SPOUSE SELECTION AMONGST CHINA'S POST-1980 GENERATION

By

Yanjun Wang

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Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

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Supervisors: prof. Dan Rabinowitz

prof. Vlad Naumescu

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ABSTRACT

Chinese people born in the 1980's - immediately following the establishment of China's family planning policy in 1979 - make a unique phenomenon in human history: an entire cohort (estimated at 90 millions) comprising almost exclusively of single children to their parents. Coming of age at the time of China's dramatic economic growth since 2000, and playing a major role in it, members of this predominantly urban generation, who have always been at the center of attention in their families of origin, are now at a marriageable age. Not surprisingly, issues associated with their marriage and dating patterns draw much public and social scientific interest in China. This thesis, which looks at spouse selection criteria and practices within this group, uses the immensely popular Chinese television dating show *If You are the One* as a source of empirical data. Focusing on self-presentations by 208 female and 43 male participants in the show, it comments on visions of ideal spouse which they project. Analysis of the data in light of earlier works on marriages in Chinese society and of sociological theories of spouse selection highlights some of the contradictions that exist between traditional and contemporary Chinese values, illustrating the strategies adopted by members of the post 1980 generation to reconcile them.

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INTRODUCTION

Chinese people born in the 1980s, immediately following the establishment of China's family planning policy in 1979, make a unique phenomenon in human history: an entire cohort (estimated at 90 millions) comprising almost exclusively of single children to their parents. World Health Organization defines "Family planning" as "it allows individuals and couples to anticipate and attain their desired number of children and the spacing and timing of their births."[1] In China, the one-child policy is the core of the population control policy, [2] while the potential social consequences of this policy are always controversial both at home and abroad (Guo and Yin, 2005). This policy, which was introduced into Constitution in 1978 and carried out at the end of 1979, restricted Chinese married couples to having only one child in 1980. From 1984 to the middle of 1990s, considering the realistic situation in some special areas[3], the Chinese government adjusted this policy to allow rural couples, ethnic minorities and parents without siblings to have more than one child. Due to this exception, the first one-child generation was mainly born in the urban area (Yu, 2008).

Initially, in the early 21st century, "the post-80s" was used to describe Chinese writers and poets who were born in the 1980s. However, on February 2nd 2004, the front page story of Time Magazine's Asian edition provoked a heated debate in the Chinese society, because it depicted a Beijing female writer born in the 1980s as a representative of this generation and

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[1] Official website of World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/topics/family_planning/en/
[2] English version of Family planning in China was published by Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in August 1995. http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/familypanning/index.htm
[3] For example, in the rural area, because the preference of boy in Chinese traditional notion and the low educational level, it was hard to convince people to accept this policy. Furthermore, comparing to the majority group which accounts for almost 92% of the national population, the population of minorities is too small.

used the term "new radicals" to compare them with the 1960s "beat generation" of America. [4]

After this event, "the post-80s" became a given mark for this first one-child generation born between 1980 and 1989 in China, leading to the appearance of a large number of reports in the media about the post-80s generation. Many relevant researches saw it as a social phenomenon reflecting the future development of China (Huang, Deng, Chen, and Lu, 2009). Despite its increasing popularity, words like "non-mainstream", "selfhood", "Little emperors", "capricious", "irresponsibility" and "bourgeois" described the negative social attitudes towards the post-80s generation during the last century. Due to the active reactions of the post-80s members after Wenchuan earthquake and to their good performances during the Beijing Olympics, this situation has positively changed since 2008. And new words are used to describe their new image: "self-confidence", "responsibility" and "patriotism" (Wang, 2009).

Coming of age at the time of China's dramatic economic growth since 2000, and playing a major role in it, members of this generation are now at a marriageable age. Not surprisingly, issues associated with their marriage and dating patterns draw much attention from society. In 2010, all of a sudden, dating shows got popular in China, and *If You are the One* has become the most popular one. From CSM's official data, the show won the largest audience rating in 2 weeks after its debut on January 15th.[5] Actually, the dating show is not a new issue in China, it was first introduced in the 1990s into Chinese television. As for *If You are the One*, besides their new model in production, the marriage and dating values of the post-80s reflected in the show ensures considerable and increasing audience (Wang and Rong, 2011). In fact, the

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[4] Relevant reports and responses in Times Asian edition and China daily :
http://www.time.com/time/covers/asia/0,16641,20040202,00.html
http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/92047.htm
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-03/28/content_318681.htm
[5] CSM Media Research is a joint venture between CTR Market Research and the Kantar Media. Its TV audience measurement network covers 1.25 billion people in China mainland and 6.40 million people in Hong Kong SAR. English version of Official website: http://en.csm.com.cn/index.php/

post-80s generation (hereafter "the post-80s") is an issue not only in the dating shows, but also of Chinese dating and marriage status report in recent years.[6]

Drawing on the most popular Chinese television dating show *If You are the One*, this thesis aims to identify new characteristics in spouse selection criteria and practices within this group. In the first chapter, in the theoretical part, I start with a review of the various relevant theories in western sociology and psychology to spouse selection, to give the theoretical framework within which I examine the Chinese spouse selection and marriage strategies. Based on the review of previous theories and empirical case studies, I focus on the post-80s generation and their marital practices. Following the methodology chapter where I explain the setting of the show, in the third chapter, focusing on self-presentations of 208 female and 43 male participants in the show, I analyze the vision of the ideal spouse they project, and I highlight new changes in spouse selection criteria of the post-80s generation. Last, in light of earlier works on marriage in Chinese society and of sociological theories of spouse selection, I discuss some of the contradictions that exist between traditional and contemporary Chinese values, the positive and negative effects of the one-child policy on this generation, and the strategies adopted by members of this generation to deal with them.

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[6] Since 2005, Chinese dating and marriage status report has been published every year. The research is conducted by the top 2 marriage and dating websites, BaiHe and ShiJiJiaYuan, and the Committee of Match-making Service Industries, China Association of Social Workers of the Chinese Ministry of civil affairs. The post-80s was the main subject of this report in 2009, 2010, and 2011. The official website: http://www.chinamarry.org/

CHAPTER 1.THEORETICAL PART

Since the 1920s, Anthropologists engaged in defining the marriage which is a long-time socio-cultural phenomenon in human history (Westermarck, 1891). In the 1960s, Leach argued that no definition of marriage can be applied to all cultures (Leach, 1961). In China, the first definition was given by Confucius in the Spring and Autumn Period.[7] "Marriage is the union of two different surnames, in friendship and in love, in order to continue the posterity of the former sages, and to furnish those who shall preside at the sacrifices to heaven and earth, at those in the ancestral temple, and at those at the altars to the spirits of the land and grain."(Su, 1922). The research shows that the marriage has a significant position in Chinese history because of its deep relationship with the various respects of Chinese society including politics, economics and gender inequalities (Watson and Ebrey, 1991). Spouse selection, as a critical part of marriage, the field also started in the 1920s. Spouse selection studies have their roots in the fields of sociology, psychology, education, medical and health, demography, and literary studies.

In this part, I will firstly review the various theoretical approaches in western sociology and psychology to spouse selection which provide the framework and academic background for understanding Chinese studies. More specifically, I will describe several researches which were frequently referenced by Chinese scholars in their studies. And then I will examine the researches of Chinese spouse selection and relevant marriage strategies. Finally, based on the review of previous theories and empirical case studies, I will focus on the post-80s generation and the approaches I use in later chapters.

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[7] Confucius, who lived in the Spring and Autumn Period, is a famous philosopher and politician in Chinese history. His philosophic thought called "Confucianism" has meaningful influence in Chinese society.

1.1 Theories and empirical studies of spouse selection and marriage strategy

In this section, I will address theories in this area, including theoretical hypotheses which are controversial and empirical theories which are applied frequently in contemporary research. Then, I will describe some empirical studies which are frequently referenced by Chinese scholars in their studies, especially some precedents in the early period.

The first is the theory considering historical precedent which emphasizes that in the history, widespread phenomena are that marriage or mate choosing is arranged or decided by parents (Goode, 1982). The second is the Freudian parent image theory which states the importance of hereditary dispositions in spouse selection (Freud, 1997). This theory gives importance to the personality traits that parents have; in this case, due to the "Oedipus complex", the male will choose a female with the personality traits of his mother, while due to "Electra complex" the female prefers a male who has a similar personality to that of her father. The third is Winch's complementary needs theory which claims that when people choose their mate, they mainly consider a variety of complementary needs (Winch, 1958). For example, a man who is possessive would like to choose a woman who is dependent. The fourth is value theory which suggests that in the individual growing process, certain value notions have already been embedded into personal habit by socialization, and these values will become the basis of mate selection (Coombs, 1961). The fifth is the filter theory of mate selection proposed by Udry, in which mate-choosing behavior cannot be explained by personality. It should be regarded as a process, in which a good impression generates at the beginning, and then through self-reliance to increase mutual understanding, and ultimately achieve individual requirements respectively (Udry, 1971).

In my view, the arranged marriage and free dating described in historical precedent theory now only are ideal styles. In real life, the situation usually is a mix of these two styles, because the support from the family is very critical to the maintenance and development of dating relationship. As for parent image theory, this psychoanalytic theory overly focuses on the physiological and psychological factors, which insists that in behavior of mate choosing, physiological and psychological needs are more important than the social factor, and stresses the significance of the innate consciousness upon the development of personality. Moreover, though Winch's later research report, which tried to verify his hypothesis, failed to support his theory, I still think complementary needs theory seems like suitable for contemporary marriage strategy. Comparing to the filter theory which pays attention to the process of mate selection, value theory focuses on the relationship between individuals and society, and connects individual behaviors to social factors.

Besides the theories I address above, there are some theories which are more practical in term of marriage strategies. First of all is the propinquity theory: people tend to choose their spouse who is similar or closer to them in terms of age, residence place, education, race, religion, social class, values, and role identity (Marvin, 1918; Goode, 1982). Secondly, the exchange theory: depending on personal available conditions, people are attracted by a particular person. A person provides resources as capital to exchange what he does not have. For instance, in an arranged marriage, labor, money and the price of the bride are the most common factors in the exchange. In other words, a good appearance of the bride can be used to obtain socio-economic status and other resources (Davis, 1941; Merton, 1941). Thirdly, the mobility theory claims that usually men tend to choose women whose social status is lower than him, while women require that the spouse's conditions in educational level, occupational class and income should be better than her. The formation of this theory was attributed to patriarchy

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which resulted in the social construction of gender roles. Normally in the respect of socio-economic status, men are in a dominant position, but women's conditions such as appearance, status, relative age, and housekeeping ability are upward mobility to help them getting men who has a better background (Elder, 1969; Taylor and Glenn, 1976; Leslie and Korman, 1989).

In my opinion, generally the common characters of these strategies are similarity, coherence and complementarities. Furthermore, these theories integrate speculation and comprehension. They provide diverse explanations for marital quality, marital conflict and motivation in courtship system. In other words, to some extent, they can reflect changes in social system, social structure and social respects. For example, the mobility theory gives us a picture how class mobility goes on by marriage. That's why Bernard Murstein addresses the importance of social effects including culture and history on dating and marriage. And he also proposed a model using stimulus, values, and roles to measure the process of mate selection (Murstein, 1976, 1986). Affected by these western theories, considering Chinese specific situation, Chinese scholars proposed the guide theory: in the context of traditional Chinese society, especially feudal period, the main way to select a spouse was to follow the opinion of parents and the advice of matchmaker. Now, in contemporary period, matchmaker is not common as past, but the role of matchmaker does not disappear. Instead, agency and media play this role in marriage market (Lin, 2002). I point out this theory, because in my research, the television dating show plays a role as a matchmaker and includes diverse marriage strategies as I mentioned above in the program.

Some western empirical studies as well as theories I reviewed above, their methods and results more or less affected similar Chinese sociological studies which I will shortly refer to

and then discuss in the following part about relevant literatures on China. Generally, these western researches are mainly about spouse selection criteria, and I classify them into three categories: namely general studies on criteria; studies that focus on a certain specific criterion; and studies which pay attention to changes of mate-selection and relative reasons.

First, in the study of Jyoti, selection criteria are sorted into 8 items: personality, education and intelligence, health and appearance, economic conditions, temperament, age, housekeeping capacity and religion (Jyoti, 1983). His categories were used as references in a famous Chinese study (Li, 1989). Second, Melton and Thomas divide criteria into two categories, one is material such as economic condition, and another is spiritual such as feelings and hobbies. The subject of research is students from American universities. The result shows that for different genders and races, there is no difference in spiritual standards. And the importance of materiality is inversely proportional to their socio-economic status; in other words, people in lower socio-economic conditions emphasize more on material standards (Melton and Thomas, 1976). Chinese studies focusing on university students followed their way, especially in method (Yang, 1988; Tian, 1993). Third, Peres and Meivar point out findings that the difference between male and female selection criteria is tending to disappear; women are more fastidious than men; and the attitude towards marriage from considering it as finding a partner to be friends, that is, demands partly shift from material complement to personal attractiveness and mutual satisfaction (Peres and Meivar, 1986). The Chinese comparative studies on spouse selection of men and women appeared in the early 21st century (Qian, Wang, Zhang, and Zhu, 2003; Zhu, Dong, Qian, Wang, and Liu, 2004). Another research (Hoyt and Hudson, 1981) about American university students aims to find changes in 10 years. Outcomes demonstrate that their requirement increases in respects of social status, intelligence, education and appearance. And they concern less about family life in future,

housekeeping ability and chastity. Hoyt and Hudson think the reasons leading to changes include the change of gender role, the influence of mass media, and the changes in the socio-economic conditions. This case becomes an example for Chinese studies divert attention on specific standards to social factors in the beginning of the 21st century (Xu, 2000; Xu, 2004).

As for other relevant marriage strategy, first according to subjects who make choices, Goode thinks there are two styles, selective marriage and market marriage, which respond to historical precedent, arrange marriage and free choice (Goode, 1982: 52—74). However, Stephes (1983) argues that there should be four ways: arranged marriage, free mate choosing based on parental consent, free mate choosing without parental consent, and co-existence of arranged marriage and free selection. Second, which depends on the range of selection, it can be divided into endogamy and exogamy. The former requires that individual choose a spouse within a specific group, while the latter requires individual chooses a member from other groups. These social groups do not only refer to the expansion of kinship groups, tribes, communities, but also refer to social class, race, ethnic and religion (Marcson, 1950). Third, according to the relationship between social class and mate selection criteria, Feldman and Houri categorize behaviors into three modes: first of all social stratification and mating behavior are absolutely independent from each other, that is, the mate choice is completely random; secondly, these two are definitely interdependence, thus mate choose is completely determined by social class; the last situation is choosing mate randomly within a particular social class, it means the range is in the range of same hierarchy (Feldman and Houri, 1975). In fact, almost all of these strategies existed in Chinese cases along with the reform of *the Chinese Marriage Law*. For example, in Chinese feudal period, arranged marriage was the main way of spouse selection, and the endogamy was preferred rather than exogamy. In 1931,

the marriage law started to advocate the freedom in marriage. And in 1950, it added an important part to oppose arranged marriage, and promote free selection. So in contemporary society, free mate choosing based on parental consent seems more popular, and social class becomes a potential factor in mate selection (Xu, 2000). In the description of Chinese researches I will refer to these strategies in detail.

1.2 Chinese studies on spouse selection and marriage strategy

Because of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution[8], from the 1960s until the late 1970s, the development of sociology remained stagnant in China. Chinese studies about spouse selection started in the middle of the 1980s. Most Chinese scholars' studies are empirical and usually they prefer to analyze matrimonial advertisements. I review researches about spouse selection and marriage strategy which relate to my study.

The first effective report is Li's *The Mate Selection Criteria of Contemporary Chinese* (1989). She picked 300 cases including 150 female and 150 male cases respectively from national newspapers and magazines. She found that age, height and marital status are factors which are more important for Chinese than in other culture (Li, 1989). Following researches, until now, most focus on matrimonial advertisements in a variety of youth-class newspapers and magazines such as *Chinese Women, Friends, Family, Girlfriend, Life partner*, by analyzing information in this way of mate selection to know specific standards (Yang, 1997; Wu and Chen, 1997; Xu and Wang, 2002; Zhong, 2003; Xu, 2005).

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[8] The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a social-political movement. It was conducted by Chairman Mao from 1966 to 1976. During these ten years, intelligentsia such as students had to interrupt their studies and displaced forcedly to rural regions to work.

From the 1980s to 1990s, studies showed men prefer women who have advantages in appearance and housekeeping, while women expect their mate to have higher education and a good job. "Lang Cai Nv Mao" is still in the main position of spouse selection[9] (Pan,1985; Shen and Ma, 1987; Xu,1997). In 1997, Qian and Wu did a study on 263 dating advertisements from a newspaper in Beijng. The results show that Chinese spouse selection is still affected by traditional value "Men Dang Hu Dui"[10](Qian& Wu, 1998). Besides, generally, family background is less critical than personality, educational background and feeling (Yang, 1988; Liu, 1996; Wu and Chen, 1997).

Entered the 21st Century, the situation begins to change. Males think their own personality, property, and appearance become more important, while the attention on female marital history and career is reduced. They emphasize more about women's housekeeping ability while pay less attention to health and career (Zhu, Dong, Qian, Wang, and Liu, 2004). For females, their educational levels have obvious improvement, and they care about appearance, occupation, educational degree, and marital history of themselves. Their demands of mate increase in terms of career and personality (Qian, 2003). Generally, during the past 15 years, characters of this group who tend to find a spouse through newspaper advertisement have changed. The average age of this group become older, and their selection criteria become more diverse. This tendency reflects dramatic changes in social, political, economic, and cultural background (Xu, 2005). Researches also illustrate that mate selection way extends from family-center realm to work and entertainment place (Xu,1997; Yang, 1997; Wu, 2000; Li   and Xu, 2004; Ye and Ye, 2005).

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[9] In Chinese tradition, "Lang Cai Nv Mao" means that literary and artistic talent are essential for men, while appearance and status are critical condition to measure women.
[10] So called "Men Dang Hu Dui" is the basic form and rules of Chinese feudal society. It means when they choose their spouse, they will compare whether factors of each other are equivalent, such as property, social status, social reputation and the history of family. They think these conditions could provide a guarantee to the stability of marriage.

The main debate of these researches is their speculation about how important the economic conditions in future spouse selection. Some assert that as living condition becomes more modern, on the whole people value love more than before, while the elderly and people whose occupational level is lower would like to choose a mate with good income (Li, 1989). Some insist that along with economic development of society, the proportion who asks for conditions including having an apartment and living in a city will increase (Zhou, 1990; Wu and Chen, 1997). Others think on the surface, the young generation consider on economic condition reduces; instead they care more about education, career, occupation, and other abilities. In fact, these potential factors can be transformed to material condition (Yang, 1988; Tian, 1993). In my view, the cause of this debate may be that most studies were based on a particular period to explain, analyze and describe specific requirements of different groups.

1.3 Theoretical approaches in the study of the dating shows and the post-80s

Recently, the new research direction diverts to changes in mate selection from the perspective of history (Xu, 2000; Qian, Wang, Zhang, and Zhu, 2003; Zhu, Dong, Qian, Wang, and Liu, 2004; Xu, 2004). However, until now only three researches from the perspective of sociology pay attention to the mass media television to study marriage strategy, which are related to my case, especially the spouse selection in dating shows (Xi and Feng, 2001; Wang and Rong, 2011; Ma, 2011). Ma (2011) used the concepts "habitus" and "capitals" of Bourdieu to explain why dating shows are popular in China. Xi and Feng (2001) analyzed the attitude of audience towards dating shows, and the result reflects the openness and modernity of new spouse selection. Wang and Rong (2011) conducted content analysis to focus on male participants, and sort out their spouse selection criteria.

As for the post-80 generation, the relevant studies relate to seven themes: the characteristics, what are social factors affecting them, the values, consumption habits, the post-80 cultural phenomenon, characters in social communication, and applicability in work (Huang, Deng, Chen, and Lu, 2009). However, in term of spouse selection and marriage strategy, though from researches focusing on groups of contemporary youth, university students and university graduates which include part of the post-80s, we can more or less get some information, up to now there is fewer specific study about this group. Except two master theses from the perspective of ethics discussed the post-80s values on marriage (Chen, 2009; Jiang, 2010), there are only two papers addressing this issue in general level from the perspective of sociology (Wang and Liu, 2007; Zhou, 2012), and no research was conducted to deal with their concrete needs in mate selection and marriage.

According to my review, initial spouse selection theories are originally from the Western. And most Chinese studies in this area are empirical and they usually followed the way of previous western studies. In my view, I agree with applying some of western theoretical approaches in Chinese case study. More specifically, among theories I mentioned above, I prefer to use the value theory, the propinquity theory and the exchange theory in my case. First, the value theory provides a perspective to analyze the relationship between individuals and society. It is in accordance with my purpose to discuss what kinds of social contradictions, mainstream values and ideal models revealed in the individual spouse selection process, and what strategies adopted to settle this process of socialization in term of spouse selection. Both the propinquity theory which is the same as the concept "Men Dang Hu Dui" in Chinese tradition and the exchange theory which is similar to the concept "Lang Cai Nv Mao" provide reasonable theoretical explanations to Chinese spouse selection criteria.

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However, to some extent these western empirical case studies were based on specific social grounds such as culture and economics, sometimes they were different from Chinese traditional society. Although Chinese researchers used the same way to conduct the research, the results turned out to be unsatisfactory. For example, in Tian's research (1993), when talking about sex, which was still a very private topic in the 1990s, responses were not positive and active. It directly affected the research results. Nevertheless, in the respect of empirical studies, in the late 1990s Chinese researches in this area started to reflect how social system, gender difference, and historical changes influence the development of spouse selection. In this condition, I also want to use the guide theory proposed by Chinese scholars to understand the setting of the dating show and the practices of participants in this setting.

Besides, in the relevant literatures about the spouse selection in Chinese dating shows, Chinese scholars engaged in new context, the television dating show, and provided visions of audiences and male participants. So in my project by focusing on marriage strategies of the post-80s generation, I want to not only give more specific spouse selection criteria of both female and male participants, but also compare their criteria and discuss the differences. Furthermore, in my view, spouse selection criteria reflect individual values at the micro level, and it is dynamic and variable. While at the macro level, relevant marriage strategy such as social mobility and mainstream values can provide different ways to perceive social changes. Since the post-80s is the first one-child generation who play a major role in contemporary Chinese society and influence the future development of China, I believe to examine the changes in their marriage practice by comparing them to previous criteria in different periods in China will put forward another way to think about the effects of social factors practically. In this point, theoretically, it may also contribute to the gap in marriage and dating values studies about this group.

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CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SITE

Due to the setting of my study case, I used both quantitative and qualitative method in my research. My preliminary work was data collection. Generally speaking, I have three information sources. The first is the official website of this dating show[11]. It provides the videos of show from episode 36 to episode 228, the newest one. Detailed information of female and male participants from episode 23 to episode 228 is also shown in the website. For females, the information includes ten items, namely name, age, city, career, the dating and marriage experience, family background, attitudes toward to consumption, whether she wants to have a child, whether she minds to live with parents-in-law after marriage, the defects of male she dislikes. For males, the information includes name, age and career, and other information is shown in the personal video profiles in the show video. A second source is the most popular Chinese twitter site "SINA Weibo"[12]. Here, I pay attention to official users, including the dating show's official twitterer, guests who make comments and give advice in show, the host of the show, as well as the producers and the directors of the show. I also refer to the personal twitter of some participants. The last source is the coverage about this show in domestic and foreign mainstream media.

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[11] The official website of dating show *If You are the One*: http://fcwr.jstv.com/
[12] SINA Weibowas launched by SINA Corporation on 14 August 2009, and has more than 300 million registered users as of February 2012. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sina_Weibo
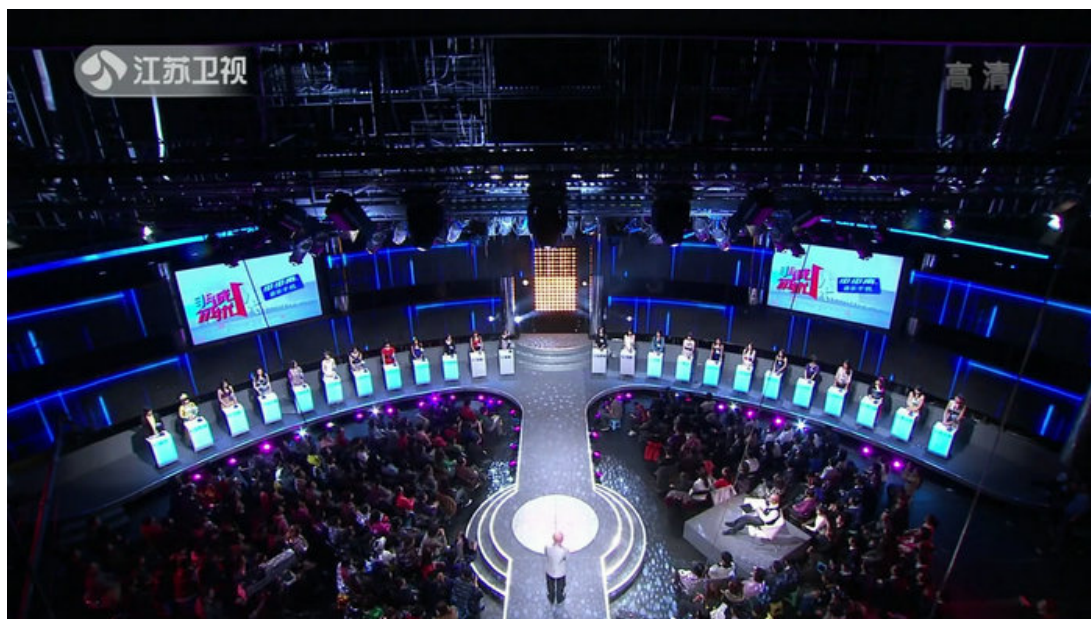
Figure 1 Recording site, the beginning of the show

I mainly use quantitative method to analyze the videos, because of the setting of the show. There are 24 female participants and from 4 to 6 male participants in each episode. There is the host, 2 guests making remarks of participants' performance, and audiences. The show has two main sections, namely what is called "female right" and "male right", and the female right part goes first. In this section, there are three rounds. In the first round, a boy goes to the stage, briefly states his name, age and which city he comes from. He stands with the host, faces 24 girls, and picks a girl he would like to date, but this is only known by the host. Then the girls will make a decision based on the first appearance of this boy. As we can see in figure 1, there is a panel in front of each girl. At the beginning of the show, all the panels are blue. If a girl does not like this boy, she can push a button, and the color of light becomes red, as what can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 2 Recording site, during the show

In the second round, the first video profile, a self-introduction of the male participant, will play on two display screens. It provides basic information on the man, including his career, hobby and character. There are three video profiles; after the self-introduction, the others are about his dating and marriage experience, ideal spouse, and the comments from his friends or colleagues.[13] Two video profiles will be shown in the second round, and after the display of each video, the female participants have chances to ask the male some relevant questions. And during the process, females can turn off their lights at anytime. In the third round, after the last video profile is finished, if there are any girls with lights on, then the show will go to a second section, the "male right".

At the beginning of this section, according to the number of lights on, there are two situations. First, if there is only one light, then the male participant should immediately decide whether he would like to date this girl. Second, if there are more than two lights, the man must pick up two of them. In other word, no more than 2 girls can be chosen at this moment. Then these two girls will be invited to the center of stage. If in these two females the girl who was picked

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[13] Usually, if the male talks about both the dating and marriage experience and his ideal spouse together in the second video profile, then the third profile shown in the third round will be the comments from his friend or colleagues.

by the man at the beginning is not included, she will also be invited to the stage. Now the man can choose 1 out of 10 items about these 2 or 3 females who are now on the stage to know more about them.[14] He can also put forward a question to these females. Finally, he has three choices. If he chooses a girl who had kept the light on for him, he can go on a date with her. If his chosen girl did not keep the light on for him, he can try to convince her to go on a date, he might succeed or fail, the result depends on the attitude of this girl. The third choice is that he just gives up the chance and leaves alone; in other words, he fails.

Because of the order of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television in early June 2010[15], the program revised their content in episode 36. So all episodes I collected are from No.36 to No.228. And in my pre-interview with the director of this show, I learned that the duration for a girl to stay on the show is from at least 4 episodes to around 20 episodes. To avoid the repetition of female participants, I chose episodes at and interval of 20. The sample episodes I picked up are 51, 71, 91, 111, 131, 151, 171, 191, and 211. In total, there are data on 208 females and 43 males in 9 episodes[16]. As for qualitative method, I conducted my fieldwork in Beijing, one of the recruitment sites and the recording locations of this show. I did semi-structured interviews with 6 female participants and 2 male participants. I also did a participant observation in the audition process and some unstructured interviews with registers in the audition site. Unstructured interviews were also done with audiences in the recording place. Then I used content analysis to analyze data in video, literal information and interview scripts.

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[14] These items are different from the ten items in female basic information. The differences are about doing housework after marriage, having an unretouched living photo, and whether accepting the notarization of marital property before marriage.

[15] In early June 2010, the order of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television requires the program to rectify and improve the content. Through the ruling, the program should "consider the public's demand for varied, multilevel, and high-quality viewing" and avoid vulgar tendencies like money worship: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/15459367

[16] Except 6 girls who were repeated and 2 girls who do not have enough information in website, these are 208 females and 43 males in these 9 episodes.

CHAPTER 3.DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 The basic information of participants

3.1.1 Age, city, nationality, career

According to the basic information of participants providing by official website of this program, of the 43 male participants, the youngest is 25 years old, the oldest is 36 years old, and the average age is about 28 years old. People between 25 and 32 account for 95%, while only 5% are above 32 years old. The age of female participants ranges from 22 to 37. The average age is about 26. Amongst females, the proportion of people whose age is between 23 and 32 makes up 82%. Women younger than 23 years old account to 10%, while women older than 32 make 8%.

As for the city participants in these 9 episodes come from, among 43 male participants, from their brief self-introduction at the beginning of first round, 69% of them come from Chinese first-line cities[17], for example Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Chongqing. 22% are from Chinese second or third-line cities. 9% is from foreign cities such as New York and Washington. Among 208 female participants, 53% of them come from Chinese first-line cities. 31% are from the second or third-line cities. And 16% are from foreign cities.

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[17] According to *the Report of 2011 Chinese Urban Development*, which is published by China Research Society of Urban Development (CRSUD), the standards for 18 first-line cities are municipality directly under the Central Government, special administrative region, GDP more than 160 billion and urban population more than 2 million. The second-line cities usually are 25 sub-provincial cities with the population more than 3 million. And the third-line cities are 24 coastal small and medium-sized cities with the population more than 1 million. The official website: http://www.chinacity.org.cn/

Out of 208 women who participated in the 9 episodes I examined, the proportion of foreign female is 7%. They mainly come from Japan, Thailand, Ukraine, Russia, Korea, and America. Most of them can speak Chinese, and have studied or worked in China for long time. When the host asked them why they attended this show, they said that they like Chinese culture and prefer some characters of Chinese men such as "taking care of family".

Based on video profiles about male participants and information about female participants in the official website, and using the *Occupational Classification Dictionary of the People's Republic of China* for reference, 38% of 43 males are junior staff and 35% are managers in private or foreign investment companies, 19% are independent entrepreneurs, and the other 8% are freelancers and governmental staff. Among 203 females, 22% are junior staff and 48% are managers in private or foreign investment companies, 25% are independent entrepreneurs, and others make up 5%.

3.1.2 The experience of marriage and dating

From video profiles dealing with dating and marriage experience of male participants, combined with information about female participant posted on the official website of the show, I learned that among males, 41 out of 43 were never married, and the other two were married once and divorced. In 43 male participants, 19 of them have only once dating experience. 5 men have no dating experience. 7 have dated twice, and 12 have dated more than twice. Among female participants, 201 out of 208 are unmarried, 7 women were married, and 4 of them have a child. 21% of female participants have a dating experience, 39% have dated twice, 38% have dated more than twice and only 2% have no experience.

3.1.3 Other characteristics of participants

Among 43 male participants, two thirds provided information about their education in the video profiles they recorded. Of these, 58% have a bachelor degree, 25% have a master degree or a doctor degree, and 17% completed high school or got technical college diploma. Around 14% of men have experience studying abroad. Secondly, about economic conditions, in the early episodes of the show male participants were required to introduce their monthly salary. However, in early June 2010, an order of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television required the program to rectify and improve the content. Through the ruling, the program should "consider the public's demand for varied, multilevel, and high-quality viewing"[18], and avoid vulgar tendencies like money worship. So their salary only can be judged by their job. From the composition of their career I found, most of them have stable income. Actually, some of men talked about their property, for instance, their apartment and car in the video profiles.

The information provided by the 208 female participants does not include their education level, but in the show, through their dialogues with male participants, there are short descriptions of educational level. Combining their age and career, I estimate at least 60% have higher education experience. With respect to their income, there are three bases for estimation; the first is their career I analyzed, the second is their monthly salary, and the third is their family background including the occupation of their parents. The last two are included in ten choices which men entering the final stage "male right" can pick up one for deeper understanding. Generally speaking, more than half the girls have a stable income and their monthly salary is usually above average 6000 RMB or holds the average line.

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[18] Report from BBC: China to limit 'vulgar' reality television shows, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/15459367

3.2 Ideal spouse

3.2.1 Male mate selection criteria

I recorded and categorized descriptions of 41 out of 43 men who entered the second or third round to talk about their ideal mate in the video segments. Then I analyzed choices and questions made by successful male participants who finally came to the male right part. Finally, I have the following results.

Table 1 Criteria mentioned in male requirements of spouse

Rank	Item	Frequency
1	Personality	41
2	Disposition	40
3	Appearance	37
4	Stature	34
5	Refinement	33
6	Capability	30
7	Career	27
8	Consumption	22
9	Living with parents-in-law	18
10	Economic condition	8
11	Age	5
12	Family Background	5
13	Fertility	2
14	Dating and Marriage experiences	1
15	Education	1

3.2.1.1 Character

First, in Table 1, we can see that personality and disposition are the most important factors in the male's spouse selection. Only two of them do not make requirements in this respect. Specifically, in Table2, the top 3 mentioned words are "considerate", "filial", and "active". Second, in Table 1, following personality and disposition, frequently mentioned requirements are "appearance", "stature", and "refinement".

Table 2 Words mentioned in male requirements of spouse's personality and disposition

Rank	Term used	Frequency
1	Considerate	38
2	Filial	36
3	Active	30
4	Gentle	28
5	Lovely	22
6	kind-hearted	20
7	Independent	20
8	Generous	17
9	Open	12
10	Low-profile	5

3.2.1.2 Capability and Career

Table 3 Words mentioned in male requirements of spouse's capability

Rank	Term Used	Frequency
1	Wisdom	25
2	Competent	15
3	Independent	15
4	Housekeeping	9
5	Take care of children/parents	8

Table 4 Words mentioned in male requirements of spouse's career

Rank	Term used	Frequency
1	Steady job	11
2	Have their own career	11
3	Job without heavy workload	8
4	Flexible job	6
5	Full-time wife	5

In Table 1, it shows that "capability" ranks 6th among demands. And in Table 3, "wisdom" is mentioned 25 times, "competent" is mentioned 15 times, and "housekeeping" is mentioned 9 times. Male's attitudes about Spouse's Capability are polarized. Some hope that the spouse would be "mighty in work but also can be delicate in family". Some hold a negative attitude about the "capable", and they hope that spouses would not be too competent. Others hold a positive or neutral attitude, but only two of them do not mind play a supportive role in family.

In Table 1, "career" ranks 7th in requirements. And in Table 4, "full-time wife" is mentioned 5 times. 3 men want their spouses to be a full-time wife, and on the contrary, the other 2 people do not hope that the spouse is a full-time wife. 27 people said that women should have their own career. In this aspect, in Table 4, "steady job" is mentioned 11 times, and "have their own career" mentioned 11 times.

3.2.1.3 Attitudes toward marriage and dating

In the 9 episodes I picked up as samples for research, the attitudes of male participants toward marriage and dating are first shown in the video profiles of their dating and marriage experiences and future relationship with ideal spouse. And then it is also can be found in their dialogue with female participants. Over 77% of 43 male participants talked about affection factors. More specifically, they want their mate to have similar hobbies and habits as them. Furthermore, they think lovers should pay enough time to accompany each other. Mr. Zhang said, "affection is love or not, but in real life people consider more about worth or not. I hope the foundation of my marriage is based on the love, instead of my economic conditions." One man who took part in the U.S. special episode said, "I have been studying in the U.S. for seven years, I hope that my spouse has an international outlook, especially the experience of working or studying abroad, because the common experience brings a common topic. Ideal spouse, first of all, is a good partner in the matter of ideology. Then love is consolidated by the exchange of ideas and mutual encouragement." About whether minding their spouse is divorced, among unmarried and divorced men, none had requirements. When they are asked about their attitude about this issue, they do not mind whether the spouse is divorced; or has children; a single mother is also acceptable. Only one expects his mate has fewer dating experience.

3.2.1.4 Living with parents-in-law

The basic information of the female participants includes economic conditions, family background, marriage and love experience, the ability to do housework, attitude towards consumption, authentic photo, whether she wants a child, whether she minds living with parents-in-law, whether she minds the property notarization before marriage, and the defects of men they most dislike. In the part of male right, half of male participants who entered the male choice stage raised the issue of living with parents after marriage. A considerable proportion of men stressed that they value the relationship with their parents and expect their spouses to live in harmony with their parents (Table1). In episode 131, Mr. Lang finally gave up his chosen girl, because she did not wish to live with his parents. However, as Mr. Lang explained, he grew up with his single mother, and he could not leave her living alone.

3.2.1.5 Consumption

Instead of paying attention to female economic conditions which ranks 10 (Table1), males seem concerned more about female attitudes toward consumption. Mr. Hu said, "I agree with rational consumption; though my income can meet any material demand of my spouse, I still prefer that she is frugal and planned in consumption. It is better for future family life, because we have to consider the fee for taking care of parents, children's education, and other emergency spending." Almost none said they would accept an orgy of spending. "I do not think squandering is a good habit." From the information about 208 female participants in official website, we can see how females think about this point. 30% of women incline to frugality, 50% of them choose to consume within the scope of their abilities, that is, moderate consumption, and 20% of them admit that they have a habit of purchasing expensive items, but none admit they spend wastefully.

3.2.1.6 Other requirements

As for spouse's age, education background, economic conditions, and family background, these requirements were mentioned in relatively low frequency. In term of age, four men wanted the woman to be younger than him, one male required his spouse to be older than him, and most reported they can accept a female who is 3 to 5 years older than them. Only one put forward a standard about education, because he completed high school. Considering the future education of children, he hoped the education level of his spouse would be higher than his. Three men expected their spouse to have a good family background; in their mind, it relates to female inner quality which will influence the child in future. Besides, two men who both come from a family with one parent have different opinions about the family background of spouse. One of them wanted to find a mate with the same conditions, as he said, "because of the same growing experience, I think she can understand me better than others." The other made an opposite demand, "I do not want my spouse with a similar experience. I want to share her happiness which I did not have."

3.2.2 Female mate selection criteria

Since female participants do not have enough chances to address their ideal mate in the program, I want to know their criteria from the opposite side; that is, what kind of man they do not like to date with. So I collected relevant data from three respects. The first is their basic information from the official website, in which they describe the defects of men they cannot tolerate. The second is their performance to make judgment of men by turning off lights or keeping it on. The third is the reason leading to failures of men in this show. Diverse reasons can be seen both in men's exit interview and dialogues between females and males during the show. Besides, by analyzing their basic information, I found other factors they are concerned about in mate selection.

3.2.2.1 Children

The information about female participants provided in the official website of the show specifies whether or not they want to have children in the future. It is also one of ten choices for men to know more about female in male right part. It is no doubt that in traditional Chinese marriage values, fertility is a responsibility of women. [19] Among 208 female participants, only two said they do not want to have a child. 7% want to have one child, 58% prefers having two children, and 15% thinks that more than two is better. 20% says that depending on their mate, both one and two children are ok.

3.2.2.2 Living with parents-in-law

Responding to men's requirement about living with parents-in-law, this item is also included in female information. It seems like most take a dim view of this requirement. Females who clearly express that do not want to live together with parents-in-law account for 67%, while 15% of the whole accepts living with them, and 18% expresses it depends on the specific situation. From the interviewees, Miss. Chang says, "I think that to not live together with his parents is better for conjugal relations, because it is not easy to deal with the relationship with the mother-in-law. You know, we are different generations. There is an apparent gap, from everyday habits to decoration of the room. I do not want to see my husband involved in a dilemma when there is a conflict." This statement represents the consideration and worry of most females. Furthermore, as Miss. Qu mentioned, "We need more space to stay alone. Could you imagine when you want to have a sweet weekend with your husband to see a movie together in sofa, his mother comes to join you? No, I will be unhappy with it." Another view is coming from girls like Miss. Huang, "although I disagree with living together, I agree

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[19] The traditional Chinese old saying is no offspring is the worst one of the three unfilial behaviors to their parents.

that we should take care of parents. In my mind, the best way is to live closer to them." Their attitudes show that even if they did not live together they could still show their filial piety to parents. Actually of the 67% who do not want to live together, two of three said that they agree with living closer to parents-in-law.

3.2.2.3 Defects of men female participants most dislike

From 208 female participants' information in the official website, the high frequency words and phrases in Table 5 to describe the defects of men they most dislike are "stingy", "dishonest", "without entrepreneur spirit", "without responsibility", "unfaithful", "sluttish appearance", and "androcentrism".

Table 5 Defects of men female participants most dislike

Rank	Defect	Frequency
1	Stingy	198
2	Dishonest	189
3	Without entrepreneur spirit	170
4	Without responsibility	169
5	Unfaithful	153
6	Sluttish appearance	125
7	Androcentrism	116
8	Selfishness	113
9	No self-confidence	105
10	Peacockery	89
11	Unpunctual	65
12	Irascibility	34
13	Smoking	22

3.2.2.4 Performance in choosing mate

As I described in the method part, I recorded the average number of lights the females keep on for males in every round. For example, in Table 6, in episode 51, there are 5 male participants and 24 female participants. These 5 male participants got 24, 18, 16, 11 and 17 lights respectively in the first round. So the average of lights the males got in the first round is 17.2. This average number shows female's attitude in the first round about the first expression

of male participants. In this round, female decisions are based on their visual judgment. From this decision, I want to know their attitudes toward men's outside appearance. Then I used the same method to get the average number of lights in the second round. In the second round, the basic information and the dating and marriage experience of male participants will be told to the females. So during this process they can make a more rational judgment. As for "Dating rate", it shows the percent of male participants who can succeed to date with a girl. For example, in episode 51, 5 male participants attended and 3 of them succeeded to date with a girl. So the dating rate is 60%. Because none succeeded to date with the girl they picked up at the beginning of the show, it is 0%.

Table 6 Male participants average success rate in each round

Episode	Lights as Indications of Interest (of 24)		Match Rate	
	First Round[20]	Second Round[21]	Dating Rate Overall	Dating Rate Girl they picked
51	17.2	7.0	60%	0%
71	17.3	9.0	50%	0%
91	19.5	5.5	16.7%	0%
111	21.6	12	40%	20%
131	22.2	9.0	40%	0%
151	22.8	9.4	20%	20%
171	20.5	14.5	50%	0%
191	21.5	10.0	75%	25%
211	20.8	16.6	20%	20%

I also counted the average number of lights of these 9 episodes in the first round, it is 20.4. This figure indicates that the initial judgment of female attendees is relatively objective. It also verifies that outside appearance does not affect too much for a female's spouse selection. Moreover, there is a case special case. In episode 171, Mr. Yang is a handsome young man

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[20] The first round is "female right", in which girls elect boys. It focuses on female attitudes about the first expression of male. At the moment they make decision, except the outside looking of the male participant, they only know his name, age and which city he comes from.
[21] The second round is also "female right", the difference from the first round is the female can know more about the male, such as career, habit, the dating and marriage experience.

with perfect status and height, but in the first round, there were only 19 lights kept on which was lower than average. When female participants responded to this decision, they said he is so perfect that they do not have sense of security; they worried that he is a playboy and his shining figure may attract other girls. Besides, comparing data of these 9 episodes longitudinally, I found that the number of lights turned off by females in the first and second round shows a declining trend. This demonstrates two points: first, the judgment of the female gradually becomes more rational; second, from interview, producers of this program advise girls to keep lights on at the beginning in order to ensure the program goes on well.

Then, dating rate is the proportion of successful male out of total number in each episode. It is from 16.7% to 75%, and the average is 41%. This rate reflects the consistency of the men and women in mate selection. Finally, the average rate of dating with picked-up girls is 9%, in other words, only 1 out of 10 can match with their initial choose. It points out that during the deeper understanding, man changes their choice.

3.2.2.5 Reasons of male failure

By synthesizing reasons of apparent and numerous turning out of lights by females and short self-reflection interview of male participants after failing to date with a girl, I found the following outcomes why they fail. First, 35% of 43 male participants make too strict standards about the appearance or character of the female. For example, a man said he could not accept a woman who has high cheekbones which is ominous in his mind. Second, 20% of them failed because they hope their mate can conduct their life-planning after marriage. In my interview, Miss Huang gave a representative response to above two points.

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"I could not understand what kind of ideal spouse these men want to find. How can we be independent and outstanding in the company and in the same time as they wish to spend enough time in family? If I am self-confident and a person who has own opinion, how can you require me to play as a fool to rely on you in everyday life? I am not an actor. We should respect individuality of each other. Yes, I could be gentle and smart, and I could do housekeeping and taking care of children, but I think all the things are mutual and should be shared, these are not female obligations."

It is worth pondering that male requests personal planning of women, but as the social status of women gradually increase today, they become more involved in social affairs, and do not want to be restricted by men. Third, 46% of men failed because the female participants think these men could not deal with the relationship with their ex-girlfriend.

CHAPTER 4.DISCUSSION

4.1 General characteristics of participants

From the data I described in the previous part, we can find some characters and patterns of participants of this show.

Firstly, marriage Law of the People's Republic of China requires that the male should not be married earlier than the age of 22 and the female should not be married earlier than age 20. As marriage law encourages late marriage, the age between 25 and 32 belongs to the marriageable age in China. The data shows that in the aspect of age, main group of participants are the post-80s generation, who is in the marriageable age. Since most participants were born after 1979, most participants of the dating show *If You Are the One* can be assumed to come from single child family and they are the first generation after the implementation of the one-child policy.

Until now, there has been no official statistics of Chinese one-child population. According to the data of the National Family Planning Department, in 1979, the one-child population was 6.1million. After 10 years, in 1988, this number increased to 34.15 million. However, this data was children who registered for the one-child certification in department (Feng, 1992). And after 1993, the data of the one-child population from the National Family Planning Committee no longer includes the youth who are older than 14 years old. In 2005, Xinhua news agency reported that the one-child population is about 90 million.[22] From Feng's research (2006), the one-child population is between 83 million to 90 million. We can see that

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[22] The official report from Xinhua news agency: http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2005-11/14/content_3779575.htm

in Table 7, in the first one-child generation, most of them were born in the cities. In the last 20 years, their growth is along with Chinese social economic reform and opening. It synchronizes with the modern transformation of Chinese society in technology, ideology and social structure. And because of the one-child policy, they become a special group in China. In my later discussion, I will come back to this point, especially the effects of the one-child policy on this generation.

Table7 The registered one-child population[23]

Year	Total(million)	City	Rural
1979	6.1	1.71	4.39
1980	11.43	3.15	8.29
1981	14.48	4.44	10.05
1982	19.53	6.48	13.05
1983	24.77	8.77	16.00
1984	28.17	14.22	13.96
1985	29.45	16.91	12.53
1986	30.51	18.62	11.89
1987	32.32	21.55	10.76
1988	34.15	24.21	9.94
1989	35.47	N/A	N/A

And according to their marriage experience, most of participants are unmarried but with dating experiences. In terms of age, female range is wider than that of male, but the average age of men is older than that of women. And among female participants, post-90s and before-80s take a certain proportion. Comparison indicates two points: first women start to consider marriage earlier than men; second though the average age of men is younger than women, from the proportion we can see the problem of 'leftover ladies' [24]is more serious than that of men.

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[23] This data is from Feng's research about the one-child population in 2006 (Feng, 2006).

[24] Leftover ladies or Shengnv in Chinese, has become a buzzword in the Chinese language. They are well-educated, well-paid and independent. And they are single; most were born in the 70sand are now stuck.

Secondly, most of participants come from the first-line cities. On-site registration points of this program are set up in these first-line cities may be one of reasons. Furthermore, obviously the proportion of females from second or third-line cities is larger than that of men. The director of this program explained, "We will filter male participants in the audition process, usually men who have good conditions come from the first line city. They are the prior subjects of the show. We also consider who comes from cities in the lower level, but the registers are obviously less than the former. I think it might because good conditions give men more confidence about dating competition, while women seem not to be worried about it." Actually female participants from the second-line city said it gives them a chance to know men who have better conditions than them. While both women and men from the first-line city said they do not have such consideration, and they can accept a spouse whose conditions is higher or lower than them, they prefer if they are equivalent. Males who do not come from the first-line city said they hope the condition of their spouse is equivalent or lower. In my opinion, the mobility theory partly works in this case, that is, it works in the female who comes from the second and third line city.

Third, to some extent, the career directly determines a person's social role, status and activities, and indirectly affects the circle of their interpersonal communication. The results show that most male and female participants are from private or foreign companies. This reflects that on the one hand, in Chinese context, their workload and pressure are higher than other occupations, and they are usually busy with their work and have limited time for dating. Although they have certain social activities, the circle is always limited to their clients and colleagues. During the interview with a male who works in a world famous IT company, my interviewee talked about potential rules in company.

"The company I work for is a world famous company, I am so lucky to get this job with high salary. But you know, in this kind of company, there are some rules which are not expressly stipulated in your contact, and you have to obey them if you do not want to lose your job. Obviously, the boss does not want to see his staff fall in love with each other, especially in the same office. He thinks this relationship will divert your attention and affect the efficiency of your work. Another situation is particular for female. Administrators do not want to employ a female who has dating relationship or plans to get married soon. It means, in the near future the company will have to permit her maternity leave which means indirect loss. Furthermore, there is no protection rules really works well for employee, when I was a programmer one year ago, I had to work for more than 10 hours every weekday, the only time I had for dating was the weekend. But in my company, the weekend does not belong to you, and my boss could give me a new project anytime. You cannot reject tasks, if you do not want to do, well, there are so many people waiting for your position. Whatever, now I am a manager, I have more freedom than before."

His explanation could be verified by the data that 25% of male participants and 15% of female participants work in IT companies. Other interviewees also imply these potential rules are common in most private and foreign investment companies in China.

On the other hand, members of this group have stable income, good education and other good conditions that make them more confident to select their spouse. For men to some extent they can satisfy most material demands of the female which can be seen in the program; for women, as they can afford themselves, they do not need to consider too much about economic conditions of men. Besides, compared to men, more females get senior positions. This might be a response to the phenomenon of leftover ladies I addressed above.

To sum up, the participants of this show mainly are the post-80s generation who come from city. They are highly educated, independent, and have stable jobs and incomes. This kind of group is not only the dominant population with comparative advantage in the marriage market, but also the main force in the development of contemporary Chinese society. As they are now at a marriageable age, their spouse selection becomes a heated issue of society.

4.2 Social changes and new characters of spouse selection criteria

Social changes in economic, culture and politics, which is mainly influenced by policies of the state, contribute to criteria changes in history. In the 1950s and early 1960s, as the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Chinese society was in the hero worship era. In terms of economic condition, there was almost no difference; an outstanding representative in production or army was a popular standard in spouse selection, such as cadres in army. Because of Great Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, political identity was the first factor and the critical condition to be considered. After 1977, after the suspension for 11 years, the reopening of national exams brought young generation opportunities to go to university. In fact, from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, it was a time of Chinese renaissance. The social status of intellectuals was improved. At the same time, in 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China decided to shift the focus of the work of the Party and the State to the economic modernization programme. Following the suggestion of Xiaoping Deng, from 1979, the policy in reform and opening up was conducted to transform the socialist planned economy to the socialist market economy. The effect of this economic reform on social structure became apparent in the early 1990s. Therefore, from that period until the beginning of this century, material condition has always been the important factor in spouse selection. In the beginning of this century, the process of globalization intensifies, and its influence in China becomes more obvious, not only in economics but also in culture. Western thought, especially notions of gender and sexuality, family and marriage, and freedom and democracy, affect the young generation, most of whom are the post-80s. Meanwhile, because of the rapid development of cities, the living conditions of urban populations have become stable and satisfactory. In this context, through this long-term transformation, Chinese spouse selection reflects new characters as following.

Firstly, both male and female put inner personality at the first place instead of material needs. Moreover, spiritual resonance becomes the key in dating and marriage, instead of measuring age, appearance, height, chastity, the marriage experience in the past (Li, 1989). Specifically, for male, as shown in Table1, immanent requirements like personality and disposition are more influential than outside appearance. From their description of ideal spouse, they expect a compatible and complementary relationship between each other in term of personality. This corresponds with complementary needs theory. For female, the men's defects they most dislike reflect their requirements in personality, habits of life, morality, future career planning, emotion and marriage. It is manifest that for females, inner and spiritual quality account for main positions, which is similar to male. However, opposite to men, outside conditions are barely demanded. Besides, spiritual and affectional factors are also increasingly meaningful in marriage. In the past, "chastity" has been a critical factor in Chinese traditional marriage and dating values, especially in the feudal age.[25] It has a considerable influence until the late 1990s. However, no participant mentioned the "chastity" issue at all. In my view, marriage and dating experience which was a private issue for Chinese in the past, but now people's attitudes are more open.

Secondly, as the development of society progresses, more men begin to accept the social reality that the two genders have become equal and women have become independent, so they pay attention not only to women's traditional character but also to their independence and self-confidence. For instance, in the respects of female capability and career, most men who

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[25] In fact, "chastity" issue is originated from men's virgin complex. In the past, especially in the old Chinese feudal society, it was forbidden for girls to have sexual behavior before marriage, sometimes requirements were stricter. They are not allowed to talk or have any physical contact with men except their fixed spouse who get the recognition of duplex parents. In feudal age, men can marry several women, but women can only marry a man. Men had rights to divorce, while women could not do that. Besides, remarriage of women were regarded as a contemptible thing. According to custom, they should remain a widow or keep single in the whole life.

have requirements in the occupation prefer the women who have independent work. They do not think the Chinese traditional idea that the man goes out to work while the woman looks after the family is reasonable now. One male participant in the program considers that women can have their own work and career but do not need a high income, and the work just brings her self-confidence. Mr. Hu says, "I do not object super woman. I hope she is masterful outside, but when she returns, she should become gentle in front of me."

Thirdly, both men and women have a long-term and rational sight in spouse selection. In the respect of economics, both male and female approve moderate consumption. For men, they underline long-term plans and consumption habits over current economic conditions. For females, as Miss. Liu reposed, "I think it is reasonable for me to buy my favorite thing which I can afford with my own income. Anyway, after I get married, I will consider my family first." Furthermore, though females do not have specific demand in the occupation of men, they show their attention on male future career plan. Besides, as for other requirements, it also shows that when men select women, they have long term goals, for example, their requirements about spouse's educational level and family background connect to their consideration of children's future education.

However, I want to point out that the contradictories between changes and tradition, which are mainly reflected on men's criteria of their spouse. For example, the ranks of exterior conditions like appearance and stature illustrate that for men these factors still have important positions in choosing a spouse, and this tendency is in accordance with Chinese traditional notion "Lang Cai Nv Mao". Furthermore, on the one hand, as the development of economics more people can access to better education, and the improvement of social status and educational level of women, men lose their advantages in gender, instead having more

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pressure in social competition. Thus, they hope their spouse can share burdens both in material and spirit. In this condition, they change part of their notion to accept new image of women. On the other hand, they still keep traditional conservative values with potential androcentrism, in which ideal spouse is a "Wise Wife, Good Mother"[26]. They expect their mate to regard him as a family-center to be dependent on him. In other words, from external to internal requirements, male demands are overmuch. In my view, essentially, it is a contradiction between social development and patriarchal tradition.

4.3 Effects of the one-child policy on spouse selection of the post-80s

Family planning policy which has been conducted since 1979 by the Chinese government, especially its one-child policy, is another critical factor in spouse selection of the post-80s generation. First and foremost, there is a fundamental conflict in point of views of male and female, that is, whether the female would like to live with parents-in-law after marriage. Notions like "family" and "home" are deep-rooted in Chinese tradition. Usually, it means a big family instead of limiting in a couple and children. This notion has different meanings for males and females. For men, they are the mainstay of the whole family; for female, though they deal with household affairs, they play a role relying on men. This situation is common in a patriarchal society, especially in China, a country that in the past looked up to men and downs on women. Men are regarded as superior to women because they are successors of family. So the custom is a wife should be compliant with a husband after marriage; usually they will be separated from her parents and live with him. In this sense, it also can be understood why this requirement is proposed by men, but never mentioned by women. In fact in most situations, "parents-in-law" can be simplified to "mother-in-law". In Chinese

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[26] It describes the ideal womanhood in China in Chinese tradition, and it still works in modern society. Female are expected to have a good housekeeping ability as well as have virtue to educate children.

marriage, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is always a core of big family. Chinese think "filial piety" is a virtue which must be in compliance with, in any condition the children should not go against their parents' opinion. In a family, the details of life are decided by females; males do not take care, so usually different opinions arise between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. However, there is a question, if "filial piety" is a tradition, why does a wife not respect the elder's opinion?

The answer can be attributed to the essential point, the family planning policy, particularly the one-child policy. In the aspect of female, to some extent, the one-child policy changes the situation of the man being superior to woman. As the only child in family, girls have the opportunity of education as man and all parental care. They do not only have superiority feeling as the only child, but also their educational level brings them independent opinions. Thus, they no longer blindly follow the conventional rules. Furthermore, without brothers and sisters, they grew up in a private space. This habit lowers their applicability to collective life or share space with others. As my interviewees said, there is a gap between two generations, especially in habit. In the aspect of male, before the implementation of this policy, they have brothers to share the responsibility of taking care of parents. But now, they have to take this as a part of their future life alone. In a word, the importance of family relationship in spouse selection transforms from the determinate role in arranged marriage to a contradictory factor in contemporary marriage.

The effects are also can be seen in other respect. For example, in the issue of having children, the data shows most female want to have more than one child. Due to the one-child policy, most of the post-80s generation, particularly who were born in the city, are the only child in their family. That's why during interviews, almost all female interviewees expressed the same

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opinion that they want to have two children because as the only child in a family they felt alone when they grew up without accompanying by brothers or sisters. This strong emotional need of companion is also reflected in both male and female attitudes about the importance of affectional factors in marriage.

In addition, the one-child policy brings another problem that the population ratio of male and female in the nation is imbalanced. It is reflected in this show that the number of females is more than men. The director said that the registers of female are three times more than men. However, the data show that the population of male and female are 119:110. In the population who was born from 1980 to 2000, the number of male is 33 million more than women (Guo and Yin, 2005). So why do more females participate more than males? Are women more open than men to attend such kind of dating show? Except natural reason, in fact, in the early period of implementation of family planning policy, it was not carried out well in the rural areas. Since traditional idea prefer boy than girl, in the rural area, big families were still proud of having many sons. Now, most of male population is distributed in rural area, while in the city where the one-child policy is well conducted, there are more females.

CHAPTER 5.CONCLUSION

This thesis, which deals with spouse selection practices of the post-80s generation, engages in empirical data analysis of the most popular Chinese dating television show *If You are the One*. Focusing on the performances of 208 female and 43 male participants in the show and combining their video profiles and information from the official website, my research explores a new vision in Chinese spouse selection in the following respects.

In respect to the vision of ideal spouse I looked at the way in which the post-80s generation, as a marriageable group made of highly educated and independent urbanites with stable jobs, project and integrate Chinese traditional values such as "Lang Cai Nv Mao" and modern requirements such as spiritual communication in their spouse selection criteria. On the macro level, these diverse criteria include inner qualities and outside characteristics. Longitudinally, these criteria are changeable and marked by epochal character; to some extent, they reflect a long-time social change. On the other hand, these criteria are still subjective and discrepant, because they depend on individual condition. On the micro level, first, complementary spiritual needs take over primacy over material demands; second, as the females become more independent, the males start to accept the changes of gender role and adapt requirements to their performances both at home and at work; third, males divert their traditional demands about age, height and chastity to new requirements of personal traits and the relationship with parents-in-law.

According to earlier works on spouse selection in Chinese society, some contradictions, which are apparently reflected in spouse selection of the post-80s generation, exist between traditional and contemporary Chinese values. More specifically, because of a series of the events and policies such as the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Great Cultural Revolution, reopening of national exams, the policy of reform and opening up, and the one-child policy, not only social structure has been changed, but also the most rapid development of economics has happened in China. Furthermore, with globalization, the developing Chinese society absorbs western modern values. All these social factors (politics, economics and culture) which directly connect to social values, gradually affect and change conservative Chinese traditions, and, as the main force of Chinese society, the marriage strategy of the post-80s generation, will lead to further social development.

On the other hand, in light of the positive and negative effects of the one-child policy, the strategies adopted by members of the post-80s generation to reconcile them are also discussed in the thesis. Obviously, due to this policy, not only the basic goal of population control has been achieved, but also gender equality has increased in many aspects such as education. It brings merits like independence to the post-80s, but at the same time, their individuality can also be attributed to it. As the only child in a family, the post-80s generation members are given a free hand in deciding their marriage and dating affairs; however, in the meanwhile, they are held responsible to take care of parents. It is hard to predict the possible effects of the one-child policy in the future, but for the post-80s, the first one-child generation, I think there are more positive effects are more than negative ones. With the relative free choice in mate selection, they make an effort to balance taking care of their parents and keeping their own private lives.

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I think this thesis may be limited because of two reasons, but I believe it fills in a gap in the current spouse selection studies. First, the research is based on one dating show, so the information may not reflect the exhaustive spouse selection criteria. Second, the participants I have studied could not represent the whole post-80s generation. People enrolled in the dating show are only a small part of Chinese marriageable post-80s population. Nevertheless, I think that in term of marriage and dating value, this thesis contributes to filling in the gap in studies about this group from a sociological perspective. Using the television dating show as a source of empirical data, it also explores a new way to observe the effects of social changes.

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