the Cultural Revolution, see Emily Honig, “Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited,” *Modern China* 29, no. 2 (April, 2003): 143–75.
- 11 Yinhe Li, “Debate: Homosexuality,” *China Daily*, July 25, 2011. [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-07/25/content\\_12973300.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-07/25/content_12973300.htm) (accessed September 30, 2011).
- 12 The fact that 70% of respondents thought there was something wrong with being homosexual does not necessarily imply that sexual minorities would be discriminated against, but follow-up questions about family and social policy issues were warranted.
- 13 When asked for reasons why they thought an older generation held such negative views of sexual minorities, more than half our participants referred to “traditional culture,” “traditional ethics,” “Chinese ethics,” “social ethics,” or “conservative views.” Other responses in descending order of frequency:
- has insufficient knowledge/understanding (20)
  - believes that the behaviour of gays and lesbians is abnormal (16)
  - finds gay and lesbian behaviour shameful/disgraceful/disgusting (12)
  - holds majority-minority views (12)
  - believes that gay and lesbian sexual orientation is against the law of nature (8)
  - adheres to the adage that “sex without offspring is the greatest sin” (8)
  - possesses a stereotype of heterosexual male-female roles (7)
  - believes that there are serious health issues (6)
- 14 Dalin Liu, Man Lun Ng, Li Ping Zhou, and Erwin J. Haeberle, *Sexual Behaviour in Modern China—Report on the Nationwide Survey of 20,000 Men and Women* [English edition] (New York: Continuum, 1997), 191 and 192.
- 15 Y.T. Cui and L.F. Liang, “The Countermeasures and Multi-dimensionality Analyses of Mental Disorders among College Students in the Socialist Market Economy,” *Proceedings of the Third Pan-Asia Pacific Conference on Mental Health* (Beijing: China Association for Mental Health, 2001), 26–40. Cited in L.T. Higgins and Chunhui Sun, “Gender, Social Background, and

- Sexual Attitudes among Chinese Students,” *Culture, Health, & Sexuality* 9, no. 1 (January, 2007): 31–42 at 34.
- 16 L.T. Higgins, M. Zheng, Y.L. Liu, and C. Sun, “Attitudes to Marriage and Sexual Behaviors: A Survey of Gender and Culture Differences in China and United Kingdom,” *Sex Roles* 46, no. 3/4 (2002): 75–87 at 86. We interpret “should be allowed” to mean “should be legal.”
- 17 East China’s College Students Surveyed on Sex Views. We interpret “should be permitted openly” to mean “should be legal.” [http://english.people.com.cn/200201/18/eng20020118\\_88916.shtml](http://english.people.com.cn/200201/18/eng20020118_88916.shtml) (accessed July 3, 2012).
- 18 Reported by Vicky Xu in “Homosexuals better-accepted, but not for child-adoption rights,” *Shanghai Daily News* (November 18, 2005). <http://english.eastday.com/eastday/englishedition/specials/node20815/userobject1ai1658123.html> (accessed November 10, 2011).
- 19 Often Internet sites do not give many details about the sample size and categories of respondents. More importantly, none of the articles we uncovered reveal what standard of “more liberal” was used. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/01/content\\_516625.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/01/content_516625.htm) (accessed October 19, 2011).
- 20 Bob Altemeyer, “Changes in Attitudes toward Homosexuals,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 42, no. 2 (2001): 63–75; Kam-lun Ellis Hon, Ting-fan Leung, Anthony Pak-yuen Yau, Sze-man Wu, Maxim Wan, Hoi-ye Chan, Wing-ki Yip, and Tai-fai Fok, “A Survey of Attitudes toward Homosexuality in Hong Kong Chinese Medical Students,” *Teaching and Learning in Medicine* 7, no. 4 (2005), 344–48 at 346: “[Medical] students with a religion ... were more likely to be negative toward issues such as marital rights, child adoption”; Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, “The Gay Cousin: Learning to Accept Gay Rights,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 42, no. 1 (2001): 127–47 at 145: “[Religious belief] made it difficult for many to accept gay marriage, and made it difficult for a few to show any tolerance whatsoever toward gay sexuality”; Mark E. Johnson, Christine Brems, and Pat Alford-Keating, “Personality Correlates of Homophobia,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 34, no. 1 (1997): 57–69 at 57: “Religiosity was significantly correlated with more biased beliefs about the origins of homophobia, greater affective discomfort around gays, less endorsement of human rights for gays and lesbians, and greater homophobia”; Diana Kardia, “Student Attitudes toward Gay and Lesbian Issues: The Impact of College,” *Diversity Digest* (Summer, 1998): “...this study found that fraternities and student religious groups are two peer environments that countered the more general trend on campus.” <http://www.diversityweb.org/Digest/Sm98/attitudes.html> (accessed June 17, 2011).
- 21 Gary Sigley and Elaine Jefferys (1999), “Interview: On ‘Sex’ and ‘Sexuality’ in China: A Conversation with Pan Suiming,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 31, no. 1 (1999): 50–58 at 54.
- 22 See Martin Forsey, Susan Broomhall, and Jane Davis who challenge the value for students of international study abroad: “Broadening the Mind?:

Australian Student Reflections on the Experience of Overseas Study,” *Journal of Studies in International Education* 16, no. 2 (2012): 128–30.

- 23 Just because so few of our participants had not traveled abroad does not mean that they were immune to influences from the West. New technologies have made it possible for Western media to penetrate the “Bamboo Curtain.” When the Chinese government banned the distribution of the film *Brokeback Mountain*, so many pirated copies circulated that the acronym “BBM” quickly entered popular speech, as in “That is a BBM situation,” or “She is a BBM ally.” When our participants were asked to indicate the sources from which they gained the most information about gay and lesbian issues, films and the Internet received the highest ratings:

	FEMALES:		MALES:
Film	94% (77)	Internet	82% (96)
Internet	72% (59)	Film	80% (93)
Discussion with friends	71% (58)	Discussion with friends	68% (80)
Newspapers/magazines	66% (54)	Newspapers/magazines	64% (75)
Literature	66% (54)	TV	56% (65)

- 24 See Bob Altemeyer, “Changes in Attitudes,” 73: “...I would highlight the beneficial effects of knowingly knowing a homosexual”; Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958); Gregory M. Herek and Eric K. Glunt, “Interpersonal Contact and Heterosexuals’ Attitudes toward Gay Men: Results from a National Survey,” *Journal of Sex Research* 30, no. 3 (1993): 239–244 at 242: “Interpersonal contact was the best predictor of attitudes toward gay men”; Gregory M. Herek and John P. Capitanio, “‘Some of my Best Friends’: Intergroup Contact, Concealable Stigma, and Heterosexuals’ Attitude toward Gay Men and Lesbians,” *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1996): 412–24; Kardia, “Student Attitudes”: “...getting to know lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people was a primary mechanism through which students’ attitudes changed.”
- 25 Li, “Debate: Homosexuality.”
- 26 These numbers are somewhat higher than those recorded by Kam-lun Ellis Hon et al. in “A Survey of Attitudes toward Homosexuality” in which two-thirds of the study’s Hong Kong medical students thought homosexuals should have equal marriage rights.
- 27 Li has proposed a *Chinese Same-Sex Marriage Bill* as an amendment to the marriage law at the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2008 to legalize same-sex marriage. None has succeeded thus far, as she has been unable to find enough co-sponsors for the motion to be placed on the agenda. The attitude of the Chinese government towards homosexuality can be best summarized in the “three



- no's" policy: "No approval; no disapproval; no promotion." Quoted from the Peking Duck blog by Richard Ammon, February 07, 2007 ([http://blogs.mcclatchydc.com/china/2007/02/gay\\_marriage\\_in.html](http://blogs.mcclatchydc.com/china/2007/02/gay_marriage_in.html) (accessed November 14, 2011)). In 2012, she started yet another effort: <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/leading-chinese-scholar-seeking-support-gay-marriage-bill-againo40312> (accessed July 4, 2012).
- 28 Li, "Debate: Homosexuality."
- 29 Li, "Debate: Homosexuality."
- 30 Gregory M. Herek, "Gender Gaps in Public Opinion about Lesbians and Gay Men," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2002): 40–66 at 40.
- 31 Hon et al., "A Survey of Attitudes," 344.
- 32 Reported by Vicky Xu, *Shanghai Daily News* (November 18, 2005). Unfortunately, no figures were provided in the report to quantify what Cen meant by "few (young) people."
- 33 "China's Divorce Rate Continues to Climb," *The Independent*, June 17, 2010.
- 34 Herek, "Gender Gaps in Public Opinion," 40.
- 35 Ties Van de Werff, "The Struggle of the Tongzhi: Homosexuality in China and the Position of Chinese Comrades," *Urgency Required: Gay & Lesbian Rights are Human Rights*, eds. Ireen Dubel and Andre Hielkema (The Hague, Netherlands: Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation), 2009, 172–180 at 176.
- 36 In the same *China Daily* article ("Debate: Homosexuality"), Li fails to resolve some contradictory results in one of CASS's 2007 surveys. She wrote: "One question was: Should a known homosexual be allowed to take up a schoolteacher's job? The respondents who said 'no' slightly outnumbered those saying 'yes'.... When it came to 'whether parents should require a school to replace a teacher who is a homosexual,' more than half of the respondents stuck to their prejudice...." This does not sound like "equal employment rights for homosexuals" which 91% claimed to have supported, nor does it appear to be consistent with the 80% who agreed that "homosexuals were equal to heterosexuals." Equal but not equal.
- 37 Li, "Regulating Male Same-sex Relationships," 86.
- 38 Li, "Debate: Homosexuality."
- 39 Bryan S.K. Kim, Michael J. D'Andrea, K. Poonam, Kiaka J. Sahu, and A. Gaughen, "Multicultural Study of University Students' Knowledge of and Attitudes toward Homosexuality," *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development* 36, no. 3 (1998): 171–83 at 179.
- 40 Eric G. Lambert, Lois A. Ventura, Daniel E. Hall, and Terry Cluse-Tolar, "College Students' Views on Gay and Lesbian Issues: Does Education Make a Difference?" *Journal of Homosexuality* 50, no. 4 (2006): 1–30 at 24.
- 41 See E. Glenn Schellenberg, et al., "Attitudes toward Homosexuals," 139–152. See also Kardia in "Student Attitudes" who reports on a survey of 1000 first- and fourth-year students (1990–94) in which she found a liberal shift.

- 42 Because the sample of third-year students falls to 20, it may not be sufficiently large to be reliable.
- 43 Altemeyer, "Changing Attitudes," 73.
- 44 Kardia, "Student Attitudes."
- 45 Gregory M. Herek and Eric K. Glunt, "Interpersonal Contact and Heterosexuals' Attitudes," 242. See also Annie L. Cotton-Huston and Bradley M. Waite, "Anti-homosexual Attitudes in College Students: Predictors and Classroom Interventions," *Journal of Homosexuality* 38, no. 3 (2000): 117–33; Larry M. Lance, "The Effects of Interaction with Gay Persons on Attitudes toward Homosexuality," *Human Relations* 40, no. 6, 1987: 329–336; and Joel Wells and Mary L. Franken, "University Students' Knowledge about and Attitudes toward Homosexuality," *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 26, no. 2 (1987): 81–95.
- 46 Altemeyer, "Changes in Attitudes," 66. See also Gregory M. Herek, "Heterosexuals' Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men: Correlates and Gender Differences," *The Journal of Sex Research* 25, no. 4 (1988): 451–77; Gregory M. Herek and John P. Capitanio, "Sex Differences in How Heterosexuals Think about Lesbians and Gay Men: Evidence from Survey Context Effects," *The Journal of Sex Research* 36, no. 4 (1999): 348–60; Johnson et al. (1997), "Personality Correlates"; Vittorio Lingiardi, Simona Falanga, and Anthony R. D'Augelli, "The evaluation of homophobia in an Italian sample," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 34, no. 1 (Feb, 2005): 81–94; Trish Pratte, "A Comparative Study of Attitudes toward Homosexuality: 1986 and 1991," *Journal of Homosexuality* 26, no. 1 (1993): 77–83; and E. Glenn Schellenberg et al., "Attitudes toward Homosexuals."
- 47 L.T. Higgins, M. Zheng, Y.L. Liu, and C. Sun, "Attitudes to Marriage and Sexual Behaviors: A Survey of Gender and Culture Differences in China and United Kingdom," *Sex Roles* 46, no. 3/4 (2002): 75–87 at 86.
- 48 Hui Cao, Peng Wang, and Yuanyuan Gao have come to a similar conclusion: "...there was no significant difference found in the perceptions and attitudes about homosexuality between the female and male students" in "A Survey of Chinese University Students' Perceptions of and Attitudes towards Homosexuality," *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 38, no. 6 (July, 2010): 721–28 at 727. They point out that "this result diverges from that of Yan, Liu, and Yu (2002) who found that the attitudinal difference was significant between male and female university students," citing Yan, Y., J. Liu, and Y. Yu, "Knowledge and attitudes towards homosexuality in students of normal universities and colleges," *Health Education in China*, 18 (2002): 645–647.
- 49 Higgins and Sun, "Gender, Social Background, and Sexual Attitudes."
- 50 Bryan S.K. Kim et al., "Multicultural Study of University Students' Knowledge," 175–76.
- 51 E. Glenn Schellenberg et al., "Attitudes toward Homosexuals," 139. By contrast, in a study involving 500 students from three universities in China,

- Cao et al. concluded that “generally speaking, the science students had much more knowledge about homosexuality and more tolerant attitudes than did liberal arts students” (“A Survey of Chinese University Students’ Perceptions,” 727).
- 52 We defined a “high level of education” as a father or mother having completed some post-secondary education and “little education” as having completed secondary school or less.
- 53 To our knowledge, this research—giving voice to gays and lesbians themselves—has never been systematically undertaken on campuses in China. This indictment includes our own research. The studies we found are all about asking “straights” what they think of “gays.”
- 54 It is worth keeping in mind that the Chinese Psychiatric Association had removed “homosexuality” from its diagnostic manual of mental illnesses just five years before in April 2001. Interestingly, three of our participants turned the diagnostic manual on its head by suggesting the those prejudiced against gays and lesbians were the ones with mental illness issues: (1) “...people who insult gay and lesbian people are not psychologically healthy”; (2) “Those who insult gay and lesbian students have a personality problem”; and (3) “Those who insult gay and lesbian people are not psychologically healthy.”
- 55 Though police harassment continues: [http://shanghaiist.com/2011/06/22/beijing\\_queer\\_film\\_festival\\_2011.php](http://shanghaiist.com/2011/06/22/beijing_queer_film_festival_2011.php) (accessed July 4, 2012).