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An Unfair Stereotype: Chinese students' views on the 'All Chinese people eat dog meat'-stereotype

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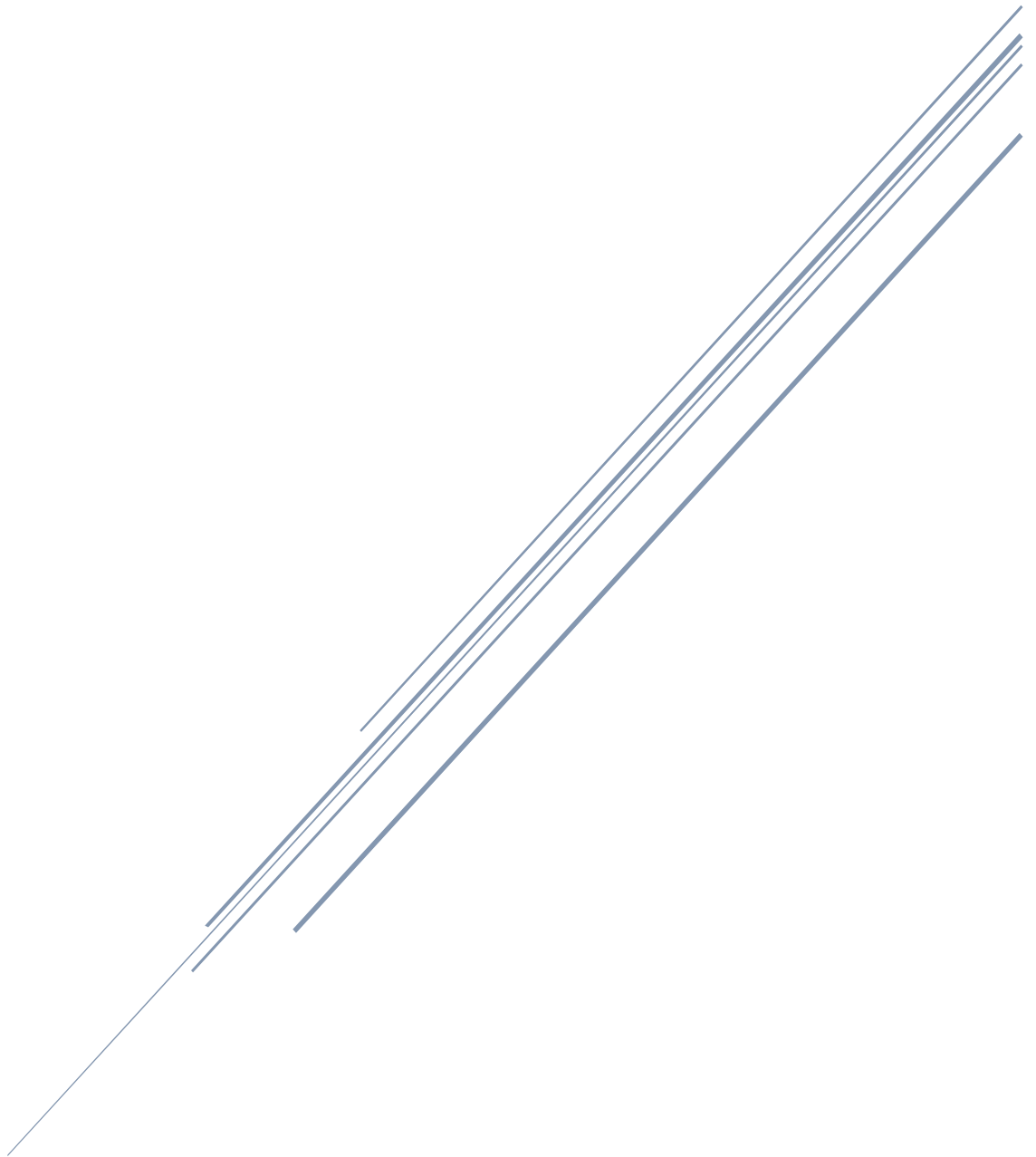
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AN UNFAIR STEREOTYPE

Chinese students' views on the 'All Chinese people eat dog meat'-stereotype



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1. Introduction

“You are Chinese, so do you eat dog meat?” A question often uttered by people who believe all Chinese people eat dogs. This generally believed stereotype has existed for decades and maybe even hundreds of years even though it is partly false and taken out of context throughout the years (Li et al. 2017, p.529). I will elaborate on this concept later on in the thesis. Right now, this universal belief in the stereotype has caused many misconceptions about China and Chinese people. These misconceptions are in turn reinforced by online news articles such as “Tragedy as 370 dogs and cats die on board “death truck” in China headed for brutal meat trade” (Humane Society International 2022). These articles are the fuel needed by organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), The UK-based World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the Chinese Animal Protection Network (CAPN) (Oh, Jackson 2011). One of their goals is to ban dog meat consumption around the globe, with a special focus on China and South Korea. In both China and South Korea, dog meat consumption is still very much present to this day, even if it is on a smaller scale than most people believe it to be. The global critique and disapproval of this practice have led to some restrictions regarding the practice. In 1983, the Korean government attempted to restrict the distribution of dog meat leading up to the 1988 Olympics in Seoul to avoid any negative media attention regarding this practice (Czajkowski 2014). They did so by banning the sale of dog meat in urban areas, especially in tourist areas. The ban is still in place today but has not been enforced since the 1988 Olympics in Seoul (Czajkowski 2014, p.49).

Moreover, China has attempted to restrict dog meat consumption as well. After the outbreak of Covid-19 which originated in Wuhan, China, the Chinese government took more precautions for the people's lives, health and safety. One of the precautions taken was a ban on wildlife trade and consumption in February 2020. This ban was followed by a ban on the consumption of dog meat in Shenzhen in April 2020 (CGTN 2020). In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture listed dogs as “companion animals” instead of livestock and poultry for the first time in April 2020 (Li, 2020). All these regulations are supposed to limit dog meat production, distribution and consumption. However, there is one place in China where the practice is still celebrated annually with a festival: the Lychee and Dog Meat Festival in Yulin, Guanxi. Over the course of ten days people slaughter, sell, buy and consume dogs for their meat. During this period, people visit Yulin from neighbouring cities and villages to attend the ‘festival.’

One example that shows the cruel world behind the consumption of dog meat and the Yulin Dog Meat Festival that organizations like PETA want to ban is the short documentary on the dog meat trade in Dazhou, Sichuan. This short documentary shows hundreds of dogs locked up in small cages in poor conditions, some barely alive and some dead (Lao Fengyang 2021). One of my respondents, Emma, brought this video to my attention. She is strictly against dog meat consumption and everything it encompasses, which I will explore further in one of the chapters.

Besides PETA and Emma, there are many other organizations and people who disapprove of dog meat consumption. These people are not only people from foreign countries but also Chinese people who are born and raised in the country that attracts a great deal of media attention regarding this topic every year: China. However, the "all Chinese people eat dogs"-stereotype still prevails to this day. As I will elaborate on in the analysis chapters, Chinese students still experience the effects of this stereotype today. Considering a large number of Chinese people are so heavily against the practice, we should be able to disclaim this stereotype as it would be quite paradoxical to be against dog meat consumption but still engage in the practice. This leads me to wonder what Chinese students think of this stereotype and whether or not they agree with it.

This study is divided into nine chapters. In the second chapter, I give an overview of and elaborate on existing literature on consumption, stereotypes and dog meat consumption. In the third chapter, the methodology, I explain what type of research I conducted, why I limited the interviewees to certain specifications, and how I analysed the results. This chapter is followed by the fourth chapter which studies where the stereotype comes from and how it still prevails to this day. In the fifth chapter, I study the reasons why certain groups of people in China still consume dog meat and more importantly, why not all Chinese people eat dog meat. In the sixth chapter, I focus on what the target group, Chinese students, think of the consumption of dog meat. I dive deeper into whether or not they morally approve of the practice or if they think it should be banned. In chapter seven, I further examine if the stereotype affects Chinese students' daily lives and, if it does, what the negative and positive effects entail. In the eighth chapter, I explore if and in what ways the stereotype is unfair. I refer to the results of the previous chapters in order to conclude the research in the conclusion chapter. The thesis concludes with suggestions for future research related to this topic.

2. Literature Review

Throughout different kinds of media platforms such as newspapers, blogs, and other social media platforms, some Chinese foods and dishes are often described as 'bizarre,' 'disgusting,' or 'weird.' For example, I have come across several travel websites and personal travel blogs that posted an article containing the words 'bizarre' or 'disgusting' in the title.¹ Among others, thousand-year-old eggs, sheep penis and stinky tofu are mentioned in those articles. Even though these foods are considered quite controversial in Western countries, they are regularly consumed throughout China. Moreover, in

¹ Very Hungry Nomads. <https://www.veryhungrynomads.com/10-bizarre-foods-china/>. M. David Scott, 2020. <https://listverse.com/2020/03/16/bizarre-chinese-food/>

specific areas in China, eating dog meat is normal and part of the culture even though it has been protested and contested throughout the world and locally in China as well (Li, Sun, Yu 2017). But why are these foods still legal and regularly consumed in China?

Scholars in many fields have addressed the concept of food consumption and consumption overall. Robert Bocock is considered one of the founders of studies on consumption. In his book *Consumption* (1993) he provides a critical overview of the role of consumption and consumerism in early modern Western society during the mid and late twentieth century. Among other things, he argues that “modern consumption is based upon symbolic systems and meanings, symbols which are linked with alienated forms of creativity, as in the design of modern consumer goods and the advertisements for them” (1993, p.49). With this statement, Bocock argues that consumption is no longer limited to the basic animal functions like eating, drinking, and procreating, but also includes, as we define consumption in today's society, the symbolic meanings behind consuming, for example, clothing or works of art (1993, p.49). He goes on to say “Modern consumers are physically passive, but mentally they are very busy” (1993, p.51). Consumption is no longer just a physical activity like eating or drinking, but rather includes and focuses on mental activity and the experience that is taken away from consuming something.

One of the authors Bocock mentions and whose theory he uses to form his own argument is Bourdieu. Bourdieu is also one of the founders of studies on consumption. One of his main theories is that people's social position in society can be determined by their social, economic, and cultural capital (1980). According to Bourdieu, differences in social class are shown through people's consumption behaviour (1980, p.243). Bocock uses and builds on Bourdieu's argument by stating that “consumption [...] can be seen as a set of social and cultural practices which serve as a way of establishing differences between social groups, not merely as a way of expressing differences which are already in place [...]” (1993, p.64). He thus argues that the way people consume products, brands, and services forms social class identities and in turn a person's own identity. By consuming an item, the consumer creates a sense of identity through the display of purchased goods (1993, p.67).

What Bocock fails to include in his argument regarding the relationship between consumption and the sense of identity is the influence of the concept of national identity. However, Enric Castillo and Sabina Mihelj (2018) did succeed in researching this connection whilst studying consumer nationalism. They established the concepts of political consumer nationalism and symbolic consumer nationalism. The purpose of these concepts is to break down the different kinds of nationalist incentives for consuming products or brands. They argue that one can have political or symbolic nationalist feelings when it comes to consuming Western brands for example (2018, p.566).

National identity stands directly across from the concept of stereotypes. National identity is mostly defined by the person it concerns, whereas a stereotype is constructed by observers using

distinct features to more easily distinguish different groups (Bordalo, 2014). Sociological scholars often describe the concept of stereotypes as “cognitions held by one social group about another social group (Elligan, 2008), or as oversimplified standardized images (Moore, 2006) (Lebedko 2013, p.6).” In addition, since a stereotype is formed and created by an observer outside of the group it concerns, it may be based on unfair judgement or a distorted image. This in turn could cause biased behaviour toward that group in the form of discriminatory acts (Bordalo 2014, p.1). In his book, Pedro Bordalo (2014) takes an economical approach to research where stereotypes come from and how they change. He argues that stereotypes take part in the construction of identity. He shows “how stereotypes provide fresh insight into the notion of identity, both in terms of distorted beliefs about one own’s abilities (self-identity) and about others (discrimination) (p.40).” Another theory, proposed by Steven Fein and Steven J. Spencer (1997), discusses how the bigger part of manifestations of prejudice and stereotypes come from “the motivation to maintain a feeling of self-worth and self-integrity (p.173).” In other words, a threat to one’s self-image could motivate that person to derogate others. Fein and Spencer’s conclusion mentions that “engaging in stereotyping and prejudice [...] can be an attractive way for many individuals to feel better about themselves in the absence of more readily available means of alleviating self-image threats or of affirming oneself (p.187).”

Furthermore, many scholars have written about stereotyping in relation to China or Chinese people (Fu et al. 2022; Jørgensen, Law, King 2018; Lu, Liu, Liao, Wang 2020; Nikitina, Furuoka 2013; Shao et al 2023; Stone, Wong 1998). The topics range from stereotypes about astrological signs to gender to Chinese tourists. It is important to note that most of these studies are psychological or economic explanations and that these are not my field of expertise. However, some of the arguments made remain useful for this study. For example, according to Stone and Wong (1998), Chinese people have their own regional stereotypes. By stating many examples that emerged from their questionnaire, they measure Hong Kong Chinese perceptions of the characteristics and behaviour of Shanghainese, Western and Hong Kongese businesspeople (p.8). They found that Shanghainese businesspeople were often considered arrogant, the toughest negotiators and the best businesspeople in China by the Hong Kong Chinese. On the contrary, Westerners were seen as “being more environmentally conscious, more concerned about quality, less secretive; less smart as business people and as feeling superior to the Chinese (p.16).” Furthermore, in another study, Jackson G. Lu et al. (2020) explore endogenous stereotype formation from social reality and exogenous stereotype formation without social reality. In other words, they research that stereotypes can form outside of pre-existing social reality, yet still produce discrimination that can then shape social reality.

Another widely studied topic is the different uses of food for political purposes. Appadurai (1981) has been one of the front-runners in studying the multiple symbolic uses of food. He explores the term ‘gastro-politics’ which, according to him, entails “conflict or competition over specific cultural or economic resources as it emerges in social transactions around food (p.495).” Michaela

DeSoucey (2010) used Appadurai's study as a basis for creating a new concept called gastrationalism. Gastrationalism is "a form of claimsmaking and a project of collective identity [...] it is responsive to and reflective of the political ramifications of connecting nationalist projects with food culture at local levels (p.433)." It thus is the use of food production, consumption etcetera, to promote national identity using a political agenda. Several other scholars have based their studies on or added to this concept in their studies (Edwards 2019; Leer 2019; Wright, Annes 2013). The regional differences in business people's character traits pointed out by Stone and Wong, relate to Jason Edwards' argument regarding gastrationalism. In his 2019 article "*O, The Roast Beef of Old England!* Brexit and Gastrationalism", he argues that gastrationalism is a myth because authentically national cuisines and dishes do not exist. According to Edwards, "there are [...] only kinds of food and styles of eating that relate to region and locality, and that are mediated in diverse ways by class, religious and ethnic identity (p.631)." Based on Stone and Wong, and Edwards' research, both stereotypes regarding character traits and different foods and cooking styles relate to region and locality. With this statement, it is also important to look at Arjun Appadurai's work again. Appadurai (1981) studied gastronomy and gastro-politics within Hindu culture in South Asia. He states that one fundamental fact about food is its capability to 'mobilize strong emotions' (p.494). This, in turn, is linked to his main argument stating food in South Asia can either 'homogenize the actors who transact in it, or it can serve to heterogenize them' (p.494). In other words, food can be used to bring people together, or it can be used to create distance, differences and segmentation.

In the field of consumption, Chinese food culture and consumption in China have been studied extensively by many authors (Li and Tan 2009; Tian, Tian, Dandan, Wang 2018; Wang, De Steur, Gellynck and Verbeke 2015). For example, Robert Guang Tian et al. (2018) studied the development of the traditional Chinese food culture and its social-political aspects. For example during the Warring States Period, herb-eaters were of a lower social class than meat-eaters. Only emperors were allowed to eat meat whilst normal peasants and citizens ate vegetables (p.352). He goes on to state that one of the reasons Chinese food culture has been so inventive and innovative is the long history of food traditions (p.351). This description of a traditional and historic food culture aligns with the history of dog meat consumption in China. Peter J. Li, Jiang Sun and Dezhi Yu (2017) lay out the history of dog meat consumption in China from the Shang Dynasty (1558-1046 BC) to the end of Mao's reign. It started out as a delicacy in the Shang and Zhou dynasty and became a household food in the Han Dynasty. However, dog meat was banished during the Sui and Tang Dynasties more often. Over time, it turned into a general feeling of closeness towards dogs and them being labelled as companions.

China is not the only country where dog meat is still consumed on a regular basis. Dog meat consumption in South Korea has been the topic of worldwide debate for many years (Czajkowski 2014; Dugnoille 2019; Dugnoille 2022; Oh, Jackson 2011). According to Claire Czajkowski (2014), raising dogs for dog meat consumption falls under a legal grey area. Legislation on the slaughter of

dogs is not specified. Only South Korea's Animal Protection Act includes anti-cruelty provisions, but nowhere is it specified that the slaughter of dogs for dog meat consumption is illegal (p.48). Contrary to South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have all banned the slaughter and sale of dogs for consumption. For example, Taiwan's 2001 Animal Protection Act defines all dogs as pets and bans pet killing for consumption (p.58). The change in legislation in these Asian countries was fuelled by a global discussion with U.S. or European-based organizations who voiced their opinion on dog meat consumption. Their mission encompasses banning dog meat consumption in South Korea. Together with national Korean organizations, they argue against Korean nationalism linking dog meat consumption with Korean identity and accusing opponents of Western imperialism (p.58-59). Minjoo Oh and Jeffrey Jackson (2011) also discuss resistance against global and national pressure to reform the traditional practice of dog meat consumption to conform to opposing organizations' rules and demands. According to Oh and Jackson, dog meat consumption in South Korea seems to continue to exist while simultaneously South Korean protesters of this practice are growing in numbers as well (Oh & Jackson 2011, p.47).

The aim of this study is to determine whether or not the 'all Chinese people eat dog meat'-stereotype is legitimate. To achieve this goal, I have studied the history of dog meat consumption in China and in South Korea, how dog meat consumption is viewed in the present time, and researched the concept of stereotypes. The notion of stereotypes plays an important role in the field of sociology and anthropology. We define and judge people, among other ways, through stereotypes. Therefore, to understand other people more thoroughly, we need to study certain stereotypes and test their accuracy. This is significant for the fields of sociology and anthropology. By interviewing Chinese students located in the Netherlands about the stereotype of all Chinese people consuming dog meat, we will be one step closer to understanding certain groups of Chinese people more completely. Even though this research is a drop in the bucket, it needs to be executed to slowly fill up the gap in sociology regarding our knowledge of Chinese people as a whole. Furthermore, it sheds more light on the worldwide discussed animal rights issue regarding the slaughter of dogs for consumption. The respondents of this study have strong opinions on this matter which mostly align with many organizations that are fighting for animal rights and for the banishment of dog meat consumption (Oh, Jackson 2011). This in turn shows that studying people can lead to findings different from our expectations and, more importantly, different from the established stereotypes. With this in mind, this study will answer the question "In what ways do Chinese students view consuming dog meat in China as an unfair stereotype?"

3. Methodology

My objective was to determine to what extent the stereotype of all Chinese people eating dog meat is accurate. To do so, I interviewed ten Chinese students who are studying in the Netherlands. To capture

the experience of the target research group, I conducted one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with each interviewee. The shortest interview lasted 30 minutes and the longest lasted just over an hour. I am using semi-structured interviews, because this method is the best way to collect the interviewees' perspectives and ask follow-up questions based on their answers in order to get more detailed answers. The interviews were conducted in English. This was the best option because English is a common ground for both me and the interviewees. Both parties could express themselves, besides their native language, best in English. Some interviewees occasionally made some grammatical or syntactical errors and sometimes used Mandarin Chinese words to describe certain phenomena or foods as they knew I speak Mandarin. The words between square brackets indicate words that have been added in order to make a well-formed sentence.

To collect as many Chinese students who were willing to participate in my research and who fit the criteria, I posted a 'story' on Instagram in both English and Mandarin. This message contained a description of the subject of the thesis and called upon Chinese students living in the Netherlands between the age of 20 and 30. After three replies, one of the respondents asked me if I needed her to forward the message to her friends and classmates. She then sent the message in a WeChat group chat with other students living in the Netherlands. Not every single person in this group chat knows each other. Through mutual contacts, students are added to the chat with the purpose of creating a small community for Chinese students who live in the Netherlands. Most of them study in Rotterdam or Amsterdam. Their studies were mostly economic or business-related. This forwarding resulted in enough respondents to set up meetings and conduct the interviews. All of the respondents contacted me individually except for one person who was the contact person for both herself and one other interviewee. Six of the interviews were conducted in person either at my home or at the interviewee's home and four of the interviews were conducted online via a Microsoft Teams meeting. Whether or not the interview was conducted online or in person was the interviewee's decision. I did state to every interviewee that conducting the interview in person benefits the process, but I left the choice to them. Some of them did not have the time or the resources to meet up in person which resulted in four interviews being conducted online. Fortunately, the connection during all four interviews was functioning very well and no issues arose during the interview process.

I have chosen Chinese students who are living in the Netherlands to interview because they are more cosmopolitan than Chinese students who have never left China as they have lived abroad before and have had impressions from foreign cultures and peoples. The term 'cosmopolitan' here means they have more foreign experiences because they live in a foreign European country than most Chinese students who live in China and have never lived abroad. Even though these students might remain in their ethnic bubble while living abroad, during their studies they are forced to interact with people from all kinds of ethnicities with many different beliefs and values. Furthermore, they would have more encounters with other cultures even if the Netherlands is the first and only foreign country

they have lived in so far because the Netherlands is a multicultural society. In addition, they gain more knowledge about various cultures which may induce a shift in opinion on the subject. All these experiences are important to the interview process because they have first-hand experience living in a foreign European country where they will encounter different foods and habits compared to their native land. Encountering different foods, beliefs and values than they are used to broadens their horizons and opens them up to different perspectives. This is crucial because these different perspectives make them less biased and probably more open to a more nuanced worldview compared to their peers who have never lived abroad. These Chinese students' views may not align with the views of other Chinese students who have spent their whole lives in China. It is in turn significant to note that this is also the reason I will avoid making generalized statements regarding all Chinese students as not all of them have led the same lives and thus do not have the same worldview.

Furthermore, the interviewees include Chinese students from the age of 20 to 30 years old. I chose this limited age group of Chinese students between 20 to 30 years old as my interviewees because, firstly, most students are generally aged somewhere within this range which makes it easier to select people fitting this criterion. Secondly, this age group in the Netherlands is the easiest to contact for me, since I too am part of this demographic. I realize that because I have more in common with people this age and thus it is easier to build rapport, this could affect the results of the interviews. However, these similarities in age and lifestyle have actually helped the interviewees to open up more and answer the questions openly and honestly. Furthermore, I interviewed eight female and two male Chinese students. This unequal division was not chosen purposefully. It was rather dependent on who responded to my 'online ad' who happened to be more women than men. However, I do not think this unequal division between genders had any influence on the results of this study because the stereotype discussed is not a gendered one. I limited my interviewees to Chinese students from mainland China, excluding Hong Kong, to narrow down the target group and to prevent making large generalisations about all Chinese people. In addition, I am interviewing a small number of people and only focusing on a specific demographic, so I will avoid making generalisations altogether.

Before every interview, I asked the interviewees if I could record the interview. In addition, I made it clear that they did not have to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable. I also told them that they could stop the interview at any given moment and that there were no right or wrong answers. In order to maintain the privacy of my interviewees, I changed their names to English names in the analyses. Furthermore, as mentioned above, I conducted semi-structured interviews. This means that I set up a list of interview questions as a guide for the interview. This list contains questions that can be used as a basis for the interview. Every question requires one or several follow-up questions to be asked to obtain more detailed answers and to prevent the interviews from becoming static questionnaires. An overview of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

After the interviews were all conducted, I transcribed each of them to get a more coherent overview of the answers and statements made by each interviewee. I used the inductive approach while analysing the results. I first identified the themes in the transcriptions, based on my research sub-questions. These themes include, for example, 'the origin of the stereotype' and 'opinions on dog meat consumption.' Once I determined the themes in the first round of analysis, I then assigned more detailed codes to the data. Using this method, I was able to make sense of the data. In addition, I build my analysis on existing secondary sources in the form of academic articles and books to put my findings into perspective and avoid generalizations and repetitive research.

4. The origin of the stereotype

As discussed in the literature review, stereotypes are oversimplified images or ideas of a person or a group of people (Lebedko, 2013) that may be based on unfair judgement or a distorted image which can lead to biased behaviour toward that group and even discrimination (Bordalo, 2014). This does however lead us to question where certain stereotypes originate from and especially where this case study's stereotype comes from and why it still remains today. As mentioned before, Fein and Spencer (1997) argue that many stereotypes stem from the amount of value a person adds to their self-worth and image. In other words, a threat to one's self-image could motivate that person to derogate others.

This theory is very general and thus might not apply to all stereotypes and prejudices. Therefore, I asked the respondents where and how they thought the stereotype originated. Not all interviewees could definitively answer that question, but the arguments of the six interviewees who could do so all followed the same line. They all feel like the Western media amplifies and exaggerates the stereotype. For example, Western media post stories and news articles about Chinese people once again participating in the Yulin Dog Meat Festival insinuating the consumption of dog meat is a longstanding Chinese tradition performed by 'the Chinese people' (Aristos Georgiou, 2022). However, as I will explain in the next chapter, this practice is in fact not executed by all Chinese people. One interviewee stated that the world is Western or European centred which leads to China being targeted for the consumption of dog meat, whereas Switzerland is not targeted for dog meat consumption even though people in Switzerland do consume dog meat (Savage, 2012). Another interviewee, Emma, argued that this stereotype is a cover and an easy way for people from other cultures to discriminate

against Chinese people. She says "Even though they know that there are not a lot of Chinese people [who] eat dogs, they can still say that, you know, because some people in China eat dogs, which means that you are like a savage, as a group. 'People like you all eat dogs.' It's more like people begin to ignore the facts, but only use this [concept] as a symbolic argument against Chinese people, or like a symbolic discrimination against Chinese people." Emma's argument is supported by something Brian told me during the interview. He talked about an occurrence a few years back during which a friend of his was called out on the street by strangers who shouted "*Chingchong*, you eat dogs!" as they walked by. This was undoubtedly a horrible experience.

This racial angle has been researched before by Irwin Katz and R. Glen Hass (1998). They studied white American students' attitudes toward black people taking four scales - Pro-Black, Anti-Black, Protestant Ethic, and Humanitarianism-Egalitarianism - into account as well as other core values. They found two contradictory attitudes among the target group, one friendly and one hostile. The first is a humanitarian-egalitarian outlook which led to sympathy and commitment to racial justice for black people. The other is a Protestant-ethic outlook which emphasises self-discipline and self-reliance and led to a critical attitude toward black people (p.114). Even though this theory does not entirely apply to this case study, it shows how personal beliefs like a Protestant ethic can influence one's attitude toward and opinion of people of another race. In my case study, according to the respondents, Western people's personal beliefs and biased opinions of Chinese people may influence the way they use the dog meat consumption practice to intimidate Chinese people on the streets and call out racial slurs. This undoubtedly is a broad generalization, but noting that almost all interviewees stated that many of the first encounters they have had with people from European or other Western countries included the prejudiced question, with a biased tone, "You are Chinese, so do you eat dog?", it is understandable that Chinese students jump to this conclusion. This stereotype in combination with that attitude has a negative connotation. In addition, according to Stone and Wong (1998), Westerners were seen by Hong Kongese as, among other things, feeling superior to the Chinese. This feeling of superiority could lead to racial and biased slurs regarding practices that do not align with their beliefs and values. However, regardless of how important and real their experiences are, it does not necessarily mean the stereotype is actually used as a means by Western people for biased and racial comments and acts toward Chinese people.

So why have stereotypes existed for a longer period of time and why are they being maintained? According to John M. Darley and Paget H. Gross (1983), people process new information differently based on their existing expectations and the stereotypes related to those expectations. They show how people "examine the labelled individual's behaviour for evidence relevant to their hypothesis (p.220)." This argument is evident in Emma's above-mentioned quote. Her statement regarding Western people knowing that some Chinese people eat dog meat so they can then draw the conclusion all Chinese people do so which confirms their expectations and the stereotype, supports

this argument. For example, they gather information from news articles about Chinese people attending the Yulin Dog Meat Festival and slaughtering dogs for consumption. This news article might clearly state that throughout the years fewer and fewer people attend the festival and that most of those people are locals. However, the reader only processes the information that confirms their expectations and stereotypes which in this case is 'all Chinese people eat dogs' and the stereotype will prevail.

5. Why people in China consume dog meat

Consuming dog meat in China has been a regular practice for a very long time (Li et al., 2017). However, not everywhere, and certainly not everyone, in China consumes dog meat on a regular basis or has ever eaten it at all. Most of the students interviewed for this study have never eaten dog meat. In fact, some of them only first learned of this practice after moving abroad and speaking to foreign people who asked them if 'they' 'really' consume dog meat.

One of the respondents is the exception to this rule. Jessica grew up in a small village in Guizhou province. As a child, she used to eat dog meat and other unique foods, that are not regularly consumed in other regions of the world, like snake or pig intestines. She disclosed that she has not consumed dog meat in the last 10 years, but she did consume it on a regular basis when she was very young. Even though this practice was a part of her everyday life during childhood, the first thing she said after I asked her if she likes the taste of dog meat was "Yeah, yeah, and I have a dog myself." I started wondering: why did she immediately feel the need to mention that she has a pet dog? I did not ask about her pet dog, in fact, it was not related to the question asked at that moment. Because the stereotype that all Chinese people eat dog meat has prevailed for decades, she felt the need to disclose that even though she likes the taste of dog meat, she would still own a pet dog and take care of it as every other person would. With this statement, she seems to try to contradict the stereotype and portray herself as a morally good human being. However, before we dive deeper into the actual

stereotype, we first have to unravel why only a small amount of people in China consume dog meat now.

The interviewees mentioned several reasons why only certain groups of people in China, still consume dog meat. The first possible reason is the generational gap between the Chinese students' generation and their parents' generation. By generational gap, I mean the decline in the consumption of dog meat. An unpublished study dated 2014, conducted in Busan, South Korea, confirms this trend. A conducted survey shows that only a small percentage of the people included in the survey still consumed dog meat. Within the age group of 50 and higher 23% of the people still consumed dog meat, whereas only 9,3% of the 40-year-old and 10% of the 30-year-old age groups consumed dog meat (Gallup Korea, 2014). A different study written by Peter J. Li, Jiang Sun and Dezhi Yu (2017), uses these statistics and their own survey and questionnaire conducted in both Yanji and Dalian, cities in China, to prove that there is indeed a decline in the consumption of dog meat between generations. Besides divisions between gender, income and education backgrounds, the respondents also represented different age groups (18-34, 35-45, and 46 and above). Within the first age group, they selected elementary, middle school, college and post-graduate students to fill out the survey. The results showed that consuming dog meat is least popular among the respondents from this age group which in turn points to the decline of the habit of consuming dog meat. According to researchers, "The future of the dog "meat" industry does not look good" (Li et al. 2017, p.529). This decline is also evident among my respondents. They are all college or post-graduate students who fit into the first age group mentioned by Li et al.. Except for Jessica, they have never consumed dog meat before in their life and stated they will never do so in the years to come. Even though these ten interviewees cannot speak for every single Chinese student within this age group, these results do confirm a trend already studied by Li and colleagues in 2017.

Furthermore, these results support the statements below. According to several respondents, their parents' generation is more likely to consume dog meat than themselves and other people of their generation. One of them, Amelia, told me that they "think those people who attend that dog meat festival [Yulin dog meat festival] are the, I think old people or like the middle-aged, I do not see any like 20-year-old boy or girl go there". She continued by stating that "if they don't go, their children also won't go, so, you know, it's just kind of stop there." In addition, another interviewee, Olivia, when asked what they think of the Yulin dog meat festival, told me that "the portrait of people who eat dog, it's really disgusting for me. It's just like my dad. My dad will eat dog. It's just [only] like [people of] my dad's age. So [...] I find myself we just can't relate to them." Olivia clearly states that she does not relate to her father's generation, especially concerning this topic, because she feels that dog meat consumption is disgusting whereas her father will eat dog meat without a second thought. Both these quotes confirm the statement made by Peter J. Li et al. (2017) mentioned above. The practice of consuming dog meat is slowly disappearing over time. Every new generation so far consumes less and

less dog meat. However, the older generation is somewhat stuck in its ways and will probably consume dog meat for many years to come. We can thus conclude that not every age group or generation still consumes dog meat.

The second possible reason certain groups in China still consume dog meat consists of a combination of history, habit and tradition. Dog meat consumption in China has a long and diverse history. As I already mentioned in the literature review, the attitude towards dog meat consumption went back and forth throughout Chinese history (Li et al. 2017). In the Shang Dynasty (1558-1046 BC), it started out as a delicacy, followed by an attempt to outlaw it centuries later during the Sui Dynasty (581-618). This opposed attitude persevered until the 20th century. Due to the overall poverty and therefore the lack of food for China's people during the Mao era, dog meat was back on the market again. Jacques Gernet (1962) argues that this poverty forced the Chinese to utilize every edible vegetable and animal they could find to feed their people (Tian et al., 2018). One of the interviewees, Tom, agrees with Gernet's argument by saying that "I personally think it's because in the past like several 100 years ago, there was nobody, you know, [...] it was solitude. There was nobody in the past. That was the place that our governments used for the prisoners. Sometimes we [the Chinese government] [...] in the past, we won't take your life like kill you. [Instead] we will just force you to move there. So I personally think the residents several years ago, [they] had no choice".

Because these people were forced to live in solitude and poverty, they had no other choice but to feed themselves on whatever animal or edible vegetable they encountered. This necessity first caused them to develop a habit and eventually, this habit evolved into a tradition which is carried out to date. Emma, one of the respondents stated this phenomenon as follows: "You know, after these, like traumatizing histories [the Great Famine], some of them, [...] they kept these traditions to eat different kind of things and some of them, like for mice, maybe people in the past, they don't eat it. But like during this disaster, people started to eat mice and they realized, oh, it's not that bad taste, you know?" During the interview, Emma uses mice as an example to explain the fabrication of the tradition of eating unique foods by Chinese people who were living in areas where the Great Famine had the most significant consequences. Even though she does not mention dog meat at this time, we can argue that this same process applies to the tradition and habit of eating dog meat. Emma's explanation supports Gernet's argument as well because both Emma and Gernet discuss how severe poverty led to the construction of a food culture based on a combination of creativity and urgency.

This in turn ties in with another respondent's, Charlotte, apt comment stating that it is probably just an eating habit of a certain group of people. "In [the] South part of China, people tend to eat all kinds of foods, yeah, and in [the] North people don't." It is important to point out that this interviewee is from Shandong Province which is located in the North of China. Even though she might have made an assumption regarding the eating habits of the people living in South China, the poverty and famine

during Mao's reign still mostly struck the centre and Southern provinces (Hu, Liu, Gordon, Fan 2017, p.925). In addition, many of the respondents come from Northern regions like Shandong province and they all had similar attitudes to Charlotte's. Furthermore, except for one respondent who was born and raised in Guizhou province, no other respondent has ever eaten dog meat and they all come from a more Northern province where according to them, nobody consumes dog meat. These regional differences in eating habits mentioned by the respondents are reasonable to expect. China is a large country with many different cultures and ethnicities which in turn include unique habits and traditions. Considering food and ways of eating are both core components of the Chinese lifestyle (Tian et al. 2018, p.351), regional differences in food consumption are bound to develop. It is thus safe to conclude that consuming dog meat is a regional practice, habit and tradition mainly taking place in the more Southern provinces like Guizhou.

6. Consuming dog meat: approve or disapprove

Now that we have established why certain groups in China still consume dog meat, and more importantly, that in fact, it is only a certain group of people and not every Chinese person, it is essential to determine what Chinese students' views on the consumption of dog meat are. This is fundamental to analyse because their opinions of dog meat consumption might influence their views on the stereotype as a whole.

Among the respondents, there is one overall sentiment on the consumption of dog meat: disapproval. Most respondents and other people such as their friends are opposed to dog meat consumption. Their main reason for this objection is moral. Some respondents feel everyone should be free to consume whatever kind of meat or foods they want. However, most respondents feel dog meat consumption is morally wrong and that no one should eat dogs. Amelia would respond with four simple words if anyone asked her if she eats dogs: "No, why eat dogs?". My hypothesis was that most Chinese students would disapprove of eating dog meat because dogs are considered a man's best friend. I tested this hypothesis by comparing dog meat consumption to the consumption of a starfish. Starfish is a common street food in coastal areas in China. However, starfish is not typically considered a food in Western countries. In addition, most of the respondents had never heard of eating starfish before the interview. The fact that consuming starfish as a street food snack is not a regular practice done by all Chinese people and it is regionally consumed - just as dog meat is not consumed by all Chinese people and is regionally consumed - makes this the best example to use in comparison. By making this comparison I found all of the respondents think that eating starfish is a normal thing to

do. They feel it is like eating any other kind of meat or fish. However, the majority of the respondents still think eating dogs is not right and that people should not consume them. This difference is remarkable because why is it morally justifiable to consume starfish but not to consume dog meat?

There are several reasons why they do not approve of this practice from a moral point of view. Firstly, they feel that dogs have feelings just as humans do, so it would be wrong to eat them. One of the interviewees, Anna, stated that "you can build this type of relationship, [a] really good intimate relationship with a dog." Because they feel like you can build a real, personal relationship with a dog, especially compared to other animals or pets, because they have feelings, they disapprove of dog meat consumption. Or to put it in different terms: "I think starfish doesn't feel that much as [a] dog." as stated by Charlotte. She considers starfish as a more 'distant' animal, just like any other fish. In her eyes, dogs are closer to people than starfish because of their emotions and affection.

Secondly, they articulated that dogs are seen as close companions or 'man's best friend.' This argument is similar to the first argument, except for the fact that this argument includes a person's feelings towards a dog instead of just the dog's feelings. As one of the interviewees, Amelia, quite literally put it: "I feel starfish it's not like [a] dog. You cannot pet it. You know, it's just a kind of fish. It's just a seafood I would say." The fact that dogs can be kept as pets and therefore can be petted makes them more of a companion than a starfish because you can build a closer relationship with dogs than with starfish. One can develop feelings of friendship, loyalty and companionship for their dog. Consuming dog meat would feel like eating one of your friends. These arguments are also supported by Li et al. (2017) in their research. Their survey found that the majority of respondents in both Yanji and Dalian in China who have a companion animal think that consuming dog meat is unacceptable (p.527). However, this rule is not endorsed by my respondents. The earlier mentioned respondent, Jessica, is the only one who has ever eaten dog meat. Jessica used to consume dog meat when she was a child. She no longer eats dog meat because she no longer has to eat what her parents tell her to eat and, in addition, moved abroad for her studies. Now that she is an adult and can make her own choices, she does not feel the need to eat dog meat anymore and prefers other foods. She states that she does not necessarily feel the urge to eat dog meat because she has a pet dog at home in China and there are plenty of other foods she can consume. This does not mean she regrets eating dog meat during her childhood because in her own words "dog [meat], for me, it's really tasty, so I would love to eat it, but the other way around, I have my dog and they're so cute." In addition, her history with dog meat consumption may have had an influence on her attitude toward dog meat consumption because she does not necessarily disapprove of people eating dogs. She believes everyone should be able to eat whatever they would like as long as it is safe and that other people should not interfere. She says "It depends on the resource of it. If it was stolen from someone, [their] pet, it's totally not ok. Otherwise, I think it's not that big [of a] difference, maybe because dog tastes really good for me, I think." In other words, as long as the animal that is being consumed was not anyone's pet and was taken away legally,

it is justified to consume them "because dog tastes really good." Even though the fact that she consumed dog meat when she was younger was her parents' choice and not her own, the experience overall did have an influence on her view of this practice. She does not only see the negative sides but instead, she knows what it tastes like and bases part of her opinion on that piece of knowledge. Furthermore, only one other respondent has a pet dog. Tom has a similar view on the consumption of dog meat as Jessica. He said "I would not say it's a bad thing, but it's something I personally won't try because of our pet dogs in our home. It makes me feel not that good." All the other interviewees who do not own a pet dog disapprove of the practice. They either think it should be banned or people should not consume dog meat anymore. We can conclude from this that ownership of a dog does not negatively influence the respondents' opinions on dog meat consumption. Instead, they become more lenient towards the practice in comparison to their peers who do not have a pet dog.

The interviewees are not the only party who opposes the consumption of dog meat. The Chinese government has been trying to ban the practice by implementing a ban on wildlife trade and consumption in February 2020. This ban was an attempt at limiting dog meat consumption, among consumption of other wildlife like bat meat. After the outbreak of Covid-19 which originated in Wuhan, China, the Chinese government took more precautions for the lives, health and safety of the people, of which this wildlife ban was one. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture listed dogs as "companion animals" instead of livestock and poultry for the first time in April 2020 (Li, 2020). This is a huge milestone, but now it is up to the local governments to enforce this new law. This raises the question of whether the new wildlife law is actually being enforced by the (local) government(s). In an announcement made by the three departments, the State Administration for Market Regulation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration in 2022, they jointly agreed to stop implementing the "Prohibition of Wildlife Trade Announcement" (Wang, Lü 2022). This indicates that the announcement is in fact not supported or enforced by the Chinese government. Even though the Chinese government has taken action towards a full ban on dog meat consumption, the practice still exists and people in several provinces are still producing, distributing and consuming dog meat.

Both groups mentioned above have different motivations for their attitude towards dog meat consumption, but their opinion is predominantly the same: people should not eat dog meat. The overall consensus is dog meat consumption is wrong and people should, under no circumstances, indulge in it.

7. The effects of the stereotype

The respondents' opinions regarding the practice of dog meat consumption mostly correspond to each other, except for one. Even though the predominant view is dog meat consumption is wrong and most of them have never even consumed dog meat before and say they never will, the stereotype of all Chinese people eating dogs remains. This stereotype is held up by the many news articles which pop up at the same time every year around the start of the Yulin Lychee and Dog Meat Festival. With titles like "Shocking evidence pet dogs are being killed for China's meat trade as police and activists rescue 126 dogs—many with collars—from an illegal slaughterhouse (HSI, 2022)" or "Tragedy as 370 dogs and cats die on board "death truck" in China headed for brutal meat trade (HSI, 2022)" people around the world are reminded every day that people in China still consume dog meat. If one would read one of these articles carefully, it becomes clear that they openly state not all Chinese people consume dog meat. However, as argued in a previous chapter, information is processed in different ways relating to expectations and stereotypes (Darley, Gross 1983).

This stereotype has serious effects on Chinese people. One example of the effects this stereotype has on Chinese people is discussed by Flemming Christiansen (2003). Christiansen's book studies the overseas Chinese community in the 1990s across Europe. He discusses the 'dog meat scandal' in Germany, a media campaign against Chinese restaurants that were, according to a local government functionary, selling dishes containing dog meat (p.161). This event caused the trade in the Chinese catering sector to collapse overnight and the overseas Chinese living in that area "became the target of public vilification and personal distrust (p.162)." One local government functionary's 'joke' turned into a city- and nearly country-wide defamation. All because one man believed in this stereotype, went to a place where it could be confirmed in his eyes and subsequently said it out loud in the wrong place and at the wrong time.

The respondents have clearly indicated that they suffer from this stereotype. For example, a friend of Tom got verbally harassed on the street in the Netherlands. She was simply walking down the street when a couple of men started shouting racial slurs and asking whether she eats dogs or not. According to Tom, the stereotype leads to and is an indirect form of discrimination because it does not necessarily just concern food, but it is a stereotype specifically about Chinese people. Emma's reasoning aligns with Tom's point of view. She believes this stereotype is a perfect example of how a tradition practised by a very small percentage of the nation's people is used as the base for greater forms of discrimination. As I have argued earlier on in this thesis, these stories are the interviewees' experiences and not factual statements. Harassment, intimidation and biased comments are all possible effects of this stereotype that some of the interviewees have experienced. However, whether or not it leads to discrimination cannot be determined in this study with the available data.

Another Chinese student, Lindsey, did not voice her opinion in so many words, but it became clear she felt stereotyped. When asked if she ever noticed that Western or Dutch people disapprove of eating dog meat, she hesitantly answered that she talked with a few Dutch people who asked her if Chinese people actually eat dog meat. Judging from her tone, she did not feel comfortable that those people asked her this question. I told her I was sorry she has had to experience this to which she responded that she is under the impression the practice of dog meat consumption still exists but she definitely does not partake in it. Her first response was to distance herself from the people who do eat dog meat in order to prevent the stereotype from applying to her personally. This stereotype creates a wedge between the Chinese people as more and more Chinese people try to distance themselves from the stereotype which in turn could cause them to unwittingly distance themselves from each other.

However, the stereotype does not only have a negative influence on Chinese people. The German 'dog meat scandal' caused the overseas Chinese community in Germany to unite and cooperate on common issues. The public protests that followed the incident empowered them to unite and indirectly fight the bigger systemic issue dominating the area and country (Christiansen 1983, p.163). In addition, the scandal "gave them a sudden opportunity to get to know the leaders of Chinese associations across Germany they had never heard of before" to build up and save the Chinese restaurant business (p.164). Moreover, during the interviews, it became clear not all students had heard of this stereotype before they moved abroad. Only upon arrival in a foreign country and people from that country asking them if Chinese people actually eat dogs or if they themselves eat dog meat, they realized this stereotype is a common assumption among many people. However, this untimely realization is not a disadvantage. Because they did not realize the stereotype existed, they do not feel offended by it and do not think the stereotype applies to them.

The stereotype has positive consequences as well as a negative influence on the people it concerns. Even though there is something to say about the positive consequences, the negative consequences it causes outweigh the positive. The stereotype causes mostly damage and harm to the people the stereotype concerns.

8. An unfair stereotype

Everything discussed above leads me to answer the final and most important question: "In what ways do Chinese students view consuming dog meat in China as an unfair stereotype?". The answer to this question has multiple layers which I will explain below. Firstly, we established in the second chapter of the analysis that not all Chinese people from every generation consume dog meat. The 'boomers' and 'GenX' generations, to use popular culture terms, still consume dog meat, whereas the younger

generations, 'Millennials' and 'GenZ', rarely consume dog meat or even refrain from the practice completely. The main reasons for this contrast are historical and moral. Historically, the two older generations have lived through the world's worst famine in history which left them no choice but to use everything in their vicinity for consumption to survive. Morally, most people from the younger generations see dogs as human companions with feelings for which they can develop particular feelings of affection as well. Because only a small percentage of people in the 'boomer' and 'GenX' generations still consume dog meat, the stereotype is not valid.

Secondly, the practice of dog meat consumption is fairly regional. Most of the students I interviewed come from northern provinces like Shanxi where dog meat is neither a household staple nor sold or consumed in restaurants. According to the respondents and other scholars, these regional differences are related to history and culture. Due to poverty in some regions, people were forced to utilize everything around them for consumption (Tian et al., 2018). This included animals like mice and dogs. After decades, sheer necessity turned into a habit and the practice became part of their culture. Because the consumption of dog meat is limited to specific regions in China, it is unfair to stereotype all Chinese people regarding this practice.

Thirdly, respondents do not associate with people who do eat dog meat. They almost all believe slaughtering dogs for consumption is immoral and should be banned. Furthermore, they think the people who do consume dog meat are most likely less educated because they simply do not know why eating dogs is wrong. Amelia points out that "there are some people that just have never been educated. They just do their thing, they eat, you know, the dogs or whatever. I have never seen a professor at a university who eats dogs or you know. [...] China is where we have so many people. In China, it's very hard to educate everyone." Even though her reasoning is based on her own experience as well as the people she regularly encounters in her life, like a university professor, the people who do consume dog meat in China are mostly located in remote areas of the country where the opportunities for better education are slimmer than in urbanised regions. Living a life of habit and traditions in a remote area of the country leads them to encounter fewer opportunities to educate themselves on topics they are not quite familiar with. From the statement above and earlier arguments, it is safe to conclude Amelia does not agree with the stereotype because she does not want to be marked as an 'uneducated' person from a remote region where consuming dog meat is standard practice. She does not identify with those people and certainly does not want other people to think she does. Furthermore, other Chinese students find dog meat consumption immoral and in turn do not want to be associated with people who believe the practice is reasonable and morally appropriate.

Fourthly, as mentioned before, some of the interviewees had never heard of the practice or the stereotype until after they moved abroad and people started asking them whether it is true all Chinese people eat dog meat or if they themselves have ever eaten dog meat. Charlotte for example never

heard of the practice before she travelled to the Netherlands and Belgium for the first time where “a lot of people have asked me whether Chinese people eat dog but before that, I never heard of that before. [...] I come from the northern part of China. And so I couldn't even imagine people [eating dog meat].” Besides stating she never heard of the practice before these encounters, she highlights the previously discussed regional differences once again. Because she is from the northern part of China, she does not associate with people from other areas where dog meat consumption exists in any way. She distances herself from those people and strengthens the comment by saying she could not even imagine people actually eating dogs. Having never heard of the practice before travelling or moving abroad, the stereotype does not apply to Chinese students and it is unfair to allocate it to them.

Lastly, I discussed the effect the stereotype has on Chinese students' daily lives in the previous chapter. Most of them believe the stereotype is used as a form of discrimination against Chinese people. Emma stated “That's why Chinese people may feel pretty uncomfortable when people ask them [if they] do eat dogs because most of the time we regard this as discrimination because we can't believe that those people really think we eat dogs. [...] It's more like a teasing.” The respondents note that the stereotype is being used as an excuse to discriminate against them. They experience the comments and random questions as intimidation and biased behaviour. Even though it does not immediately point to discrimination, the other negative consequences this stereotype has, cause respondents to view the stereotype as unfair.

9. Conclusion

Generational differences, regional differences, overwhelming feeling of disapproval of the practice, ignorance regarding the existence of the practice and bias against and intimidation towards Chinese people overall allows me to conclude that Chinese students feel the stereotype is unfair. Even though dog meat consumption still exists in some regions of China, all respondents agree the stereotype is biased and not based on the current reality. One respondent out of ten interviewees has ever eaten dog meat before during her childhood but has not eaten it in over ten years. Basing a stereotype on these statistics renders it deceptive and useless.

I have established that not all Chinese people eat dog meat due to generational and regional differences. These discrepancies are all tied to history, tradition and local culture. Except for one student, none of the other students have ever consumed dog meat or know anyone who has and, in addition, they have all clearly stated they never will. The most important reason for this aversion is moral beliefs. Again except for one student, they all believe it is not morally justified to eat dogs because they have feelings and are human's companions. Because dogs are perceived as a 'man's best friend' and Chinese students feel dogs have feelings and one can develop certain feelings for a dog,

they regard dog meat consumption as immoral. Therefore, they think dog meat consumption should be banned.

Furthermore, Darley and Gross (1983) argued that people subconsciously search for empirical or textual evidence to prove a pre-existing stereotype they believe in, even if the proof is not conclusive. This argument was supported by the respondents through their own experience. This in turn leads to a solid argument that the stereotype does not apply and is not well-founded. In addition, the stereotype has an overall negative influence on Chinese students' lives. According to the students, the stereotype is being used by many people to justify bigger forms of discrimination towards Chinese people. The effects range from failing Chinese businesses to being verbally harassed on the streets. It is important to note that these incidents all happened in the Netherlands. However, these incidents are personal experiences, not solid proof. Whether or not this stereotype leads to some form of discrimination cannot be proven with the currently available data. I can merely conclude one possible effect of the stereotype is intimidation and biased comments. Discrimination as an effect of this stereotype is worthy of future research.

In conclusion, the respondents do feel this existing stereotype is unfair. This conclusion is supported by several arguments. Firstly, not all Chinese people consume dog meat, moreover, most Chinese people never have and never will eat dogs. The dog meat consumption practice is generational as well as regional. Regionally, dog meat is consumed by some people. These regions mostly cover the more southern and rural provinces. In addition, only people born between 1946 and 1980 participate in this practice, while anyone born after 1980 largely feels the practice is morally wrong (Li et al. 2017). Within the demographics to which the stereotype does not apply, there are exceptions of people who do consume dog meat. For example, one of the Chinese student participants in this study consumed dog meat in her youth. Even though she does fit the regional demographic, she does not belong to the generational demographic that predominantly consumes dog meat. However, this is one exception for nine other students born and raised in more northern provinces like Shanxi who have never and – say they – will never consume dog meat in their life.

Secondly, Chinese students believe dog meat consumption is immoral and should be banned. The respondents believe the practice is immoral because dogs are human companions, a dog has 'feelings' and one can develop feelings of affection for a dog. Eating a dog would feel like eating one of your friends, which, everyone can agree, is horribly wrong. Because of these moral beliefs, these students do not consume dog meat and therefore the stereotype is incorrect and unfair. Thirdly, some Chinese students had never heard of this practice before they moved abroad and people started asking adversarial questions. Since the people whom the stereotype supposedly applies to have never heard of other people from their home country engaging in dog meat consumption, it is apparent they

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themselves have never eaten dog meat in their life. In turn, the stereotype cannot apply to them and therefore the stereotype is rendered incorrect, misleading and insignificant.

These arguments lead me to conclude that the stereotype is biased and untrue as it is based on assumptions and it is blown out of proportion – as most stereotypes are. Chinese students feel this stereotype is unfair because it simply is not based on facts, and it mostly has a negative influence on their life. The stereotype leads to a biased view of Chinese people along with racial innuendos about Chinese people. Presumably, there are many stereotypes that are just as untrue, biased and have the same or more detrimental effects on a certain group of people. Therefore, I suggest fellow sociologists and anthropologists study other stereotypes' validity and what effects they have on the people it applies to. Through more in-depth research on this subject, we can create a better understanding of the interaction between people, how we see other people and what influence a certain amount of bias has on people. In case a scholar would like to research this specific stereotype in more depth, I suggest extending the research to Chinese students or other groups of people living in China. With this study we can hopefully finally say goodbye to this specific stereotype and be more cautious to proclaim and believe stereotypes in the future.

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Appendix I

Interview questions:

1. Introduction:
 - a. What is your name?
 - b. Where exactly are you from?
 - c. How old are you?
 - d. What are you studying here in the Netherlands?
 - e. How long have you been living in the Netherlands?
2. What different food cultures have you experienced before?
3. What kind of unique dishes or foods did you encounter there?
4. Could you describe the food culture here in the Netherlands, please?
 - a. What do you think of it?
5. Are there any Dutch foods that you thought were weird upon your first encounter with them?
 - a. Why?
6. How does the food culture here differ from the food culture in China?
 - a. What do you think of these differences?
7. Please name one or more unique Chinese foods.
 - a. Have you ever consumed these foods? Or do you know anyone who has?
 - b. What do you think about this/these food(s)?
8. Why do certain groups of people in China (or you) still consume dog and/or bat meat, in your opinion?
 - a. What is your opinion on consuming dog and bat meat? And why?
9. What is your opinion on the Yulin dog meat festival?
10. How does the Chinese national and local government play a role in this worldwide controversial situation?
11. What is your opinion on governmental involvement with this issue?
12. Why do you think the local government interfered in the dog meat festival by arresting a couple of men who were headed to the festival with a car full of dogs in crates?
13. Are you aware of any conspicuous Chinese foods or dishes that the government promoted or still promotes?
14. Another commonly eaten food in the coastal areas of China is starfish. Have you ever eaten starfish?
 - a. What do you think of this practice?
15. In many Western countries people disapprove of eating these foods. To what extent have you noticed that attitude here in the Netherlands as well?
16. Where do you think this stereotype of eating dogs comes from?
17. What do you think of this attitude towards these foods?
18. Why do you think these foods aren't considered as controversial in parts of China compared to the West?