
Gender and Representation in People's Daily:

***a comparative analysis of the media representation of
single men and single women in China***

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Many highly educated “leftover women” are very progressive in their thinking and enjoy going to nightclubs in search of a one-night stand, or they become the mistress of a high official or rich man. It is only when they have lost their youth and are kicked out by the man that they decide to look for a life partner. Therefore most “leftover women” do not deserve our sympathy.”¹

This is an excerpt from a Chinese column that was originally posted on the website of Xinhua News.² The word ‘leftover women’ (剩女 shèngnǚ), which I will elaborate more on later in my thesis, briefly stated, officially refers to single women of 27 or older.³ According to many scholars – among whom Feldshuh and Koetse – the media increasingly subjugates women and depicts them in relation to marriage, and by extension home and motherhood. They say that the media urges women to get married, and depicts marriage and motherhood as essential to womanhood. They further write that single women who do not adhere to these ideals (like the leftover women quoted above), are stigmatized by the media.⁴ At the same time, the media bestows men with important social expectations and roles, like taking care of the family.⁵ Gong, Tu and Jiang found that gender and marriage status have come to define the identity of single women, whereas these same standards were not applied to single men.⁶ Many researchers – among whom Chen, Fincher and Gui – argue that because Chinese men enjoy a privileged position in society, the media, that embraces men’s superiority, mainly targets single women, instead of single men or singles in general.⁷

In my research, I investigate whether single men and single women are indeed depicted according to different standards. The main goal of this investigation is to find out what the differences and similarities are in the representation of these groups as portrayed in the articles of *People’s Daily* (a newspaper which I will further introduce in my methodology chapter). To my knowledge, there has not been a similar research concerning this newspaper, which is why this study adds a new perspective. Furthermore, there is much research into single women’s portrayal in the Chinese media, but single men’s representation has not been researched to such an extent.⁸ The current academic literature also lacks research on the comparison of the media representation of both

¹ Fincher 2016, p. 19-20.

² Ibid.

³ Chen 2011, p. 1; Fincher 2016, p. 2-3, 16.

⁴ Gui 2016, p. 33; Ji 2015, p. 1057-1058; Koetse 2016, p. 90-91; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 283; Song and Hird 2014, p. 263-264.

⁵ Li 2015, p. 529-532.

⁶ Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197-202, 206-207.

⁷ Chen 2011, p. 10; Feldshuh 2018, p. 51; Fincher 2016, p. 22; Gui 2016, p. 44; Koetse 2016, p. 93, 98.

⁸ I will elaborate more on already established research in later chapters.

genders.⁹ This thesis aims to fill in this gap in the literature. Researching and comparing the representation of both genders will allow for better investigation of the role of media representation in how single men and women are viewed, and determine if there is discrimination in the representation of the different genders. Finally, since media representation has a powerful effect on society, and can contribute to stigmatizing certain groups and normalizing this behavior, my research aims to create a more public interest in and stimulate readers to think more critically about this topic.

This thesis will address the following main question: In how far is there a difference in the representation of single men and single women in articles written by *People's Daily* during the period of the 1st of January 2017 until the 31st of December 2019? To answer this question, my thesis will elaborate on the following topics:

1. How are single men during this period represented in the articles of *People's Daily*?
2. How are single women represented during this period by the same newspaper?
3. What (if any) are the similarities in the representations?
4. What (if any) are the differences in representations?
5. How do my findings fit into the academic debate surrounding this topic?

To answer my main question, I will conduct a content analysis of the online articles of *People's Daily*.

For my research, 'discrimination' will refer to gender discrimination, which encompasses views that contribute to normalizing and reinforcing gender stereotypes, which are uncritical and oversimplified beliefs concerning the appropriate roles for men and women.¹⁰ For example, the view 'women are soft, and men are not', will be seen as a discriminating view, since it differentiates between both genders, and reinforces the stereotype that women are soft, and men are not. Furthermore, this thesis will often elaborate on 'patriarchal values'. 'Patriarchal' stems from the word 'patriarchy', which is a system with a male-dominated power structure throughout organized society and in individual relationships. According to patriarchal values, men are superior to women.¹¹

This thesis proceeds as follows. First, I will briefly touch upon the analytical concepts that I have

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rouse 2002, p. 201.

¹¹ Arrighi et al. 2007, p. 327; Patriarchal Society According to Feminism.

chosen to work with. These concepts are related to the fields of gender studies and media representation. Then, I will provide some more information about relevant topics, starting by elaborating on the importance of marriage in Chinese society, followed by a brief overview of women's emancipation, and, finally, I will address the phenomena of shèngnǚ and shèng nán (剩男 leftover men). This will be followed by the literature review, in which I explore the most important research that has already been established on my topic. After this, I will write about my chosen methodology, and justify why I chose this particular method. Then, I will lay out the results of my analysis, and compare them to the academic literature. Finally, I will present the conclusion of my thesis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will first discuss gender theory, to which end I will go into what constitutes gender and gender inequality. Then, I will elaborate on media representation, to see how the media contributes to stereotyping and influences the way people think.

2 – 1. Gender theory

2 – 1.1. Gender as a constructed identity

Gender is often viewed by post-structuralist feminists as a socially constructed phenomenon. Butler states that gender is a constructed identity and describes gender as “...a performative accomplishment, which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief...”¹² Gender can be established through specific repeated interactions and routines. What these include, is prescribed by the ideologies of femininity and masculinity.¹³ Gender, thus, respectively ‘guides’ men and women towards acting masculine and feminine, normalizing and reinforcing gender stereotypes, such as that men ‘should be strong’ and ‘are not allowed to cry’, and ‘women are soft’ and ‘belong in the kitchen’.

The accomplishment of gender, according to Butler, is compelled by social sanction and taboo. This means that if someone fails to perform his or her gender right, (s)he is punished and looked down upon by society. Without these performances and social sanctions, gender would not exist.¹⁴ Gender, therefore, functions as a form of ‘social policing’, and can work to preserve already existing social hierarchies and power relationships.¹⁵ According to Feldshuh, many words have been created to label those who fail to conform to gender stereotypes, e.g. ‘sissy’ and ‘tomboy’.¹⁶ Feldshuh calls shèngnǚ ‘a similar tool of language policing’, which works through several mechanisms (such as through humor and insults), and states that, for women, it encompasses the threat of being labeled ‘leftover’ and not conforming to gender norms.¹⁷

So, to avoid social sanctions, both men and women will try to adhere to gender norms, meaning the prescribed ideals of femininity and masculinity. Also, singles will look for ‘ideal’ feminine and masculine qualities in a partner, and turn down those who do not possess them. Since masculinity

¹² Butler 1988, p. 520.

¹³ Tolman, Davis and Bowman 2016, p. 5.

¹⁴ Butler 1988, p. 520-522; Gui 2016, p. 51; Lorber 2010, p. 9; Tolman, Davis and Bowman 2016, p. 6.

¹⁵ Feldshuh 2018, p. 40; Gui 2016, p. 51; Tolman, Davis and Bowman 2016, p. 5.

¹⁶ Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, p. 12; Feldshuh 2018, p. 40.

¹⁷ Feldshuh 2018, p. 40.

and femininity are, therefore, closely related to singles and their depiction, I will sometimes elaborate on femininity and masculinity throughout my thesis.

2 – 1.2. Gender inequality

So, what is gender inequality? According to Lorber, although gender inequality can appear in many different forms (depending on society's economic and social structure, and a societal group's particular culture), it is usually used to refer to "...women who are disadvantaged relative to similarly situated men."¹⁸ An example of this is, if within the same firm and department, a female manager gets paid less for doing the same job as her male counterpart. There is, thus, gender inequality if men and women are not granted the same rights and opportunities, and if they cannot participate in all aspects of life as equals.¹⁹

2 – 2. Media representation

Luo and Hao write that "In exploring the relationship between media and society, pertinent questions include whether media are molders or reflectors of social structures, and whether media are agents of social change or reinforcers of the status quo." The answer to this question would probably be that the media are all of the above, since media content does not only reflect life in all its facets, but also represents it in a specific way, accentuating and emphasizing certain elements over others, and, through this, influencing people in a certain way.²⁰ Men and women's media depiction, therefore matters, because it reflects society's view of them, but also because it influences gender norms, and can contribute to normalizing and reinforcing gender stereotypes. However, this will probably be different in a country, like China, where the state has a tight control over the media narrative. Nhan writes that, in China, the media, which must reflect the government's guiding ideology, is seen by the government as a tool to shape the "values and perspective of the entire population."²¹ In China, the media will, therefore, probably be more a molder of society, than a reflector. Nonetheless, through media, which praises certain depictions of people and punishes 'deviant' behavior, viewers gather much information about norms, values, and behavior expectations. The viewers are, then, likely to orient their attitudes and behaviors to the depictions.²² Ames and Burcon, e.g., refer to studies that have found that romantic comedies influence their audiences: "...viewers may even watch these films in order to 'observe the behavior within

¹⁸ Lorber 2010, p. 4-6.

¹⁹ Rouse 2002, p. 201.

²⁰ Feldshuh 2018, p. 40; Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 199-200; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 281.

²¹ Hassid 2008, p. 415-417; He 2004, p. 1; Nhan 2008, p. 36-40.

²² Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 199-200; Gui 2016, p. 52.

relationships depicted by media' to determine how they could, or should conduct themselves 'in their relationships'."²³

Media depictions and the public opinion mutually shape one another, and the media has the capability to function as an agent of social change. For this reason, analyzing representations of single men and women, and continuing to engage in a discourse is important: so that possible rigid (gender) views are not automatically accepted, but are regularly questioned and, if need be, challenged so they can evolve.

²³ Ames and Burcon 2016, p. 83.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This chapter will discuss the context of my research. I start by looking at traditional Confucian values, because these still play a role today in shaping marriage values, femininity and masculinity. Then, I will elaborate on marriage, since it is very important in Chinese society, and influences the way singles are viewed and, thus, portrayed. The second part of this chapter will examine women's emancipation. I found it important to offer a quick overview of women's emancipation, since, although traditional conceptions of marriage, femininity, and masculinity still apply, women's rights have changed. This 'friction' between 'old and new' explains some of the contemporary representations and frustrations (which I will get to in the next chapter) of single women. Finally, I will address the terms *shèngnǚ* and *shèng nán*.

3 – 1. Marriage

For more than 2500 years, Chinese culture has been dominated by Confucian ideology, which played (and still plays!) an important role in shaping marriage values, femininity and masculinity.²⁴ Family and marriage are highly valued by Confucian philosophy, and not regarded as a personal choice, but as one's duty.²⁵ Characteristics of the Confucian-based family structure, which is often identified as patriarchal, are the presence of hierarchies, authority, and subordination.²⁶ According to Confucian family values, men should dominate over women: "...in terms of patriarchy (a father is the leader of the family while [the] mother is the nurturing caretaker), [and] in reference to gender hierarchy (sons are more valuable than daughters)".²⁷ After marriage, a woman belonged to her husband's family, and was only expected to have children and be obedient to men.²⁸

Today, marriage is still of great importance in Chinese society and is not only considered imperative, but also a social status marker.²⁹ Chen writes:

Marriage is still a highly valued social norm, traditionally universal and an obligatory first stage in family formation. Marriage is a means not only to perpetuate the family line and filial

²⁴ Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 223; Yun 2012, p. 584.

²⁵ Gui 2016, p. 37, 67.

²⁶ Yun 2012, p. 592.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Gao 2003, p. 118-121; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 283; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 223; Yun 2012, p. 585.

²⁹ Attané 2018, p. 1; Chen 2011, p. 12-13; Gaetano 2010, p. 2, 12.

piety but also to establish new kinship ties useful to the development of social and economic networks.³⁰

However, since 1987, the proportion of Chinese singles has been increasing due to a decline in the overall marriage rate, and an increase in the divorce rates and the average age at first marriage.³¹ Since mid-2000s, the Chinese media began to problematize marriage postponement and – what the government believes to be – ‘related issues’ (e.g., China’s population imbalances).³² The Communist party believes that ‘a harmonious family is the foundation of a harmonious society’, and has taken measures against marriage postponement and the related issues. These measures, such as government-sponsored matchmaking, are meant to maintain stability and protect the social order.³³

According to many scholars, among whom Fincher, Song and Hird, media campaigns are a part of the measures to promote marriage. These campaigns seem to be aimed at convincing women to stop delaying marriage and childbirth, and at attributing certain qualities to Chinese men as defining characteristics of masculinity that are needed to obtain a wife, like having home ownership.³⁴ By stigmatizing singles and promoting Confucian values, in which married life is depicted “...as the number one priority” and as the “ultimate achievement in contemporary Chinese society”, the government can tackle problems (e.g. population imbalances) that have arisen as a consequence of social policy.³⁵ According to Fincher, the Chinese state is intent on social engineering, with a propaganda apparatus that holds a tight grip on information and goals that increasingly go against those of women.³⁶ Both Feldshuh and Fincher imply that the media campaigns mainly focus on women since there are enough marriageable men for all the unmarried women, but not vice-versa. Also, because of their limited numbers and strategies of indirect sexism, it is easier to shame women into changing their behaviors than it is to find a solution for the millions of surplus men.³⁷

3 – 2. Women’s emancipation

As stated earlier, a woman belonged to her husband’s family after marriage, and was only expected to have children and be obedient to men in Chinese traditional society. The beginning of the 20th

³⁰ Chen 2011, p. 5, 12-13.

³¹ Gaetano 2010, p. 1; Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197.

³² China Development Research Foundation 2014, p. 14, 52; China’s ‘Leftover’ Women; Fincher 2016, p. 28; Gaetano 2014, p. 125; Koetse 2016, p. 90.

³³ China Development Research Foundation 2014, p. 174; Fincher 2016, p. 23-24.

³⁴ China’s ‘Leftover’ Women; Fincher 2016, p. 30-33, 59, 87; Song and Hird 2014, p. 10, 71-73, 217, 255-259.

³⁵ Fincher 2016, p. 4-6; Koetse 2016, p. 90, 99-100, 104.

³⁶ Fincher 2016, p. 4.

³⁷ Feldshuh 2018, p. 51; Fincher 2016, p. 22.

century brought the first wave of women's emancipation, in which the Xinhai revolution of 1911³⁸ and the May 4th movement³⁹ of 1919 were two of the most important events, eroding the oppression of women by removing and rejecting certain Chinese traditional values.⁴⁰ Among other things, the concubinage system was abolished, divorce was made possible, and women could work and go to school.⁴¹ In 1949, women's conditions further improved. The Communist government ensured women's access to education, employment, and participation in all social activities.⁴² Women's emancipation reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution, in which women were greatly masculinized: they dressed, behaved, worked, and were depicted as men. These women were also referred to as 'Iron Girls'.⁴³

After the Cultural Revolution, gender inequality resurged. Without the socialist job-protection, women's labor force participation dropped, since many women were fired. Other women had to 'carry a double burden', referring to work and household.⁴⁴ And now, traditional femininity is, as stated earlier, again glorified by the media.⁴⁵ This is a problem, because, as Chen articulates well:

On one hand, [women] were enlightened by the market economy and Western ideology to pursue career and equal marriage. On the other hand, they are stuck in the gap between ideology and reality when the new gender dynamic in China still place more importance on women's [traditional roles].⁴⁶

This 'being stuck in the gap between ideology and reality' creates an internal strife within women, and explains many of the depictions of single women, which I will elaborate more on in the next chapter.

3 – 3. Shèngnǚ and shèng nán

Certain single women are now often referred to as 'shèngnǚ' or, literally translated, 'leftover

³⁸ During this revolution, the Qing dynasty was overthrown, bringing an end to a dynastic regime that lasted thousands of years and many patriarchal thinking.

³⁹ This was a cultural and political movement that grew out of the demonstrations against the pro-Japanese Treaty of Versailles, which stipulated that the province of Shangdon, which had been occupied by Germany during the second World War, should be given to Japan, instead of returned to China. The movement rejected Confucianism and Chinese traditional values, and promoted certain Western values instead.

⁴⁰ Gao 2003, p. 124; Gui 2016, p. 31.

⁴¹ Gao 2003, p. 124.

⁴² From 'Iron Girls' to 'Leftovers' - Independent Women in China; Gao 2003, p. 125; Gui 2016, p. 31-32; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 283.

⁴³ From 'Iron Girls' to 'Leftovers' - Independent Women in China; Gui 2016, p. 32-33; Koetse 2016, p. 93-94.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Gui 2016, p. 33; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 283.

⁴⁶ Chen 2011, p. 29.

woman'.⁴⁷ This term, which many scholars view as an androcentric and discriminative term, originated in 2007, in which the All-Chinese Women's Federation defined the term 'leftover women' as 'single women older than 27'.⁴⁸ At the end of 2007, the Ministry of Education announced that shèngnǚ was officially a new Chinese word.⁴⁹ Since then, the term has been used throughout state media.⁵⁰ The various interpretations often refer to single women with a high education, a high income and a 'high age' of 27 or older, although in reality women who are just 25 are included.⁵¹ According to the academic literature, shèngnǚ is used as a denigrating term that contributes to normalizing and de-problematizing rigid concepts of gender, and motivates conformity to marriage norms.⁵² The label has been called problematic, because it implies that the women it refers to are not 'normal' and nothing like the ideal of a traditional Chinese woman.⁵³

The term shèng nán literally translates into 'leftover man', and was created later than its female counterpart, shèngnǚ. Shèng nán refers to single men who are "...past their prime age of starting a family." The age referred to here, is that between 28 and 30.⁵⁴ Unlike its female counterpart, there is barely any research on this term. That is probably because it is used far less frequently. Up until today, the term is not an 'official term'.⁵⁵ According to To, the term probably originated from the word guānggùn (光棍). Guānggùn literally means 'bare branches', and is used to refer to "...poor, single men with no marriage prospects and thus no hope of producing sons...".⁵⁶ Just like guānggùn, the term shèng nán also refers to men who are uneducated and poor.⁵⁷ This is in direct contrast with shèngnǚ, who have a high education and a high income. Another difference between these two groups, that is often mentioned in the media, is that, whereas shèngnǚ are often single by choice, shèng nán are single because they are unwanted due to their low socioeconomic status.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ From 'Iron Girls' to 'Leftovers' - Independent Women in China.

⁴⁸ Chen 2011, p. 1; China's 'Leftover' Women; Feldshuh 2018, p. 39; Fincher 2016, p. 3, 16.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Fincher 2016, p. 3.

⁵¹ Chen 2011, p. 1; Fincher 2016, p. 2-3, 16.

⁵² Feldshuh 2018, p. 38-42, 50-52.

⁵³ Feldshuh 2018, p. 40; Gui 2016, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Wu 2017, p. 37.

⁵⁵ Shèng nán; To 2015, p. 199.

⁵⁶ Crow 2010, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Fincher 2016, p. 22; Zhou, Yan and Therese 2013, p. 1087-1090.

⁵⁸ Guānyú "shèngnǚ" nǚ xūyào zhīdào de 10 gè chángshì; To 2015, p. 199.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a lot of research into how the media portrays singles. This chapter will look into research that has already been conducted and ideas that have been established regarding the (media) representation of single men and women.

4 – 1. Singles outside of China

Across the world, singles are stigmatized and discriminated. Budgeon argues this is due to the so-called 'tyranny-of-coupledness'; we live in a culture that privileges couple-relationships, and when relations do not conform to this prescribed heteronormativity, this results in a lack of social recognition.⁵⁹ DePaulo and Morris refer to the stereotyping and discrimination of singles as 'singlism'. They found that singlism results in discrimination on many fronts (e.g. lower salaries and housing discrimination) and often goes unrecognized. The only positive characteristics that are attributed to singles are their perceived independence and potential to pursue careers and interests.⁶⁰ In the 1950s in America, not marrying was considered the failure of an individual's shortcomings. Singlehood only became a legitimate lifestyle-choice later on, as social attitudes and structural supports made being single more feasible.⁶¹ Nonetheless, singles in the US are still the targets of negative stereotyping and discrimination; Gong, Tu and Jiang, write that in the US singles are, e.g., even disadvantaged by the tax system, since married people receive many federal benefits that singles do not.⁶² In Canada, singles also experience discrimination, and are often approached with feelings of pity. Mulawka and Scobie argue that the media is infused with the notion that everyone should be in a relationship, "...and serves to reinforce ideals and denote many 'alternative' life paths that are common in Canadian society."⁶³

Across societies, single women are more often portrayed as deviant and problematic than single men. Sharp and Ganong found that the amount of discrimination may vary based on a single's age, and, due to the age-restricted time limits on bearing children, women between 25 and 35 especially experience social pressure to live up to marital norms.⁶⁴ Mulawka and Scobie further add that it is due to history, patriarchy and gender roles, that women are more severely discriminated and experience a greater pressure to marry. They argue that this is also evident when viewing the

⁵⁹ Budgeon 2008, p. 301, 307-310.

⁶⁰ DePaulo and Morris 2005, p. 57-60, 62-64.

⁶¹ Rouse 2002, p. 45, 277.

⁶² Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 199; Gui 2016, p. 22.

⁶³ Mulawka and Scobie 2013, p. 19-20, 97-99.

⁶⁴ Sharp and Ganong 2011, p. 958, 966-967.

common names for singles: whereas men are called a 'bachelor', which has a neutral connotation, women are referred to as an 'old maid or spinster', which both carry negative connotations.⁶⁵ Japan, also has many denigrating terms for single women, like *Makeinu* (loser dog) and *Onibaba* (demon hags).⁶⁶ In postwar Japan, masculinity was embodied by the white-collar employee or bureaucrat, whereas childrearing and household management was seen as a woman's responsibility and the most desirable and rewarding life for women.⁶⁷ Today, the government still promotes these ideals of womanhood and the conservative media blames women whom, instead, choose for a career or education for "...undermining the nation's welfare by what is termed their selfish choice to avoid marriage and childrearing."⁶⁸ During the late 1980s in the United States, the media proposed that women's emancipation was the source of the 'misery' that many women faced. Depictions of these women showed that only marriage and motherhood offered them true happiness.⁶⁹ Popular contemporary television shows of single women, like *Sex and the City*, according to Sharp and Ganong, only reinforce such conservative ideologies.⁷⁰ Ames and Burcon found that conservative ideologies are also reinforced by magazines, music videos, advertisements and other cultural products that 'enlighten' women on what men are supposedly looking for in women and 'how to become a wife', giving the message that it's good to let men take control.⁷¹ They, in addition, argue that phrases like 'biological clocks' are used to further objectify women, reinforce the sexual double standards and get women to conform to conservative ideologies.⁷²

4 – 2. Singles within China

4 – 2.1. Portrayal of singles

To my best knowledge, there has only been one investigation so far that compared the representation of single men and women in a newspaper. Gong, Tu and Jiang investigated the representation of these two groups in the newspaper *WiseNews*, and found that mass media have strong double standards in framing single womanhood vs. single manhood; whereas gender and marriage status defined women's identities, these same standards were not applied to single men. They argue that this framing contributes to reinforcing stereotypes and facilitating mechanisms for

⁶⁵ Mulawka and Scobie 2013, p. 24.

⁶⁶ Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 199; Gui 2016, p. 24; Mandujano-Salazar 2017, p. 531; Rosenberger 2007, p. 93; Yamaguchi 2006, p. 109.

⁶⁷ Mandujano-Salazar 2017, p. 528.

⁶⁸ Mandujano-Salazar 2017, p. 530; Rosenberger 2007, p. 93.

⁶⁹ Gui 2016, p. 43.

⁷⁰ Sharp and Ganong 2011, p. 975.

⁷¹ Ames and Burcon 2016, p. 59, 89, 97-98.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 171, 200.

control.⁷³ This newspaper is not the only media that had double standards in portraying single men and single women. These double standards were, as it seems, present across different types of media. Koetse researched television drama series. She found that, in these series, single men were less stigmatized than single women. She further discovered that there was a focus on marriage and family life, and a promotion of traditional Chinese virtues and the idea of the 'virtuous housewife'.⁷⁴ The double standards in portrayal can also be seen in the famous dating show 'Fēi Chéng Wù Rǎo' (非诚勿扰 You are the one). What this program further shows, is that masculinities and femininities are products of 'dynamic relational processes', since both the men and the women in the show play a complicit role in the process of reinforcing stereotypes and patriarchal ideologies.⁷⁵ Li argues that this show normalized the practice of consuming women and that it reinforced gender stereotypes. Men on the show, for example, are bestowed with more important social expectations and roles than women, like needing to take care of the family and have a good job.⁷⁶ The women, however, are represented as subordinates who need material support from men.⁷⁷ Luo agrees with Li, and further argues that what 'true masculinity' entails is constructed, reinforced and naturalized within the popular media discourse. He found that women on the show immediately stop being attracted to a man, who does not meet the patriarchal, heteronormative ideal (that of the versatile, successful, upper-middle-class man). These men were immediately criticized and stigmatized with labels like *diǎo sī* (屌丝 loser; used to refer to men with supposedly inferior upbringing, mediocre looks, and underachievement).⁷⁸

4 – 2.2. Leftover women: a social construct

According to many scholars, most media are directed at single, educated urban women and involve around the same theme: they urge women to stop working so hard and delaying marriage, and lower their standards for a partner.⁷⁹ Fincher discovered that many articles that promote this theme and discriminate women have, over the years, been republished many times on different websites and in different media.⁸⁰ Thus, reinforcing a particular 'ideal' depiction of women. Feldshuh agrees with Fincher in that a particular image of single women – even when this image, according to her, does not match social reality – is constructed and reinforced by the media. However, she takes a slightly

⁷³ Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. , 197-198, 206-208.

⁷⁴ Koetse 2016, p. 90, 99-100, 104.

⁷⁵ Luo 2017, p. 200, 206-207; Luo and Sun 2015, p. 239, 253.

⁷⁶ Li 2015, p. 529-532.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Luo 2017, p. 204-205.

⁷⁹ Fincher 2016, p. 15; Gui 2016, p. 33; Ji 2015, p. 1057-1058; Koetse 2016, p. 90-91; Luo and Hao 2007, p. 283; Song and Hird 2014, p. 263-264.

⁸⁰ Fincher 2016, p. 18.

different point of view; she argues that media representations do not directly discriminate women, but use more insidious methods of sexism, such as promoting language that degrades educated women, which according to her, helps to normalize and de-problematize rigid concepts of gender and motivate conformity to marriage norms.⁸¹ Another view is taken by Luo and Hao, who write that women in China are symbolically denigrated by either not being depicted at all, or by being depicted in stereotypical roles. They argue that these sexist images make gender stereotypes appear 'normal'.⁸²

One central topic that always came up in the academic literature in relation to single women, was age. It is less acceptable for women to get married at a later age, and they experience more familial and societal pressure than men do.⁸³ Furthermore, women are not expected to be picky in choosing a partner after a certain age.⁸⁴ Women, thus, experience 'age discrimination'. Chen states that part of this problem is that there is a double standard in age: husbands are supposed to be older than their wives.⁸⁵ A general consensus holds that the ideal marriage age for women ranges between 25-28 years old and chances to get married fall precipitously after the age of 30, whereas the ideal marriage age for men only starts at 30 and begins to decrease from the age of 40 onwards.⁸⁶ Although Feldshuh's research is not directly about single men, she does pay some attention in her case studies to how single men are portrayed in comparison to single women, and remarks that, unlike for women, age is not seen as a deficit for men. If men get married at a later age, it is because they have then reached an age where they are able and expected to support a family.⁸⁷ Feldshuh also writes that a myth has even been created around older single men: the *dàshū kǒng* (大叔控 older man obsession), which claims that a majority of women aged 18-25 long for men that are 10 years older than them.⁸⁸ This myth further confirms Chen's argument about the presence of a double standard in age. Another important reason for age discrimination is reproduction-related. Gaetano addresses this in her research. According to an interviewee of Gaetano, both family and society in general want women to conceive children and women who are too old, risk not being able to.⁸⁹ Next to the reproduction argument, Gui mentions two more reasons for the age discrimination. Gui first states that it is believed that younger and more beautiful women are indicators of men's success and

⁸¹ Feldshuh 2018, p. 38-42, 50-52.

⁸² Luo and Hao 2007, p. 284.

⁸³ Koetse 2016, p. 90-91, 99.

⁸⁴ Gui 2016, p. 83; Ji 2015, p. 1065.

⁸⁵ Gaetano 2010, p. 4-5; Gui 2016, p. 60-61.

⁸⁶ Chen 2011, p. 2; Gaetano 2010, p. 5; Gui 2016, p. 83-84.

⁸⁷ Feldshuh 2018, p. 44.

⁸⁸ Fincher 2016, p. 41-42.

⁸⁹ Gaetano 2014, p. 137; Gui 2016, p. 20.

boost men's self-confidence and status. This reason is also mentioned by Song and Hird. Secondly, younger women are believed to be better capable of undertaking eldercare and other household tasks.⁹⁰

4 – 2.3. Leftover men: a threat to social stability?

China struggles with a big surplus of men due to its one-child policy, preference for sons and widespread abortion of female fetuses.⁹¹ It is expected that this surplus will only further increase in the future.⁹² These single men, often referred to as *shèng nán* or *guānggùn*, are seen by the Chinese government as abnormal and a 'threat to social stability', which is why the government wants them to get married as much as possible.⁹³ According to governmental reports, these single men partake in "...activities destroying social order, including gambling, rioting, stealing and gang fighting."⁹⁴ Many researchers' findings support these governmental reports.⁹⁵ Crow, e.g., found that married men in traditional society were less likely to engage in criminal activities and resource-motivated rebellions than single men. Crow writes that in some areas in China, *guānggùn* is even used interchangeably with *bandit*.⁹⁶ According to Greenhalgh, many Western scholars also did research into the implications of the surplus men, and warned for sex-starved, violence-prone rural bachelors.⁹⁷ Whether single men really pose a 'threat to social stability', remains uncertain. Not all research seems to agree with the findings in the Chinese governmental reports and the above views. Greenhalgh points to a 2009 Xi'an survey that found that problems caused by bachelors are either non-existent or not that serious.⁹⁸ Furthermore, Attané discovered that single men are not more inclined to engage in high-risk or socially disapproved practices (e.g., drinking and using sexual services) than married men.⁹⁹

So, what determines if men become 'leftover'? A feature that has been attributed to Chinese men through the media is that home ownership is a defining characteristic of masculinity. Men are expected to have a house, and be the head of the household and the official homeowner.¹⁰⁰ Men

⁹⁰ Gui 2016, p. 62; Song and Hird 2014, p. 76.

⁹¹ Attané 2018, p. 1; Chen 2011, p. 2; China Development Research Foundation 2014, p. 148-150; Crow 2010, p. 72-73, 77; Fincher 2016, p. 4, 20-21; Gaetano 2010, p. 4; Global Gender Gap Report 2020; Gui 2016, p. 35.

⁹² Chen 2011, p. 2; Feldshuh 2018, p. 44; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133; Jiang, Feldman and Li 2014, p. 190; Zhou, Yan and Therese 2013, p. 1093.

⁹³ Attané 2018, p. 1, 4; Crow 2010, p. 72; Fincher 2016, p. 4, 20.

⁹⁴ Fincher 2016, p. 21-22.

⁹⁵ Zhou, Yan and Therese 2013, p. 1087-1090.

⁹⁶ Crow 2010, p. 74-75.

⁹⁷ Greenhalgh 2013, p. 137.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁹⁹ Attané 2018, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Fincher 2016, p. 59, 87.

themselves also believed this to be a defining characteristic of their masculinity; according to research conducted by DefiChine, the majority of male respondents believes that a lack of education, a low income, and not being in possession of their own home, makes them unattractive as a potential partner to the opposite sex, reducing their chances of marriage.¹⁰¹

Masculinity further seems to be defined by a man's socioeconomic position. Men are expected to have a higher educational level, and a better job and income than women. This is elaborated on by Song and Hird.¹⁰² Gaetano also confirms this in her research; she writes that Chinese women are depicted to want a man that is materially well-off and financially capable.¹⁰³ Ji's research, on the other hand, pointed out that many women are open to the idea of marrying a man with fewer financial resources, but that a man would probably become insecure and object to a wife who earns more than he does.¹⁰⁴ To's findings support Ji's point of view: she writes that many women just get romantically rejected by men due to their strong economic accomplishments and passed over for less educated and less career-oriented women.¹⁰⁵ To what an extent Ji and To's arguments are true, can be debated. Because if women are open to the idea of marrying a man with fewer financial resources, why, then, is it that many studies found that it is the poorer and less educated men who are single? Fincher, e.g., writes that in 2013, the matchmaking website Jiayuan.com conducted a study on leftover men and found that they are more likely than leftover women to be uneducated and poor, and not eager to get married.¹⁰⁶ Attané's research also indicates that single men have a slimmer chance of getting married if they live in the countryside, especially if they are also poor.¹⁰⁷ Finally, Greenhalgh's research also supports this view. She found that, especially in rural and remote areas where incomes are low, there is a shortage of brides, because the single men cannot meet the demands of brides' families, and many women migrate to the cities to work and look for higher-status husbands.¹⁰⁸

4 – 2.4. Resurgence of patriarchal values

There is a resurgence of patriarchal values in Chinese society. Single women suffer more pressure to fulfill traditional roles and are presented more often in relation to parenthood, marriage and

¹⁰¹ Attané 2018, p. 2.

¹⁰² Song and Hird 2014, p. 10, 71-73, 217, 255-259.

¹⁰³ Gaetano 2014, p. 125.

¹⁰⁴ Ji 2015, p. 1066.

¹⁰⁵ To 2013, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Fincher 2016, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ Attané 2018, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133-135.

domesticity, than men.¹⁰⁹ Multiple authors argue that women are increasingly subjugated, and that there is a need for the man to be the family breadwinner and higher educated person in a marriage.¹¹⁰ One of these authors is Feldshuh. According to her, marriage, and by extension the home and motherhood, are depicted by the media as ‘essential to womanhood’, and the media makes it seem as if women will only truly find happiness in according with traditional preferences.¹¹¹ Gaetano, Gui and Li all confirm this in their research. Gaetano further adds that today, femininity is still associated with and men still prefer women with the ‘traditional’ virtues: submissive, gentle, filial and dependent.¹¹² The ideal Chinese woman, according to the depictions, knows how to balance being a good wife, and a wise mother. Since shèngnǚ fail to do this, they do not have the ‘appropriate femininity’, and are, therefore, discriminated.¹¹³ Like for women, marriage and parenthood are essential to being a ‘real Chinese man’; because sons have to perpetuate the patrilineal family and take care of parents in their old age, the duty to marry impacts heavily on single men.¹¹⁴

The resurgence of patriarchal values is also visible concerning work and education. Women’s traditional roles are still considered more important than their efforts in education and the workplace. In fact, according to Feldshuh, many believe that career achievement conflicts with marriage prospects. Both she and Gui write about studies that suggest that, whereas education is advantageous for men, it may prove detrimental to women’s marriage prospects, and how many women believe this.¹¹⁵ According to Gui, women often get told by friends, coworkers, and relatives that “as a woman”, it is not necessary to be successful in a career.¹¹⁶ Women who are too intelligent and successful in their career are, says Gui, no longer even regarded as ‘women’.¹¹⁷

4 – 2.5. Pressure to get married

According to Butler, failing to perform according to one’s gender, can result in social isolation and mockery,¹¹⁸ which is exactly what is happening to singles in China. They are increasingly becoming a target of mockery and social discrimination, because they cannot adhere to the ideals of femininity

¹⁰⁹ Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 217.

¹¹⁰ Ji 2015, p. 1057-1058; Koetse 2016, p. 90-91; Song and Hird 2014, p. 263-264.

¹¹¹ Feldshuh 2018, p. 45-46; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 227.

¹¹² Gaetano 2010, p. 2; Gui 2016, p. 11, 40; Li 2015, p. 531.

¹¹³ Chen 2011, p. 6-7, 13, 30-32, 45.

¹¹⁴ Attané 2018, p. 2; Crow 2010, p. 74; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133, 138.

¹¹⁵ Feldshuh 2018, p. 46; Gui 2016, p. 16, 28, 40-42.

¹¹⁶ Gui 2016, p. 99-101.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Chen 2011, p. 32.

and masculinity, and get married.¹¹⁹ This stigma was not only experienced by the singles themselves, but also by members of their family. Nobody wanted others to view their child as problematic.¹²⁰ This results in a lot of pressure to marry, deriving from romantic partners, relatives, friends, colleagues and (especially) parents.¹²¹ Proof of this pressure can be derived from the fact that, according to Wang and Abbott, many singles find it disturbing when others enquire about their marital status.¹²² Single women are even under more pressure than men: they more often have to and feel the need to explain why they are still single.¹²³ This pressure is further magnified by the media, pushing singles towards adhering to traditional gender roles and meeting restrictive social expectations.¹²⁴ Many articles, e.g., advise women to be more attractive or to “lower their self-esteem” and their expectations, according to Gui.¹²⁵ These forms of advice and negative stereotypes represented in the depictions are then accepted as fact by society.¹²⁶ And because there is such a uniformity in the media representations, this limits objections to sexist discourse.¹²⁷

The pressure to get married results in gender hierarchies and influences the behavior, modes of thought and self-perception of both men and women alike. The media acceptance of the ‘shèngnǚ’ label, e.g., results, according to Feldshuh, in the normalization and de-problematization of this term. This, on the one hand, leads to acceptance of this term by women, hurting and restricting them.¹²⁸ On the other hand, this will lead to societal contempt and pity towards single women, who become even more anxious about becoming unmarriageable.¹²⁹ Many scholars – among whom Feldshuh, Fincher, and Gaetano – write that many women internalize the created misconceptions and feel so worried to become leftover that many give up some partner selection criteria to get married, marry (too) quickly to avoid becoming leftover or are stuck in an abusive marriage. And the older women become, the more and quicker they lower their standards.¹³⁰

The stigmatization of men results in a state of isolation, with higher poverty and slimmer chances of

¹¹⁹ Attané 2018, p. 2; Chen 2011, p. 6-7, 13, 30-32, 45; Gui 2016, p. 13-14, 135.; Ji 2015, p. 1057-1059, 1067; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 216; Luo 2017, p. 204-205.

¹²⁰ Greenhalgh 2013, p. 134; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 222-226.

¹²¹ China's 'leftover women' choosing to stay single; Feldshuh 2018, p. 42; Fincher 2016, p. 2; Gaetano 2010, p. 12-14; Gui 2016, 45-46, 125, 144; Ji 2016, p. 1064; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 225-228.

¹²² Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 227.

¹²³ Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 217.

¹²⁴ Fincher 2016, p. 2; Gui 2016, p. 145.

¹²⁵ Gui 2016, p. 13-14.

¹²⁶ Fincher 2016, p. 52.

¹²⁷ Feldshuh 2018, p. 42.

¹²⁸ Feldshuh 2018, p. 40.

¹²⁹ Gaetano 2014, p. 124.

¹³⁰ Feldshuh 2018, p. 38-39; Fincher 2016, p. 2-4; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 226-227.

getting married.¹³¹ Therefore, some men, according to Greenhalgh, go to extreme lengths to secure a bride, legally or illegally. In the border areas, men have been importing wives, travelling abroad to select a wife or acquiring 'mail-order brides' through middlemen.¹³² In the interior provinces, there are forms of polyandrous arrangements, in which already married women informally service several men.¹³³ Greenhalgh also writes about underground smuggling networks, engaged in the purchase and sale of women, that have emerged due to the bride-shortage. Poor rural men often save money for years and even borrow money to afford a wife through these networks. Those without any marital or parental prospects sometimes live together in so-called bachelor communities, where they join forces to manage life's problems.¹³⁴

4 – 3. Dawn of a new era?

Despite the worldwide pressure on singles, the dominant image of singleness is increasingly being "...challenged by representations in which friendship networks provide a rich source of meaningful and fulfilling connections."¹³⁵ In Western societies, women that have attained a high education or high professional status are now more often viewed and depicted as independent and liberated, and are less stigmatized than before.¹³⁶ Mandujano-Salazar found that in Japan, too, women are slowly redefining how the media portrays single women and, through this, resist the hegemonic discourse of femininity. Through television dramas, they spread the message that women can find happiness by themselves.¹³⁷

Ji further argues that the single and discriminated Chinese women "... are actually innovative actors, responding strategically to constraints and cultural disapprobation to construct their blend of the modern and traditional in their daily lives", although she also found that most men tend to stick to traditional gender norms and remain quite traditional in their behavior and attitude.¹³⁸ Fincher agrees with the latter, and states that the media will just keep finding new ways to stigmatize single women.¹³⁹

¹³¹ Attané 2018, p. 2; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133.

¹³² Greenhalgh 2013, p. 134; Jiang, Feldman and Li 2014, p. 201.

¹³³ Greenhalgh 2013, p. 134.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

¹³⁵ Budgeon 2008, p. 311; Gaetano 2010, p. 16-17.

¹³⁶ To 2013, p. 2.

¹³⁷ Mandujano-Salazar 2017, p. 526, 540.

¹³⁸ Ji 2015, p. 1057-1059, 1067.

¹³⁹ Fincher 2016, p. 42.

5. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will give some background information about *People's Daily*, cover my methodology, and elaborate on how I conducted my analysis.

5 – 1. *People's Daily*

For my research I used online articles from the Chinese newspaper *People's Daily* (人民日报 Rénmín rìbào). *People's Daily* published its first article in June 1948 and it currently has a circulation of approximately 3 million.¹⁴⁰ *People's Daily* covers a wide array of topics in its articles, so it is aimed at a diverse audience. *People's Daily Online* is now globally one of the largest internet media sources. Besides the Chinese version, there are circulations in nine foreign languages. For my research, I used the Chinese version of *People's Daily*.¹⁴¹ I chose for this particular newspaper because *People's Daily* is one of the most influential and authoritative newspapers in China. It is also seen as the official voice of China's central government since 1949, which is when the Chinese government decided to make *People's Daily* its official newspaper. Since that moment, the newspaper has been under the direct control of China's Communist Party's central leadership.¹⁴²

5 – 2. Research

My study was conducted from the 1st of February to the 12th of July 2020. For two weeks during this period I conducted a content analysis of 41 Chinese articles. The analyzed articles were from the website of *People's Daily*. The reason I analyzed online accessible articles, is because of the convenient access. I chose this period, because I wanted to cover a full (so from January until December) three years, and because this period covers the most recent years.

To select the articles, I began by noting down key words. I first wrote down all the words that I could think of that had 'dānshēn' (单身 single) in them. The reason I did not choose dānshēn itself, is because it resulted in too many hits. This is why I used this word as part of other search terms. Then, I added the words for masculinity and femininity. I thought these would be relevant, since I had read in the academic literature that singles who do not adhere to the heteronormative ideals of masculinity and femininity are often blamed for being single. Since masculinity and femininity know different ideals, this will result in a difference in the representation of single men and single women.

¹⁴⁰ Introduction to People's Daily.

¹⁴¹ Introduction to People's Daily Online.

¹⁴² Ho 2018, p. 63; Lok 1995, p. 232-233; Merskin 2019, p. 1662.

Lastly, I added marriage-related words that describe singles. I thought it was important to add these, since, in the academic literature, being single was often associated with being unmarried and/or wanting to find a partner or spouse. All in all, I came up with the following key words (here: written down alphabetically): dānshēn gǒu (单身狗 single person), dānshēn guìzú (单身贵族 single population), dānshēn nán (单身男 single man), dānshēn nǚ (单身女 single woman), dānshēn réngún (单身人群 group of single people)/dānshēn rénshì (单身人士 single person), nánxìng dānshēn (男性单身 single man)/dānshēn nánxìng (单身男性 single man), nánzǐ qì (gài) (男子气(概) masculinity), nǚxìng qì (zhì) (女性气(质) femininity), nǚxìng dānshēn (女性单身 single woman)/dānshēn nǚxìng (单身女性 single woman), shèng nán, guānggùn, shèngnǚ, shì hūn (适婚 of marriageable age), tuō dān (脱单 to find oneself a partner), wèihūn (未婚 unmarried), zé'ǒu (择偶 choose a spouse). One for one, I entered these terms in *People's Daily's* search engine, and noted down the amount of hits that came up as a result.

Since the topic of single men and women receives considerable media attention in China, I had to narrow down my research, and only picked articles that met the following criteria:

- The article was from the period of the 1st of January 2017 until the 31st of December 2019.
- The source of origin (来源 láiyuán) of the article was *People's Daily* or *People's Daily Online* (人民网 rénmín wǎng). So, articles from, e.g., Xinhua News Agency were excluded.¹⁴³
 - Note: I did not make a distinction between the different kinds of branches within *People's Daily*, such as 'popular science China' or 'the foreign edition'. All the articles from the different branches were included.
- The article itself focused on China and on singles, masculinity, femininity, marriage and/or partner choice. So articles that, for example, elaborated on Japanese singles or the profits of Singles' Day were excluded.
- The article had not already come up.¹⁴⁴

During my search for articles, I initially started out with 85.517 hits. After applying the above criteria, I ended up with 41 articles. These articles can be found in the appendix, where I listed the transcribed titles alphabetically per search term.

¹⁴³ *People's Daily* republishes content from other newspapers, such as the Xinhua News Agency.

¹⁴⁴ Some articles appeared multiple times. The title sometimes was different, but the content was the same. I only analyzed one of these articles every time.

For my content analysis, I noted down the following for each article:

- How often and in what way do the following topics appear? Do they, e.g., relate to singles in general, or specifically to men or women or both? And what do these topics say about the person(s) involved?
 - Age
 - Education
 - Home or car ownership
 - Household (e.g. household duties, ‘taking care of the family’, establishing a household etc.).
 - Marriage
 - Status
 - Work/income
 - Characteristics/personality traits (e.g. submissive, tender, strong etc.).
 - Note: I came up with these topics, because they were the main topics in the academic literature.
- ‘Code’ each text. The labels used for coding are the following: dating, men, women, partner choice, marriage, education, age, work and income, home ownership, car ownership, discrimination, character qualities, outside pressure, the lonely single, patriarchal views.
 - Note: After reading an article I had to analyze, I noted down the main themes of that article, which is how I came up with these labels.
- After this, I analyzed my results and discussed what they could mean, the findings of which can be found in the chapter ‘Analysis’.
 - Note: I translated all the sentences I used from the analyzed articles myself.

5 – 3. Chosen methodology

There were several reasons why I chose to do a content analysis. Conducting a content analysis allows for unobtrusive data collection, which meant I was not dependent on others. Furthermore, it is a highly flexible method that can be conducted anytime and anywhere, and at a low cost. Finally, this method is transparent and replicable, so other researchers can easily replicate it, and the results have a high reliability.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Abbott and McKinney 2013, p. 322-324.

6. ANALYSIS

This chapter will elaborate on the results of my analysis, and compare them to the representations of single men and single women according to the academic literature. I will first discuss results that relate to singles in general, then elaborate on the representation of single women, then look at the representation of single men, and, finally, I will show that the differences in representation of single men and women are due to patriarchal values.

I will refer to the analyzed articles with a letter and a number, which corresponds with their designation in the appendix.

6 – 1. Singles in general

The ‘lifegoal’ of finding a partner and getting married is depicted as being equally as important to single men as it is to single women. Of the articles that mentioned marriage, words concerning love/marriage and finding a spouse, came up almost equally as often in relation to men as they came up in relation to women.¹⁴⁶ Being single seemed to be the same as not being married, and was almost inseparably connected to the need of finding a partner. In fact, I got the most hits using marriage-related search terms. Only two of the 41 analyzed articles did not mention marriage.¹⁴⁷ Of the 41 analyzed articles, only four articles expressed the idea that it is acceptable to be single, and that “...dating and establishing a household should be someone’s personal choice”.¹⁴⁸ All the other articles urged both single men and single women to get married.¹⁴⁹ Five texts even encouraged the guidance of young people towards the “proper views on marriage”, implying that everyone should get married and that it is improper not to do so.¹⁵⁰ Apparently, being or remaining single is not an option; even texts that start with statements that promote the acceptance of singles, end with passages that insinuate that one will eventually meet the right partner and find happiness.¹⁵¹ Text G9, e.g., states: “being single...simply means you are still trying to find your partner”. These messages imply that finding a partner is the ultimate goal after all.

All these findings only partially correspond with what I have found in the academic literature. I,

¹⁴⁶ See appendix: table 1.

¹⁴⁷ See appendix: table 1; Texts C2 and F2.

¹⁴⁸ Texts B1, G7, G12 and H2.

¹⁴⁹ Texts B2, B3, G4, J1 and L2.

¹⁵⁰ Texts C3, F1, K2, K6 and K8.

¹⁵¹ Texts G9 and H3.

indeed, found that the media is infused with the ideology of marriage, as stated by Mulawka and Scobie.¹⁵² Furthermore, the singles in the analyzed articles were all under extreme pressure to get married, which was also found to be the case in the academic literature, as discovered by many scholars through interviews with singles.¹⁵³ However, multiple scholars found through media analysis that single women are more often depicted in relation to marriage and finding a partner than men.¹⁵⁴ As I have pointed out, I did not find this to be the case, but instead found that men and women were presented almost equally as often in relation to marriage and finding a partner. Another big difference with the academic literature was that none of the analyzed articles elaborated on single men as a 'threat to social stability';¹⁵⁵ nowhere in the analyzed articles were single men depicted as a threat, nor could it be inferred that they were more inclined to engage in high-risk or socially disapproved practices.

Education is mentioned almost just as many times in relation to single men as it is in relation to single women.¹⁵⁶ However, the analyzed articles do not provide much other information on the topic of education. What I did notice, however, is that, in relation to men, high education seemed to be mentioned more often as a requirement women looked for in men. In relation to women, on the other hand, a higher education was never mentioned as a requirement men looked for in women, but it was mentioned as a reason for marrying late (and thus staying single). Articles G1, K6 and L1, e.g., state or imply the need for men to have a good educational background in order to find a partner. Article K5 on the other hand, that relates to women, states that women "...continue to postpone marriage, due to the fact that they now receive higher education...". When comparing these findings to the academic literature, I first noticed that, in the literature, single men and women's education was a far more prominent topic. I found two differences between the academic literature and the analyzed articles. Firstly, according to the literature, men are expected to have a higher educational level than women.¹⁵⁷ This was not mentioned in the articles. Secondly, Feldshuh and Gui found that women's marriage prospects worsen – and men's marriage prospects improve – as their educational level increases.¹⁵⁸ I could only partially find this in the analyzed articles. Nowhere in the analyzed articles was it

¹⁵² Mulawka and Scobie 2013, p. 19-20, 97-99.

¹⁵³ China's 'leftover women' choosing to stay single; Feldshuh 2018, p. 42; Fincher 2016, p. 2; Gaetano 2010, p. 12-14; Gui 2016, 45-46, 125, 144; Ji 2016, p. 1064; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 225-228.

¹⁵⁴ Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 217.

¹⁵⁵ Attané 2018, p. 1, 4; Crow 2010, p. 72-75; Fincher 2016, p. 4, 20-22; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 145; Zhou, Yan and Therese 2013, p. 1087-1090.

¹⁵⁶ See appendix: table 2.

¹⁵⁷ Gaetano 2014, p. 125; Song and Hird 2014, p. 10, 71-73, 217, 255-259.

¹⁵⁸ Feldshuh 2018, p. 46; Gui 2016, p. 41-42.

mentioned that a higher education was detrimental to a woman's marriage prospects, but it was stated multiple times that single men with less education had a slimmer chance of getting married.

Finally, I wanted to mention that I, just like Fincher, noticed that many articles have been republished. Nine of the analyzed articles had been almost completely republished two or even three times.¹⁵⁹ Even the titles were the same; only two of the republished articles had a different title. All the republished articles appeared within 24 hours of the 'original' article, except for the republished articles of texts H4 and L2, which both appeared within a month of the original text. The difference with what Fincher found, is that the republished articles I found did not only concern women. Instead, some specifically related to men, or to singles in general.¹⁶⁰ However, considering the amount of articles that have been republished (almost one out of four!), and the way in which they have been republished, I think that what Fincher argues, namely that the republishing of articles reinforces a particular 'ideal' for women, has some truth to it. I think that through these 'republishings', the media reinforces a particular 'ideal' for both genders.

6 – 2. Single women

During my research, I found that, both in the academic literature and during my research, single women are more often written about than single men. I found 13716 articles using women-related search terms (dānshēn nǚ, nǚxìng dānshēn, shèngnǚ), and 9884 articles with men-related search terms (dānshēn nán, nánxìng dānshēn, shèng nán).¹⁶¹ There is also a lot more written on femininity than there is on masculinity, since the woman-related search term nǚxìng qì (zhì), resulted in 912 hits, and the man-related search term, nánzǐ qì (gài), resulted in 343 hits, which is almost three times less.¹⁶²

Furthermore, single women are more often referred to with a discriminating term than single men. Unlike the term shèng nán, the term shèngnǚ has, apparently, become more commonly used in everyday speech. There were almost three times as many articles found with the term shèngnǚ than with its male counterpart, shèng nán.¹⁶³ Moreover, the more neutral search terms dānshēn nǚ and nǚxìng dānshēn, only resulted in 2361 hits, whereas the discriminating term shèngnǚ resulted in 11.355 hits.¹⁶⁴ This means that 82% of the time, single women were referred to with a discriminating

¹⁵⁹ Fincher 2016, p. 18; Texts B2, E1, F2, G1, G8, H4, K6, K8 and L2.

¹⁶⁰ See appendix: texts.

¹⁶¹ See appendix: table 1.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

term. For men, however, the neutral search terms *dānshēn nán* and *nánxìng dānshēn*, resulted in 5276 hits, whereas the more discriminating term *shèng nán* resulted in 4608 hits.¹⁶⁵ This means that single men were ‘only’ referred to with a discriminating term 46% of the time. These results concur with what I have found in the academic literature, namely that single women are more often referred to with discriminating terms than single men.¹⁶⁶

My results further reveal that six of the analyzed articles expressed discriminating views against men, and 19 against women. In these articles, men and women are discriminated based on different factors (I will elaborate on men’s discrimination in the next chapter). Women are, firstly, discriminated when it comes to their age. Multiple texts stressed that the older women are, the more difficult it will be for them to get married, implying the need for women to get married while they are still young.¹⁶⁷ Yet, there was no similar emphasis on men’s age. Moreover, women who ‘failed’ at marrying young, were often referred to with the discriminating term *shèngnǚ*.¹⁶⁸ However, the male variant of the term, *shèng nán*, was not used for men who could not find a partner due to their age.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, there were two texts that spoke of a relationship in which women are older than men, but there were no articles specially dedicated to relationships in which men are older than women. Both concerned texts state that these relationships, unlike relationships in which men are older, are frowned upon by society.¹⁷⁰ Out of all the analyzed articles, there was only one article that attributed a positive quality to older women; text H4 mentions that older women are more tender and considerate, and can, therefore, take better care of men. Younger women, in contrast, still need to be taken care of themselves. Concerning this topic, my findings concur with what I found in the academic literature. The authors in the academic literature found through media analysis and interviews with singles that, like in the articles, women are discriminated more severely for still being single at a certain age and experience a greater pressure to marry than men do.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, both in the academic literature and in the articles, it was stated or portrayed that husbands are supposed to be older than their wives.¹⁷² Finally, unlike for women, both the academic literature and the analyzed articles stated that age is not seen as a deficit for men.¹⁷³ One of the main reasons for that, according to both sources, is reproduction-related; unlike men, women who are too

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Mulawka and Scobie 2013, p. 24.

¹⁶⁷ Texts C1, H1 and L1.

¹⁶⁸ Texts G1, H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5.

¹⁶⁹ Text G1.

¹⁷⁰ Texts H4 and L3.

¹⁷¹ Koetse 2016, p. 90-91, 99.

¹⁷² Chen 2011, p. 2; Gaetano 2010, p. 4-5; Gui 2016, p. 60-61, 83-84.

¹⁷³ Feldshuh 2018, p. 44.

old, risk not being able to conceive children.¹⁷⁴

Secondly, the topics of fertility and having children were only mentioned in relation to couples in general or to women in particular, but not once in specific relation to men.¹⁷⁵ This makes it seem as if having children is a couple's, and more in particular, a woman's duty, and that it is due to a woman's infertility if a couple is unable to have children. In this way, women were, thus, also discriminated. Article I1, for example, states that "having children is one of the biological tasks of women", but says nothing of the sort when it comes to men. These findings seem to agree with what I have found in the academic literature, in which Gaetano and Gui found that women are depicted as having to have children and having to do so while young, because they might otherwise not be able to as they age.¹⁷⁶ There is one big difference with the academic literature, which is that, according to the literature, parenthood is depicted as an essential life goal for men, too,¹⁷⁷ whereas the analyzed articles did not mention parenthood in specific relation to men. However, the fact that fertility and having children were not mentioned in specific relation to men in the analyzed articles, could perhaps be explained by an observation made by Ames and Burcon, which I referred to in chapter four. This observation entails that depictions of infertility and phrases like 'biological clocks' are purposely used in relation to single women (and not in relation to single men!) to further objectify women, reinforce the sexual double standards and get them to conform to conservative ideologies.¹⁷⁸ I will further elaborate on the embrace of patriarchal values and conservative ideologies later on in this chapter.

Finally, when it comes to requirements of prospective partners, women are portrayed as having high standards and far more socio-economic demands than men, which, in the way these women were depicted, was also a form of discrimination.¹⁷⁹ The depictions made women seem materialistic and needy. It was described in the analyzed articles that, out of all possible characteristics, women attach the most value to a prospective partner's financial situation and income.¹⁸⁰ It was stated that women do not just want, but need a man with a good financial background.¹⁸¹ Also important for a man to have, are a car and a house, according to multiple texts.¹⁸² One part of the conclusion of text E1, that

¹⁷⁴ Gaetano 2014, p. 137; Gui 2016, p. 20, 62.

¹⁷⁵ Texts D1, F1, G1, G6, H1, H4, I1, J1, K1, K6, K8 and L2; see appendix: table 2.

¹⁷⁶ Gaetano 2014, p. 137; Gui 2016, p. 20.

¹⁷⁷ Attané 2018, p. 2; Crow 2010, p. 74; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133, 138.

¹⁷⁸ Ames and Burcon 2016, p. 171, 200.

¹⁷⁹ Texts C1 and K3.

¹⁸⁰ Text E1.

¹⁸¹ Texts K6 and L1.

¹⁸² Texts E1, G6 and K6.

is supposed to be targeted at singles in general, even seems to be directed at women in particular (since it uses the Chinese word for 'him' (他 tā) to refer to the possible partner and since, earlier in the text, the author states that women want a prospective partner to have a house or car). It states that "one should not immediately dismiss a possible partner, just because he does not have a house or car...", implying that women only care about materialistic goods and not truly about men themselves. Men, in contrast, were depicted as having no socio-economic requirements of a prospective partner at all. Instead, they were depicted as finding a woman's character and personality the only important requirements. Men were portrayed as wanting someone that can be their "wife, lover and friend", valuing the interests and personality of a partner the most.¹⁸³ This makes it seem as if men are far more interested in the actual person they are dating, as opposed to women, who appear to only care about a man's socio-economic characteristics. This portrayal of men's and women's spousal requirements are not in accordance with what I have found in the academic literature. In the literature, many scholars write that women are depicted by the media as having more requirements of a prospective partner than men.¹⁸⁴ However, in the analyzed articles I found that women did not have more requirements, but simply different requirements; whereas women's requirements related to a man's job, income, and car and house ownership, men's requirements concerned a woman's character and personality. What also differs from the academic literature, is that the analyzed articles stated that all singles, as opposed to just women, have high standards and need to lower their expectations.

6 – 3. Single men

As stated earlier, men are also discriminated on certain factors in the analyzed articles. Firstly, men are discriminated on the grounds of not having home or car ownership, since only they were expected to have home or car ownership, and were eliminated from the marriage market if they failed to so. Whenever the analyzed articles elaborated on home or car ownership, this was almost always in relation to men. In fact, home or car ownership were only mentioned in relation to women twice, one of which times stated that "before getting married... men need [to buy] a house. The woman can contribute to the house along with the man...", meaning that it is still primarily a man's responsibility to buy a house before marriage.¹⁸⁵ Many of the other analyzed texts also stated that either the man acknowledged himself that he needed to buy a

¹⁸³ Texts E1 and L1.

¹⁸⁴ Gaetano 2014, p. 125; Gui 2016, p. 13-14, 83, 135; Ji 2015, p. 1057-1059, 1065-1067; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 216.

¹⁸⁵ See appendix: table 2; Text G3.

house and/or a car before being able to get married, or that others (especially women) expected them to have already bought a house and/or a car before marriage.¹⁸⁶ Text K8, e.g., states that many men recognize that having a house is a marriage requirement for women. One man even says that “[not having bought a house] keeps [him] from dating and getting married” altogether. That not having a house or a car keeps a man from getting married is also stated in text E8: “women should not immediately dismiss a man, just because he does not have a house or car... Women should just give men a chance.” These findings correspond with what I have found in the academic literature. According to the literature, men were also expected to have a house and a car.¹⁸⁷ In fact, in the literature too, it was found (through interviews) that men themselves acknowledged that they needed a house before being able to get married.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, according to the academic literature, in the media depicted women also immediately stopped being attracted to a man, who did not meet the ‘patriarchal, heteronormative ideal’ and did not have a house.¹⁸⁹ The only difference I found with the analyzed articles, is that, according to the academic literature, women are open to the idea of marrying a man with fewer financial resources and without a house.¹⁹⁰ I read nothing of the sort in the analyzed texts.

Secondly, men are discriminated on the grounds of not having a (good) job and income. Although men’s work/income was mentioned only slightly more often in the analyzed articles than that of women, it was often stated that men should have a good job and income, whereas it was not even mentioned once that women should have a good job and income.¹⁹¹ Work and income were also depicted in the analyzed articles as important spousal requirements that women looked for in men.¹⁹² In fact, according to article E1, women find the financial situation and income of a prospective partner the most important spousal requirement. However, there was no mention in the analyzed articles of a man that looked for a woman with a good job and income. Moreover, if the men in the analyzed articles lacked a good job and income, they found themselves in a disadvantaged position in the marriage market, but, once again, this was not the case for women.¹⁹³ These results concur with men and women’s depiction according to the academic literature; according to the literature, women, unlike men, are depicted as not having to be successful in a

¹⁸⁶ Texts B2, C1, E1, G3, G6, H4, H5, J1, K6 and K8.

¹⁸⁷ Attané 2018, p. 2; Fincher 2016, p. 59, 87; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133-135.

¹⁸⁸ Attané 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ Fincher 2016, p. 59, 87; Luo 2017, p. 204-205.

¹⁹⁰ Ji 2015, p. 1066; To 2013, p. 10.

¹⁹¹ See appendix: table 2; Texts B1, B2, B3, C1, C3, D1, G1, G3, G11, H5, I1, J1, K1, K2, K4, K5, K6, K8 and L2.

¹⁹² Texts D1, E1, G1, G3, K5 and K6.

¹⁹³ Texts G1, G3, K5, K6 and L1.

career.¹⁹⁴ Also, according to the literature, male respondents of surveys and interviews believed that a low income, among other things, made them unattractive, thus finding themselves in a disadvantaged position in the marriage market.¹⁹⁵

6 – 4. Patriarchal values

Adherence to patriarchal values was the reason for the differences in representation between single men and single women. Of the 41 analyzed articles, more than half (22 to be exact) wholly or partially embraced or elaborated on patriarchal values.¹⁹⁶ First of all, some of these articles did that by stating that strong women and weak men are unwanted by the opposite sex, and that women are or should be inferior and/or obedient, whereas men should be superior and strong.¹⁹⁷ Text E1, e.g., states that most men do not want a strong woman, but rather one who is more obedient. It states that “soft and gentle women are ideal”. Texts F2, I1, L1, and L3 also elaborate on women’s ‘sweet and submissive nature’ or how women should adhere to such a nature. These portrayals of how ideal women should be, create the assumption that strong women are unattractive, and that women should, therefore, try to be more soft and obedient. For men, examples can be found in the texts F2, L1, L3 and L4, according to which men should be strong, masculine and “...have what it takes to persevere”.¹⁹⁸ These texts concerning men imply that men who do not meet this ideal, are (just like strong women) unattractive and unwanted. Moreover, text L3 states that it is frowned upon by society, if, in a relationship, the man is not stronger than and superior to the woman. This would mean that, in order to adhere to societal norms, most people will try to avoid seeking out a strong woman or weak man as a partner. Men’s expected superiority explains the earlier elaborated on double standards in age, and also why men are expected to have home and car ownership, a good education, and a good job and income; they are expected to be superior to women in every way.

When comparing these results to what I found in the academic literature, I noticed the following. Firstly, according to the literature, men and women both play a crucial role in shaping, respectively, femininity and masculinity, since they dismiss possible partners who do not meet the patriarchal, heteronormative ideal. This was found by Luo and Sun, when they analyzed the dating show *You Are The One*.¹⁹⁹ This finding concurs with what I found in the analyzed articles: the men and women in

¹⁹⁴ Feldshuh 2018, p. 46; Fincher 2016, p. 15; Gui 2016, p. 16, 28, 40-41, 99-101.

¹⁹⁵ Attané 2018, p. 2; Fincher 2016, p. 22; Greenhalgh 2013, p. 133-135.

¹⁹⁶ Texts C3, D1, E1, F1, F2, G1, G3, G4, G6, G10, G11, H4, H5, I1, K1, K2, K5, K6, K8, L1, L3 and L4.

¹⁹⁷ Texts E1, F2, G10, H4, I1, L1, L3 and L4.

¹⁹⁸ Texts F2, L1, L3 and L4.

¹⁹⁹ Luo 2017, p. 200, 204-207; Luo and Sun 2015, p. 239, 253.

the articles stopped being attracted to someone, who did not meet the patriarchal, heteronormative ideal. According to both the analyzed articles and the academic literature, people who did not live up to this ideal, were discriminated in the media (by being depicted as unattractive or unwanted) as well.²⁰⁰ Secondly, I noticed that my findings on the 'ideal characteristics' of femininity concurred with the descriptions in the literature by, among others, Gaetano and Gui.²⁰¹ These authors found that in China, women with 'traditional' virtues are still preferred: women who are gentle, submissive and dependent. In my analysis I came to that same conclusion: ideal women depicted in the articles all possessed the 'traditional virtues'. For men, I did not find in the academic literature that they were depicted as having to be stronger and superior to women (as I did in the analyzed articles), but I did find that, as I wrote earlier, the literature stated that they were depicted as having to be the main breadwinner, home owner, and 'take care of their families' (as opposed to women).²⁰² This does imply a sort of superiority. Another difference with the academic literature is that one of the analyzed articles stated that older women would be better caretakers, since younger women still need to be taken care of themselves, whereas, according to Gui, and Song and Hird, it is believed that younger women are better capable of undertaking eldercare and other household tasks.²⁰³ However, I only found this statement in one of the analyzed articles. Therefore, I, unfortunately, cannot draw any meaningful conclusions from that.

Many of the analyzed articles further embraced or elaborated on patriarchal values by stating that men and women each have different roles in the household and in society, and should adhere to these traditional gender roles.²⁰⁴ For women, according to the analyzed texts, these roles included household duties and having children.²⁰⁵ Article I1, for example, states that many people believe that the household should be a woman's primary focus, especially after having children. And article G10 elaborates on the view that "[women] are birthing tools and housekeepers", stating that this view is still present in society. Moreover, I have noticed that in text K6, whenever a man's work came up, the article stated the need for the man to have a good job or income, but whenever a woman's work came up, the text spoke of the woman's fear of losing her job due to or having to combine it with household duties after marriage. Article I1 depicts what happens if women do not adhere to their gender roles: "they no longer have the household as their main focus, men find [this] difficult to

²⁰⁰ Chen 2011, p. 6-7, 13, 30-32, 45; Gui 2016, p. 13-14, 135.; Ji 2015, p. 1057-1059, 1067; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 216; Luo 2017, p. 204-205.

²⁰¹ Gaetano 2010, p. 2; Gui 2016, p. 11, 40; Li 2015, p. 531.

²⁰² Li 2015, p. 529-532; Song and Hird 2014, p. 10, 71-73, 217, 255-259.

²⁰³ Gui 2016, p. 62; Song and Hird 2014, p. 76.

²⁰⁴ Texts D1, E1, F2, G2, G5, G10, H4, I1, K6 and L1.

²⁰⁵ Texts G2, G10, H4, I1 and L1.

accept ... and ... this can endanger the marriage due to clashing views between husband and wife.” This implies that, for the sake of her marriage, a woman should adhere to her traditional role. This explains why women were discriminated in the analyzed texts for not having children (on time). For men, the analyzed texts stated that the traditional role involved leading the household, supporting his family, and taking responsibility.²⁰⁶ Text F2 states that if men do not adhere to their traditional roles, this “...messes up the gender role division, both in the households and in society”, indicating that this would be damaging to both households and society. This explains why men are discriminated for not having house and car ownership, and a good job and income. The gender role division in the analyzed articles seems to agree with that according to the academic literature. According to the academic literature, as stated earlier, men are bestowed with more important social expectations and roles than women, like needing to take care of the family, while women are bestowed with the role of the ‘virtuous housewife’.²⁰⁷ Also, just like in the analyzed articles, the academic literature stated that career achievement was depicted as conflicting with a woman’s duty as a wife, since she will no longer have the household as her main focus, endangering her marriage.²⁰⁸

Lastly, patriarchal values were embraced or elaborated upon by many of the articles by depicting women as ‘the weaker sex’ and/or uttering a preference for masculinization over feminization.²⁰⁹ Text F2, for example, mentions that “Some boys, when faced with difficult situations, show even less generosity and responsibility than girls”, implying that girls, innately, have no or little generosity or responsibility, and that boys ‘should know better’. This text further states that the feminization of society is a negative phenomenon that would most certainly bring many problems (such as endanger gender role division), and that schools and households should, instead, promote masculinization and Chinese traditional culture, which are of great merit to society. Another example can be found in text I1, in which the author says that women are less suited to work in competitive businesses, due to their “gentle and soft” nature that makes them cautious when it comes to taking risks, and because women “lack an innovative entrepreneurial spirit”. Concerning this topic, there is a big difference with the academic literature; in the literature, authors did not speak of a preference for masculinity as opposed to femininity. Also, although Feldshuh, as stated

²⁰⁶ Texts D1, E1, F2 and L1.

²⁰⁷ Feldshuh 2018, p. 45-46; Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197; Jiang and Gong 2016, p. 217; Koetse 2016, p. 90, 99-100, 104; Li 2015, p. 529-532; Song and Hird 2014, p. 10, 71-73, 217, 255-259; Wang and Abbott 2013, p. 227.

²⁰⁸ Feldshuh 2018, p. 46; Gui 2016, p. 16, 28, 40-41.

²⁰⁹ Texts F2, G5, G10, I1, L3 and L4.

earlier, did say that the media promotes language that degrades women,²¹⁰ I found no direct references in the literature where women were depicted as 'the weaker sex'.

²¹⁰ Feldshuh 2018, p. 38-42, 50-52.

7. CONCLUSION

For the past decennia, the amount of singles in China has been steadily increasing, along with the average age at first marriage. Since mid-2000s, the Chinese media began to problematize marriage postponement. According to many scholars, although both single men and single women who do not live up to the patriarchal, heteronormative model of love and marriage are stigmatized by the media, it is especially women that are being stigmatized, since men enjoy a privileged position in society.²¹¹

For my research, I investigated in how far there is a difference in the representation of single men and single women in the articles published in *People's Daily* during the period of the 1st of January 2017 until the 31st of December 2019. I found three main similarities and six main differences in the representations between single men and single women. Concerning the similarities, I found that both single men and single women were urged to get married and depicted as needing a partner. In fact, 'single' and 'unmarried' seemed to be interchangeable terms. 'Single', like 'unmarried', was inseparably connected to marriage. Secondly, I found that both men and women were portrayed as having unrealistic expectations of a partner. I, thus, discovered that women do not have more expectations at all, just different expectations; the expectations of women were more socio-economically oriented, while those of men concentrated on character and personality. Finally, I discovered that all singles were portrayed as finding someone of the opposite sex, who did not meet the patriarchal, heteronormative ideal, unattractive. Both men and women dismissed possible partners who did not meet this ideal, thus contributing to normalizing and reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Concerning the differences in the representation of single men and single women, I found the following. Firstly, single women were almost twice as often referred to with a discriminating term compared to single men. Furthermore, women were discriminated more severely for still being single at a certain age and experienced a greater pressure to marry than men do, proving that there is a double standard in age between men and women. Thirdly, it was only single women (or couples in general) who were mentioned in relation to fertility and having children. Not once did an article elaborate on men's declining fertility or that men needed to produce children. Thus, having children was portrayed as mainly a woman's duty. Another difference in representation was that women were depicted as inferior and/or obedient to men, whereas men were depicted as superior and

²¹¹ Chen 2011, p. 10; Feldshuh 2018, p. 51; Fincher 2016, p. 22; Gong, Tu and Jiang 2017, p. 197-198, 202, 206-207; Gui 2016, p. 44; Koetse 2016, p. 93, 98.

strong compared to women. Moreover, men were bestowed with more important social expectations and roles than women, like needing to take care of the family and having a good job and income, while women were portrayed as having to fulfil the role of the 'virtuous housewife'. These depictions further reinforced gender stereotypes and the gender ideals that both men and women needed to strive for. Finally, I also found that home and car ownership were mentioned almost exclusively in relation to men, and not in relation to women. The responsibility to buy a house and a car was, thus, portrayed as a man's responsibility.

All in all, I found that both single men and single women were stigmatized and discriminated by the media for not living up to the patriarchal, heteronormative model of love and marriage, albeit for different reasons. Single men were discriminated on the grounds of not having home or car ownership, and not having a (good enough) job and income, whereas women were discriminated on the grounds of age, their ability to have children, and for having too many spousal requirements. Whether there has been a resurgence or rise of gender inequality in China, like Fincher stated there is,²¹² cannot be directly deducted from the articles I have analyzed. However, as mentioned before, more than half of the analyzed articles embraced patriarchal values and reinforced gender stereotypes; what, therefore, can be deducted from the analyzed articles, is that gender is constituted and organized such that characteristics of femininity are undesirable and subordinate to those of masculinity. The analyzed articles elaborated on women's obedient position, and the 'traditional roles' they should occupy, while at the same time praising masculinity and bestowing men with more important social expectations and roles than women. What I further noticed, as I stated earlier, was that a quarter of the analyzed articles have been completely republished two or even three times. The fact that *People's Daily*, a newspaper known to be a mouthpiece of the Chinese government, embraces patriarchal values (which means that the Chinese government probably does, too), along with the fact that many articles are republished, might further confirm Fincher's finding that the Chinese state is intent on social engineering.²¹³ Through the media, propaganda is spread that promotes language that degrades women, helps to normalize and de-problematize rigid concepts of gender, and motivates conformity to marriage norms. If one adds this to the fact that, although men are discriminated, they are discriminated for not having the *ownership* of cars and houses, and for not having good jobs and incomes (unlike women), one could conclude that the portrayal of single men and single women in the media acts to maintain men's privileged position in Chinese society.

²¹² Fincher 2016, p. 4-6.

²¹³ Ibid.

This study supplements previous studies on the depictions of single men and single women in the media, by providing an analysis on the differences in representation of single men and single women in the articles by *People's Daily*, a large Chinese news platform. Most previous research focuses on the depiction of single women. However, my research also elaborates on the depiction of single men, and compares both depictions, thus giving a different perspective on gender discourse in the media. Moreover, most previous research found that it is women who are discriminated in the media, but I found that men are also discriminated, albeit for different reasons. In addition, this study has shown that there was an embrace of patriarchal values, which works to reinforce gender stereotypes and conformity to marriage norms, in the articles of *People's Daily*. Finally, this study found that the discriminative and patriarchal portrayal of single men and single women acts to maintain men's privileged position in Chinese society.

There are several limitations that need to be addressed here. First, a content analysis always involves a certain level of subjective interpretation, which can affect the reliability and validity of the research. Secondly, there are different ways to gauge the public perception of a certain topic. A content analysis is only one of them. It would also have been possible to conduct interviews on how the public perceives single men and women, or to analyze the depiction of single men and women in tv shows. It also has to be stated that I only analyzed articles from one news source (*People's Daily*). Other news sources or media platforms might represent single men and women differently. Finally, another limitation of my research is that, with my method, it is impossible to know how singles view their own position, or how they are talked about by real people. Since most research has focused on the depiction of single women in the media, further research could be conducted into media depictions of single men and manhood, since there was hardly any research on this topic. One could, e.g., through researching media representations, look into how men are pressured to get married or to what an extent men are pushed to fulfil certain societal norms, like having to buy a house. Also, more research could be conducted using different media platforms. Instead of newspapers, one could use blogs or magazines. One could also, e.g., investigate how different media platforms, such as Qzone or WeChat, promote patriarchal norms.

To conclude, I have the following remarks. According to the China Development Research Foundation, China strives for gender equality. However, although Chinese women have greatly emancipated in the past century, they still face quite some challenges.²¹⁴ What I find strange, is that

²¹⁴ China Development Research Foundation 2014, p. 150-156.

there is obviously quite some gender discrimination in de media, but that this is not mentioned at all as one of the challenges to overcome, which probably means that it is not considered and treated as a problem. However, without addressing the gender discrimination in the media as a problem, there is a risk of the continuation, and, perhaps even, a further reinforcement of the gender discrimination and patriarchal values in the media. Instead of moving towards gender equality, this would bring Chinese women further away from it.

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China's 'leftover women' choosing to stay single, available at

https://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/18/world/asia/on-china-single-women-leta-hong-fincher/index.html?sr=sharebar_twitter (last visited on the 29th of March 2020).

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9. APPENDIX

9 – 1. Tables

Table 1

Search term	Category 1: Woman-related search term	Category 2: Man-related search term	Category 3: Non- marriage related search term	Category 4: Marriage-related search term	Total amount of hits
Dānshēn nǚ 单身 女	X				2278
Nǚxìng dānshēn 女性单身	X				83
Nǚxìng qì (zhì) 女 性气(质)	X				912
Shèngnǚ 剩女	X				11.355
Dānshēn nán 单 身男		X			5199
Nánxìng dānshēn 男性单身		X			77
Nánzǐ qì (gài) 男 子气(概)		X			343
Shèng nán 剩男		X			4.608
Guānggùn 光棍*		X			12.390
Dānshēn gǒu 单 身狗			X		1426
Dānshēn guìzú 单 身贵族			X		1006
Dānshēn rénpǔ 单 身人群			X		407
Dānshēn rénrì 单 身人士			X		2773

Shì hūn 适婚				X	2700
Tuō dān 脱单			X	X	1834
Wèihūn 未婚				X	29.163
Zé'ǒu 择偶				X	8963

* Note: during my search for articles, I noticed that the term guānggùnr resulted in an enormous amount of hits. Most of these articles related to the profits on Singles' Day (guānggùnr jié 光棍节) and singles in general, not to single men in particular. This is why I decided to not use the word guānggùnr in my analysis on how many search hits came up as a result with men-related search terms.

Table 2

Topic	Number of articles that mention this topic	Number of times this topic was mentioned in articles that deal specifically with <i>women</i> *	Number of times this topic was mentioned in articles that deal specifically with <i>men</i> **	Number of times that there was a specific focus on <i>women</i> in the articles that mention this topic	Number of times that there was a specific focus on <i>men</i> in the articles that mention this topic
Age	30	29	14	63	58
Education	15	6	7	18	17
Home or car ownership/having to buy a house or car	18	34	33	2	39
Household	34	13	8	15	10
Children/fertility	11	14	-	18	-
Marriage or getting married	39	20	27	54	69
Finding a spouse or dating	30	3	1	10	3
'Single' and 'never married'/'unmarried'	27	11	5	14	5
Status	8	-	1	4	4
Work/income	22	20	29	49	55
Worrying	8	3	1	4	1

* The articles C1, D1, F1, G10, H1, I1, E1, G1, G2, G5, G6, H4, K3, K6, L1, L3

** The articles C2, F2, G3, G8, L4, E1, G1, G2, G5, G6, H4, K3, K6, L1, L3

9 – 2. Analyzed articles

Analyzed articles: during the period of the 1st of January 2017 until the 31st of December 2019

(Note: the articles are listed alphabetically underneath each search term, which are also alphabetically organized)

- A. Dānshēn gǒu 单身狗 (1426 hits in total): no relevant hits.
- B. Dānshēn guìzú 单身贵族 (1006 hits in total):
 - 1. Dānshēn bù dōu shì yīnwèi méi duìxiàng wèi shà yǒuxiē rén huì “dān bìng kuàilèzhe”? 单身不都是因为没对象 为啥有些人会“单并快乐着”? , available at <http://jysh.people.cn/n1/2017/1110/c404390-29637804.html> (last visited on the 4th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 11-10-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (5)
 - Education: (1)
 - Find a partner: 脱单 (10)
 - Force to marriage: 催婚 (2)
 - Happy singles: 单并快乐着 (4)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 爱情 (2), 婚姻 (2), 已婚 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (3)
 - Single: 单身 (22)
 - To marry: 结婚 (1), 谈婚论嫁 (1)
 - To worry: 焦虑 (1), 忧愁 (2)
 - Unmarried: 未婚 (1)
 - Work/income: (1)

- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - are free to do what they want
 - have trouble to find a partner
 - increasingly enjoy single life and prefer it over married life
 - many of them enjoy single life and are not at all worried about being single
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Being single is no longer something to feel worried about or feel ashamed about.
 - Some people even brand themselves as happy singles (单并快乐着). Is this an emerging problem for society?
 - The reasons for being single are various: not being able to find the right partner, voluntarily wanting to stay single, having more spare time and freedom, feeling worried about marriage.
 - Even if these singles no longer want to be single, they have trouble to do so because of their beliefs (e.g. worries about marriage). The article proposes that these singles can just read some marriage/love-related books and/or ask married people for guidance.
 - People are increasingly delaying marriage, but are still forced to marriage by their parents. Communication and understanding between both parties is essential to solve this problem. Also, parents should respect their child's choice and under no circumstances force him/her to marry.
- coding of text: marriage, outside pressure, the lonely single
- 2. Gāi jiéhūn de yīnggāi shì àiqíng 该结婚的应该是爱情, available at <http://fashion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0820/c1014-31304768.html> (last visited on the 4th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-20-2019).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished three times (in the

fashion, health and foreign edition of People's Daily). One text was published a day earlier, the other two on the same day, but with a time interval of four hours.

- Words:
 - Age: (1)
 - Car: 车 (1), 买车 (1)
 - Fated match: 有缘 (2), 姻缘 (2)
 - House: 房 (1), 买房 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (2), 成家 (3)
 - Love and marriage: 爱情 (8), 婚姻 (4), 恋爱 (2)
 - Lover/partner: 恋人 (1), 伴侣 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (15), 谈婚论嫁 (1)
 - Work/income: (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - do not get married for several reasons
 - many have erroneous preconceptions about marriage: they should not let their own limitations keep them from a good marriage
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Why is it okay to date, but not to marry?
 - Some people do not get married for materialistic reasons (not having a house or car is one of the biggest obstacles), for some it is because they are too occupied with work, some want to wait for the perfect partner and others just do not want to marry.
 - Singles should not give in to external pressure on whether or not to get married, but listen to their heart. However, often, singles use materialistic reasons as an excuse to avoid marriage, even though marriage can bring many benefits to a couple, giving them a better life.

- There is also no need to think that you first need to jumpstart your career; you can occupy yourself with your marriage and career simultaneously and become even better.
 - “Waiting for the right partner” is also a limitation many people force upon themselves. Instead, they should open themselves up to possible prospective partners; they will achieve an even better marriage like this. Also, they might otherwise miss out on what could have been.
 - coding of text: dating, marriage, outside pressure
- 3. Zhā xīnle lǎo tiě yòu yī nián qīxì wèihé nǐ háishì dānshēn? 扎心了老铁 又一年七夕 为何你还是单身? , available at <http://lxjk.people.cn/n1/2017/0828/c404177-29497636.html> (last visited on the 4th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-28-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (1)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (1)
 - Find a partner: 找对象 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 恋爱 (1), (谈)恋爱 (15)
 - Lover/partner: 情侣 (1), 伴侣 (2)
 - Single: 单身 (12)
 - Work/income: (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - they do not want to think about love and marriage yet, but focus on school, which makes them happy
 - they want to “better” themselves before starting with love. This has to do with the fact that people have more and more requirements for prospective partners.
 - they are afraid to get hurt by love.
 - they want to pursue the single lifestyle, and be free and careless.
 - They compare prospective partner’s qualities to those of their idols, which is unrealistic.

- non-singles in general: -
- men in particular: -
- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Why is the number of singles increasing?
 - Although there is but one main reason why people are in a relationship, there are many reasons for being single. They can be summed up in 5 categories: see descriptions of people – singles in general.
- coding of text: dating, marriage
- C. Dānshēn nán 单身男 (5199 hits in total)/Nánxìng dānshēn 男性单身 (77 hits in total):
 - 1. Pōuxī dānshēn nánǚ hūnyīn guān 剖析单身男女婚姻观, available at http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrhwb/html/2017-08/31/content_1802058.htm (last visited on the 26th of January 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-31-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: 适龄 (1)
 - Age of woman: (2)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (3)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (2)
 - Find a partner: 脱单 (1)
 - Force to marry: 逼婚 (1)
 - House: (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (5), 恋爱 (1), 爱情 (5), 找真【爱/心】 (2)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (5)
 - To marry: 结婚 (1)
 - Work of woman: (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:

- men in particular:
- women in particular:
- Side notes:
 - The number of singles is increasing.
 - Are blind/arranged dates the best way to find a partner?
 - The article describes a tv program and states that many women and singles, in real life, are just like in the program. Also, the program correctly shows the problems that singles cause for households and society.
 - The woman in the show is approaching an age where it will be more difficult to get married. She does not stay single because of materialistic reasons, but because she holds on to her high standards.
 - The article ends on the note that, when it comes to love, we should give people a chance.
- coding of text: women, marriage
- 2. Wén xiāng shì nánrén? Dānshēn nánxìng tǐwèi gèng nóng 闻香识男人? 单身男性体味更浓, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0304/c14739-30955232.html> (last visited on the 5th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 03-04-2019).

- Words:
 - Age of men: (2)
 - Age of women: (1)
 - Love and marriage: 已婚 (3), 恋爱 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 伴侣 (1)
 - Masculinity: 男子气概 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (5)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - have strong body odors

- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - According to research, single men have stronger body odor than married men.
- coding of text: men
- 3. Zhōngguó wèishéme huì yǒu “xiāngqīn jiǎo”? 中国为什么会有“相亲角”? , available at <http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2019/1024/c429373-31417696.html> (last visited on the 4th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 10-24-2019).

- Words:
 - Age: 年轻 (2), 适龄 (1)
 - Age of man: (2)
 - Age of woman: (2)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲角 (18), 相亲 (27)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (7)
 - Dating agency: 婚姻介绍所 (3), 婚介所 (2)
 - Education: (2)
 - Fate: 缘 (5)
 - Household: 家庭 (6)
 - Hukou: (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (35), 恋爱 (5), 婚(姻) (6), 恋情 (1), 爱情 (4), 相爱 (1), 婚礼 (4), 相恋 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 恋人 (1), 对象 (3), 有情人 (1), 伴侣 (3), 配偶 (1)
 - Status: 身份 (1)
 - To look for a partner/find a partner: 征婚 (7), 脱单 (3), 找对象 (3)
 - To marry: 结婚 (5), 嫁娶 (1), 娶 (1), 嫁(给) (1), 求婚 (1)
 - Unmarried/single: 未婚 (2), 单身 (9)
 - Views on love and marriage/patriarchal views: 婚恋观 (念)(6), (传统) 观念 (4), (传统)婚姻观 (3), 爱情观, 家庭观 (1)
 - Work/income: (11)
 - Work/income of man: (3)

- Work of woman: (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - are anxious about finding a partner
 - have more freedom now than ever before in choosing a spouse
 - should be properly guided towards good views on love and marriage
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - The marriage rate is at an all-time low. The stability of the nation is intertwined with that of singles.
 - Singles' love lives went from the 'private domain' to the 'public domain', at the same time as they obtained more freedom to choose in their love lives.
 - Marriage markets are frequently visited, mostly by parents who worry about their single children, but also by young singles themselves, who attract the most attention. Many singles do not mind it if their parents go there and accept this form of dating.
 - Since China's opening up reform, more and more ways to find prospective partners have emerged, such as apps, tv dating shows and dating agencies. Instead of going to a marriage market, some parents even 'unite' online.
 - The youth should be properly guided towards proper views on marriage and household, and helped to "blend in" into society.
 - During the 50s and 60s, people payed attention to status and background when looking for a partner. During the 70s, moral character and a stable job became most important. During the 80s, someone's financial position became important as well. Later on, feelings and the quality of marriage became important factors as well. Feelings have now become more important than materialistic qualities.

- Only if people’s households are stable and well, then people can truly invest in their work and the nation can then truly become prosperous.
 - coding of text: dating, marriage, partner choice, patriarchal views.
- D. Dānshēn nǚ 单身女(2278 hits in total): no relevant hits/Nǚxìng dānshēn 女性单身 (83 hits in total):
 - 1. Yuánshānshān cānpāi “wǒjiā nà guīnǚ” bèihòu tǎnyán bù wéi dānshēn jiāolù 袁姗姗参拍《我家那闺女》背后 坦言不为单身焦虑, available at <http://ent.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0112/c368312-30524238.html> (last visited on the 6th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 01-12-2019).

- Words:
 - Choose a partner: 择偶 (1)
 - Force to marry: 催婚 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (1), 婚礼 (3), 婚事 (1), 爱情 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 另一半 (4), 对象 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (5)
 - To give birth/raise: 生 (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (2)
 - Work/income: (1)
 - Work of woman: (1)
 - Worry: 焦虑 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - the woman in the text wants a man that is able to take responsibility (担当), her father thinks a humorous and lively man would be suitable for her, her mother thinks the man should be ambitious and share the pressure with her.
 - women in particular:

- must have a man that can take care of them
 - must have man that shares life's pressure with them
- Side notes:
 - This article is about a television program and specifically looks at one of the women and her (love)life.
- coding of text: women, partner choice
- E. Dānshēn rénrqún 单身人群 (407 hits in total)/ Dānshēn rénshì 单身人士 (2773 hits in total):
 - 1. Nánǚ zé'ǒu dōu kànzhòng shà? Nánrén zuì kànzhòng de jūrán bùshì yán zhí 男女择偶都看重啥? 男人最看重的居然不是颜值, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0915/c14739-29537988.html> (last visited on the 5th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 09-15-2017).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished two times (both in the health edition of People's Daily). One of the texts was published two days later.

- Words:
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (1)
 - Car of man: 没车 (1)
 - Choose a spouse: 挑选另一半 (1), 择偶 (7)
 - Education of woman: (1)
 - House of man: 没房
 - Household: 家庭 (13)
 - Independence: 独立 (2)
 - Interests: 兴趣 (6)
 - Looks of woman: 颜值 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (1), 婚姻 (4), 爱情 (5)
 - Lover/partner: 对方 (3), 恋人 (1)
 - Personality: 性格 (12)
 - Recognition: 辨识 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (1)
 - To marry: 嫁给 (1)

- Understanding: 理解 (1)
- Work/income of man: (4)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - should give prospective partners a chance.
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - find the interests of a prospective partner the most important (otherwise, women become too clingy and men will feel less at ease), followed by her character (description: some men want a tender and virtuous woman (温柔贤惠), others want a more extraverted woman, and others just want someone similar to them) and family background (not so much the woman's background, but whether or not she fits into his family)
 - most want a woman that is temperate and gentle (温良恭俭让) and treats them and their family right. They do not want a strong woman, but one that is more obedient.
 - Men do not want a woman to be from too good a household, since she otherwise will not want to climb the social ladder
 - Intrinsically have a leading position in the household (主导地位)
 - women in particular:
 - find the financial situation of a prospective partner and his income the most important, followed by his family background (women do not want heavy burdens) and character (women want a man to be able to support his family; his temperament is less important)
 - have to 'sacrifice' themselves to blend into a man's household
 - soft and gentle women are ideal
- Side notes:

- Quote directed at men: “If two women, whose looks do not differ much from one another, stand in front of you and one of them has an ardent passion for music and cooking, and the other one has no interests and hobbies whatsoever, who would you choose?” (...有两个颜值相当的女生站在你面前，一个热爱乐器、烹饪，另一个没有兴趣爱好，你会选哪一个?)
- The article is about what men and women each look for in a partner
- In the conclusion, the author says that the character qualities that one should instead look at are independence, recognition and understanding. One should find a partner that shares the same interests and ambitions.
- Furthermore, one of the paragraphs of the conclusion seems targeted at women (since the word him (他) is used when talking about the prospective partner). It states that women should not immediately dismiss a man, just because he does not have a house or car, comes from a one-parent or difficult household. These things are not absolute. His family might be reasonable or economically stable, and he might be ambitious and have great potential. Women should just give men a chance. Maybe it will turn out that he is the right guy.
- Then the conclusion states that people should also not dismiss a prospective partner because of their personality, because this could change. Love changes people. You should not look for a perfect person, but a person who fits you.
 - coding of text: men, women, partner choice, character qualities, patriarchal views, discrimination
- F. Nánzǐ qì (gài) 男子气(概) (343 hits in total)/Nǚxìng qì (zhì) 女性气(质) (912 hits in total):
 - 1. Hūnliàn wǎng zōng jiémù bù yìng “fàn mài” jiāolǚ (yún zhōng mànbǐ) 婚恋网综艺节目不应“贩卖”焦虑（云中漫笔），available at http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrhbwb/html/2019-04/26/content_1921773.htm (last visited on the 27th of January 2020).

(Publishing date: 04-26-2019).

- Words:

- Age: (1)
- Age of woman: (1)
- Fear of marriage: 恐婚 (1)
- Force to marry: 催婚 (1)
- Household: 家庭 (3)
- Love and marriage: 婚恋 (8), 恋爱 (2), 婚姻 (2)
- Single: 单身 (1)
- To give birth/raise children: 生孩子 (1)
- To marry: 结婚 (2)
- Worry: 焦虑 (3)
- Views on marriage/love: 婚恋观(念) (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - doubtful and worried about being single
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular:
 - a woman named Zhang Ye is described as being afraid for marriage
 - another woman is looking for a man that is like her father
 - another woman does not have high expectations of her future partner; she just wants to be looked after.
- Side notes:
 - About a tv program.
 - Shows like this contribute to showing young people the rational and correct way to look at marriage.
- coding of text: women, partner choice, marriage.
- 2. Shèhuì xūyào shà yàng dì xìngbié qìzhì 社会需要啥样的性别气质, available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0813/c1008-30223989.html> (last visited on the 5th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-13-2018).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished two times (both in the society edition of *People's Daily*). One of the texts was published one hour later.

- Words:
 - Education: (3)
 - Feminization: 女性化 (5), 娘化 (2)
 - Gentle and beautiful: 柔美 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (4)
 - Love/marriage: 婚姻 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (1)
 - Masculine: 阳刚 (13), 找回男生该有的荷尔蒙 (1), 男子汉 (3), 男子气 (1)
 - Masculinization: 男性化 (1)
 - Sex-related personality traits: 性别气质 (7)
 - soft and feminine: 阴柔 (35), 柔弱 (2), 温柔 (1), 弱化 (1)
 - Worry: (担)忧 (3), 忧虑 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - are increasingly soft and feminine (阴柔) and losing their masculinity
 - must be masculine (阳刚, 找回男生该有的荷尔蒙)
 - Should be strong and have what it takes to persevere
 - should have a leading role in households and in society (see notes below: “...messes up the gender role division, both in the households and in society”).
 - women in particular:
 - must be gentle and beautiful (柔美)
 - skinny is beautiful
 - are increasingly depicted by the media as feminine (阴柔) and weak/delicate (柔弱)
- Side notes:

- Men are increasingly becoming soft and feminine, leaving many to worry deeply about this “feminization”. According to the article, this is not something to worry about, since this trend is already declining. Furthermore, like all trends, it can come and go.
- Where is this feminization coming from? Many believe this feminization is due to male celebrities, who tend to act very feminine, and love beauty, dressing themselves up, talk in a sweet manner, and cover their mouths when they laugh. According to the article, several factors, along with the traditional beliefs in yin and yang, have played a role. Firstly, with a certain degree of economic developments, comes a certain degree of feminization of society. Also, the culture of South-Korea and Japan heavily influences Chinese culture. Secondly, with developments, comes a change in traditional views on sexuality and women have also gained better positions in society. Lastly, people are not properly guided by households and education (家庭教育、学校教育里缺乏正确引导是重要原因). Also, there are a lot of additives in food, that might contribute to feminization.
- The media can all bring a lot of misunderstandings about sexuality and sexual stereotypes. Most interviewees do not believe in stereotypes and a specific type of sexuality, and have a neutral stance on the subject, but they do believe people should not ‘exaggerate’.
- What kind of sex personality traits should there be? Sexuality-related traits should not be one-sided. There should be diversity and diversified developments. Every type of sexuality has its positive aspects and people should be able to freely develop. However, in order for sexuality to be able to freely diversify, the feminization should not be allowed to widely spread.
- On the other hand, the article also mentions that if feminization further spreads, it would most certainly bring result in problems. China should not give up on its cultural traditions, and femininity and masculinity are an important part of this cultural tradition. Masculinization of children is of great merit to society (增加孩子的

‘阳刚之气’是社会的大功课). Schools and households should promote this and promote Chinese traditional culture. And the media should be somewhat kept in check.

- According to an expert, one more reason to not let the feminization spread further and promote masculinization, is because masculinity is a must for further development of China. Also, it messes up the gender role division, both in the households and in society.
- Quote: Some boys, when faced with difficult situations, show less generosity and responsibility than girls (“有些男孩在面对困难、任务时不如女孩表现得大方、有担当”).
 - coding of text: men, (indirect: women), discrimination, character qualities, patriarchal views
- G. Shèng nán 剩男 (4.608 hits in total)/Guānggùn 光棍 (12.390 hits in total):
 - 1. 3000 Wàn “shèng nán” gēn shéi jiéhūn (shēn yuèdú) 3000 万“剩男”跟谁结婚（深阅读），available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0213/c1008-29075371.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-13-2017).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished two times (both in the foreign edition of *People's Daily*), one of which times was under a different title: “Zhōngguó wèilái 30 niánnèi jiāng yǒu yuē 3000 wàn shì hūn nánxìng zhǎo bù dào duìxiàng 中国未来 30 年内将有约 3000 万适婚男性找不到对象”. This text last was published six hours later.

- Words:
 - Age: 年龄 (10), 婚育年龄 (2), 适龄 (1)
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (6)
 - Concerning marriage: 适婚 (5), 结婚 (4), 婚(姻) (2)
 - Dowry: 彩礼 (1)
 - Education in general: (3)
 - Education concerning men: (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (3)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (15)
 - Leftover women: 剩女 (1)

- Love and marriage: 婚事 (2), 婚姻 (6)
- Never/not married: 未婚 (8)
- Pregnant: 怀孕 (1), 孕妇 (1)
- Second-rate men: 丁男 (3)
- Single: 单身 (1)
- Status: 阶层 (1)
- To give birth: 生(育) (7)
- To marry: 娶(媳妇) (3), 娶妻 (1), 结婚 (2), 婚配 (1), 嫁高娶低 (1), 嫁 (1)
- To value males (and belittle females) (Chinese saying): 重男轻女 (3), 男孩偏好 (3)
- Work/income: 收入 (2), 经济地位 (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - Those with a low income, low status and low education, which means that especially the men from the countryside run the risk of remaining single.
 - Indirectly suffer from patriarchal views; causes the sex ratio imbalance, leaving many of them unable to find a wife.
 - women in particular:
 - leftover women are single by choice
 - don't have the same equal rights as men
- Side notes:
 - This article is about China's sex ratio imbalance and how hard it is for men to find a wife.
 - Then the reasons for the imbalance are given: firstly, to give birth to sons is, especially in the countryside, valued more. Secondly, new sex detecting technologies make it easier for people to choose whether they want a boy or girl and many. If the child is unwanted, many conduct abortion.

- This imbalance makes it hard for many men to marry and the number of single men is expected to rise.
 - Who are the men that mostly remain single? Those with a low income, low status and low education, which means that especially the men from the countryside run the risk of remaining single, since it is believed that men should marry 'down' and women should marry 'up'.
 - This results in that the singles who remain are first class women and 'second-rate' men. However, the article remarks that unlike the leftover men, the leftover women are single by choice (然而, 和“剩女”多为个人选择不同, “剩男”是被动单身).
 - The solution, according to the author, is more urbanization, industrialization, and raising the education level and teaching the next generation right. Furthermore, the 重男轻女 ideology needs to be overcome (raise the status of women in society).
 - coding of text: marriage, men, discrimination, patriarchal views
- 2. 3000 Wàn “shèng nán” gēn shéi jiéhūn (shēn yuèdú)- jiějué “shèng nán wéijī” yào xiān pò “zhòngnán qīng nǚ”(duǎnpíng) 3000 万“剩男”跟谁结婚 (深阅读) - 解决“剩男危机”要先破“重男轻女” (短评) , available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0213/c1008-29075371-3.html> (last visited on the 2nd of May 2020).

(Publishing date 02-13-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (1)
 - Bachelor: 单身汉 (1), 光棍 (4)
 - Equality of the sexes: 男女平等 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 适婚 (1), 婚姻 (2)
 - Patriarchal views: 传统观念 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (1)
 - To find a partner: 找对象 (1)

- To marry: 结婚 (2), 婚配 (1)
- To value males and belittle females (saying): 重男轻女 (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - women in particular:
- Side notes:
 - There are many more single men than single women, leading to activities that damage social stability, like mail-order brides and health-damaging abortions for women.
 - The author says that the sex ratio imbalance will solve itself over time. Meanwhile, the only solution is to target the roots of the problem. Firstly, the social inequality has to be addressed. The law system has to provide women with equal opportunities to get a job. Secondly, women have to be provided equal chances when growing up and not be forced to take care of the elderly. Sex detection at birth should also be targeted.
- coding of text: men, women, discrimination, patriarchal views.
- 3. Chénzhòng de cǎilǐ (jìzhě diàochá) 沉重的彩礼（记者调查）, available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0220/c1008-29091752.html> (last visited on the 2nd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-20-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (3)
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Car must be bought by man: 汽车 (5)
 - Car must be bought by woman: (1)
 - Dowry: 彩礼 (57), 礼金 (22), 嫁妆 (2)
 - Equality of the sexes: 男女平等 (1), 男女性别失衡 (1)
 - Forced marriage: 包办婚姻 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)

- Housing of man: 房(子) (8)
- Housing of or with help of woman: (1)
- Love and marriage: 婚(姻) (7), 结婚 (11), 恋爱 (6), 婚事 (1)
- Preference for men: (男孩生育)偏好 (2)
- To marry: 娶 (6), 嫁 (2)
- Work/income in general: 收入水平 (1), 工作 (1)
- Work/income of man mentioned: (4), 工资 (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - must give dowry when marrying
 - must have car before marriage
 - must have house before marriage
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Article states that the dowry in some places is incredibly high, forcing the family of the groom to spend all their life savings and commit to huge debts. This puts a lot of pressure on the people involved.
 - The dowry is especially high in the Western part of China and in countryside regions. And, in many places, the dowry is increasing.
 - Also, men must have a car and a house. Often it is also considered bad if a man does not have real or stable work.
 - In some parts, the dowry is decreasing. Especially women from wealthy families do not pay so much attention to the dowry. It is also increasingly common for women's families to contribute to buying a house or to let the young lovers just enjoy their love.
 - The author believes that the increase of the dowry is due to the sex ratio imbalance.
 - The author also believes that equality between the sexes is increasing.
- coding of text: discrimination, men, patriarchal views, home ownership, car ownership.

- 4. Dānshēn rénshì zuò dào zhè 5 diǎn míngnián de “guānggùn jié” jiù bù yòng guò le 单身人士做到这 5 点 明年的“光棍节”就不用过了, available at <http://lxjk.people.cn/n1/2017/1120/c404177-29656889.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date:11-20-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: 年龄 (1)
 - Find a partner: 脱单 (2)
 - Housing: 家庭 (1)
 - Lonely: 孤单 (1)
 - Love/marriage: 恋爱 (4), 相爱 (3), 爱情 (6), 婚恋 (1)
 - Lovers/sweethearts: 情侣 (2), 恋人 (2)
 - Single: 单身 (4)
 - Singles' Day: 光棍节 (5)
 - Terrified: 惶恐 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - feel lonely and are terrified of singles' day.
 - The reason for being single is that they do not know how to maintain an intimate relationship.
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - The author has the following tips to have an intimate relationship.
 - Firstly, it is said that choosing your lover is very important. You must know yourself and the other person well and see if you match each other. Important factors to look at are: character, habits, family background, what do parents think?
 - Secondly, communication is very important.
 - Thirdly, it is important to lower your expectations and accept each other's flaws.

- Lastly, active try or change to be your best self.
 - coding of text: partner choice, character qualities, the lonely single
- 5. “Jì xuè yàn zǐ” gēn zài zhòng nán qīng nǚ “寄血验子”根在重男轻女, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0403/c14739-29187065.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 04-03-2017).

- Words:
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Equality of the sexes: 男女平等 (3)
 - Household: 家庭 (3)
 - Inequality between men and women: 男女不平等 (1), 性别偏好 (1)
 - Sex discrimination: 性别歧视 (1)
 - To marry: 娶 (2), 嫁 (2), 结婚 (2)
 - Value men and belittle women (saying): 重男轻女 (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - women in particular:
- Side notes:
 - According to the article, there is still a lot of discrimination of women and inequality between the sexes. Men are, for example, hired more often than women. In the countryside, men are also preferred, because they are more suited to perform physical labor.
 - Although this preference for men is declining slowly, it is still prevalent and can also be seen in the sex ratio imbalance.
 - The most important thing is to change traditional views on giving birth.
 - The author is convinced that the strong preference for men will eventually decline.
- coding of text: men, women, discrimination, patriarchal views.

- 6. Jiějiěmen jí zī wèi dì qǔ qī, fǎn fèng zhòng nán qīng nǚ 姐姐们集资为弟娶妻，反讽重男轻女, available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0713/c119388-30146506.html> (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 07-13-2018).

- Words:
 - “bare branches”: 光棍 (1)
 - Dowry: 彩礼 (9), 嫁妆 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (7)
 - To buy a house: 买房 (2)
 - To give birth: 生(育) (3)
 - To marry: 嫁 (2), 结婚 (1)
 - To take a wife: 娶妻 (2), 娶媳妇 (5)
 - To value men and belittle women (saying): 重男轻女 (7)
 - Wedding: 婚礼 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - have to pay dowry when getting married
 - women in particular:
 - have to contribute their earnings to their brother’s marriage and buying of a house.
 - Their mothers expect a prospective partner to have a house.
 - Have a ‘price’ on their head from the dowry: 身价 (2).
- Side notes:
 - To have a boy is still more desired than giving birth to a girl.
 - In the text, all the sisters have to work to pay for their brother’s wedding and house: they have to self-sacrifice. This kind of thing happens often in the countryside. This thing, according to the text, would not happen in the city.

- The text questions whether society should not ponder the fairness of this all and states that this only points to the inequality between men and women.
- The ideology of “重男轻女” is becoming less and less adhered to both in the countryside and in the city.
- Getting daughters cannot be such a bad thing, says the author. The author asks whether it is truly discrimination if a dowry has to be paid for a son who wants to marry, since people also receive a lot of money for their daughters who are married off. So, the author concludes, women probably are not as scorned in the countryside as people say.
 - coding of text: men, women, discrimination, marriage
- 7. Pínglùn: Dàlíng dānshēn bùshì wèntí shèhuì piānjiàn ràng tā chéngle wèntí 评论：大龄单身不是问题 社会偏见让它成了问题, available at <http://fashion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0922/c1014-29551730.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 09-22-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: 大龄 (11)
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (4)
 - Forced to marry: 催婚 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (1), 婚(姻) (9), 结婚 (6), 恋爱 (2)
 - Never married: 未婚 (5)
 - Parents' interference: (1)
 - Single: 单身 (5)
 - To marry: 结婚 (1)
 - To worry: 焦虑 (6)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - are a disadvantaged group that needs to be 'saved'
 - non-singles in general: -

- men in particular: -
- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - author describes how you are reminded of being a lonely single everywhere.
 - And that it is almost like older single people need to be ‘saved’: there is a type of ‘older singles phobia’. They are seen as a disadvantaged group that needs help.
 - The author does not believe that older singles are the problem. It is society that is prejudiced and turns it into a problem.
 - Marriage is supposed to be beautiful, but becomes more of a duty this way. Solution: do not care too much about others’ opinions.
 - Parents also interfere a lot, causing their children to loathe marriage.
 - The author believes in happiness and that one should listen to his/her heart.
- coding of text: marriage, discrimination, outside pressure.
- 8. Pòjiě , jiě dì liàn ch de hūnyīn kùn jú 人民日报评论员观察：破解彩礼重压背后的婚姻困局, available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0224/c1003-29104167.html> (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-24-2017).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished five times (twice in the theory edition, once in the ‘gongyi’ edition, once in the politics edition, and once in the opinion edition of *People’s Daily*), but with four different titles. The other three titles were: “Rénmín rìbào pínglùn yuán guānchá: Pòjiě cǎilǐ zhòng yā bèihòu de hūnyīn kùn jú 人民日报评论员观察：破解彩礼重压背后的婚姻困局”, “Pínglùn yuán guānchá: Pòjiě cǎilǐ zhòng yā bèihòu de hūnyīn kùn jú 评论员观察：破解彩礼重压背后的婚姻困局”, and “Pòjiě cǎilǐ zhòng yā bèihòu de hūnyīn kùn jú (pínglùn yuán guānchá) 破解彩礼重压背后的婚姻困局（评论员观察）”. These texts were all published on the same day. One was published two hours earlier than the rest. The rest was all published within a twenty minute time interval of each other.

- Words:
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (1)
 - Couple’s feelings for each other are important: (1)

- Dowry: 彩礼 (21), 礼金 (3), 财务 (2)
 - Forced marriage: 包办婚姻 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (4)
 - Housing: 房 (1)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (1)
 - Love: 恋爱 (2)
 - Marriage: 婚姻 (9), 婚事 (1), 婚 (2)
 - Propose marriage: 提亲 (1)
 - Status: 身份 (2)
 - To have an affinity with each other: 情投意合 (2)
 - To marry: 结婚 (4), 娶 (3), 嫁 (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - matters for women if they're 'city people' or not. Financial condition is also one of the most important factors.
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - In the countryside, it is still very common for men to pay a dowry to the bride's family when they get married.
 - The man's entire family sometimes works to pay off the 'debt' of the dowry.
 - The man in question has no "bargaining power", which the author thinks is due to the fact that there are way more men than women.
 - The author also thinks this is one of the biggest differences between the city and the countryside and a cause for major inequality.
 - The marriage law, according to the article, prohibits the asking for 财务 when marrying.
 - The author poses the question why it is important to have things like dowry, when what should matter is whether the couple has any affinity for each other.
- coding of text: men, marriage, discrimination

- 9. Tīng zhàng értóng zhēn de xūyào “chéngsè shūbāo” ma? 听障儿童真的需要“橙色书包”吗? , available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0921/c1003-29550703.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 09-21-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: 年龄 (5)
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Forced to marry: 催婚 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (2), 婚(姻) (7), 结婚 (6), 恋爱 (1)
 - Prejudice: 偏见 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (6)
 - Unmarried: 未婚 (2)
 - Worry: 焦虑 (4)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - singles have a better self-awareness; know better what has to be changed about themselves and what not.
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - This article consists of two very different texts. Only the second one was relevant and has been analyzed.
 - The author says that marriage is supposed to be a something that you really look forward to, but that it's been made into a duty that worries people and singles are belittled. It is believed that when a person is single, there must be something wrong with him/her.
 - This almost makes people loathe marriage.
 - Being single does not equal never having been in love. And it also does not mean that you are afraid of or running away from marriage; it simply means you are still trying to find your partner.
- coding of text: marriage, outside pressure, patriarchal views

- 10. Zhòng jiǎng “sāncóngsidé”, nǚshénmen chī zhè tài? 重讲“三从四德”，女神们吃这套? , available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1201/c1003-29680889.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 12-01-2017).

- Words:
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (1)
 - Confucian moral injunctions for women: 三从四德 (3) (meaning: women should, in turn, obey the three men in their life: father, husband, son. Also, this refers to the four virtues for women: morality, physical charm, propriety in speech and efficiency in needlework)
 - Discrimination: 歧视 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (4)
 - Male chauvinism: 大男子主义 (1)
 - (woman’s) virtue: (女)德 (5), 道德 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - Are “like heaven” (Chinese saying)
 - women in particular:
 - Are “like the ground” (the lowest) (Chinese saying)
 - Cannot retaliate when they are hit
 - Cannot answer back when they are scolded
 - Must completely submit themselves to insults, maltreatment etc.
 - Cannot leave their man
 - Household duties are a woman’s job
 - Cannot question what a man says
 - Are birthing tools and housekeepers
 - Are a man’s accessory.

- Get ridiculed and even attacked if they say something wrong to a man
- Many try to act servile: 低三下四 (1)
- Side notes:
 - Author talks about the patriarchal views on women and, rhetorically, asks what women's virtues are and in what period people had views like that, implying that thoughts like that belong in the past.
 - The author also states that those patriarchal views still exist in society. Those views are not popular and barely exist, but they should be addressed before they affect society's system of values.
 - Author asks why it is okay for a man to belittle a woman, whereas people would disapprove if it were the other way around. The author believes the goal for society is to strive for the equality between men and women.
- coding of text: women, "work" and income, discrimination, character qualities
- 11. "Zhōngguó shì xiāngqīn" huǒle shòu wài méi guānzhù diànshì wénběn bùtóng yú xiànsí 《中国式相亲》火了受外媒关注 电视文本不同于现实, available at <http://media.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0227/c14677-29110044.html> (last visited on the 2nd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-27-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (4)
 - Bachelor: 光棍 (1)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (21)
 - Choose a partner: 择偶 (4)
 - Find a partner: 找对象 (2)
 - Force to marry/forced marriage: 催婚 (1), 包办婚姻 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - "lightning wedding": 闪婚 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (12), 婚姻 (7), 恋爱 (4)
 - Partner: 伴侣 (1)

- Patriarchal system: 家长制 (2)
- Single: 单身 (5)
- Social status match: 门当户对 (1)
- To marry: 娶 (1), 嫁 (1), 结婚 (6)
- Work/income: (5)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - are severely influenced by their parents, also this is decreasing
 - do not truly know what they want in a partner, because they lack life-experience (and thus they need their parents to help them decide) (1)
 - spoiled 'big babies' 巨婴 (3)
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Dating shows originated in the west, but in China they brought in a 'china-adapted' version, in which the parents play an important role, symbolizing the traditional ideology that rules in china.
 - Many people watching the show make a grave error to mistake what happens on the show for reality.
 - Do parents also have this much power in the dating lives of their children in real life?
 - Increasingly often, parents do not stand in the way of their children's happiness, even if the prospective partner does not meet all the traditional requirements. The 'children' themselves also increasingly pay attention to whether there is a match, instead of other factors. The majority would even date someone against his or her parents' wishes.
- coding of text: dating, marriage, patriarchal views.
- 12. "Zhōngguó shì xiāngqīn" nán dìng bāobiǎn "中国式相亲" 难定褒贬, available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0227/c1008-29108669.html> (last visited on the 1st of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-27-2017).

- Words:
 - Blind/Arranged date: 相亲 (16)
 - Dowry: 彩礼 (2)
 - Fate: 姻缘 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (1), 婚姻 (6), 结婚 (1)
 - To value males and belittle females (saying): 重男轻女 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - women in particular:
- Side notes:
 - Dating and establishing a household should be someone's personal choice and the ultimate goal should be happiness.
- coding of text: dating, outside pressure

• H. Shèngnǚ 剩女 (11.355 hits in total):

Additional information concerning the search term: this word gave more hits than the 'male version' (Shèng nán 剩男).

- 1. Gé lái bǎo měi yùn xié bǎihé jiāyuán jǔbàn “wǒ de děngdài, zhǐ wèi yùjiàn zuì hǎo de nǚ” huódòng 格莱宝美孕携百合佳缘举办“我的等待，只为遇见最好的你”活动, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0528/c14739-30019059.html> (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 05-28-2018).

- Words:
 - Age in relation to women: 年龄 (2)
 - Fertility: 生育能力 (1)
 - Forced to marry: 催婚 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (3)

- Husband and wife: 夫妻 (1)
- Job/income: economically independent 经济独立 (1)
- Leftover woman: 剩女 (1)
- Marriage: 婚姻 (6)
- To freeze one's eggs/frozen eggs: 冻卵 (7)
- To give birth: 生育 (1)
- To marry: 结婚 (1), 嫁人 (1)
- To seek a marriage partner: 找对象 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular:
 - experience a lot of pressure to get married
 - get called “剩女”
 - feel they have to hurry to get married as they get older, because their fertility will decline.
- Side notes:
 - This text is about women getting pressured to get married by the outside world, but also by their declining fertility (as they age).
 - Furthermore, this text is about an event for single women, where speakers also talk about the ability to freeze one's eggs.
- coding of text: women, outside pressure, discrimination, age
- 2. Qiān míng gāoxiào dānshēn nánǚ liányì méi shà dàbùliǎo 千名高校单身男女联谊没啥大不了, available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0412/c1003-29206338.html> (last visited on the 29th of April 2020). (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 04-12-2017).

- Words/themes:
 - Age in general: 年龄 (2), “大学生谈恋爱, 已不会被归入“早恋”范畴” (when college students date, it is already not considered ‘puppy love’ anymore) (1)

- Blind date: 相亲 (2)
- Higher education: 高校 (2)
- Leftover men: 剩男 (1)
- Leftover women: 剩女 (1)
- Love: 恋爱 (2)
- Love each other: 相恋 (1)
- Opposite sex: 异性 (2)
- Pre-marital sex: 婚前性行为 (1)
- To rent an apartment: 租房 (2)
- To buy a house: 买房 (1)
- Sexual relations: 性关系 (2)
- Single: 单身 (3)
- Single men and women: 单身男女 (1)
- Speeddating: 情侣速配 (5)
- To be dating: 谈恋爱 (2)
- Worry: 焦虑 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - have feelings of crisis because they're single: 有危机感 (1)
 - society:
 - has bias against singles: 偏差 (1)
 - has one-sided understanding when it comes to single men and women: 片面理解 (1)
 - Thinks dating is always related to sexual intercourse.
 - Are naïve (幼稚) if they believe they can keep college students from dating and finding out about the world (1)
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Blind dating and speed dating are frowned upon: “这种活动不像某些人想象得那么肮脏”，“被人视为“洪水猛兽”？”

- What the young people think about blind dating and speed dating: it is beautiful if people can really get to know each other, love each other, and protect each other, but if this is not the result, than that is okay: “如果一些人能够相识、相知、相恋、相守固然是美事，倘若无果也无伤大雅”
- You cannot forbid pre-marital sex.
- This article seems to comprise of two different stories. The second one, about real estate, has nothing to do with my research → left this part out (includes all the words that are related to real estate and housing).
 - coding of text: age, discrimination, outside pressure
- 3. Rénmín rìbào qīngnián guān: Xìngfú bù zhǐyǒu yī zhǒng múyàng 人民日报青年观：幸福不只有一种模样, available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1107/c1003-29630441.html> (last visited on the 29th of April 2020). (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 11-07-2017).

- Words:
 - Age in general: talked about singles between the ages of 20 and 39 and said that 2000 万 lives alone.
 - Destiny: 缘分 (1)
 - High-class: 高层 (1)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (1)
 - Leftover women: 剩女 (1)
 - Live alone: 独居 (1)
 - ‘Lonely Dog’: 单身狗 (1)
 - love: 恋爱 (1)
 - Marriage: 婚姻 (1)
 - Pressure from outside: (2)
 - Single: 独身 (1), 单身 (5), 一个人的生活 (1), 单着 (1)
 - Single’s day: 光棍节 (2)
 - to find oneself a partner: 脱单 (3)

- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - 'afraid of' Singles Day (1)
 - anxious/worried: 焦虑 (3x)
 - bitter and pained: 苦涩 (1)
 - Depressed and negative: 颓废消极 (1)
 - experience pressure from outside world: (1)
 - Free and at ease: 洒脱 (1)
 - Freedom: 自由 (1)
 - lonely: 孤单 gudan (2), 寂寞 jimo (1), 孤独 (2)
 - not afraid of being single, but afraid of rejection: “不害怕单身，而害怕挫败感” (1)
 - possible envy: 羡慕 (1)
 - Pride: 骄傲 (1)
 - self-ridicule: 自我调侃 (1), 自我戏谑 (1)
 - “unrestrainedness”: 潇洒 (1)
 - want to find partner: “有脱单的意愿” (1)
 - non-singles in general:
 - possible envy: 羡慕 (1)
 - sweet happiness: 甜蜜幸福 (1)
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- side notes:
 - author wonders if it is really so pressing to find a partner (迫切)
 - important is if a partner adheres to the same values (价值观), what kind of choices one makes individually
 - you don't want to rush into a relationship
 - being single might mean loneliness, but being by yourself is the best time there is (单身也许意味着孤独，而孤独正是丰富灵魂的最佳时刻)
 - First the author writes about how there are different forms of happiness and that being single is not that bad. But then, the author

says that “you can truly become your best self when you are single and then you will most certainly run into/meet with high class destiny and happiness (高层次的缘分和幸福).”

“It is like finding the right pair of shoes”

“if you find the right person, seize him/her” (遇到了值得相伴一生的人，那就好好把握).

→ so finding a partner is the ultimate goal after all?

- coding of text: settling, the lonely single, pressure to get married, character qualities (of the single)
- 4. Shí niánjiān, jiě dì liàn chéng bèi zēngzhǎng 十年间，姐弟恋成倍增长, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1223/c14739-29724747.html> (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 11-29-2017).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished three times (all in the health edition of *People's Daily*). One of the texts was published on the 29th of November 2017, the other one on the 2nd of December 2017, and the last one on the 23rd of December 2017.

- Words:
 - Age in general: 年龄 (6)
 - Age of man: (1)
 - Age of woman: (2)
 - Force to marry: 逼婚 (1)
 - “lightning wedding”: 闪婚 (1)
 - Leftover women: 剩女 (1)
 - Love between an older woman and a younger man: 姐弟恋 (14)
 - Marriage: 婚姻 (13), 婚恋 (3)
 - Older man, younger woman: 男大女小 (4)
 - Older woman, younger man: 女大男小/男小女大 (7)
 - Pregnancy: 怀孕 (1)

- Property: 财产 (1)
- To give birth: 生育 (2)
- To marry: 婚配 (1)
- To pair up: 搭配 (1)
- Sex: 性爱 (3), 性 (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - Worry (about getting married): 焦虑 (1)
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - A man's sexual peak is between the ages of 20-30.
 - Are under pressure from society.
 - women in particular:
 - A woman's sexual peak is between the ages of 30-40.
 - Women are a little bit more grownup when it comes to their "psychological age" (feelings and emotions).
 - Older women are psychologically more mature.
 - Older women are financially more independent.
- Side notes:
 - According to this article, it is still more common to see older men with younger women, but relations between older women with younger men are occurring more and more often both in China and abroad.
 - Also, the rate at which this process is occurring has been faster the past few years.
 - Because of the pressure from society on men, men could use an older tender and considerate woman to take care of him. In this respect, an older woman would be better than a younger woman, who still needs more care herself.
 - According to the text, as long as people have an affinity with each other (情投意合), their age should not pose a problem.
 - However, the text gives its reader a warning in the final two sentences: when the woman is older, couples should communicate

and plan well to avoid not being able to have children, since the woman will become infertile.

- coding of text: partner choice, age, outside pressure, discrimination
- 5. Xiāngqīn jì (qīngtīng) 相亲记 (倾听) , available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0209/c1008-29067236.html> (last visited on the 30th of April 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-09-2017).

- Words:
 - Age of man: (4)
 - Age of woman: (4)
 - Appearance of the woman: (1)
 - Blind date/arranged date: 相亲 (25)
 - Car in relation to men: (3)
 - Education of the man: (2)
 - Education of the woman: (1)
 - Destiny: 缘分 (3), 有缘 (1), 投缘 (1)
 - Having the same interests is important: (2)
 - Housing: (2)
 - Housing in relation to men: (2)
 - Hukou of the man: (1)
 - Leftover men: 剩男 (1)
 - Leftover women: 剩女 (2)
 - Love: 恋爱 (3), 热恋 (1), 爱情 (4)
 - Marriage: 婚恋 (1), 婚恋 (2), 结婚 (1)
 - Of marriageable age: 适婚 (1)
 - Online dating: 网恋 (3)
 - Parents are worried about their child not having found a partner yet: (3)
 - Predestined marriage: 姻缘 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (4)
 - To be a match: 匹配 (2)
 - To look for a partner: 征婚 (1)

- Work/income: (2)
- Work/income of the man: (1)
- Work/income of the woman: (3)
- Worried: 焦虑 (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - Having a mild/gentle character is positive (1)
 - women in particular:
 - According to others: she must not smoke and drink: (1)
 - Must not have a too strong economic position: (1)
- Side notes:
 - Author writes that more and more people are single and that many singles go on blind dates, that are an important way for many to meet a possible partner.
 - Parents are very worried about their child not having found a partner yet.
 - More and more people are dating through online methods.
 - The last paragraph is about a couple whom found each other on a new dating show.
- coding of text: outside pressure, dating, partner choice
- I. Shì hūn 适婚 (2700 hits in total):
 - 1. “Shuāng chuàng” shídài: Fù nǚ hái néng dǐng bànbiāntiān ma? (“双创”时代：妇女还能顶半边天吗？, available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0313/c69481-29142284.html> (last visited on the 5th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 03-13-2017).

Additional information: since this article is about female entrepreneurs, I did not note down how often the article spoke of the work/income of women.

- Words:
 - Education of woman: (1)
 - Get a divorce: 离婚 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (3)

- Love and marriage: 婚姻 (4), 适婚 (1)
- Patriarchal views: 传统观念 (1), 传统性别角色 (1), 传统偏见 (1), 传统桎梏 (1)
- To give birth/raise children: 有孩子 (1), 生 (1), 生儿育女 (1)
- To marry: 结婚 (1)
- To regard men as superior to women: 男尊女卑 (2), 男主外女主内 (1), 女子无才就是德 (1)
- Work/income of man: (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - find it hard to accept if their wives are entrepreneurs, because it is not according to traditional gender role division.
 - women in particular:
 - have different entrepreneurial experiences than men, due to differences in psychology, physiology and cultural views.
 - Household should be their primary focus, especially after having children
 - Female entrepreneurs have to overcome sexual prejudice.
 - (生儿育女, 是生物学赋予女性的重要使命).
 - Are all “gentle and soft” (温柔细腻), and therefore ‘less made’ for competitive businesses
 - Lack an innovative entrepreneurial spirit.
 - Due to their nature, are more into ‘playing it safe’ and less into taking risks; they are cautious and timid (小心谨慎)
- Side notes:
 - Increasingly many women are becoming entrepreneurs. These women have to overcome sexual prejudice. It is, e.g., hard for many to start a business due to lack of funds. Many borrow money from friends and family. Investors and banking institutions are less eager to lend money to women, because they believe that any setbacks will be more difficult to overcome for female entrepreneurs,

compared to male entrepreneurs. They also pay a lot of attention to if a women finds herself in a marriageable or childbearing age, which, they think, might also harm the business.

- Due to their nature, women are less made to be entrepreneurs than men, according to the article. However, some of their qualities might also prove to be effective in business (利器)
- Can the phenomenon of “strong women and weak men” (女强男弱) lead to a marriage crisis? According to the article there are three factors that endanger marriage when the wife is an entrepreneur: they no longer have the household as their main focus, men find it difficult to accept that their wives are entrepreneurs (goes against traditional gender role division), and when the wife’s business loses, this can endanger the marriage due to clashing views between husband and wife.
- A successful business is not dependent on your sexuality. If you want to start a business, you should have the courage to do so, be able to take risks and dare to innovate. Success is also dependent on the business environment and the seizing of opportunities.
- The article also partially follows the stories of a few female entrepreneurs.
 - coding of text: women, marriage, work and income, discrimination, character qualities, patriarchal views.
- J. Tuō dān 脱单 (1834 hits in total):
 - 1. [Wǎng lián zhòng guó] qīxì dào le, nǐ de duìxiàng hái zài lùshàng? [网连中国]七夕到了，你的对象还在路上？, available at <http://leaders.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0828/c58278-29497536.html> (last visited on the 6th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-28-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: 大龄 (1)
 - Age of man: (2)
 - Age of woman: (2)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (19), 相亲角 (5)

- Car of a man: (1)
- Education of man: (1)
- Fate: 缘分 (1)
- Find a partner: 找对象 (8), 脱单 (4)
- Force to marry: 逼婚 (1)
- House of a man: (3)
- Household/background: 人家 (1)
- Hukou: (3)
- Looks: 外貌 (1)
- Love and marriage: 恋爱 (2), 婚(姻) (1), 婚恋 (1)
- Lover/partner: 对象 (2), 伴侣 (2), 另一半 (1)
- Single: 单身 (10)
- To give birth to/raise children: 生子 (1)
- To marry: 结婚 (4)
- Work/income of a man: (2)
- Work/income of woman: (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - set up psychological barriers
 - are very picky
 - have little time and opportunities to meet new people
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - The amount of singles in China is increasing. Many people have difficulties finding a partner. An expert believes it is due to people setting up psychological boundaries and not having many opportunities to meet new people. Singles should be less picky. If they truly open themselves up and continue to believe in love and marriage, they will find a partner and happiness eventually.
 - When people are happy, the country can be more harmonious.

- This article talks about different people’s experiences with blind/arranged dates (相亲). Some people find it a good way to meet prospective partners, whereas others do not like it one bit.
 - coding of text: dating, outside pressure.
- K. Wèihūn 未婚 (29.163 hits):
 - 1. Érnǚ bù jiéhūn, diē mā bié jiāolù 儿女不结婚，爹妈别焦虑, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0203/c14739-29803684.html> (last visited on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 02-02-2018).

- Words:
 - Age: (3), 结婚年龄 (1)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (2)
 - (Establish a) household: 成家立业 (1)
 - Find a spouse: 择偶 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (5), 婚事 (1), 恋爱 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (1)
 - Patriarchal views: 传统观念 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (1)
 - To give birth to/to raise: 生娃 (1), 生育 (1), 养育 (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (3), 谈婚恋嫁 (1)
 - To worry: 焦虑 (1)
 - Unmarried: 未婚 (1)
 - “unmarried children phobia” (“sickness” parents get when their children do not marry): 儿女未婚恐惧症 (1)
 - Work/income: (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - are, when it comes to their love life, bothered excessively by their parents
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -

- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Parent are extremely worried when their children remain single.
 - According to the text, parents have to just accept it (必须得看开).
 - Parents can give advice, but should not make decisions for their children. Parents also should not worry or blame themselves for their child's singleness. This way, both parties will be more at ease.
 - This article addresses singles and states that they should let their parents know their thoughts and boundaries when it comes to marriage and parental interference.
- coding of text: marriage, outside pressure
- 2. Háizi bùxiǎng jiéhūn de wǔ gè lǐyóu: fùmǔ chúle lǐxìng hé háizi gōutōng, yě yào zhèngshì zhè zhǒng xiànxàng 孩子不想结婚的五个理由：父母除了理性和孩子沟通，也要正视这种现象, available at: <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0601/c14739-29310732.html> (last visited on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 06-01-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (4)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (8), 婚事 (1), 爱情 (5), 情爱 (2)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (2), 伴侣 (2)
 - Patriarchal views: 男大当婚, 女大当嫁 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (2)
 - To marry: 结婚 (8)
 - Unmarried: 未婚 (2)
 - Work/income: (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: According to the article, the reasons why people are single, are the following:
 - Have not found the right partner yet. Feelings are more important than they used to be in relationships. Singles

themselves do not know what they are looking for either.

Parents can help their children and give advice.

- Are afraid of marriage (有恐婚症), because they are surrounded by divorces and unlucky marriages.
- They are not done “messaging around” yet.
- They think marriage interferes with their other activities (like work). Parents should point to the benefits of marriage.
- They are increasingly independent.
- non-singles in general: -
- men in particular: -
- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Parents are worried, because their children are single.
 - According to an expert, parents ought to try to understand their children and better communicate with them. They ought to guide their children towards marriage. Parents also ought to realize that times are changing and that marriage is not a child’s only choice anymore.
- coding of text: marriage, outside pressure.
- 3. Niánqīng rén duì hūnyīn bù yuàn jiāng jiù zuì kànzòng de shì rén pǐn hé xìnggé 年轻人对婚姻不愿将就 最看重的是人品和性格, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0601/c14739-30027416.html> (last accessed on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 06-01-2018).

- Words:
 - Age: (1)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (3)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - Live together: 同居 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚(姻) (12), 婚恋 (6), 婚恋观 (3), 匹配 (1), 恋情 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 伴侣 (1), 结婚对象 (1), 对象 (1)

- Patriarchal views: 传统观念 (1)
- Single: 单身 (2)
- To marry: 结婚 (6)
- Unmarried: 未婚 (2)
- Well-matched in terms of status (saying): 门当户对 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - value character and personality the most (3)
 - most want to wait for the perfect partner. The rest either stays single or lowers expectations.
 - value capability (能力) and health (健康) in prospective partner
 - have relatively little knowledge on sexual health. They find it acceptable to live together and do not know how to have safe sex.
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - half of them value looks
 - Believe that a perfect life includes marriage
 - Marriage offers half of them a sense of security (安全感) or stability (稳定性).
 - women in particular:
 - Endorse marriage less than men do. Believe that staying single can also provide happiness.
 - Marriage offers most of them partially or entirely no sense of security (安全感) or stability (稳定性).
 - Have higher expectations of prospective partners due to romantic images
 - Due to high rate of divorces, many of them have lost hope and no longer believe in ideal partners. This results in the above-mentioned lack of a feeling of security and stability and even in a 'fear of marriage' (恐婚).
- Side notes:

- People are increasingly getting married later on.
 - The majority of singles values character and personality in a partner and wants to wait for the perfect partner.
 - According to an expert, singles have to make up their mind about what they want. He says that singles do not know what they want and therefore do not even know what they are waiting for. He says that husband and wife should 'grow and develop' together (我认为夫妻应该是一起成长的).
 - Many singles have relatively little knowledge on sexual health. According to an expert, society should educate more about sex.
 - coding of text: partner choice, character qualities, men, women, marriage
- 4. Rénmín wǎng píng: Shéi de dānshēn jīngdòngle tuán zhōngyāng? 人民网评: 谁的单身惊动了团中央? , available at <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0519/c1003-29286659.html> (last visited on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 05-19-2017).

- Words:
 - Age: (2)
 - Force to marry: 逼婚 (2), 包办婚姻 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚恋 (5), 婚姻 (3), 恋爱 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 伴侣 (2), 对象 (2)
 - Single: 单身 (5)
 - To find a partner: 脱单 (2)
 - To marry: 结婚 (1)
 - Unmarried: 未婚 (1)
 - Views on marriage: 婚恋观(念) (2), 家庭观 (1)
 - Work/income: (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - have difficulties finding a partner
 - want love and feelings as the basis of a relationship

- can be scared away if you interfere too much in helping them find a partner
- non-singles in general: -
- men in particular: -
- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Many people want to help singles find a partner, but this is not an easy thing to do.
 - What makes it even more complicated, is that views on marriage have changed. Marriage is an individual's choice. If the community interferes too much in this choice, this could scare the individual.
 - Feelings and love are now the most important in a relationship.
- coding of text: the lonely single, outside pressure, marriage
- 5. Xiānggǎng dānshēn nánǚ: Xiǎng shuō jiéhūn bù róngyì 香港单身男女：想说结婚不容易, available at <http://hm.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0118/c42272-30574986.html> (last visited on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 01-18-2019).

- Words:
 - Age in general: (1)
 - Age of woman: (5)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (2)
 - Education in general: (1)
 - Education of woman: (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Lonely: 孤独 (2)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (1), 婚恋 (1)
 - Partner (for dating): 约会对象 (3), 伴侣 (2), 另一半 (1), 对象 (1)
 - Patriarchal views: 传统婚姻观念 (1)
 - Single: 单身 (9)
 - Speed dating: 极速约会 (1)
 - Status: (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (4), 嫁 (3)

- Unmarried: 未婚 (2)
- Work/income: (3)
- Work/income of man: (1)
- Work/income of woman: (2)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - described as lonely
 - want someone with a relatively status and good job, like a doctor, lawyer or accountant.
 - Have many requirements for a future spouse:
 - Outward appearance
 - Height
 - Income
 - Household background
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular: -
 - women in particular:
 - postpone marriage to work and study
 - want to marry upwards.
- Side notes:
 - Speed dating is popular, since it gives people the opportunity to not waste much time, but still be able to look for a partner.
 - There are more single women than single men in Hongkong. Women also continue to postpone marriage, due to the fact that they now receive higher education and have better jobs. It also has to do with the fact that women, according to traditional views, have to marry upwards and there are not enough men to choose from.
 - According to dating agencies, singles have many requirements, especially concerning a prospective partner's appearance, work and background. However, people from completely different background and with different jobs sometimes still get married.
 - Also, Hongkong women are increasingly often getting married to mainland China's men. Firstly, because it is easier to come into contact with men from the mainland. Secondly, because the financial

status of men from the mainland has improved due to China's economic progress.

- coding of text: dating, women, partner choice
- 6. Yīxiē niánqīng rénwéi shà bù yuàn jiéhūn 一些年轻人为啥不愿结婚, available at <http://fashion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0820/c1014-31304767.html> (last visited on the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 08-20-2019).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished three times (in the fashion, health, and society edition of *People's Daily*). One of the texts (the first one that was published) was longer, because it had added an introduction of three sentences. Two of the texts were published on the 19th of August 2019 with a four hour time interval in between, the other text was published on the 20th of August 2019.

- Words:
 - Age in general: (15)
 - Age of women: (7)
 - Car: 买车 (1), 有(没有)车 (4)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (1)
 - Dowry: 彩礼 (1)
 - Education: (3)
 - Education of the man: (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (13)
 - Housing of men: 买房 (2), 看房子 (1), 有(没有)房 (5)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (33), 谈恋爱 (2), 已婚 (1), 恋爱 (1)
 - Partner: 伴侣 (2)
 - Patriarchal views: (传统)婚育观(念)(6)
 - Status of the man: (1)
 - Single: 单身 (3)
 - To find a partner: 脱单 (1)
 - To give birth/raise kids: 生(孩)子 (3), 育 (4), 养育 (1), 生育 (5), 出生 (2)
 - To marry: (结)婚 (44), 嫁 (1), 成家 (2)

- Unmarried: 未婚 (4)
- Work/income: (9)
- Work/income of the man: (3)
- Work/income of the woman: (8)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - more often think that getting married is no longer a necessity.
 - Many of them indicated they do not marry now, because they are poor.
 - Have more and more demands of future partners
 - Many stay single because they are afraid to lose their freedom, themselves and become poor after marriage.
 - Are, in general, getting married later or not at all
 - non-singles in general:
 - get (financial) support (支持) from and looked after (照顾) by their partner
 - have the possibility to have children (生儿育女) (1)
 - the above-written two things are decreasing
 - have many responsibilities (5)
 - men in particular:
 - feel the need to buy a house and car first (4)
 - need to have a good education background and status and a stable job
 - women in particular:
 - more and more and choosing to get married later
 - want a man to have a car and house first (2)
 - often do not want to marry because they want to stay independent
 - many of them are economically independent
 - many of them lead fulfilling lives
 - many of them are afraid to give up their fulfilling single lives when they see their married friends and bad marriages. This view is increasing

- they do not want marriage to affect their lives so much (jobs, meeting with friends). Many of them are especially afraid that marriage will affect their jobs.
- Side notes:
 - The change in marriage views has many consequences. Marriage rates are continuing to drop, especially in big cities. Singles are getting married later or not at all, which the article describes as something 'unfortunate' (一件不容乐观的事情). The decline of marriages has a direct effect on the declining birthrate. The population will get smaller and the aging of the population will speed up. This is described by the article as a population crisis (这是一个人口危机的过程). Furthermore, it will have an effect on the Chinese economy, culture and sustainable development.
 - Getting married, thus, is not a matter of the individual, but of the entire society. Although an individual's choices should be respected and singles should be given enough 'private space' to make their own decisions, the author believes that 'country and society should lead' and help young people establish their views on marriage.
 - Singles have different views on marriage and different reasons for staying single.
 - One big reason for men to not marry, is because they indicated they are poor or do not have enough financial resources. They stated they need a car and house first. Also often stated as qualifications for men are a good education, status and stable job.
 - A big reason for women not to marry is because they do not want to give up their fulfilling and financially independent single lives.
 - The benefits of getting married are decreasing; people are leading fulfilling lives and marriage only brings responsibilities.
 - When there is talk of a man's job/income, it is about the need for a man to have a good job/income. When the article talks about a woman's work/income, it's about women afraid of losing their jobs when getting married or combining their job with household duties.
- coding of text: marriage, partner choice, patriarchal views, men, women.

- 7. Yòng gǎnqíng bǎ rìzi cā liàng (mínshēng guān) 用感情把日子擦亮(民生观), available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2019/1021/c1008-31410116.html> (last visited on the 2nd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 10-21-2019).

- Words:

- A woman should do whatever her husband orders (saying): 嫁鸡随鸡嫁狗随狗 (1)
- Choose a spouse: 择偶 (1)
- Dowry: 彩礼 (1)
- Household: 家庭 (6)
- Love and marriage: 已婚 (1), 婚(姻) (5), 爱情 (3), 婚恋 (3)
- To look for a marriage partner: 找对象 (3)
- To marry: 结婚 (2)
- To worry: 焦虑 (1), 担心 (1)
- Unmarried: 未婚 (1)

- Descriptions of people:

- singles in general:
- non-singles in general:
- men in particular:
 - worried about being single
 - dowry is less important; ambition (志气) is more important now.
- women in particular:

- Side notes:

- You can learn to stop worrying about being single.
- Along with society, the nature of relationships and households are changing for the better; men and women are turning more into equals. This is also portrayed in the media.

- coding of text: marriage, men, patriarchal views

- 8. Zhōngguó jiéhūn lǜ zhúnián zǒudī niánqīng rén: Liàn'ài dū gù bù shàng tán, zěnmē jiéhūn? 中国结婚率逐年走低 年轻人：恋爱都顾不上谈，怎么结婚？, available at <http://fashion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0628/c1014-30092960.html> (last visited on

the 3rd of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 06-28-2018).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished two times (twice in the fashion, and once in the society edition of *People's Daily*). One of the texts (the last one that was published) was shorter, because it omitted the first two sentences. Both texts were published on the 27th of June 2018 with an eleven hour time interval in between, the other text was published on the 28th of June 2018.

▪ Words:

- Age: (8), 适婚 (2), 婚龄 (2), 结婚年龄 (5)
- Aging population: 老龄化 (4)
- Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (1)
- Car of men: 有车 (1)
- Education: (5)
- Household: 家庭 (7), 成家 (1)
- Housing: 房价 (3), 租房 (1)
- Housing, related to men: 房价 (1), 买房 (2), 房子 (1), 合租房 (1), 有房 (1)
- Love and marriage: 恋爱 (2), 恋情 (1), 婚姻 (10)
- Must marry: concerning men (1), concerning women (1)
- Of marriageable age: 适婚 (2), 婚龄 (1)
- Patriarchal views: 婚育观念 (1)
- Single: 单身 (2)
- To have/raise children: 生(子) (11), 育儿 (1)
- To marry: (结)婚 (39), 嫁 (2)
- Unmarried: 未婚 (1)
- Work/income: (5)
- Work/income of men: (1)

▪ Descriptions of people:

- singles in general:
 - Many singles do not have the time to date.
 - For many, normal life is already costly, let alone having a household.

- Increasingly, singles just want a partner that matches them well and that they can communicate with.
 - Increasingly marry late or not at all. Marrying is no longer seen as a must, but as a personal choice.
- non-singles in general:
- men in particular:
 - Housing prices, to a certain degree, keep them from marriage and dating
 - must have a house before marriage
- women in particular:
- Side notes:
 - The amount of people who marry is decreasing.
 - The marriage rate of an area seems to be connected to the degree of economic development. People from the economically wealthier and more developed areas marry less, whereas people from poorer and less developed areas marry more.
 - Also, for many, marriage is too costly. Many men are not in a position to buy a house, even though they recognize that this is a marriage requirement for many women.
 - Increasingly, singles just want a partner that matches them well and that they can communicate with. Views on marriage are changing and straying from traditional views is increasingly accepted by society. Marriage is no longer the only option.
 - Urbanization, education and late marriage are the reasons for the declining marriage rate.
 - Specialists believe that this is all a product of society's economic development, and that society should honor diversification more and allow individuals to make their own choices. Also, young people should be more encouraged to marry and have children. Furthermore, the government should promote and implement laws that will benefit the above.
 - If nothing happens, this will eventually affect society's birth rate, structure, and, eventually, its economic development. China already has an aging population.

- Part of this article is dedicated to the declining marriage rate in other countries. I left this part out of my analysis.
- There are also more divorces, most of them initiated by women. Main reason for divorce is that people no longer feel the same for each other as they did at the beginning. Women are also more financially independent, are protected by the law and no longer need a man. Moreover, people have longer lifespans and when they retire, many of them decide to divorce, because they cannot stand being around their partner.
 - coding of text: marriage, partner choice, patriarchal views.
- L. Zé'ǒu 择偶 (8963 hits in total):
 - 1. “90 Hòu” de àiqíng guān “90 后”的爱情观, available at <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0322/c1008-29881604.html> (last visited on the 6th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 03-22-2018).

- Words:
 - Age: (1)
 - Age of man: (1)
 - Age of woman: (2)
 - Blind/arranged date: 相亲 (2)
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (2)
 - Considerate: 体贴 (2)
 - Education: (1)
 - Education of man: (2)
 - Education of woman: (1)
 - Family-responsibility: 家庭责任 (1)
 - Family role: 家庭角色 (1)
 - Find a partner: 找对象 (2)
 - Force to marry: 催婚 (1)
 - Gentle and soft: 温柔 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (17), 家庭(条件/关系) (3), 爱情 (1)
 - Housewife: 家庭主妇 (2)

- Like-minded: 志同道合 (2), 三观一致 (6)
- Looks: 颜值 (4), 好看的容颜 (1)
- Looks of man: (2)
- Looks of woman: (2)
- Love and marriage: 婚姻 (3), (谈)恋爱 (5), 恋情 (1), 拍拖 (1), 婚礼 (2), 爱情 (4)
- Lover/partner: 另一半 (2), 对象 (3), 伴侣 (6), 对方 (5)
- Talent: 才华 (6)
- To be well-matched in terms of social status: 门当户对 (saying) (3)
- To marry: 嫁 (1), 结婚 (5), 谈婚论嫁 (1)
- Views on love/marriage: 爱情观 (1)
- Work/income: 经济条件 (1), 收入(水平) (2), (1)
- Work/income of man: (5)
- Work of woman: (3)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - non-singles in general:
 - men in particular:
 - must take family responsibility and assume right position in their household according to family roles (家庭角色)
 - must take care of his family
 - want a wife, lover and friend
 - one man says that equality and communication are very important in a relationship, and so is independence/having your own life. He further states that it is important that both husband and wife will assume their position in the household: one has to be more strong and masculine, make decisions and take the lead, the other has to be more soft and follow. They have to work together.
 - Another man says he does not have a high education or fancy job, but he wants a healthy woman, who wants to share everything with him and work together

- Another man says that it is most important to find someone who fits you, but does not think it is important to pay attention to family status and wealth. He also thinks you should not pursue looks. He wants someone who wants to work together with him and is like-minded.
- women in particular:
 - the older they are, the harder it will be for them to marry
 - need a man with a good financial background to take care of them
 - not necessarily interested in someone with a good financial background, but want a 'like-minded spirit'
 - do want someone with a somewhat equal social status (门当户对)
 - do not find looks and talent the most important in their prospective partner, but do pay attention to it
 - have to hurry to get married as they grow older.
 - must take family responsibility and assume right position in their household according to family roles (家庭角色)
 - one of the women states that her mother was always her big example: as soon as her mother returned from work, she was a good housewife (母亲不论在外面多么风光精彩、艰辛劳累, 一回到家马上切换成普通家庭主妇模式). Her father worked a lot, never complained, and always knew how to make her and her mother laugh. Her mother always taught her how to do household duties. The woman sees this as natural family responsibilities
 - have to be sweet and look after the family/household
- Side notes:
 - 90's college students look most at the tenderness, considerateness and family values of a prospective partner. Furthermore important were family relations, level of income and health status.
 - Talent and looks are not as important, because looks can fade and talent does not mean anything in a relationship if people are not like-minded.

- The article looks at several singles and their criteria for prospective spouses.
- coding of text: men, women, partner choice, marriage, character qualities, patriarchal views.
- 2. Hái wèi zhǎo bù dào lìng yī bàn fā chóu? Sān zhāo zhù nǐ zǎo rì xún dé yì zhōng rén 还为找不到另一半发愁？三招助你早日寻得意中人, available at <http://lxjk.people.cn/n1/2019/0118/c404177-30575345.html> (last visited on the 5th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 01-18-2019).

Additional information: This text was, in its entirety, republished two times (once in the health, and once in the science edition of *People's Daily*). One of the texts was published on the 18th of January 2019, the other text was published on the 19th of February 2019.

- Words:
 - Age: 适婚年龄 (2), 同龄人 (1)
 - Choose a partner: 择偶 (1)
 - Education: (1)
 - Find a partner: 脱单 (10)
 - Force to marry: 催婚 (1)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Love and marriage: 婚姻 (1), 恋爱 (1), 爱情 (1), 谈恋爱 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 另一半 (4), 对方 (4)
 - Single: 单身 (7)
 - To give birth/raise children: 生子 (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (2)
 - Work/income: (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general:
 - their expectations are too high
 - are under a lot of pressure to get married
 - are unwilling to put any effort into finding a partner
 - are afraid of marriage

- are not willing to fully open themselves up to a prospective partner
- non-singles in general: -
- men in particular: -
- women in particular: -
- Side notes:
 - Finding a partner and starting a household is a very important part of people's lives, yet many people are still single at marriageable age. What are the main sources of pressure for these singles?
 - Age is the most important source
 - Peers have already married and have children
 - Why are singles not successful in finding a partner? It is because they often have one of these attitudes:
 - They think they are not good enough or think too low of themselves
 - They too easily submit themselves and accept a bad situation
 - They think marriage is dangerous and destructive, and are afraid of it; they close themselves off.
 - They are not willing to put in any effort, because they think love and marriage are fated things.
 - They are not willing to fully open up their heart to their partner
 - By following the tips in the article, people will more easily be able to find a partner. In addition, they should try to make more friends and lower their expectations of a prospective partner.
 - coding of text: outside pressure, partner choice, marriage, dating
- 3. Nǐ néng jiēshòu jiě dì liàn ma? Xiǎoxīn bèi kèbǎn yìnxìàng míhuòle shuāngyǎn 你能接受姐弟恋吗? 小心被刻板印象迷惑了双眼, available at <http://lxjk.people.cn/n1/2017/0919/c404177-29544901.html> (last visited on the 6th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 09-19-2017).

- Words:

- Age: (3)
- Choose a spouse: 择偶 (1)
- Household: 家庭 (1)
- Love and marriage: 婚姻 (1), 爱情 (1)
- Love between an older woman and a younger man: 姐弟恋 (10)
- Lover/partner: 情侣 (1), 伴侣 (2), 对方 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - want a younger woman/should be older than the woman
 - should be superior/stronger than the woman
 - women in particular:
 - want an older man/should be younger than the man
 - should be inferior/weaker than the man
- Side notes:
 - According to a saying: if women are older than men, the household will be happier
 - In reality, relationships in which the woman is older, are frowned upon. This has to do with stereotypes. It is believed that the man should be strong/superior and the woman weak/inferior, which includes that a man should be older. When this is not the case, it is frowned upon.
 - Age should not be a decisive factor in dating
 - How should we regard the relationship in which a man is younger and a woman is older? We should acknowledge that there are stereotypes and not let ourselves be guided by them, instead respect individual's choices. Also, people in such a relationship should not let themselves be stopped by what others have to say about their relationship and give up on true love. Friends and family of these people should support the couple and not disapprove of them.
- coding of text: dating, men, women, age, discrimination, patriarchal values, outside pressure

- 4. Nǚxìng xǐhuān shǎo shēngbìng de nánrén 女性喜欢少生病的男人, available at <http://health.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0928/c14739-30318598.html> (last visited on the 6th of May 2020).

(Publishing date: 09-28-2019).

- Words:
 - Choose a spouse: 择偶 (2)
 - Household: 家庭 (1)
 - Lover/partner: 对象 (1), 伴侣 (1)
 - Strong: 强壮 (1)
 - Squeamish: 娇气 (1)
 - Tenacious and unyielding: 坚韧不拔的人 (1)
 - To marry: 结婚 (1)
- Descriptions of people:
 - singles in general: -
 - non-singles in general: -
 - men in particular:
 - being strong in times of sickness is even more important than how a man looks
 - man who are more fearless are more desired by women, even if they are not as good looking
 - must be strong, tenacious and unyielding
 - must not be squeamish and weak.
 - a man must not be an extra burden to a household, but an extra helping hand
 - women in particular:
 - want a strong man
 - find strength and braveness when facing sickness more appealing than a man's looks
- Side notes:
 - Women are more attracted to men who are less sick
- coding of text: men, women, partner choice, character qualities.