



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

# The Interactions and Role-changings between the LGBTQIA+ Community and the Creative Industries in Guangzhou, China

Focusing on Women's Opinion in the LGBTQIA+ Community

**Ziyuan Zhou**  
**zi5067zh-s@student.lu.se**

**Abstract:** This thesis examines the interactions and role-changings between the LGBTQIA+ community and the creative industries in Guangzhou, China. Following Florida's (2003) creative capital theory, and Badgett, Waaldijk, and Rodgers's (2019) study on LGBT inclusion and economic development, involving semi-structured interviews with LGBTQIA+ individuals working or studying in the creative industries. This qualitative data reveals that Guangzhou as a creative city, facilitates the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as the development of the creative industries. The main roles of the LGBTQIA+ community in creative industries can be concluded as producers, consumers, opinion leaders. And the roles the creative industries played for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community is that it can help de-stigmatizing the community, promote its culture, raise public awareness and acceptance, and provide a platform for differences.

**Keywords:** Queer Culture in China, Cultural and Creative Cities Index, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion, Creative Capital Theory, Causal Pathways Linking LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development, Creative Industries in Guangzhou

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## List of Abbreviations

LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and more
C3	Cultural and Creative Cities
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, Sex Characteristics
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

## **1. Introduction**

In China, sexual minorities still live in the shadows, the UNDP (2016) report brought new light to our understanding of the living situation and struggles of the LGBTQIA+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and more), with only 5% of them openly revealing their sexual identity. The vast majority of LGBTQIA+ people experience discrimination in all areas of their lives. Regarding health and social services, sexual minorities face many difficulties in seeking services if their sexual orientation or multi-gender identity is known or only suspected by service providers. Sexual minorities living with HIV face a double stigma and obstacles in accessing disease prevention and treatment services and unbiased psychological support and counseling (UNDP, 2016). On the other hand, however, the report (UNDP, 2016) also shows several significant developments.

The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that sexual minorities should be treated equally and have full access to social services. The majority of respondents also supported the development and implementation of particular policies to respect the status of LGBTQIA+ people and protect them from discrimination. There is a clear age difference in public opinion, with young people significantly more open and receptive to sexual diversity. The older the respondents, the higher the proportion of those who rejected homosexuality as pathology, biased attitudes based on rigid stereotypes, rigid dichotomies of gender roles, and even HIV-related stigma. Similarly, 89% of young respondents were comfortable with their children being LGBTQIA+. In short, it is clear that within this generational divide lies the most significant opportunity for social liberation for China's sexual minorities (UNDP, 2016).

In addition, this thesis departs from noting that LGBTQIA inclusion is key to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Inclusiveness demonstrated in Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; and Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. "Leave no one behind" is the guiding ideology (Fukuda-Parr, 2018).

### **1.1. Aims of the Research**

This thesis intended to draw attention to the LGBTQIA+ community in China and discuss their career path and LGBTQIA+ individuals' opinion of the association between the advancement of LGBTQIA+ inclusion and the development of creative industries in Guangzhou. By conducting interviews investigating self-identified LGBTQIA+ interviewee's perceptions of the inclusiveness in Guangzhou, China, and their perceptions of the linkages between creative industries and LGBTQIA+ inclusion, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do the members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Guangzhou, China perceive the role of the creative industries in creating LGBTQIA+ inclusiveness?
2. And how do they perceive the role of the LGBTQIA+ community in the development of the creative industries and the city?

The research question is explorative and aims to investigate the interactions and role-changings between the LGBTQIA+ community and the creative industries in Guangzhou, leading to a conclusion that with common grounds while reserving differences, further explanation of methodology will be illustrated in section 4.

## **1.2. Academic Contribution**

LGBTQIA+ related topics are significantly neglected in Chinese society, their legal rights are restricted, and their voices are silenced. By doing this research, the aim is to contribute a new perspective by looking into the relations of LGBTQIA+ people and the cities' development in the Chinese context and for better international recognition of the struggle and achievements of the LGBTQIA+ community in China.

## **1.3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is mainly based on the creative capital theory introduced by Richard Florida (2003) and the study of macro-level evidence of the relationship between LGBT inclusion and economic development by Badgett, Waaldijk, and Rodgers (2019).

## **1.4. Thesis Outline**

In the next section, the background of the queer culture in China will be introduced and discussed Guangzhou as a creative city, using previous research as a reference published by European Commission (Montalto, Tacao Moura, Alberti, Panella, & Saisana, 2019). Section 3 discussed the theoretical frameworks of the thesis, creative city and human capital theory, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and the four linkages between economic development and LGBT

inclusion. By briefly concluding former theories, providing a guideline for section 4, the methodological process, including interviewee selection, terminology of the interview questions, bias of the interview and consideration of interviewer-interviewee dynamics. Section 5 analyzes the findings from the interviews by interpreting the differences and similarities of the answers of the nine interviewees in each question. Finally, a discussion in line with previous literature, focusing on the theoretical framework of this research and a conclusion will be presented in section 7, as well as suggestions for future research.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1. Queer Culture in China**

To understand the Queer culture in China, the first thing is to realize the philosophical and political complexity in the country. Confucianism is the dominant philosophy in Chinese culture, its significant influence dates back to 500 BC and is still a hegemonic paradigm in today's Chinese society. In Confucianism, sex is considered an integral part of life but never a dominant one or a negative one. A Confucian saying, 食色性也 (eating and sex are human nature) (Zhou, 2000), denied the stigmatized sinful ideology of sex. However, Confucianism, on the other hand, celebrated the obedience to the ruler's authority over the minister, the father over the son, and the husband over the wife (Tu, 1998 cited in Yip, 2016), and sex was highly regulated by the appropriate family-kinship (traditional familism and kinship-system) relationships (Zhou, 2000). There has been no conception of sexual orientation such as heterosexual or homosexual for the longest time because people were never identified themselves as their object of erotism (Yip, 2016), which led to the large extent of invisibility and silence of the queer people in China for a long time.

In its modern times, China grew with the contradiction of Confucianism traditions as the Socialists entered the stage of history. Socialist production was based on stable heterosexual family units for social re/production and a homogeneous state formation, and the sexual modernity was structured around heterosexual monogamy (Tian, 2019). Homosexuality was eliminated in public vision and considered a disorder, incivility, a pathology, a threat to the state (since the potential of any divergence from the homogeneity of the nation-state was not allowed), and made illegal when the Communists took over China in 1949 (Zhou, 2000; Tian, 2019). Influenced by Soviet socialist imperialism, the Communist party regarded

homosexuality as Western corruption and a crime; on a larger scale, any sex practices back then were seen as “bourgeois”. The concept of “bourgeois” originates from the Marxist class theory, the bourgeoisie are usually influenced by Western culture and have an extreme tendency of democratization, their existence is anti-proletarian; From which, they were harshly criticized in the Marxist context (Parkin, 2006). And in the Chinese context, that sexual freedom among young people were not necessary for reproduction purposes, and they were influenced by Western ethics and values, which was highly against, freedom of thought in any form was a luxury in China at the time (Tian, 2019).

Since the late 1990s, an apparent economic polarization was produced through uneven marketization; the political elites gained incalculable political power and wealth, which made their justification of oppression, especially to women and sexual minorities, easily achieved with the assistance of the aforementioned Confucian philosophy (Tian, 2019).

Despite the historical context mentioned above, the development of queer activism in China today is thriving but also being resisted in many aspects. Nevertheless, over the past few years, a vibrant, young, urban, and cosmopolitan queer culture has emerged in mainland China, and a significant development linked with a growing individualism and the desire for the mainland LGBTQIA+ community to connect with the global queer culture can be observed (Tian, 2019). Many grassroots LGBTQIA+ NGOs sought survival in major cities, but due to media constraints, censoring of the state, and lack of freedom of speech and march, their objectives to educate the masses and provide safe spaces for the community are always disciplined. Furthermore, cyberspace facilitated strong connections in the LGBTQIA+ community; however, it was brutally regulated by the government. For example, a gay rights promotor and blogger posted an educational and informative article about queer sex on Weibo (the largest public social media in China), and the article was censored and deleted by the platform as soon as it was posted for the reason of spreading “obscene information” or stigmatized as “foreign forces”. Tian (2019) concluded that the state and the bureaucratic-capitalist elites are terrified of any social issue that can cause their loss of monopoly and dictatorship, and queer activism can only survive in an unfrontational, depoliticized context.

## **2.2. Evaluation of Guangzhou as a Creative City**

In this section, the Cultural and Creative Cities Index (The C3 Index) will be utilized to evaluate to what extent Guangzhou is a creative city in the European context. The C3 index comprehensively identified three major aspects of cultural life in a city: cultural vibrancy,



creative economy, and enabling environment, and more specified nine dimensions (see below, and appendix 1). The sub-dimension of the three aspects comprehensively concluded the culture-led development: D1.1 consists of cultural venues & facilities, D1.2 consists of cultural participation & attractiveness, both could generate revenue from people consuming cultural products and services; D2.1 indicates the creative & knowledge-based jobs, D2.2 for intellectual property and innovation, and D2.3 stands for the new jobs in creative sectors, these aspects relate to the labor market in the creative economy which stimulates both creation and consumption; For the enabling environment, D3.1 takes human capital and education into account, D3.2 measures openness, tolerance & trust by calculating foreign citizens and their integration, as well as the citizens' tolerance towards foreigners, D3.3 represents local & international connections of the city, and lastly, D3.4 measures the quality of governance. The dimensions mentioned above are highly collective and reasonable for the evaluation of creative cities and significant for international integration, which explains Guangzhou's integration into the framework. According to Van Puyenbroeck, Montalto, & Saisana (2021), culture-led development is multidimensional and includes various areas of the economy, society, and individual lives into coverage. The C3 index is consistent with the research approach that considers culture as a significant urban phenomenon and a resource for urban development (Montalto et al., 2019). Culture and cities can be considered natural counterparts. Much of Europe's cultural heritage is found in cities (Van Puyenbroeck, Montalto, & Saisana, 2021). Thus, the urban environment is advantageous for cultural facilities, activities, and participation. On the flipside, culture has a vital accumulation effect on urban quality of life and well-being (Ferilli, Sacco, Tavano Blessi, & Forbici, 2017).

Some corrections need to be made while incorporating the indicators. For example, the first indicator measures the number of sights and landmarks per 100,000 inhabitants in European cities. The geographical size and the population of Guangzhou are approximately 100 times larger than the average of European cities. By the end of 2021, the population of Guangzhou was 18,810,600, with an urbanization rate of 86.46% (Guangzhou Statistics Bureau, 2022). With that being the presumption, the sights and landmarks indicator should be measured by the number per 10,000,000 inhabitants. The rest of the indicators should also be multiplied by 100 to match the city's population and geographical size. Another critical factor that needs to be elaborated on is the observation year for each data. Because the global pandemic had an enormous impact on transportation worldwide, data from 2019 will be collected for indicator 3.3, measuring local & international connections. The rest of the data are found with the most recent possible observation years.

The C3 score is calculated as a weighted average of the ‘Cultural Vibrancy’ (40%), ‘Creative Economy’ (40%), and ‘Enabling Environment’ (20%) sub-index scores scaling from 0 to 100 (specific scoring criteria can be referred to appendix 2). The same method was used in calculating the scores of each dimension. As for sub-dimensions, a more specific weight can be referred to in Table 2 (see appendix 3). The weights have been designed by a group of 15 professionals with experience in policy or research in the field of culture, creativity, and urban development, at the international level (Montalto et al., 2019).

Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that, in general, Guangzhou has a 57.8 C3 score, and by European standard, as a city larger than any XXL city in Europe, Guangzhou ranks right after Paris, with a C3 score of 66.0. According to table 3, Guangzhou scored 50.48, 65.78, and 56.54 in cultural vibrancy, creative economy, and enabling environment, respectively, indicating an equal performance in all aspects. In the first category, cultural vibrancy, from table 2, we can see that Guangzhou citizens are doing exceptionally well in cinema attendance, scoring a total of 100 points, and 75.70% of the whole population is very satisfied with the cultural facilities in the city, scoring 94.63. Table 2 also demonstrated that cultural venues and facilities in Guangzhou are not enough since it is a city with a vast population capacity. Besides cinema attendance and cultural facilities satisfaction, Guangzhou’s cultural participation and attractiveness for tourists and museum visitors are pretty low, scoring merely 8.37 and 12.59.

Secondly, a picture of a robust and vibrant creative economy can be drawn. Guangzhou stands out for the dynamism and diversity of its commercial, cultural, and creative sectors. The biggest shares of jobs are taken by IT, software and computer services, advertising, media & communication, TV, entertainment, and performing and visual arts, which provides an exciting labor market full of opportunities and choices for people.

In the third dimension, enabling environment, Guangzhou seems to have an unfavorable openness and tolerance towards foreigners, as well as people’s trust, only 3.9% of the population strongly agrees with the fact that most people in the city can be trusted (Democracy and Science, 2013). The reason for that might be that Guangzhou’s foreign-born population compared to the local population is too small, so low scores for the percentage of foreign graduates and foreign-born population appear. Guangzhou has a very encouraging environment for human capital and education, scoring 100 in both graduates in arts and humanities and graduates in ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), and the average number of universities’ appearances is 6 in four different university rankings: QS, Shanghai, Leiden and Times. D3.3 contributed a total score in local and international

connections, according to Baiyun Airport’s official data and Guangzhou Municipal Transportation Bureau, Guangzhou’s accessibilities by flight, road, and rail are off the charts. Last but not least, the quality of governance scored 67.38, which is mediocre compared to European cities.

Together these results provide important insights and by large confirm that Guangzhou can be considered a creative city with an exceptionally vibrant creative economy, intensive human capital, high quality of education, and a well-connected transportation system. According to the data presented in Table 2, there are not enough cultural venues and facilities provided for all Guangzhou citizens, and thus there is no higher cultural participation and attractiveness. However, the cinema attendance is remarkably high, indicating Guangzhou citizens’ high passion for movies. The C3 index can also serve as a guideline for policy makers in Guangzhou, for example, increasing the construction of cultural venues and facilities to retrieve cultural vibrancy, hence fortifying cultural participation and attractiveness and the quality of governance.

Table 1 List of 29 indicators relevant to 9 dimensions reflecting 3 major facets of the cultural, social and economic vitality of cities

29 Indicators		9 Dimensions		3 main facets	
1	Sights & landmarks		1.1 Cultural Venues & Facilities	Cultural Vibrancy	
2	Museums & art galleries				
3	Cinemas				
4	Concert & music halls				1.2 Cultural Participation & Attractiveness
5	Theatres				
6	Tourist overnight stays				
7	Museum visitors				
8	Cinema attendance				
9	Satisfaction with cultural facilities				
10	Jobs in arts, culture & entertainment		2.1 Creative & Knowledge-based Jobs	Creative Economy	
11	Jobs in media & communication				2.2 Intellectual Property & Innovation
12	Jobs in other creative sectors				
13	ICT patent applications		2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors		
14	Community design applications				
15	Jobs in new arts, culture & entertainment enterprises				
16	Jobs in new media & communication enterprises				
17	Jobs in new enterprises in other creative sectors				
18	Graduates in arts & humanities		3.1 Human Capital & Education	Enabling Environment	
19	Graduates in ICT				3.2 Openness, Tolerance & Trust
20	Average appearances in university rankings				
21	Foreign graduates				
22	Foreign-born population				3.3 Local & International Connections
23	Tolerance of foreigners				
24	Integration of foreigners				
25	People trust				
26	Accessibility to passenger flights		3.4 Quality of Governance		
27	Accessibility by road				
28	Accessibility by rail				
29	Quality of governance				

Source: European Commission (2019)

Table 2 Guangzhou's raw, standardized data and score in each indicator

Dimension (weight)	Cultural Vibrancy (0.4)										Creative Economy (0.4)						Enabling Environment (0.2)																			
	D1.1 Cultural Venues & Facilities (0.5)					D1.2 Cultural Participation & Attractiveness (0.5)					D2.1 Creative & Knowledge-based Jobs (0.4)			D2.2 Intellectual Property & Innovation (0.3)			D2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors (0.4)			D3.1 Human Capital & Education (0.4)			D3.2 Openness, Tolerance & Trust (0.4)			D3.3 Local & International Connections (0.15)		D3.4 Quality of Governance (0.05)								
Indicator	Number of museums	Number of galleries	Number of libraries	Number of museums	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters	Number of theaters
Score	12.07298	8.2985125	9.701977	8.6972239	2.2168352	2.0616	1581.8089	191775.1	75.70%	64.81	72.43	278.52	207	65.37	159.84	108.65	578.98	26650	1068	6	0.0457	0.04	34	4	3.9	5273.74	478.233	386.65	67.38							
source	Dianping	Dianping	Dianping	Dianping	Dianping	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Guangzhou	

Source: own calculation

Table 3 Weighted scores in each dimension and each main facets

<b>C3 Index</b>	57.81396	<b>D1.2 Cultural Participation &amp; Attractiveness</b>	61.57	<b>D3.1 Human Capital &amp; Education</b>	79.57
<b>1. Cultural Vibrancy</b>	50.48	<b>D2.1 Creative &amp; Knowledge-based Jobs</b>	81.69	<b>D3.2 Openness, Tolerance &amp; Trust</b>	15.862
<b>2. Creative Economy</b>	65.784	<b>D2.2 Intellectual Property &amp; Innovation</b>	54.92	<b>D3.3 Local &amp; International Connections</b>	100
<b>3. Enabling Environment</b>	56.5418	<b>D2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors</b>	55.31	<b>D3.4 Quality of Governance</b>	67.38
<b>D1.1 Cultural Venues &amp; Facilities</b>	39.39				

Source: own calculation

### **3. Literature Review**

This part of the thesis provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks, including the creative capital theory (Florida, 2003), LGBT Inclusion Index (Badgett & Sell, 2018), and four linkages between LGBT inclusion and economic development (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019).

#### **3.1. Creative City and Human Capital Theories**

In the case of regional growth, more specifically the growth in urban regions, the contribution of human capital is one of the most critical factors. In this term, as Glaeser (2000) emphasized, cities are centers of idea creation and transmission, where people agglomerate and generate capital at a fast pace, and people are the glue of cities. In his book *Principles of Economics*, Alfred Marshall (1890) argued that firms cluster in “agglomerations” to gain production efficiencies due to three aspects: a local pool of skilled labor, local supplier linkages and local knowledge spillovers. On the top of that, agglomeration theorists believe that the positive benefits of co-location, or “spillovers” and face-to-face contacts affect the outcomes of clustering (Feldman, 2000; Jaffe, 1989; Audretsch and Feldman, 1996; Audretsch, 1989, cited in Florida, 2003). However, from a social capital perspective, places with tight linkages and high levels of traditional social capital (for example, church districts) are beneficial for the “insiders” because these linkages provide stability. On the other hand, places with looser networks are more inclusive and open for newcomers, which promotes new combinations of resources, ideas, and creativity (Florida, 2003).

The creative city is all about openness and mobility. The human capital theory illustrates that people are the main force behind regional growth. In modern society, reducing the costs of doing business is no longer the critical factor but the amount of highly-educated and productive people that a city holds. Furthermore, Jane Jacobs (1984, cited in Florida, 2003) brought another point that contributed to the human capital theory: the ability of cities to attract creative people can spur economic growth. Edward Glaeser (2000) found out that with a labor pool consisting of a more significant proportion of highly-educated people, the city would attract more firms to locate, in line with Glendon (1998), a good deal of city growth over the 20th century can be traced to those cities’ levels of human capital at the beginning of the century, formed a conjunct conclusion, places with more talented people economically grow faster and are able to attract more talent.

On the shoulders of former theorists, Florida (2003) established the creative capital theory. From this perspective, creative people power regional economic growth, and these people prefer innovative, diverse, and tolerant places to live in. Florida's (2003) paper investigated the "creative class" and studied their patterns. "Creative class" are distinguished by their thought leadership and their function is to "create meaningful new forms". The super-creative core, also introduced by Florida (2003), includes scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, architects, nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion-makers. They create values on a daily basis by generating and communicating new ideas. The "creative class" moves away from traditional corporate communities and working-class centers. With no traditional reasons, they look for communities with high-quality experiences and open to all kinds of people, and an opportunity to validate their identities as creative people. Furthermore, he concluded that the key to the success of a city is to have 3Ts: *Tolerance* as openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walk of life; *Talent* is people with a bachelor's degree and above; *Technology* is a function of high-technology concentration in a region. The three factors complement each other and are indispensable. Florida, Mellander & Stolarick (2008) examined the role of human capital, the creative class, and tolerance in regional development. The study shows that tolerance plays a consistently significant role in technology, talent, and regional wages and income. Moreover, Florida and Gates (2003) emphasized that a large gay population is the leading indicator of the high-technology success of a metropolitan area, which will be discussed in section 3.3.

### **3.2. LGBTQIA+ Inclusion**

According to Badgett & Sell (2018), the LGBT Inclusion Index is structured around five aspects: education, political and civic participation, economic well-being, health, and personal safety and violence, and in total 51 indicators (see appendix 6). Each indicator falls into two categories: opportunity measures and outcome measures. Education in general as an opportunity measure consists of seven indicators, reflecting the safe learning environments, access to education, and knowledge of the LGBTQIA+ community. Discrimination and lack of recognition are likely to discourage LGBTQIA+ students from continuing their education and reduce the educational value of their years in school. Moreover, a further setback in the student's economic outcomes if they are prevented from achieving higher education reduces their likelihood of getting employment in higher-skilled jobs (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers,

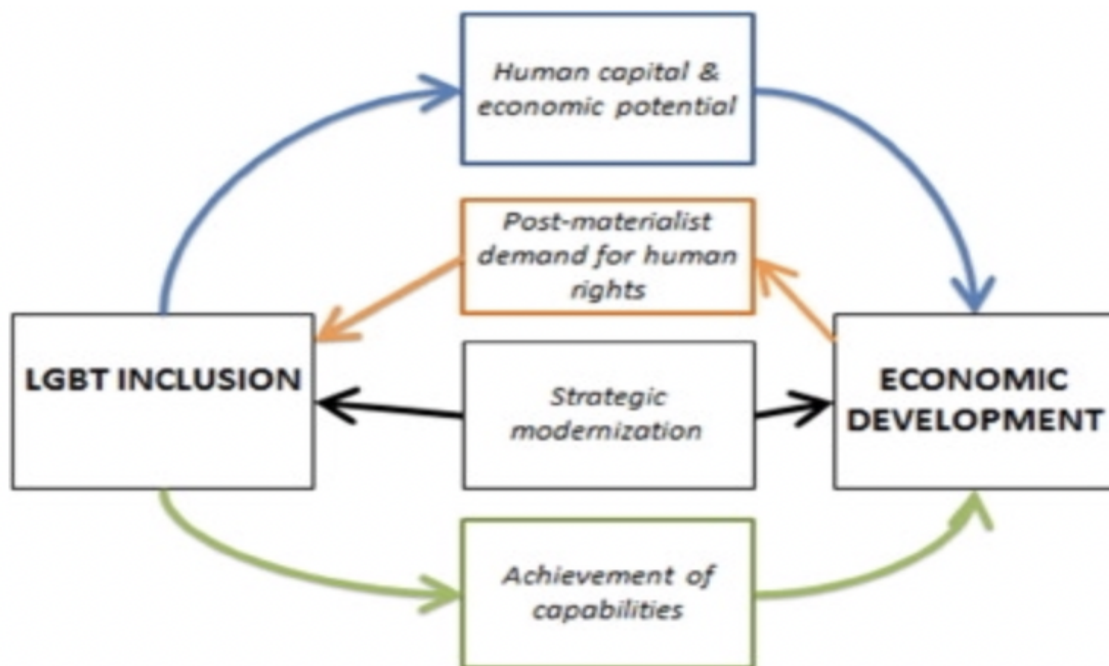
2019). In the political and civic participation section, the indicators show the legal recognition of LGBTQIA+ people and their political representation. Economic well-being is observed by access to jobs, adequate income, equal benefits in the social care system, and workplace discrimination. Health indicators capture the access to SOGIESC (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics) sensitive healthcare, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and legislation of inclusive health policies. Lastly, in the personal safety and violence section, access to justice for LGBTQIA+ people plays the most essential role, justice sector training, trust in the justice sector, monitoring violence against LGBTQIA+ people, as well as detention policies make a comprehensive depiction of the political climate in LGBTQIA+ related issues (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019).

### **3.3. Emerging Interactions between Creative City and LGBTQIA+ Inclusion**

Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers (2019) proposed that there are four linkages between LGBT inclusion and economic development: human capital & economic potential (LGBT inclusion to higher productivity and lower labor costs, potentially increasing employer profits, as a result of greater inclusion could lead to expansion of the business or new investments, thus increasing the level of economic development); post-materialist demand for human rights (countries are more likely to value minority rights after they have developed economically and become more economically secure (Inglehart, 2008, cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019)); strategic modernization (an instigating force behind both LGBT inclusion and economic development, through a country's interest in strategies); and the achievement of capabilities (conceptualizes development as an expansion of freedom for individuals to make choices about what they can do and be, with that expansion not dependent upon individuals' membership in certain identity groups (Nussbaum, 2001, Sen, 1999, cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019)). These four aspects have different causal pathways linking LGBT inclusion and economic development (see below, also see appendix 6). LGBT inclusion facilitates human capital and economic potential of individuals, as well as achievements of capabilities of individuals, therefore, promotes economic development; on the contrary, economic development enhances post-materialist demand for human rights, from which the country or the city of study has better LGBT inclusion; lastly, strategic modernization has dual forces improving both LGBT inclusion and economic development (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019).

Florida & Gates (2001) mentioned that the Gay Index is one of the most robust predictors of a region's high tech industry concentration and its growth. There are several reasons why the Gay Index is a good measure of diversity. First, as a group, gays have been subject to an exceptionally high level of discrimination. Attempts by gays to integrate into the mainstream of society have met substantial opposition. To some extent, homosexuality represents the last frontier of diversity in our society, and thus a place that welcomes the gay community welcomes all kinds of people. Florida, Mellander & Stolarick (2008) came to a similar conclusion that the combined measure of artists and gays is a proxy for the much broader impacts of tolerance and openness generally on regional development.

Figure 1 Causal Pathways Linking LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development



Source: Badgett, M. V. L., Waaldijk, K. & Rodgers, Y. (2019)

To conclude section 3, human capital and creative capital are the main forces for urban economic development, which are also supplements with LGBT inclusion. The interview questions are closely formulated with the guidance of aforementioned theories, the following section will explain the methodology of the thesis, and in sections 5 and 6, interactions between the theories and the interviewees' response could be observed.



#### 4. Methodology

Interviews were conducted with 9 individuals (aged 22-31) who self-identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, also working or studying in the creative fields or strongly related to the industries. The objective of the interview was to collect individual opinions on the creative industries and the status of the queer community in Guangzhou, China. Each interview lasted between 20 to 60 minutes, and all interviews were done through internet chat due to the distance constraint. The format of the interview was semi-structured, in which the researcher introduced general themes to the conversation via open-ended questions about the interviewees' identification with sexuality, participation in political organizing, membership in LGBTQIA+ communities, and personal lifestyle practices (interview questions see appendix 7). The interviews were recorded and were later transcribed and translated by hand since all interviews were originally conducted in Chinese and Cantonese. Using native language gives the freedom to the interviewees to express and describe in a more complete and more natural way. It is a challenge to find the English words as corresponded as possible to the Chinese words because of the language barriers (the complete translated transcription see appendix 8).

Interviewees and readers might be curious of the different wording in the interview questions, "LGBTQIA+" is used in question 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, and 16, and "queer" is used in question 8, and 10. The explanation is that among "LGBTQIA+", "Q" represents queer, and "queer" can include all non-heterosexual, non-cisgender people, and defies all stable identifications, it represents a fluidity. During the interview, the differences between "LGBTQIA+" and "queer" are not specifically pointed out, because the two words in the researcher's opinion are interchangeable, and by using both words, no presumption has been made before get to understand the interviewees' sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recruiting interviewees for a study on LGBTQIA+ members can be a complicated matter. The interviewees were purposely selected based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and studying/working status, this exclusiveness was intentional. When engaging in an interview in China discussing LGBTQIA+ topics, privacy protection would be taken as the most important issue since the private information of the interviewees would be involved in the data collection. Some of the interviewees would like to not openly share their personal life details, which is completely valid and understandable. Before each interview, the interviewees were informed that the conversation will only be utilized for this specific research, and a verbal consent was received

from all interviewees for authorizing private information and being recorded. What's more, some radical activists and their organizations are regularly subject to infiltration and surveillance by law enforcement personnel, which may make them particularly wary of people claiming to be doing "research" on their activities. For this reason, a snowball technique (Portwood-Stacer, 2010) would also be relied on when carrying out the interview, recruiting people the researcher was personally acquainted with and then through them, making contact with other potential interviewees. Another way of recruiting interviewees is through Tinder, which provides a large pool of potential interviewees and reduces biases during the recruiting process, as well as, makes the interview process lighter in both academic and political sense, and the interviewees not feeling constrained by the seriousness of an academic research.

A particular organization or physical location (in Guangzhou) of this study would not be restricted because of the queer movement's nature as a cosmopolitan, electronically connected network in which organizational affiliations are highly fluid and geographical mobility is common. Individual's experiences of sexuality and identity are affected by their situation within local communities, so it would be instructive to talk to people who were situated in a variety of locations and positions. At the same time, the construction of queer identity is not wholly determined by local context, given the circulation of queer discourses and bodies within national and global networks, so the account of queer identity here is representative. That being said, the generalization of any of the specific experiences or discourses discussed here to the queer movements as it exists beyond Guangzhou, China. The cultural, economic, and political contexts within which other branches of national queer movement are situated are too divergent, yet with a large range of similarities.

Another factor affecting interviewee selection is that to define "creative industry". In line with Richard Florida's (2003) definition on "creative class", it includes scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, architects, nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion-makers. All interviewees are in this range of selection.

This interview would be biased because of the invisibility of less privileged queer people who may not have the access to the interview or the researcher not acquainted with could have a negative effect on accuracy in describing the current status of queer community in Guangzhou. It is also note-worthy that the interviewer-interviewee dynamic might have an impact on the answers. The interviewer's personality background, and perceived relationships to the interviewees and the LGBTQIA+ community can affect people's answers. The

interviews were conducted with building trust, which could be assumed as an advantage, increasing people's willingness to participate in the study and be more open and honest with the answers they gave.

## **5. Analysis**

The interview questions can be divided into three sections: question 1-5 are personal information; question 6-10 are about individual experiences in Guangzhou and their attitude about the LGBTQIA+ community's current status; and question 11-16 are about the interactions between LGBTQIA+ inclusion and creative industry, and each interviewee gave out their opinion, provided a conclusive narrative from which a deeper analysis could be done in this section.

### **5.1. Interviewee Composition**

To summarize question 1-5, the interviewees' age range is 22-31, interviewees 1 and 2 are currently studying in universities, and the rest of the interviewees have finished their studies, preparing to go into or already working in the creative industry. Interviewees 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9 identify themselves as she/ her, and interviewees 3, 7, and 8 are identified with they/them. Without knowing the personal information of the interviewees, it is surprisingly to see that 5 out of 9 interviewees are pansexual, the rest consist of two homosexuals and two bisexuals. The provinces and country of origin are widely distributed, which provides a broad perspective on living experiences in Guangzhou. The majority of interviewees are originally from Guangzhou, and the other interviewees are from Xinjiang, Wuhan, and Ireland. The education levels of the interviewees are varied, five of them achieved bachelor's degree, interviewee 4 has a master's degree, interviewee 6 has a highschool diploma, and interviewees 1 and 2 are currently still studying in the universities.

### **5.2. Impressions of Guangzhou**

Interview question 7 focuses on individual impressions of Guangzhou, and the words that appear the most frequently are casual and relaxing (mentioned by interviewees 2, 4, 6, and 9). Being known as one of the cities with the slowest tempo in China, Guangzhou is quite inhabitable, with great infrastructure and high afforestation coverage. Interviewees who are not originally from Guangzhou (interviewees 1, 7, and 9) found that Guangzhou is a city with

unique Canton culture and history, and profound cultural connotation. They discovered that Guangzhou has a very nice mix of the modern and the old, the prosperity and the tradition, some of the districts feel entirely different from one another, and a cultural phenomenon “village within the city” fascinated them by experiencing completely different culture just by crossing a street. On the contrary, Guangzhou locals tend to criticize the city’s art and culture: interviewees 2, 3, and 6 have a consensus that Guangzhou has not do enough in building cultural education for the masses, or quote interviewee 3, “I personally think Guangzhou is a cultural desert”, art and culture is a very niche and exclusive thing for Guangzhou citizens, because normal people do not have the chance to comprehend and to be involved, it is not something that we can get access to on a daily basis. From the evaluation of Guangzhou as a creative city in section 2 and table 2 (also see appendix 2), cultural venues and facilities are not enough for Guangzhou citizens. More than that, interviewee 6 also criticized about Guangzhou local’s discrimination towards the non-locals, she was brought up hearing her family saying bad words of the non-locals. However, this tension was eased as more and more people from other provinces were attracted to settling in Guangzhou in the last decade. Another interesting point brought up by interviewee 2 is that due to Guangzhou’s remoteness from the political center of China (Beijing) and closeness to the special administration districts of Hong Kong and Macau, the power of Chinese government has not penetrated too much and the information from “outside of the wall” is more accessible.

### **5.3. LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Guangzhou**

The responses of the interviewees on scaling the inclusiveness towards the LGBTQIA+ of Guangzhou are more or less the same, interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9 all gave out 3 as the answer (1 being not friendly at all, and 5 being extremely friendly), but the aspects they’re focusing on are slightly different. Interviewee 1 focused on the age differences of people that led to varied acceptance levels. The younger generation commonly have higher acceptance due to their more vigorous learning ability and wider channels of information. The broader their LGBTQIA+ related knowledge scope, the higher their acceptance. Both interviewees 2 and 8 expressed that the current society is less inclusive than before, both of them mentioned that there used to have lectures about sex and gender at Sun Yet-sen University, the most prestigious university in Guangzhou, but the lectures were shutted down because of the value they convey cannot fit in the value the Chinese government propagandizing. Chinese

government consider homosexuality a threat to the state, since the potential of any divergence from the homogeneity of the nation-state was not allowed (Tian, 2019).

Another perspective brought up by interviewee 2 is the geographical differences. Judgments towards sexual minorities and females come more brutally in the more rural parts of the city, and in the central area of the city, people just care of other people less. Interviewees 3 and 4 agreed with this point of view by pointing out that people in Guangzhou are very modest and wouldn't be very intimate with their partners in public, and they usually only focus on their own lives. Interviewee 4 also stated briefly that age and geographical differences could have impact on people's inclusiveness towards LGBTQIA+ community, and the linkages between Guangzhou citizens are not that tight, people tend to be distant with each other. In connection with Florida's (2003) theory on social capital that places with looser networks are more inclusive and open for newcomers, which promotes new combinations of resources, ideas, and creativity. The counterpart of the city center has tighter linkages and high levels of traditional social capital, which are beneficial for the "insiders" because these linkages provide stability (Florida, 2003).

As a foreigner in Guangzhou, interviewee 9 compared the LGBTQIA+ scene in Guangzhou and in Ireland, she pointed out that Guangzhou has a larger LGBTQIA+ scene than she expected before settling in the city, and due to language barrier, she could eliminate the negativity towards her gender and sexual expression in a way that being not too integrated in the society and not having a grasp of the Chinese language. The integration of foreigners could be observed in the evaluation of Guangzhou as a creative city in section 2, table 2 (also see appendix 2), only 34% of the population strongly agrees with the fact that foreigners are well integrated. The other interviewees have a more optimistic point of view regarding Guangzhou's inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community: interviewees 7, 6, and 5 gave out 3.5, 4.5, and 5, respectively. In line with interviewee 1's opinion that age differences can cause different levels of acceptance, interviewee 6 contributed another perspective that people always have certain stereotypes of every group of people, for example, old people are always stubborn and bad-tempered, the young are always open-minded and understanding. However, the truth is not like that. There would always be people who don't fit in the stereotypes, and the LGBTQIA+ community are the people shackling stereotypes. For supporting her point of view, interviewee 6 given out an delightful little story that an old man who was textbook "old and traditional", but instead of saying something offensive, he was willing to understand young people's gender expression and sexual orientation. And because of her lack of contact with middle aged or older people, interviewee 6 rated 4.5 out of 5 in this question. Both

interviewees 5 and 7 stated that the LGBTQIA+ community in Guangzhou do not cause too much social attention and controversy, their SOGIESC characteristics are hidden in daily lives, yet sometimes they being “unconventional” might make them suffer from judgements.

Using the LGBT Inclusion Index developed by Badgett & Sell (2018) as a guideline for question 8, after the interviewer brief explained the five dimensions, nine interviewees elaborated their queer experiences in Guangzhou. The five dimensions of the index are education, political and civic participation, health, economic well-being, and personal safety and violence, on the top of that, social life is also an important dimension in queer experiences. The following subsections discuss the interviewees’ queer experiences in Guangzhou. Question 10 is a follow up question of question 8, the responses of question 10 will be summarized in subsections 5.3.2. and 5.3.6.

### **5.3.1. Education**

Sex education being missing in the public sphere is one of the biggest problem not only in Guangzhou, but also in the whole China. In most of the interviewees’ accounts of the events surrounding sex and gender education, when they were teenagers, they were confused by their bodies’ changes and the thoughts of “am I normal if I am attracted to the same sex”. Interviewee 1 argued that her friends brought her an abundant spectrum of gender identification and options, and the gender/sexuality education is mostly done by themselves, like finding information online, reading literature on the topic. And interviewee 2 demonstrated more about the sex culture in China is, quote, “very vicious and unequal towards women, and sex could represent too many things, such as power dynamics and hierarchy in political, monetary, social status and so on”. The inequality is further illustrated by interviewee 2 that “In queer community, fake marriage between lesbians and gays are really common, in these marriages, women are expected to bare children, and only seen as a reproduction tool for men. Although they are not attracted to men, and some of them even abandoned all their femininity, as long as women have uteruses and ovaries, they became the victim of sex deprivation... The society treats women as sex commodities, reproductive tools, or in a better way to phrase, ‘devoted wives and mothers’, ‘sweethearts’. With my experiences and the things I saw, now I realize that, as long as I have a uterus, I’ll still be coveted by men. We are not human, we are just a functional object”. To conclude of interviewee 2’s opinion, with social constraints and lack of sex education, women, especially poor-educated women have a long way to go on the path of self awareness and liberation.

From the educator's perspective, interviewee 9 suggested that in Guangzhou more LGBTQIA+ people are needed working in schools as role models for LGBTQIA+ students and to put a stop to some of the hetero-normative ideas that students are being taught, and how dress in a very queer style maybe in a small way her presence at the school is something that can bring influences to younger people. It will change their ideology and how they think about sexuality, LGBTQIA+ teachers existing being visibly a very queer person might offer the students more options.

### **5.3.2. Political and Civic Participation**

Queer culture is marginalized from the mainstream culture, and within the LGBTQIA+ community, people who couldn't find their own communities are also marginalized. Interviewee 3 thought that queer community in Guangzhou is invisible and faint, the promotion of queer culture is hardly seen in the city. So it is hard for the marginalized queer people to find their community, and the friends around her are all cisgender heterosexual people, even though they seem quite respectful on this subject, but also because they are not really wanting to understand sexual minorities' situation, so she couldn't come out as non-binary and pansexual to them yet. As an active member in the queer community, interviewee 9 observed that there is like a lot of marginalized queer people, especially some Chinese people, they are not coming out anywhere, maybe only to some close friends. How to reach those people, give them guidance to a community, and provide a space is a really hard thing.

Another interesting fact is that when the interviewees were trying to make reference of the LGBTQIA+ community, they sometimes left the "QIA+" unsaid, the recognition of queer people other than gay and lesbian need to be raised. Several interviewees elaborated on this that people within the community should respect each others' differences, respect pronouns and names, and make the marginalized people be seen.

As it mentioned in section 2, the Communist Party considered homosexuality and queerness as a western influence (Tian, 2019), interviewees 3 and 9 also shared similar experiences regarding this matter, interviewee 3 remembered during the interview that there was a gay pride in Guangzhou, the organization posted on social media (Weibo), soonly banned because they were considered as "foreign hostile forces", while interviewee 9 conveyed her worry because there is an attitude that homosexuality and queerness is a western influence, as a foreigner and a teacher, she never wanted to be accused that she was forcing the "homosexuality" and "queerness" to her students. Moreover, censorship was mentioned by 4

out of 9 interviewees, which implies their worries for being censored, and the consequences that come next.

Interviewee 8 compared her experiences now with ten years ago, people were free to organize all sorts of events without interference, activists, doctors, professors were invited to the universities, giving out lectures about sex and gender, sharing experiences, while supported by teachers in sociology, anthropology, psychology and other fields from the university. The lectures were always open to the public. People back then were very politically active, advocating LGBTQIA+ rights, if that happened now, probably the organizers would be thrown into prison.

Moreover, interviewee 9 discussed the survival status for gay bars in Guangzhou. The gay bar in the city can't openly be gay bars. Maybe they get harassed by the police, maybe they get shut down. The bars also have to operate under the radar. So it's a really difficult balance of trying to grow our community, but quietly, so that we don't get harassed for it.

The most outstanding cases for political and civic participation are the active advocates interviewees 1, 8, and 9. Both interviewees 1 and 9 are volunteering at Zhitong (a fully legal and registered NGO focusing on advocating LGBTQIA+ rights), they both expressed that working there brought them a sense of belonging. Interviewee 1 also would organize underground activities with her queer friends, somewhat more radical ones, like making stickers with slogans like "The Stonewall Movement Began with Them" and the hanging transgender flag during Transgender Visible Day, introducing the history of the Stonewall Movement, which was initiated by two transgender female. Because this topic is too invisible in China, even she had no knowledge or ways to receive these kind of information before she had transgender friends, let alone understanding their situations. For example, transgender lesbians face a tougher situation because their relationship seems too much like a heterosexual relationship, so they wish to express in a creative way to let them to be visible. Although most of the organizations aren't as radical as they are, she genuinely hoped that other organizations are doing the same kind of "underground" movements like they did.

Interviewee 9 held a positive attitude that the community in Guangzhou is growing and getting stronger with so much potential. In the few years she has been in the city, there were more events, people were trying to open up the community even though it's still quite small. The times she went to these events, it was always the same group of people. She and her friends were also organizing watching parties for drag races and did the first screening in Guangzhou. When talking about being the firsts to organize events, she was being open about her feelings: "It's kind of exciting sometimes to be the first people to do this, it's also



exhausting being the first person to do something and sometimes it doesn't work out or they might encounter some problems". It was very lucky to have interviewed an advocate who has been very involved in the queer movements in the last decade, interviewee 8. They found it hard to talk about their political and civic participation due to the political environment being too vicious. They have taken part in several events for queer movement in Guangzhou when they were still in college. They were one of the organizers of a LGBT group back in Wuhan, the group was mostly made up of women and lesbians and feminist people and some gay feminist, they tended to organize more cultural activities. Then later when they came to Guangzhou to attend a few women's rights advocating events, where they were inspired and found out that LGBTQIA+ problems were essentially feminism and misogyny problems, so the group was then focus on gender equality advocacy, instead of LGBT advocacy. At that time, they thought it was meaningless to talk about LGBT until we reached an ideal state of gender equality. Because we thought that the root of all discrimination especially discrimination within the LGBT community was misogyny, so they thought that advocating for women's rights would be more fundamental and more important.

### 5.3.3. Health

The single most striking observation to emerge from the interview was that 7 out of 9 interviewees expressed concerns about sexuality during gynecologic examination. The respondents found it difficult to answer the question about sexual experiences during gynecologic examination, with a mixed feeling of afraid of judgment and coming out to a stranger. This feeling could be explained by the extreme lack of acknowledgement for medical personnel about LGBTQIA+ people's existence and knowing that queer sex is as valid as what the heterosexuals have. The common experience of interviewees 3 and 9 is that, the examiners never ask the gender of the other person who they have sex with, if they are sexually active, with the doctor's presumption being that they were only sexually active with men. Whether the examiners or the doctors have enough knowledge of sexual minorities and their tolerance towards the LGBTQIA+ community is important, people need to be a part of the conversation in medical care and broadly speaking, in the society. As a volunteer at Zhitong, interviewee 9 provided a source of lists of doctors and therapists who are LGBTQIA+ friendly, and other doctors who are homophobic and transphobic organized by volunteers. Whatsmore, the under representation in medical and health care places can brought up discomfort to the LGBTQIA+ people as when interviewee 1 talked about her friend's misfortune, "they identify as non-binary, but when they was called out at the hospital,

the nurse still refer them with their old name (a very feminine name) and the female gender, which made them extremely uncomfortable”.

Mental health problems caused by family problems and past traumas are brought up by interviewee 1 “People around me are always suffering from previous experiences and trauma, which had large influences on their mental health” and interviewee 8 “Although I am not diagnosed with depression, but there are a lot of friends of mine who are either diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder or autism... I still feel like there’s a lot of depression from time to time. I think it is the because of my sexual orientation, the first reason is that I come out when I was 20 years old to my family, and then to now, at this time in the past more than ten years, eleven years, although I have already come out, my family said they are not opposed, but also not very accepting. It is feeling like there is a wall between my family and me, because of this, it’s hard for me to go to take the initiative to contact them, although I know they are very concerned about me, and love me, but there’s a psychologically difficulty to take the initiative to call them, and saying I feel is a kind of more embarrassed mood, even though I am very concerned about them too with all my heart. I don’t know what to talk about when calling them, nothing other than day-to-day hassles. This brought me a lot of guilty feelings, then this also led to depression sometimes. I went to therapy because of these family-of-origin problems. And my family actually can’t express emotions, they only care about you in a rhetorical or reproachful way like many Chinese families do, then they never communicate non-violently, so the whole thing is very difficult”. Even though this research has not included further questions on mental health related issues, the consequences of unstable mental health including self-injuring and substance abuse are not strangers to the LGBTQIA+ community (Johns, Lowry, Rasberry, Dunville, Robin, Pampati, Stone & Kollar, 2018).

#### **5.3.4. Economic Well-being**

The concerns regarding economic well-being are coming out in the workplace and the risk of losing jobs for most of the interviewees. The majority of them who are working full-time or part-time both chose to hide their identity and sexual orientation at work. Interviewee 1 works as a private tutor for kids, teaching them playing flute, when she added the parents on social media, she would restrict them from seeing the posts related to her private life, she couldn’t take the risk of being found out as a sexual minority and lose her job. Interviewee 7 expressed that even though her old company is an oversea-funded company and has very inclusive policies for LGBTQIA+ community. Being out at work wouldn’t affect her

economic well-being, but the tension in the office made her working experience not that delightful. Being a sexual minority and a foreigner gives interviewee 9 anxiety at work, she has to be more careful about what she said in the classroom, and hide her identity, she described that “As if it was to be spread around the school, or I don’t know who it would get back to, maybe it would be a problem. Maybe I could lose my job. I have heard of other lgbt people losing their position because they are queer. So maybe there’s not as much protection in the law. Yet, in certain circumstances, also as a foreigner, maybe I don’t know how to navigate the legal system if something like that happened to me. So it’s difficult”.

Another interviewee alluded to the notion of it is not necessary a bad thing to be expressive of their sex characteristics at work: “And in the workplace, many times some of my superiors will give the job to me, and not to some other girl with the same ability as I have”. Being gender neutral benefited them to get promotions or superiors’ favor.

### **5.3.5. Personal Safety and Violence**

It is a relief that none of the interviewees suffered from any physical violence, but this situation should not be ignored. Most of the interviewees reported that being sexually harassed physically and verbally in a bar is very common: “It happened multiple times, some guys approached me and my girlfriend and wanted to have a threesome with us... I think it is a sexual harassment, it grosses me out. So when I go out to a bar, I would never disclose my sexuality because I’m afraid that something like that will happen to me again” (interviewee 2); “I always feel very, very safe in this country. I walk around at night. I don’t particularly worry about anything, I’ve had some bad experiences, but that can happen in any place, any country. The only times I’ve really felt scared for my safety being queer is when men approached me or my partner. And you tell them you are not interested. Sometimes they become quite aggressive... I think in certain situations, it’s unpredictable. You don’t know who that person is... I’d love to say something, but coming out to random people is not the smart thing to do sometimes. So, yeah, occasionally I’ve had unpleasant experiences” (interviewee 9).

Sometimes choosing a safe place to go is also a tactic, “Offline experiences for me it’s just going to gay bars or LGBTQIA+ friendly bars with friends, because in these bars, the atmosphere is generally better, and you don’t need to have extra concerns about harassments and dangers. I presented myself in a quite feminine way, so I always worry about being sexually harassed, physically and verbally, by men” (interviewee 7).

Other than the bars, using public bathrooms is also an issue that troubles many transgender people or people have opposite gender expression than their biological sex, interviewee 1 disclosed an incident of her friend: “I think my personal safety isn’t that affected by my identity and sexual expression, but my female friends who dress masculine are always verbally attacked when using public restrooms, every time they want to use public restrooms, they are always mistaken as men, if they met some very irrational people, I couldn’t imagine the consequences. The choice of using a men’s room or women’s room is always hard for them, the possibility of being treated violently is pretty high in Guangzhou, and also in other cities in China”. Echoing the benefits from gender neutrality in the workplace in the last section, interviewee 6 also mentioned that dressing more masculine eliminates her concerns of putting herself in danger while going to a bar or using public transport, “If men think you are a man, they won’t have second thoughts”.

### **5.3.6. Social Life**

The most prominent characteristics of queer social life in Guangzhou is that people connect with each other first online, queer people found each other on social media through common interest or on dating apps through potential love interest. As interviewee 6 said, “I think now is an internet era, we mostly just meet people online, either it is for dating or making friends with the same sex or the other sexes. This situation is like a paradox, because sometimes we are afraid of identifying ourselves in the public spaces such as during job hunting, and at the same time the invisibility hinders us from identifying with each other, so it is harder to find a community”.

The nine interviewees fell into two camps when it comes to finding communities. Whilst a minority mentioned that not all LGBTQIA+ people need a community, interviewee 5 said that for her, she won’t specifically find a community only for queer people, she would like to meet people as many as she can regardless of their identity or sexual orientation. And interviewee 4 have almost the same idea, quote, “Now I think finding communities doesn’t matter to me anymore, because in the end we are all human beings, heterosexual or homosexual relationships aren’t that different”; all agreed that it is necessary to find a community where they can gain the sense of belonging. Interviewees who are more actively participants in the social events, volunteering et cetera, they would feel more empowerment and be more positive about Guangzhou’s queer community. For example, interviewee 1 expressed her belongingness when she said “my circle of queer friends are very vocal about LGBTQIA+ rights, we want to create all forms of art, to narrate our stories”, and interviewee

7 thought that the LGBTQIA+ people in China should find our communities, where they can share information, and also support each other when they feel vulnerable. So all of us should unify, disregard our differences, and support each other for being our true selves.

However, interviewee 9 also pointed out that queer people who have a stable social circle might live in a “guilty bubble”, she thought that “we feel like we can be open there and be free there, and we definitely don’t realize sometimes outside the bubble, maybe the rest of the world is not so accepting”. Concerns were expressed about the segregation of people representing each letter of LGBTQIA+ by interviewee 7, the status for the community now is gays, lesbians have very different social circles, they seldomly interact with each other. Speaking of the topic of sexuality and gender expression, the masses only aware of gays and lesbians, and haven’t realize there is a much larger and various spectrum in the LGBTQIA+ community, and interviewee 8 “There are the lesbian community and the gay community, as well as the transgender community”, the willingness of people wanting to stay in social circles that exclusively consist of people with the same sexual property, it forms comfort zones and does not consume much of social energy. However, suffering on one person in the LGBTQIA+ community should be a responsibility for all, creating a more diverse and inclusive environment requires support and efforts from everyone.

#### **5.4. LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Creative Industries**

This section of the analysis is concerned with the working or studying environment of the interviewees, whether they can gain motivation from it, and their opinion about the interactions between LGBTQIA+ inclusion and the creative industries. The analysis is broken down into two parts, the following subsections firstly will focus on investigating interviewees current working or studying status, covered by interview questions 11 to 13, by asking interviewees to describe their relations to the creative industries, whether the creative industries played a role in their lives, whether there would be more motivation if they were working or studying in a creative and LGBTQIA+ inclusive environment, and whether the environments they are in now inspire more achievement in the future. And the personal opinions in the second subsection, the analysis will generate through question 14 to 16 by throwing out more general questions including whether they feel that creative industries are more tolerant to LGBTQIA+ people, what kind of roles do they think the LGBTQIA+ community plays in the creative industries, and what kind of roles do they think the creative industries play for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community.

#### 5.4.1. Current Working/Studying Status

Aforementioned in section 5.1., 2 out of 9 interviewees are still studying in universities, only one interviewee is currently in the process of job hunting, and the rest of the interviewees are already working in the creative industries. Within the 6 interviews who are working, 2 of them are self-employed, and the rest are employed by a fashion design company, a publishing house, a tattoo and toy design studio, and a school, respectively. If we now turn to their experiences working or somewhat involved in the creative industries, the majority of the interviewees respond quite positively. For example, interviewee 7 described their work place like “Working in a creative and inclusive environment would help me gain more motivation, because the people I work with are mostly queer, they are very open minded, very bold, and they have jumpy thoughts, if they have an idea they would transform it into reality right away. And my friends from work usually have a wide range of knowledge, and various ways of getting information, so we can have all kinds of interesting conversations about international or national issues and situations. They had broadened my horizon, and they actually understand me”. Not working in the creative industries, interviewee 9 explained how she connected to her creative sides: “I do enjoy volunteering at Zhitong and trying to make events with other people, some of my friends are very talented in making arts. There’s a lot of things that go into making an event like promotion and poster. We organize queer talks, queer movie screening, and then we sit and we discuss afterwards. We’re just trying to think of more events in the future for community building that bring people into space. Instead of just drinking and parties, I have a lot of very creative friends and I sometimes ask them to help make things, hoping our next thing might be a drink and draw”. On a more negative side, interviewee 3 discussed about her struggle at work of not being able to come out as non-binary, although they are working in the fashion industry, people are generally open-minded and inclusive, but their energies are always consumed by mechanic and repetitive work.

The responses to question 13: “Would you say the working/studying environment that you are in now inspires more achievements in your future career?” are polarized. Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 felt that the environments that they are in now are not in favor of creation and inspiration, or worse, because their work is dull and rigid, interviewee 3 thought of quitting her job for better mental health. Other responses to this questions include: “I find the environment I’m involved in very inspiring, because I only do stuff I enjoy after graduating from high school, my decision of work is only based on my interest”, “I’ve only just started

modeling, but I think this circle inspires me to have more achievements in the future. The vibe of working is relaxed and comfortable, and I have ambition to make myself a better person to have better cooperation with other people while I'm doing something I like. I'm also learning more about fashion, gaining more knowledge spontaneously because I am very fascinated by the fashion industry. My definition of success is just to be happy and inspired by what I'm doing, and to love, to create, to experience a better life, this is the state I'm pursuing". Interviewee 2 pointed out that in customer-oriented business, or more conventional sectors in the industries, sexuality doesn't matter, while interviewee 8's experiences confirmed that statement: "I feel comfortable in the current working environment, because I think LGBTQIA+ people will have a sense of trust if they connect with each other, so that we can do more to help each other. However, I have to serve the first party at the present, providing what they need. From another point of view, I want to create something to take this opportunity to implant some ideas into them, so as to influence some things in the society is quite difficult, but it still depends on how open the first party is. Of course, this is also related to the Chinese environment. It is very hard to get the messages out, you just have to be very subtle. Actually I had done something like that before. I think in China, my goal is to create illustrations, to break stereotypes, to promote gender equality, and put these ideas into such expressions".

Almost in all cases, the interviewees reported that they would have more motivation when they are working or studying in a more creative and LGBTQIA+ inclusive environment. The consensus is that they would find more motivation because when the environment is more diverse and inclusive, and has no limitations for the creative process, they don't need to deliberately conceal their identity and sexual expression, they would not have to worry about their employment or safety, and they would have more interest in their certain fields, make good conversations with colleagues, and have deeper connection with them. Interviewees 5 and 8 have a different idea that it is not about the workplace that they are in, it depends on the people they are working with. The environments are created by a group of people, it does not necessary means LGBTQIA+ people are definitely good colleagues, study partner, or friends. However, both of them agree that people can have a sense of cohesion and feel that they have found their own community, which could make them more enthusiastic about creation. Interviewee 6 proposed that she can separate work from identification, she usually only focuses on the ideas of other people while working, and great ideas are not confined to any identity.

#### 5.4.2. Interactions Between LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and the Creative Industries

On the matter of whether the creative industries are more tolerant for LGBTQIA+ people, generally speaking, in the fashion, music, art industries, people are very diverse, their expressions are non-restricted, so naturally people who create and appreciate art always have an open heart, and accept all kinds of differences, they can be who they are and flourish at work. Because most creative works are done on their own, and they have salons, club culture where they can meet people with the same aspirations and have tighter bounds. And the question also depends on what position the person we are talking about, as interviewee 1's example, JSD (Jiang Sida, Chinese influencer, comedian, artist, entrepreneur), he is the head of his company so his subjectivity is stronger, so he can have the freedom to present a more multidimensional perspective. There is a rather unexpected answer that interviewee 9 illustrated that LGBTQIA+ people shouldn't just be tolerated, they should be welcomed. Most of her friends who work in fashion and arts are self-employed, they have so much more freedom and great ideas. Creative people are absolutely everywhere. And maybe in the creative industries, they feel much more comfortable in being out and they feel safer. They use their talents and nobody can stop them or tell them what. She thought creative industries give LGBTQIA+ people a lot of freedom.

The roles that LGBTQIA+ people played in the creative industries are diversified in different interviewees' eyes. For interviewees 1 and 2, LGBTQIA+ people are more like opinion leaders, if queer artists have broad recognition, they can bring different stories based on their own experiences in to the narrative, and show the rest of the world a more multidimensional perspective. Furthermore, LGBTQIA+ people also act as producers and consumers, which brings the creative industries profits economically. Interviewees 6, 7 and 8 agreed on that the LGBTQIA+ community makes the industry no longer limitedly consist of cis-gender and heterosexual people, their positions are indispensable and irreplaceable, the whole creative scene wouldn't be as colorful as what it is now. The answer of interviewee 9 is consistent with the ideas obtained by the others, she thought a lot of creative industries are very much inspired by queer people without realizing it. Throughout history, queer people have always pushed boundaries, challenged, existing, societal norms, express gender and like whatever way they feel like. And slowly society is getting more comfortable with that. She proposed that there is a great debt owe to queer culture while not fully accepting the community. The industries need to give more credits and recognition.

Turning now to the evidence on what roles the creative industries play for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community, the most frequent response is that getting the society to



understand queer culture and queer people's experiences. As an important media, the creative industries can help with making queer people more visible, de-stigmatizing them, building a bridge for better communication, improving people's recognition and acceptance. Instead of focusing of the differences, but actually recognize that queer are everywhere, and they probably have friends too who are queer and they just don't know it, which would change a lot of minds. And for the future generations, the environment we are creating now is essential, if they grow up in a more diverse, more open place than what we had before, regardless of their identification and sexual orientation, the society would be kinder to the LGBTQIA+ community.

However, some of the interviewees are still skeptical about the idealized thoughts of the others. Interviewee 4 expressed that topics of LGBTQIA+ are still pretty disclosed in China, so the promotion in the creative industries may not have influences on the general public, because they won't have much acceptance to the community when they receive these messages, like our parents' generation. Because of the obscurity, even though the community tries to make some differences, she thought this will do little to raise public awareness. Similar ideas held by interviewee 3, they believe that when the culture reaches to the masses, those who are accepting at the first place would be more accepting, those who are close up to new things prone to develop a more opposite opinion, like polarization. And those who stand on the middle ground, they find them hypocritical, those people seem to make a show of support, but deep inside they still don't approve of this 'lifestyle'. Whatsmore, interviewee 8 proposed that there is a classism problem within both LGBTQIA+ community and the creative industries, which is inseparable from Chinese society. They thought the promotion done by the creative industries might only help some of the elite of the LGBTQIA+ community, because, after all, creative industry serves the elite, and then was sold to elite people to consume, people who work in this industry are also kind of elite, and we already know this industry only widely distributed in first-tier cities in China. In addition, there are still quite different classes within the LGBTQIA+ community. The ones at the bottom are the ones who have little voice, who are rarely seen. In fact, the masses have a certain stereotype of LGBTQIA+ people in the creative industry, that is, they will generally imagine an elite image, but in fact, most LGBTQIA+ people in China or Guangzhou, they are just ordinary people. Therefore, the role of the creative industries in the development of LGBTQIA+ is nothing but visibility, but could be an illusion, a stereotypical visibility. It does not represent the whole, but is regarded as an idealized figure. It seems that every class, every category, every society is like a variety of categories under the social class, and people always only see

the top-tier and most glamorous people, but in fact, most people are hard to be seen. Moreover, queer people are very diverse, and there is no way to be generalized uniformly. They may have general characteristics, but their differentiation is very complicated. And until this day and age, the goals of the queer movement are very different from 10 years ago. Because this topic is now a very common and wide-spread topic, there are more discussion directions, which are actually more diversified, and the possibility of smaller groups being seen is higher. But now it's actually very difficult to achieve that goal, because the social and the political climate are not as good as they used to be, so now it's only a debate within the community.

### **5.5. Limitations**

In this observational research, there is a potential for bias from not involving gay, transgender people's presentation. However, their experiences are included as second-hand sources when the interviewees had discussed their friends' encounters. All interviewees are biologically female, it is not that male perspectives are not important, but what we lack in the society is to give women an opportunity to be loud, to express their feelings, and to give out their opinions. Furthermore, nine interviewees, although having different experiences, can not conclude the status of the whole LGBTQIA+ community, which revealed the limitation of the snowball technique, the sampling was not necessarily random, restricted by the writer's own network.

## **6. Discussion**

In accordance with the present results in the last section, previous studies have demonstrated that there are four linkages between LGBT inclusion and economic development: human capital & economic potential, post-materialist demand for human rights, strategic modernization, and achievement of capabilities (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). The interview questions are formulated based on these four aspects, so it is not surprising to see that the answers fit well with the aspects. This research chose Guangzhou as a representative of China, since not many studies have been done in China regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusion and economic development. The interview enabled the dissemination of the voices of Chinese LGBTQIA+ individuals, and provided more empirical evidence for Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers's research.

### **6.1. Human Capital & Economic Potential**

Evidence shown in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers (2019) indicated that LGBT inclusion leads to positive business outcomes including higher productivity, greater workplace engagement, contributions, and commitment from LGBT employees, improving mental health and job satisfaction for them, and lower costs for the company spending on health care and absenteeism. All together could potentially increase employer profits (Badgett et al., 2013, cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). One specific point mentioned in the literature is that LGBT employees' disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity in a supportive workplace improves mental health of the employees (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007 cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019), which was anticipatedly embodied in the interviews. Interviewee 9 expressed that her workplace brought her anxiety of not being able to come out and the risk of being laid off because of her appearance or gender expression. In the same spirit, interviewee 3 felt the pressure from the colleagues because of their gender expression that is affecting their mental health. Those who have motivation in the current workplace are the ones involved in a supportive and inclusive environment, for example, interviewees 6, 7, and 8. Interviewee 3 disclosed that they don't have motivations at work not only because of the workload, but also the unpleasant environment.

### **6.2. Post-materialist Demand for Human Rights**

If we now turn to a political science perspective, with lesser concern on the economic side, a country and its people shift their focus towards values of self-expression, individual autonomy, and minority rights (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). Inglehart (2008, cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019) suggested that countries are more likely to value minority rights after they have developed economically and become more economically secure. As a well-established freelance illustrator, interviewee 8 has been devoted to being politically active for advocating LGBTQIA+ rights and women's rights. Economic security gives them more freedom to create, to put in messages in their work, and to influence those who hold misogyny thoughts and opposing LGBTQIA+ minds.

### **6.3. Strategic Modernization**

Strategic modernization is an instigating force behind both LGBT inclusion and economic development, through a country's interest in strategies. These interests include the expansion of tourism, urbanization, and attraction of foreign investments (Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). Florida & Gates (2001) argued that the signal of tolerance of LGBT people and their visibility of a city create a positive image for its open creative business environment to attract creative and skilled workers. When talking about the most important traits of a city if the interviewees had plans to relocate, 4 out of 9 interviewees expressed their desire for a more LGBTQIA+ inclusive city. The tolerance of freedom, the unity between people, a more vibrant and bigger LGBTQIA+ scene are what the interviewees valued. The cities they mentioned are Shanghai, Taipei, Amsterdam, and so on, which are the cities known for their dynamics and inclusiveness.

### **6.4. Achievement of Capabilities**

The achievement of capabilities conceptualizes development as an expansion of freedom for individuals to make decisions on their lives, with that expansion not dependent upon individuals' membership in certain identity groups (Nussbaum, 2001, Sen, 1999, cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). The exclusion of LGBTQIA+ community limits development. As individuals, LGBTQIA+ people are often coming under the resistance of discrimination (in employment and education), personal safety and violence, stigma and rejection, and non-recognition in law and the society (Waaldijk, 2013 cited in Badgett, Waaldijk & Rodgers, 2019). The interviewees explicitly explained that their decisions are hindered by social constraints, as small as what to wear every day, whether they can use a

public restroom, what they can and cannot say on social media, as big as career choices, freedom of speech and expression, freedom to march, and the legalization same-sex marriage. These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature of Chinese society and the extent of freedom.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis provides the first interview-based study and the first comprehensive assessment of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in one of the most developed cities in China, and to explore the role-changings of the creative industries in the advancements of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The present study was designed firstly to determine whether Guangzhou could be seen as a creative city using European standards, and the result is very encouraging. Guangzhou scored 57.81 out of 100 in the C3 index, the vibrant creative economy provides abundant job opportunities attracting well-educated creative workers into the city. Another aspect that Guangzhou did exceptionally well is the human capital and education, scoring 79.57 of a total of 100, indicating Guangzhou itself also owns a large pool of skilled and creative laborers. However, Guangzhou still has disadvantages in inadequate cultural venues and facilities, cultural attractiveness, tolerance, and trust.

Moreover, the interviews confirmed that Guangzhou provides a mediocre environment for LGBTQIA+ people due to the combined effects of distance between citizens and non-recognition in law and the society. Judging from the five dimensions of LGBT inclusion (Badgett & Sell, 2018), most interviewees responded negatively, but through the conversation, it can also easily be seen that LGBTQIA+ people from Guangzhou are making efforts to transform the city into a more inhabitable, open, and diverse place for the LGBTQIA+ community.

The second aim of this study was to investigate the effects of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in creative industries in Guangzhou through interviews with LGBTQIA+ people working or studying in the creative industries. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this research is that creative industries are more tolerant towards LGBTQIA+ community. Linking to the human capital theory and creative capital theory developed by Richard Florida (2003), and Guangzhou's creative industries are the reasons for LGBTQIA+ people to thrive, to agglomerate, and to generate new ideas. Most of the interviewee's working environment and people they work with allow them to create, to express freely. In their opinion,

LGBTQIA+ community are producers, consumers, opinion leaders, that can open the public's eyes to new perspectives and experiences, create a more diversified environment for the future generation, by means of arts, movies, music, and so on. Their positions are indispensable and irreplaceable. And the roles the creative industries played for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community is that it can help de-stigmatizing the community, promote its culture, raise public awareness and acceptance, and provide a platform for differences. Although some doubts arise from this topic, for instance, the classism problem that only the top of the pyramid can have more exposure, while people from the bottom of the pyramid are left invisible, either it is because of their economic, social status, or they are the minority of the whole LGBTQIA+ spectrum. The majority of the interviewees hold optimistic opinions.

The generalisability of the results is subject to certain limitations. For instance, lack of gay and transgender people's perspective, and whether Guangzhou is the most representative city in China. Notwithstanding these limitations, the thesis suggests that further research is required to establish a more inclusive investigation that includes people from over the country and people representing every letter in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. Policy-wise, continued efforts are needed to make Guangzhou's cultural features more accessible to the citizens, and to make Guangzhou a more inclusive city. Practical policy implications are agitatedly expected.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 List of 29 Indicators Relevant to 9 Dimensions Reflecting 3 Major Facets of the Cultural, Social and Economic Vitality of Cities

29 Indicators		9 Dimensions		3 main facets
1	Sights & landmarks		1.1 Cultural Venues & Facilities	Cultural Vibrancy
2	Museums & art galleries			
3	Cinemas			
4	Concert & music halls			
5	Theatres			
6	Tourist overnight stays		1.2 Cultural Participation & Attractiveness	
7	Museum visitors			
8	Cinema attendance			
9	Satisfaction with cultural facilities			
10	Jobs in arts, culture & entertainment		2.1 Creative & Knowledge-based Jobs	Creative Economy
11	Jobs in media & communication			
12	Jobs in other creative sectors			
13	ICT patent applications		2.2 Intellectual Property & Innovation	
14	Community design applications			
15	Jobs in new arts, culture & entertainment enterprises		2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors	
16	Jobs in new media & communication enterprises			
17	Jobs in new enterprises in other creative sectors			
18	Graduates in arts & humanities		3.1 Human Capital & Education	Enabling Environment
19	Graduates in ICT			
20	Average appearances in university rankings			
21	Foreign graduates		3.2 Openness, Tolerance & Trust	
22	Foreign-born population			
23	Tolerance of foreigners			
24	Integration of foreigners			
25	People trust		3.3 Local & International Connections	
26	Accessibility to passenger flights			
27	Accessibility by road			
28	Accessibility by rail		3.4 Quality of Governance	
29	Quality of governance			

Source: European Union (2019)

### Appendix 2 How to Interpret the Indicators Scores: a Methodological Note

Scale	Jobs in new arts, culture & entertainment enterprises per 100 000 inhabitants	Jobs in new media & communication enterprises per 100 000 inhabitants	Jobs in new enterprises in other creative sectors per 100 000 inhabitants	Graduates in arts and humanities per 100 000 inhabitants	Graduates in ICT per 100 000 inhabitants	Average appearances in university rankings
100	369.02	193.23	871.13	2255.18	393.41	15.5
80	298.25	155.78	703.76	1804.14	314.72	12.4
60	227.49	118.34	536.39	1353.10	236.04	9.3
40	156.72	80.89	369.02	902.07	157.36	6.2
20	85.96	43.45	201.65	451.03	78.68	3.1

Source: European Union (2019)

### Appendix 3 Guangzhou's Raw, Standardized Data and Score in Each Indicator

Dimension	Cultural Vibrancy (0.4)									Creative Economy (0.4)									Enabling Environment (0.3)											
	D1.1 Cultural Venues & Facilities (0.5)			D1.2 Cultural Participation & Attractiveness (0.5)						D2.1 Creative & Knowledge-based Jobs (0.4)			D2.2 Intellectual Property & Innovation (0.2)			D2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors (0.4)			D3.1 Human Capital & Education (0.4)			D3.2 Openness, Tolerance & Trust (0.4)				D3.3 Local & International Connections (0.15)		D3.4 Quality of Governance (0.45)		
Code	D1.1			D1.2						D2.1			D2.2			D2.3			D3.1			D3.2				D3.3		D3.4		
Unit	(number)			(number)						(number)			(number)			(number)			%				%		%					
2018	12,072	8,298	515	19,717	8,692	2,216	15,811	19,177	75.70%	64.81	72.43	278.52	207	65.37	159.84	108.65	578.98	26,652	10,668	6	0.0457	0.04	34	4	3.9	5,273	74	478,233	386.65	67.38
Score	10.26	25.46	67.5	59.87	12.34	8.27	12.59	100	94.63	94.16	75.15	75.77	69.34	40.6	43.26	56.23	66.46	100	100	38.71	0.1	0.07	4.83	12.12	12.19	100	100	100	87.38	

Source: own calculation

### Appendix 4 Weighted Scores in Each Dimension and Each Main Facets

<b>C3 Index</b>	57.81396	<b>D1.2 Cultural Participation &amp; Attractiveness</b>	61.57	<b>D3.1 Human Capital &amp; Education</b>	79.57
	50.48	<b>D2.1 Creative &amp; Knowledge-based Jobs</b>	81.69	<b>D3.2 Openness, Tolerance &amp; Trust</b>	15.862
	65.784	<b>D2.2 Intellectual Property &amp; Innovation</b>	54.92	<b>D3.3 Local &amp; International Connections</b>	100
	56.5418	<b>D2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors</b>	55.31	<b>D3.4 Quality of Governance</b>	67.38
	39.39	<b>D1.1 Cultural Venues &amp; Facilities</b>			

Source: own calculation

## Appendix 5 List of Indicators of LGBTI Inclusion

1. EDUCATION											
Aspect of inclusion	Name of indicator	Indicator	Feasibility tier	SDG	Comment (justification, explanation, or issues)	Potential sources of data	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Intersex
Safe learning environments	1.1 Rate of bullying	Percentage of LGBTI students who have experienced physical, psychological, or sexual violence or bullying during the past 12 months.	3 (partial 1 in near future)	4.a	This measure has been adapted for consistency with the likely SDG thematic indicator 4.a.2 on the provision of “safe, inclusive and effective learning environments” and the likely indicator for INSPIRE, a global initiative to end violence against children. This indicator could be a ratio of the rate for LGBTI students to the rate for all students.	The WHO’s Global School-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) for children aged 13-17 will include sexual identity and sexual behaviour questions on a core-expanded module, making it possible to move this indicator to Tier 1 for LGB students. No questions capturing gender identity or intersex identity/status are currently agreed on, however, so further work will be needed, possibly collecting data via civil society. Also, the GSHS question is optional. Another potential data source is the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC), collected in European and North American countries.	x	x	x	x	x
	1.2 Anti-bullying policy	Presence of a law, constitutional provision, policy, or regulation preventing and addressing bullying and harassment against students in the educational system that includes students based on actual or perceived SOGI-ESC.	2	4.a	An anti-bullying policy may lead to prevention of bullying of LGBTI students. This measure could also be a proxy for the rate of bullying. Final wording should specify the education levels covered, and specify level of centralization of policies (e.g. national or local). Measure should consider the content and quality of the policies in place.	No current data sources are known; measurement could involve surveys of legal experts, national authorities, and non-governmental partners, for example, or review of laws, constitutional provisions, policies, etc.	x	x	x	x	x

	1.3 Implementation of anti-violence policy	Percentage of schools that have comprehensive school policies to prevent and address violence and bullying related to SOGIESC.	3	4.a	Recommended policy by UNESCO. Measurement will require defining "violence", "comprehensive school policies" and education level; UNESCO Out in the Open (2016) reports contains recommendations. No current data sources known; measurement could involve surveys of legal experts, national and local authorities, and non-governmental partners, for example.	Questions might be incorporated into school census survey instruments, or be administered to a representative sample of schools. The World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators are a possible source for data collection.	x	x	x	x	x
Access to education	1.4 Non-discrimination policy, students	Presence of a law, constitutional provision, policy, or regulation that prohibits discrimination against student in educational settings based on SOGIESC.	2	4.5	A non-discrimination law opens educational opportunities for LGBTI students. When creating measurements, explicit enumeration of SOGIESC or LGBTI students in the list of groups covered should be necessary to receive highest scoring.	No current data sources are known; measurement could involve surveys of legal experts, national authorities, and non-governmental partners, for example, or review of laws, constitutional provisions, policies, etc.	x	x	x	x	x
	1.5 Implementation of non-discrimination policy, students	Existence of concrete mechanisms (national or local) for reporting cases of SOGIESC-related discrimination, violence, and bullying toward students, including incidents perpetrated by representatives of the education sector such as teachers and other school staff.	3	4.5	This indicator is a proxy for the implementation of policies or laws against institutional discrimination by the education sector, including discrimination by, for example, teachers and other school staff.	No current data sources are known; measurement could involve surveys of legal experts, national authorities, and non-governmental partners, for example, or review of laws, constitutional provisions, policies, etc.	x	x	x	x	x
	1.6.a Educational attainment: secondary completion	Ratio of percentage of LGBTI people who have completed upper secondary education to percentage of total population that have completed upper secondary education	3	4.1; 4.5	Adapted to fit most common definition used by international bodies to measure educational attainment.	No current data sources are known. Could be measured in a population-based survey of LGBTI individuals, using a particular age cohort, such as age 25-34, to capture recent degree of educational access.	x	x	x	x	x

	1.6.b Educational attainment: primary completion	Ratio of percentage of LGBTI people who have completed primary education to percentage of total population that have completed primary education	3	4.1; 4.5	Designed to identify impact of early marginalization of LGBTI children.	No current data sources are known. Could be measured in a population-based survey of LGBTI individuals, using a particular age cohort, such as age 25-34, to capture recent degree of educational access.	x	x	x	x	x
Knowledge	1.7 Diversity-inclusive curricula	Existence of school curricula that include information on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.	3	4.7	In keeping with standard educational norms and practices, such curricula would be evidence-based to ensure accuracy and would be age appropriate to meet the needs of different age groups. This indicator reflects the possibility that inclusion of SOGIESC-related content could fit in several subjects, such as sexuality education, human rights education, or civics.	No current data sources are known. Could be combined with efforts to collect data on other school-based measures, perhaps through questions added to school census instruments.	x	x	x	x	x

## 2. POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Aspect of inclusion	Name of indicator	Indicator	Feasibility tier	SDG	Comment (justification, explanation, or issues)	Potential sources of data	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Intersex
Recognition	2.1 Decriminalization of same-sex conduct	Private consensual same-sex activity between adults is not illegal.	1	10.3	Focus on behaviour to be inclusive of those without an LGBTI identity.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy, e.g. ILGA.	x	x	x	x	x
	2.2 Decriminalization of gender expression	Country has no laws that criminalize people on the basis of their gender expression	2	10.3	Focus on expression to be inclusive of gender non-conforming people who do not identify as transgender.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy, e.g. ILGA.				x	
	2.3 Legal gender recognition	People have self-determination for choosing their gender.	2	10.3; 16.9	Captures national recognition of the right to self-determination of gender. Recognition should not include requirements such as sterilization, medical interventions, divorce, or a psychological diagnosis/assessment, nor should it require any eligibility requirements related to sex characteristics.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy, e.g. ILGA. See also reports from ILGA ("Trans Legal Mapping Report"), UNDP ("Legal Gender Recognition" in Asia) and Southern Africa Litigation Centre report on Southern Africa.				x	x
	2.4 Process for updating sex/gender in documents	Availability of centralized protocols for updating sex/gender in official certifications.	1/2	10.3; 16.9	Provides a clear administrative process or system for changing official documents to match current gender identity. Protocols are not necessarily at the national level but should be clear and accessible to all.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy, e.g. ILGA. See also reports from ILGA ("Trans Legal Mapping Report"), UNDP ("Legal Gender Recognition" in Asia) and Southern Africa Litigation Centre report on Southern Africa.				x	x

	2.5 Statistical inclusion	Measures of SOGIESC are included in statistical reporting systems and allow calculation of Index statistics on health, education, economic outcomes, violence, and political participation.	2	17.18	Evaluate whether reporting systems exist and whether they include the collection of data on LGBTI status or SOGIESC victimization. Would also be able to measure separately which SOGIESC groups are included in statistics, as well as whether all dimensions of the index would be included. Countries should also have policies in place to keep data secure and from being abused.	Review of national statistical organization practices	x	x	x	x	x
Freedom of expression & association	2.6 Restrictive laws	Existence of laws that restrict freedom of expression, civic participation, or association related to SOGIESC	1		Measure of the presence of explicitly exclusionary law related to SOGIESC. Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy. ILGA for sexual orientation (and sometimes gender identity). Includes so-called "homosexual propaganda" laws.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy. ILGA	x	x	x	x	x
	2.7.a LGBTI NGOs allowed	NGOs that promote the interest of LGBTI individuals are legally allowed to register.	1		Captures lack of legal barriers to registering plus actual practice in each country that allows registration. Paired with indicator on actual presence of LGBTI NGO.	Review of national law required to establish the presence of this policy. ILGA	x	x	x	x	x
	2.7.b LGBTI NGOs present	Presence of at least one national organization related to (1) LGB rights, (2) transgender rights, and (3) intersex rights that operates openly	2		Could be the same organization with documentation of activities related to each category. If all three categories are not covered, would have a lower value. Organizations that cannot operate openly indicate limits to freedom of association and expression	Work with international CSOs; recent data collected by OutRight Action International	x	x	x	x	x
Political representation	2.8 LGBTI in Parliament	Percentage of members of Parliament or other national, elected representative body who are openly LGBTI	1	5.5; 16.7	Could be compared to prevalence rate of LGBTI people, but since that is not available in most countries (would be a feasibility Tier 3 measure), can still interpret higher levels of this indicator as indicating greater inclusion. Measurement should account for the possibility of fluctuations related to small numbers, perhaps by pooling over time or creating a benchmark (e.g. "more than one").	UNC Rights & Representation Project.	x	x	x	x	x

Public opinion	2.9.a/b/c/d Social acceptability of variations in SOGIESC	Percentage of individuals in a country who believe that a. homosexuality, b. bisexuality, c. transgender, d. variation in sex characteristics is socially acceptable	1; 3		Would combined measures of four different attitudinal measures that capture acceptability of homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender, and having variations in sex characteristics. Measurement will require development of terms that will work across countries.	A variety of questions exist on cross-national surveys, e.g. Pew Global Attitudes Survey, World Values Survey, ILGA/RIWI. Most only address issues related to "homosexuality."	x	x	x	x	x
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**3. ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

Aspect of inclusion	Name of indicator	Indicator	Feasibility tier	SDG	Comment (justification, explanation, or issues)	Potential sources of data	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Intersex
Access to jobs	3.1 Employment non-discrimination law	Presence of a law, constitutional provision, policy, or regulation prohibiting SOGIESC discrimination in public and private sector workplaces at the national level	1	10.3	Non-discrimination laws increase opportunities for LGBTI people in the workplace, and inclusion of private and public sectors captures full range of employment. Could include presence of state/provincial/local policy as well to create a Percentage Covered variable, but would bump to Tier 2. The measure should also include deductions if exceptions are allowed (e.g. religious exemptions) or if coverage is not complete, which might also place this in Tier 2.	Review of national law, case law, and other policies required to establish the presence of this policy, including data from ILGA and World Policy Center.	x	x	x	x	x
	3.2 Implementation of employment non-discrimination law	A national equality body or national human rights institution is responsible for handling charges of employment discrimination related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics	2	10.3	Assignment of responsibility for implementation of law is the first step toward enforcement. Should consider subnational bodies; this indicator should be consistent with geographic coverage of the indicator for presence of an employment non-discrimination law.	Review of national law and practice required to establish the presence of this policy. FRA collects some data for EU countries on these issues; Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, also collects some data for European countries.	x	x	x	x	x



	3.3 Experiences of employment discrimination	Percentage of LGBTI people who report experiencing employment discrimination in the last 12 months	3	10.3	Provides more direct information about experiences of discrimination, especially where they are underreported or cannot be reported to a national equality body.	Some LGBT data available: cross-national results for EU countries in FRA survey; asked on some surveys in Canada and U.S.	x	x	x	x	x
	3.4 Relative Unemployment Rate	Ratio of percentage of LGBTI labour force that is unemployed to percentage of overall labour force that is unemployed	3	8.5	The unemployment rate measures the percentage of people in the labour force who want to work but cannot find jobs. This measure is one minus the employment rate (measured as a percentage of the labour force). The relative measure assesses whether the unemployment rate is higher than average for LGBTI people.	No known data source; will require population-based surveys that include questions on SOGIESC and/or LGBTI-specific samples.	x	x	x	x	x
	3.5 Women's economic autonomy	Use an existing index of legal restrictions on women's ownership of property, access to assets, or freedom of movement	1	1.4; 5.a	LGBTI women's, transgender men's, and other gender nonconforming people's economic well-being is closely related to economic autonomy for all women, such as right to own property, access to financial services, and freedom of movement. Without such rights and autonomy, lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender women and men would have a very difficult time gaining the economic resources to live outside of a heterosexual family structure.	Indexes that measure institutions, such as the Social Institutions & Gender Index (SIGI, OECD) or the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law data, could be used if updated regularly.	x		x	x	x
Adequate income	3.6 Relative Poverty Rate	Ratio of percentage of LGBTI population below poverty threshold to the percentage of overall population below poverty threshold	3	1.2	The poverty rate captures people living with very low levels of income, and the relative rate shows whether LGBTI people are more likely than the average person to be poor. Measurement issues include choosing which poverty threshold to use; also, definition of household may need to be adjusted for LGBTI people's families.	No known data source; will require population-based surveys that include questions on SOGIESC and/or LGBTI-specific samples.	x	x	x	x	x
	3.7 Relative Individual earnings	Ratio of average annual earnings for individual LGBTI people to average individual earnings for overall population	3	8.5; 10.3	Provides measure of earnings inequality by SOGIESC.	No known data source; will require population-based surveys that include questions on SOGIESC and/or LGBTI-specific samples.	x	x	x	x	x

Social security	3.8 Equal benefits	Pension system for civil servants provides the same benefits to same-sex partners provided to different-sex spouses	2	1.3; 8.3	Proxy for equity in social security system. Equity in public employee pension system captures inclusion within the public sector, potential role modelling effect, and possible route to inclusion within a broader social security old age pension system. Also, old age pensions might not be available broadly in some countries, hence the proposed focus on pensions for civil servants. Issues of documentation that might restrict transgender people's access to benefits are addressed in a separate documentation indicator.	Review of national law and practice required to establish the presence of this policy.	x	x	x	x	x
Business climate	3.9 LGB-TI-owned or LGBTI-led businesses	Number of LGB-TI-owned or LGB-TI-led businesses divided by country population (times 10,000)	3	8.3	Measure of economic options, including access to capital, with a focus on the formal sector. Ownership is the preferred measure of inclusion; LGBTI-led businesses might be better measure of employment access to high level jobs. Any measure should be relative to population size.	Could be measured through a survey of businesses or adding questions to existing surveys, such as the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys, which are used to measure women's business ownership. Possible partnership with NGLCC.	x	x	x	x	x

4. HEALTH											
Aspect of inclusion	Name of indicator	Indicator	Feasibility tier	SDG	Comment (justification, explanation, or issues)	Potential sources of data	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Intersex
SOGIESC inclusive health legislation and policies	4.1 Patient non-discrimination protections	The presence of non-discrimination laws and policies by providers that specifically include SOGIESC (preventing denial of care and recognizing the right to care for all regardless of SOGIESC)	2		In some areas there may be laws protecting patients in medical settings.	Providers could be surveyed for the existence of such policies/laws. Review of national law could establish the presence of this policy.	x	x	x	x	x
	4.2 Medical record protections	Protection of medical records and information exists	2		This can include the archiving of records so people can find access medical records from childhood (of particular concern to Intersex).	Local laws protecting medical records could be examined, providers could be surveyed for the existence of medical record protections, or reports of abuse of records could be assessed.	x	x	x	x	x
	4.3 Informed consent	Patients have to provide informed and free consent before medical examinations (in particular anal examinations and HIV)	2			Could come from reports of examinations without consent.	x	x	x	x	x

Access to SOGIESC sensitive healthcare	4.4 Patient discrimination/stigma experience	Percentage of people that feel discriminated against on the basis of SOGIESC in health care settings	3		Would need to come from survey data. Could also assess trust in healthcare setting in addition to the presence of discrimination.		x	x	x	x	x
	4.5 Variations in SOGIESC considered healthy	Variations in sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression are considered healthy in medical guidelines, protocols and classifications.	2			Could be assessed by examining local practices toward including SOGIESC medical diagnoses in charts or as categories for reimbursement of procedures/treatment; or by surveying providers and provider organizations about their beliefs, or examining curriculum for medical professional training.	x	x	x	x	x
	4.6 Source of care	Percentage of persons who have a specific source of ongoing care.	3		Perhaps a better measure of access than insurance coverage but doesn't recognize quality of care.	In the U.S. such data exist for LGB but not TI people through the National Health Interview Survey. This data is usually self-reported and would require surveys of LGBTI people. May be difficult in across socio-economic and cultural settings.	x	x	x	x	x
	4.7 Gender-affirming care	Presence of gender-affirming care for those who need or want it	1-2		Could be difficult to define what "gender-affirming care" means or whether such services exist but the WPATH standards could be looked to. If properly defined this could potentially be measured if there is a "known" place providing services.	Could be assessed by examining the existence of LGBTI clinics. But would better be assessed by surveys of LGBTI people assessing their access to gender-affirming care (making it a tier 3 indicator).				x	x
	4.8 Cervical cancer screening	Percentage of LBTI people with a cervix who are screened for cervical cancer according to most recent guidelines	3		Would need to come from survey data.		x		x	x	x
Sexual and reproductive health and rights	4.9 HIV prevalence	Prevalence of HIV Infections in LGBTI people	1-3	3.3.1	New infections (incidence) would be more interesting than existing infections (prevalence). An alternative indicator could be access to anti-retroviral therapy.	Some prevalence data can be found in UNAIDS Data 2017 where data exists for some LGBTI groups in some countries (66 countries have estimates for MSM and 44 have for transgender; does not exist for remainder).	x	x	x	x	x
	4.10 Access to SOGIESC-sensitive reproductive healthcare	Existence of SOGIESC sensitive reproductive health care	2	3.7; 5.6		Could be assessed by examining the existence of LGBTI clinics or all general health care settings that provide reproductive health services. But would better be assessed by surveys of LGBTI people assessing their access to reproductive health-care (making it a tier 3 indicator).	x	x	x	x	x

	4.11 Sterilizations	Presence of forced and coercive sterilizations affecting reproductive health and rights in LGBTI people	2-3		This could possibly be assessed by examining whether any cases existed in a country over a set period of time.	ILGA collects information on coercive sterilization for a large number of countries.	x	x	x	x	x
Health status	4.12 Depression	Prevalence of depression	3			Great measures of depression exist but this would require collecting survey data, and finding valid cross-cultural measures.	x	x	x	x	x
	4.13 Self-rated health	In general, would you say your health is... excellent, very good, good, fair, poor (WHO variation: "How is your health in general?" with response scale "It is very good/ good/ fair/ bad/ very bad")	3			Requires surveying populations. Has been assessed in a few countries (Canada, U.S., U.K. see Elliott MN, Kanouse DE, Burkhart Q, et al. Sexual Minorities in England Have Poorer Health and Worse Health Care Experiences: A National Survey. Journal of General Internal Medicine. 2015;30(1):9-16. doi:10.1007/s11606-014-2905-y.)	x	x	x	x	x

**5. PERSONAL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE**

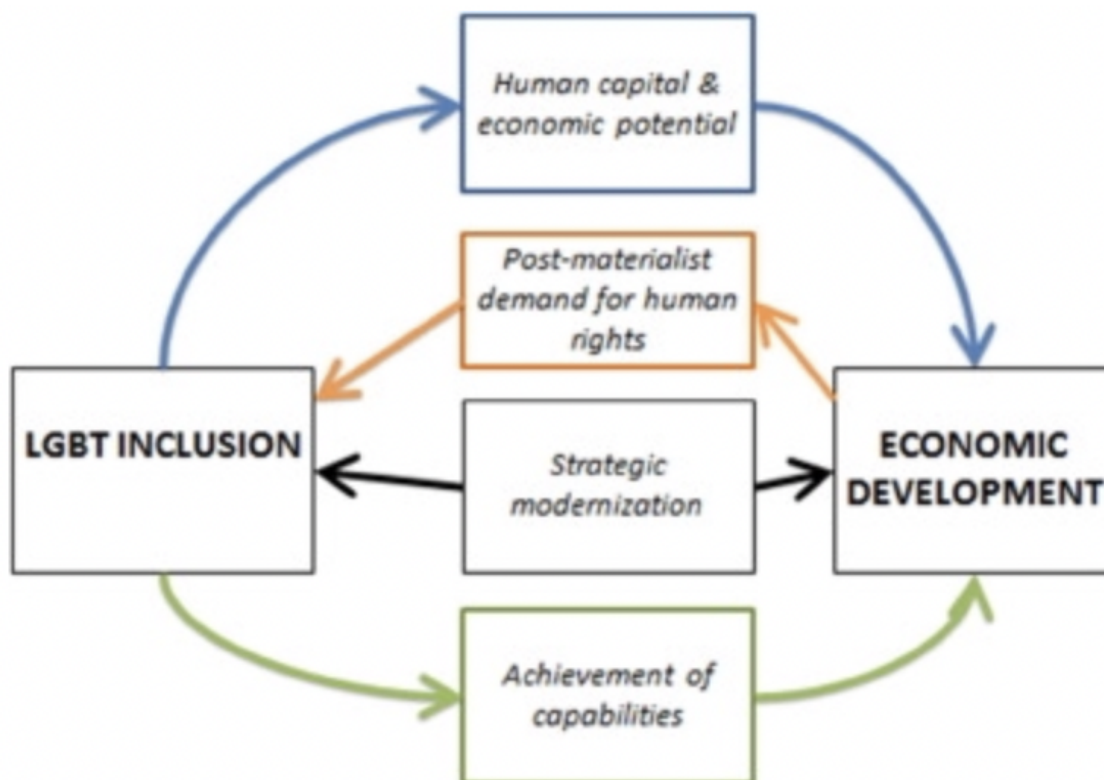
Aspect of inclusion	Name of indicator	Indicator	Feasibility tier	SDG	Comment (justification, explanation, or issues)	Potential sources of data	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	Intersex
Bodily, Physical and Psychological Integrity	5.1 "Normalizing" medical interventions	Laws, regulations, judicial decisions protecting against non-consensual "normalizing" medical interventions for children born with variations of sex characteristics	2		Should also consider assessing proper enforcement and implementation and recognize some intersex children may consent to medical interventions.	Very rare, so may be relatively easy to count. Could possibly assess from reports from LGBTI and human rights organizations.					x
	5.2 "Conversion therapy"	Laws, regulations, judicial decisions and policies prohibiting/banning/protecting against sexual orientation and gender identity "conversion therapy"	2			May be collected from reports from LGBTI and human rights organizations. Likely to involve qualitative data from a small number of countries.	x	x	x	x	
Hate Crimes/Incitement to Violence	5.3 Hate crime legislation/Incitement to violence	The inclusion of hate based on real or perceived SOGIESC as an aggravating factor in laws, regulations, judicial decisions and policies on hate crimes and incitement to violence legislation that includes real or perceived SOGIESC as motive of hate crimes exists	2		May need to choose between hate crimes and incitement to violence as this may be two indicators as written.	Potential sources of data include: OSCE/ODHIR publishes annual hate crime data. <a href="http://hatecrime.osce.org/">http://hatecrime.osce.org/</a> . In USA FBI collects data. <a href="https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016">https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016</a> .	x	x	x	x	x

SOGI-ESC-related violence	5.4 Physical, Psychological, Sexual Violence	Proportion of persons subjected to physical, psychological, or sexual violence in previous 12 months on the basis of real or perceived SOGIESC	3	16.1.3		Would require surveying LGBTI people about their recent experiences with violence. In US, National Crime Victimization Survey collects data on SOGI and experienced violence.	x	x	x	x	x
	5.5 Violence Against Defenders	SOGIESC activists/human rights defenders subjected to violence in past 12 months	2			It may be easier to collect evidence on this indicator in many countries than on other SOGIESC-related violence indicators. LGBTI groups/human rights organizations can monitor. Problems with interpreting may arise.	x	x	x	x	x
SOGIESC asylum	5.6 Asylum protections	Asylum is granted to people who are persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their real or perceived SOGIESC	2			Local laws addressing who can seek asylum could be assessed. UNHCR has a case law data base as well as a section devoted to SOGI (that incl. case law). <a href="http://www.refworld.org/sogi.html">http://www.refworld.org/sogi.html</a> .	x	x	x	x	x
Access to Justice for LGBTI People	5.7 Justice sector training	Mandatory training programs for judicial, law-enforcement, and correctional officials incorporate training on human rights and protection from violence concerning LGBTI and SOGIESC	2		Recognizes the importance of training throughout the judicial system. Law enforcement included military in countries where military is enforcing laws.	A systematic process of collecting data (methodology) would need to be put into place.	x	x	x	x	x
	5.8 Trust in justice sector	Percentage of LGBTI people who say that they trust the justice system to take appropriate response to violence on the basis of real or perceived SOGIESC	3			Can be included in surveys of LGBTI people's experiences of violence (necessary for other indicators). Could be disaggregated into questions e.g.: do they trust the system to investigate/prosecute a report, how high is the perceived risk of secondary victimization, will victims receive remedy through the judicial system, etc.	x	x	x	x	x
	5.9 Monitoring violence against LGBTI	Domestic bodies monitor incidents of violence against people of diverse SOGIESC	2		A number of independent institutions have the mandate to monitor incidents of violence against people of diverse SOGIESC	A systematic process of collecting data (methodology) would need to be put into place.					

5.10 Violence against LGBTI in institutional settings	Domestic bodies monitor incidents of violence against people of diverse SOGIESC in places of detention	2-3		NOTE: "places of detention" (defined according to Convention Against Torture) include mental health facilities, police stations, and detention centres.	A number of independent institutions have the mandate to monitor closed settings (police/prison inspectorates, national human rights institutions, National Preventive Mechanisms against torture etc.), although their reports are not always made public (makings some data potentially tier 3).	x	x	x	x	x
5.11 Detention policies	Existence of official policy protections on SOGIESC in detention settings, including specific policies to respect the self-identified gender identity and expression of trans people	2			Captures the existence of policies to respect the GI/GE of trans people in detention, which is critical re: detention settings.	x	x	x	x	x

Source: Badgett, M. V. L., & Sell, R. (2018)

### Appendix 6 Causal Pathways Linking LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development



Source: Badgett, M. V. L., Waaldijk, K. & Rodgers, Y. (2019)

### Appendix 7 Interview Questions

1. Age?

2. What is your education level?
3. What is your gender identity and expression?
4. What is your sexual orientation?
5. Which field are you working/studying in?
6. Scale 1 to 5, 1 being not friendly at all, and 5 being extremely friendly, how would you describe Guangzhou regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and can you elaborate more on this topic?
7. Other than the LGBTQIA+ inclusion, how would you describe Guangzhou?
8. Can you elaborate on your queer experiences in Guangzhou? (5 dimensions: education, political and civic participation, health, economic well-being (affected by both inclusion and creative industry), personal safety and violence)
9. What are the most crucial traits of a city when you are considering moving to a new city? (openness and mobility of young people)
10. How would you describe the status of queer community in Guangzhou?
11. Describe your relation to the creative industries. (employed, involved in some way). Have the creative industries played a role for you?
12. Is there more motivation when you are involved in a creative and LGBTQIA+ inclusive working/studying environment?
13. Would you say the working/studying environment that you are in now inspires more achievements in your future career? If so, to what extent?
14. Do you feel that the creative industries are more tolerant of LGBTQIA+ people? In what way.
15. What kind of role do you think the LGBTQIA+ community played in the creative industries?
16. What kind of role do you think the creative industries play for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community? (dimensions as follow up questions)

## **Appendix 8 Interview Transcription**

Interviewee 1 Allen, 22, she/her, pansexual, musician, bachelor's student major in classical music

“I would scale it at 3. I think the age of the citizens have a larger impact on the issue, like, the younger generation have a better acceptance, they don't mind others' sexuality when making friends, and maybe the older generation have less acceptance. The younger generation have a more open and better learning ability, and also the channels of information of theirs are more varied, which broaden their scope of LGBTQIA+ related knowledge. But at the same time, the gender/sexuality education is also lacking among the young people, for example, people still assume other people as heterosexual and biological gender as their identified gender. These stereotypes also depend on the friend group and people they choose to be involved with, it is much better when there is a mutual understanding.

“I think Guangzhou is a city with a very unique climate and food culture, there are so many things to experience, for a person not born in the city, the culture here makes me very curious. Guangzhou as one of the biggest city in China, it has one of the most interesting cultural phenomenon which is the “village within the city”, the villages have their own traditional rules, and the other side of the street is extremely developed and prosperous, the city as a co-existing organism that includes all kinds of people, this fascinates me.

“I feel very lucky that I met a group of queer friends, and they gave me the opportunity to explore my imagination of gender, and shackled some of the stereotypes of mine. These people, full of vitality, brought me an abundant spectrum of gender identification and options, I think this has a very large impact on me. However, the gender/sexuality education is mostly done by ourselves, like finding information online, reading literature on this topic, sex education is missing in the public sphere. Our university has no LGBTQIA+ clubs or related courses.

“In the case of political and civic participation, we merely dabble in this area, the LGBTQIA+ community is invisible, we are trying to fight for our rights, but generally speaking, it feels like in Guangzhou, the situation is not that optimistic.

“Regarding health related issues, the mental health of our community needs to be brought up. People around me are always suffering from previous experiences and trauma, which had large influences on their mental health. The recognition of our community also has a lot to improve in for example hospitals and medical institutions. Something happened to my friend the other day, they identify as non-binary, but when they was called out at the hospital, the nurse still refer them with their old name (a very feminine name) and the female gender, which made them extremely uncomfortable. The other thing is when doing a gynecological examination, when the doctor asked about sexual experiences, I find it really hard to answer, almost like coming out to a stranger, especially when people do not have any knowledge of queer sex.

“When a queer person enters a more conservative workplace, they tend to hide their identity, from which a lot of distress come up. For me, I work as a private tutor for kids, teaching them to play the flute. When I add the parents on social media, I would choose restricting them to see my posts related to my personal life. In my friend's case, she just joined a media company working as an editor, she wrote an article about her life experiences of her being a transgender



woman, and people need to see that and have more understanding to the LGBTQIA+ community. So the working experience really depends on the workplace.

“I think my personal safety isn’t that affected by my identity and sexual expression, but my female friends who dress masculine are always verbally attacked when using public restrooms, every time they want to use public restrooms, they are always mistaken as men, if they met some very radical people, I couldn’t imagine the consequences. The choice of using a men’s room or women’s room is always hard for them, the possibility of being treated violently is pretty high in Guangzhou, and also in other cities in China.

“The most important trait of a city is the tolerance of freedom, where I can do whatever I want. Living costs and job opportunities are also in the list of considerations. And also if the city is habitable, which means a more balancing human-environment relationship. Another point is that there should be a community where people can have constant and socially active interactions.

“Guangzhou has a quite active queer community I would say, I volunteered at NGOs like Zhitong, various female support groups, I feel a sense of belonging while working there. And in a smaller sense, me and my queer friends form an inclusive circle, this could count as a small community right? Our circle is very vocal about LGBTQIA+ rights, we want to create all forms of art, to narrate our stories. We also organize underground activities, somewhat more radical ones, like hanging flags, making stickers with slogans like “The Stonewall Movement Began with Them” and the transgender flag during Transgender Visible day, introducing the history of the Stonewall Movement, which was initiated by two transgender female. Because this topic is too invisible in China, even I have no knowledge or ways to receive these kind of information before I have transgender friends, let alone understanding their situations. For example, transgender lesbians face a tougher situation because their relationship seems too much like a heterosexual relationship, so we wish to express in a creative way to let them to be visible. Although most of the organizations aren’t as radical as we are, I hope they are doing the same kind of “underground” movements like we did.

“The creative industry definitely has an influence on me. In the future I would like to apply for jobs that are creative and flexible, which require me to come up with new ideas, not like mechanical work. I also find there would be more motivation when I’m involved in a creative and LGBTQIA+ inclusive working or studying environment, where it is more diverse and inclusive, and has no limitations for the creative process. Now I’m studying in Xinghai Conservatory of Music, the environment is not that in favor of creation, the professors teach in a quite rigid way, the scope of the teaching is also limited, so I don’t always feel inspired at school.

“The question of whether the creative industry is more tolerant to LGBTQIA+ people really depends on what position the person we are talking about, like JSD (Jiang Sida, Chinese influencer, comedian, artist, entrepreneur), he is a boss so his subjectivity is stronger, so he can present a more multidimensional perspective, like a opinion leader and pushing both the advancement of creative industry and LGBTQIA+ inclusion. If an queer artist has broad recognition, it would be a more complete narrative.”

Interviewee 2 Makayla, 23, she/her, pansexual, bachelor's student major in advertisement and communication

“I think maybe 3? The realization of my sexuality came pretty late for me. I grew up here in Guangzhou, but compared to other cities I lived in after the realization, I think Guangzhou is not that friendly, and the only reason is that I don't have many friends that identify as sexual minorities in Guangzhou. For women, they are also treated differently in the central area of the city and surrounding area, such as judgment towards those who dress kinda exposed, people in the central area wouldn't say or care much, but women suffer from verbal attack or unfriendly looks in more rural parts of the city.

“I did a research in junior high school, interviewed classmates and teachers who are in LGBTQIA+ community, they all felt that this topic is too obscure back then, and Guangzhou isn't as open and friendly as we expect. Sun-Yat Sen University used to have a LGBTQIA+ organization, but again, because of politics, it was shut down, so I felt our environment is getting worse and worse, the space for LGBTQIA+ people is shrinking.

“Guangzhou is a very casual city, freeing in some kind of ways, due to its remoteness from the political center of China (Beijing), the power of CCP hasn't penetrated too much. The geographical aspect is very important, it is a city close to Hong Kong and Macau, which makes information from “outside of the wall” more accessible. Guangzhou is also very practical and efficient, for example, the government has a very comprehensive database collecting how many people have mental illness, disability, and formulates related and accurate policies, trying to take more minority groups into account. Oh, and making money is the priority of Guangzhou citizens.

“I genuinely believe that sex education, including education for queer people, is far less than enough, the sex culture in our society is very vicious and unequal towards women, and sex could represent too many things, such as power dynamics and hierarchy in political, monetary, social status. In queer community, fake marriage between lesbians and gays are really common, in these marriages, women are expected to bare children, and only seen as a reproduction tool for the men. Although they are not attracted to men, and some of them even abandoned all their femininity, if the woman has uterus and ovary, they became the potential victim of sex deprivation. Last year I was diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome, which means I have a very small chance to get pregnant. The moment hearing this, I didn't panic at all, on the contrary, I felt free. It is the same feeling described in *Fleabag* (an English TV series), quote, “The menopause comes. The fucking menopause comes, and it is the most wonderful fucking thing in the world! And yes, your entire pelvic floor crumbles and you get fucking hot and no one cares, but then... You're free. No longer a slave, no longer a machine, with parts. You're just a person in business.” The society treats women merely as sex commodities, reproductive tools, or in a better way to phrase, “devoted wives and mothers”, and “sweethearts”. With my experiences and the things I saw, now I realize that, as long as I have a uterus, I'll still be coveted by men. We are not human, we are just a functional object.

“As for health examination, it really depends on the whether the examiner have enough knowledge of sexual minorities and their tolerance towards the LGBTQIA+ community. I had two examiners while I was doing the HPV test, the male one was extremely impatient

and rude about my sexuality, but the female one, even she didn't know how sex works between women, she was so gentle and trying not to be offensive.

"I think my identity would definitely affect my career. Firstly, I haven't considered working in a company or something in Guangzhou, and secondly, I would hide my identity as a lesbian if I am going to work.

"It happened multiple times, some guys approached me and my girlfriend and wanted to have a threesome with us, does that count as verbal violence? Yeah, I think it is a sexual harassment, it grosses me out. So when I go out to a bar, I would never disclose my sexuality because I'm afraid that something like that will happen to me again.

"I think sexuality is a private matter, and city life is on a more public scope. So I won't take LGBTQIA+ related issues of a city as an important factor, the city's infrastructure, education resources, cultural diversity and abundance, entertainment facilities, and climate are the things I value the most.

"I am not that involved in the queer community in Guangzhou, so I may not have much contribution on this topic. Queer community to me is marginalized from the mainstream culture in Guangzhou, it is hard to say there is some sense unity between us. Queer people mostly just form a small size of social circle and among these circles there's only a very weak linkage.

"Guangzhou in general is not an inspiring city for me, from this city it is very hard to absorb some kind of creative nutrients, I don't really feel the desire of creation. Art and culture is a very niche and exclusive thing for Guangzhou citizens, because normal people do not have the chance to comprehend and to be involved, it is not something that we can get access to on a daily basis.

"I don't think my studying environment now facilitates my motivation, and my education now may not have anything to do with my career path. I think the creative industry can include so many things, it is not necessarily more LGBTQIA+ inclusive. Within the creative industry, there are more conventional sector, like architecture, advertisement firms, the more customer-oriented businesses, sexual identity doesn't matter while working in these areas, at least what I understand."

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Interviewee 3 Wei, 24, they/them, pansexual, fashion designer, bachelor's degree in fashion design

"3, I think Guangzhou people are modest, including queer people, I hardly see any intimate interactions on the streets, and young people are quite accept of the whole LGBTQIA+ culture. I heard there are some active gay bars in Guangzhou. I personally think Guangzhou is a cultural desert, unlike Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, we don't have abundant entertainment activities, it is a little bit boring and shallow. I didn't follow up art exhibitions in Guangzhou in recent years, because I think it is not worth it and does not convey good messages.

"I haven't paid close attention to the dimensions of political and civic participation, economic well-being, and health, and I don't feel like people are fighting for their rights in these dimensions. In my experiences, we don't have much gender/sexuality education, my first

impression of homosexuality was in junior high, from a Thai movie, and in my school there were some gay couples, from then on I started to have a picture of homosexuality. I remembered there was an organization on Weibo who wanted to hold a gay pride in Guangzhou, but not for long they were banned to organize the pride parade, they were considered as “foreign hostile forces”, and that’s it.

“During physical examinations, they would ask whether I have sex experiences, but they never ask the gender of the others who I have sex with. I think in Guangzhou, the possibility of getting physical or verbal attack because of sexual orientation is around 60-70%, there would be some extreme, stubborn, older people, or misogynic people, they probably are offended or disgusted by sexual minorities, but I haven’t experienced any of that yet.

“The development and inclusiveness of cultural diversity and the art scene is the most important trait when considering moving to another city. For example, Taiwan approved gay marriage a few years ago, and they also have pride parades, the vitality and the sense of community cultural power of the city is very alluring and warm. I think Taiwanese have the power to unite all kinds of people together.

“Queer community in Guangzhou is invisible and faint, because the realization of my sexuality is not until recent two years, and the promotion of queer culture is hardly seen in the city. And it is so hard to find our community, my friends are all cisgender heterosexual people, but they seem quite respectful on this subject, but also because they are not really wanting to understand sexual minorities’ situation, so I haven’t come out as non-binary and pansexual to them yet.

“I am employed in the creative industry, I work for a fashion design company and haven’t come out at work. I present myself at work as a more masculine figure, and my colleagues are quite curious, so I told them that I am not constrained by gender, I could wear both masculine or feminine clothes. And they were like “oh, so you like girls? Don’t fall in love with me!”, which makes me very uncomfortable and speechless. Also my work is very mechanical, repetitive and exhausting. I am in charge of drawing the drafts and investigating in fabrics, so I don’t have much creative motivation at work, I feel dull and rigid. I’m considering quitting my job and finding a more creative and inclusive working environment for my mental health and for things I want to achieve in my life, but I am still quite lost at this moment.

“I am constantly inspired by queer music, movies, all forms of art, I feel connected with those art works, as well as the artists. When I’m trying to create something, like drawing, I feel more lively than ever.

“I think the creative industries are more tolerant of LGBTQIA+ people, like the fashion, music, art industries, they can be who they are and flourish at work. Because most creative works are done on their own, and they have salon, club culture where they can meet people with the same aspirations and have tighter bounds. The roles of LGBTQIA+ people are creators and leaders, the artists I follow are mostly queer people, personally I think heterosexual people make boring arts and I rarely pay attention to them. Sometimes it is the art works that I am drawn to, then later find out the artist is also queer.

“The creative industries would help advancing and promoting LGBTQIA+ culture, both individually and socially speaking. However, when the culture reaches to the masses, those who are accepting at the first place would be more accepting, those who are close up to new

things prone to develop a more opposite opinion, like polarization. And those who stand on the middle ground, I find them hypocritical, they make a show of support, but deep inside they still don't approve of this 'lifestyle'."

Interviewee 4 Ran, 24, she/her, pansexual, master's degree in linguistics

"3, I don't feel Guangzhou is a very LGBTQIA+ friendly city or extremely unfriendly, people don't really care what you do, they are just very focused on their own lives. For the city center, I think Guangzhou in general is a very inclusive city, but it also depends on the age difference. Older people are kinda judgey, but the young people, in my own observation, are quite open to anything, and they don't usually judge people by their looks. For example on subways or in restaurants, no one really cares about other people, I think people's linkages in the city are not that tight.

"I have lived in this city for basically all my life, so if I want to move to another city, I hope that it would be as open as Guangzhou, and I think I won't settle in a less developed city, I could hardly fit in, plus people from less developed cities could be quite judgemental sometimes.

"I don't have any queer experience in Guangzhou, I recently came out as pansexual, but not to everyone like my parents and colleagues, only to one or two of my closest friends. I don't have any education on this matter, because I thought I was straight not until last year, and also I haven't been that invested in educating myself in LGBTQIA+ topics, history, social problems and so on. I also haven't been seeking help for my realization, let alone looking for communities, now I'm just focusing more on myself, and not restricting myself in certain labels. My desire to find a community is lower than before, I used to be quite ignorant of the LGBTQIA+ community, so I wanted to learn more, either online or in person. Now I think finding communities doesn't matter to me anymore, because in the end we are all human beings, heterosexual or homosexual relationships aren't that different.

"I think the creative industry mainly affects me through art exhibitions, I would sometimes be inspired by some exhibitions and they gave me a starting point or an intuition to create. I think a creative and inclusive environment would help me gain motivation, because I don't like to deliberately conceal my identity, assuming that I am in this workplace, I would feel more comfortable and unrestrained. Now I'm still unemployed and feeling kinda lost, I'd love to continue doing academic research abroad, but that path seems unreachable. I did my master's degree in Britain, I think my study experiences changed my ideology a lot. I have learned to think more critically, which I benefit a lot from. And the labor market here in Guangzhou is too competitive, I am constantly very stressed out, I can't enjoy my work here.

"Yes, the creative industries would be more tolerant to LGBTQIA+ people, like arts are very diverse, their expressions are non-restricted, so naturally people who create and appreciate art always have an open heart, and accept all kinds of differences. I haven't focused too much on the identities or labels of the artists, it is the core of the creation I cared about. Topics of LGBTQIA+ are still pretty disclosed in China, so the promotion in the creative industries may not have influences on the general public, because they won't have much acceptance to the community when they receive these messages, like our parents' generation. Because of

the obscurity, even though the community tries to make some differences, I think this will do little to raise public awareness.”

Interviewee 5 Junsun, 26, she/her, bisexual, musician, artist, bachelor’s degree in fine arts, now working for a publishing house as book binding designer

“5, I think the LGBTQIA+ community in Guangzhou won’t cause too much social attention and controversy, we are just normal human beings trying to live our lives, so for me I don’t feel much constraint because of my identity. As long as we do our things within the law, the atmosphere in Guangzhou is very inclusive.

“I don’t really label myself as a member of the LGBTQIA+community, I feel like everyone else, the label doesn’t play a big part when talking about personal achievements in the society, but individual’s ability in certain fields. And for those who think labeling is necessary, there will be voices of disagreement, but if they can find their own community and thrive, then the labels would definitely help with their growing process. For me, I won’t specifically find a community only for queer people, I’d like to meet people as many as I can regardless of their identity or sexual orientation, so I don’t have enough knowledge of the queer community in Guangzhou.

“The creative industry definitely has impacts on me. I work in graphic design, almost everyday I need to take in a lot of information about the arts, and also try to create new illustrations. I think the question of whether I can have more motivation from a LGBTQIA+ inclusive and creative environment, is a maybe/maybe not situation. The environment is created by a group of people, although people would have acknowledgement on their gender identity and sexual orientation, but it doesn’t necessary means that they are good colleagues, study partner, or friends, so it really depends on the person. As for the working environment now, I don’t feel much inspiration that I would achieve much in my future career.

“Instead, this group will be the purchasing power of creative industries, producers and consumers. If they have great content, it will improve people's cognition and acceptance, but legalization is out of the question.”

Interviewee 6 Piepie, 22, she/her, lesbian, illustrator, tattoo artist, also work in toy designing and coating, graduated high school in 2018

“I think for this question, I have some doubt that it shouldn’t be Guangzhou as a city has inclusion, but inclusion between people. And I also need to categorize people, if we’re surrounded only by young people, I would say 4.5; if the people are in their middle age or older, it would be hard to judge since I don’t have much contact with these people. There is one more thing I want to add to this question. In my last relationship, my ex-girlfriend and I were just doing our after-dinner walk, and there was an old man wearing a striped shirt and a hat walking his dog. He asked about my gender because my gender expression confused him, so I just told him that I am a girl and that is my girlfriend. I expected him to say something really offensive, but he didn’t, instead, he said something like “love is love”. So we have certain stereotypes of every group of people, there are very understanding, open minded old people rather than stubborn and bad-tempered, and vice versa among young people.

“When I was thinking about what kind of city Guangzhou is, or how I can use some words to conclude this city, a Cantonese word jumped into my head: “求其” (kau4 kei4, means casual, low ambition, or settle for the second best). I think “kau kei” is an attitude towards people and things, and also a character of Guangzhou people, whether something works or not, it doesn’t really matter to them. For example, most art exhibitions in Guangzhou are carried out so indifferently, there is hardly anyone striving for the best. And whatsmore, local Guangzhou people tend to be quite exclusive or antialien, kids were taught to be like that growing up. Their discriminating conduct is Cantonese, they treat people differently base on if the others speak proper Cantonese, at least I was taught this way. However, more and more people from other provinces were attracted to Guangzhou, so this phenomenon is less seen in recent years.

“Sometimes I feel like dressing more masculine benefited me in some ways. I don’t have concerns of putting myself in danger going to a bar or on public transport. Men think you are a man so they won’t have second thoughts, they would still have that thought if they know you are a woman dressed like a man. (Personal safety and violence)

“I think now is an internet era, we mostly just meet people online, either it is for dating or making friends with the same sex or the other sex. The situation is like a paradox, because sometimes we are afraid of identifying ourselves in the public spaces such as during job hunting, and at the same time the invisibility hinders us from identifying with each other, so it is harder to find a community. Another thing is homosexuality is a trend among women, they are now expanding their perception of themselves, and for women, sexuality is more fluid.

“I’m employed by a studio working in tattoo and toy design. Creative industry in my opinion is just where people generate new ideas to have fun and be entertained. I think personal entertainment can be separated from working life. I usually focus on the ideas of other people while working, great ideas are not confined to any identity. Speaking of achievements, I find the environment I’m involved in very inspiring, because I only do stuff I enjoy after graduating from high school, my decision of work is only based on my interest. But I do feel mentally challenged by society and the pandemic.

“I think the LGBTQIA+ community is indispensable and irreplaceable in the creative industries, if there were no presence of these people, it wouldn't be as colorful as we have now. I can’t tell what kind of role we play, because in every trade there is a presence of LGBTQIA+, whether it is visible or invisible. I think people who are LGBTQIA+ have a bigger heart, they can contain a lot of things, and also produce a lot of things, either it is art or contents. And I think the industry and the community are supplements for each other.”

Interviewee 7 Leyla, 23, they/them, lesbian, bachelor’s degree in economics, now working as fashion designer and model

“3.5, I think I can’t have a sense of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in my daily life, our identities and orientations are hidden characters, so we don’t look any different than anyone else. But when me and my friends wearing like, unconventional clothes or do something unconventional, we can feel the judgmental eyesight coming from other people. And my experience during work was that my old employer is HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation), and they have high inclusiveness towards the LGBTQIA+ community, for example, every

LGBTQIA+ festivals as well as the pride month, we would receive emails, rainbow wristband, and the company would organize group activities. Overseas-funded enterprises like HSBC would definitely have higher inclusion compared to nation-owned enterprises.

“Guangzhou is a very inclusive, open city, and has unique and rich culture and history which is very appealing and fascinating. And also most of the population speak Cantonese, and we have the opera culture, as well as the amazing foods, compared to Shenzhen, Guangzhou has a much more profound cultural connotation. For those who live their whole life in Guangzhou, it might be hard for them to accept new things or novelty, they are quite judgey and scornful of young people with fashionable clothes, even though they can accept people from different places, their abilities to accept new things are limited.

“My queer experiences mostly happen online, I met a lot of queer friends in Guangzhou through social media or dating apps first, who are also operating social media accounts, making videos and creating contents. Offline experiences for me it’s just going to gay bars or LGBTQAI+ friendly bars with friends, because in these bars, the atmosphere is generally better, and you don’t need to have extra concerns about harassments and dangers. I presented myself in a quite feminine way, so I always worry about being sexually harassed, physically and verbally, by men. And Guangzhou has a good ambiance and provides a good survival environment for gay bars. As far as I know there are a lot of LGBTQIA+ related events held by NGOs in the city, but I haven’t been to many.

“The aspect of seeing a doctor bothers me a lot, especially seeing a gynecologist. If I got some problems with period, or discomfort in uterus, the gynecologist would ask my sexual experiences, or if I have a boyfriend. I really wanted to tell them that I do have sexual experiences, but it is not the normal kind of male and female penetration, so that they could perform a more thorough check, but it is hard for them to understand, and they would be very judgemental. I have a lot of scenarios like that in my mind, so I am afraid to communicate with the gynecologist about my sexuality.

“In the workplace, because my old company is very politically correct, so my pay won’t get affected by my identity, but some of the colleagues were implying differently, which makes the whole working experience not that delightful. However, the topic of LGBTQIA+ is very disclosed, people won’t even take that into account, for example, when the human resource is hiring they wouldn’t ask about your sexuality, and the company won’t discriminate because of that. But some of my friends who started working before me told me that I should keep this information to myself while having a job interview. As I said before, I dress quite feminine, so the interviewers usually don’t presume me as a lesbian, and also my people I used to work with, they were constantly asking if I have a boyfriend, and the male colleagues sometimes verbally harass me. To avoid that happening all the time, I just told them I have a boyfriend. Coming out in the workplace is impossible, even though the company has good policies, it is inevitable to have close-minded people around you. Now I am working in the fashion industry as a model and designer, people don’t care about your sexuality or anything else, they just treat you as a human being, so now I can open handedly introduce my girlfriend to the people I work with.

“The natural environment is very important to me, and a city’s inclusiveness of young people and their culture comes second, for example Shanghai before the pandemic is very ideal for me. I think Guangzhou has the tendency of making young people feel more and more



stressed, especially I'm living in the old town in Guangzhou now, where many senior citizens live, so I get a lot of weird looks when I dress or put on makeup whatever I want. Now I can only think of moving out of China, because at least I could attend pride and everything, in China we are not supposed to show off ourselves, and the policies are tightening. There were more events before in Guangzhou, but now the organizations are all "regulated".

"I think the LGBTQIA+ people in China should find our communities, where we can share information, and also support each other when we feel vulnerable. As far as I know, we don't have a platform where we can do that. The status for the community now is gays, lesbians have very different social circles, they seldomly interact with each other. Speaking of the topic of sexuality and gender expression, the masses only aware of gays and lesbians, and haven't realize there is a much larger and various spectrum in the LGBTQIA+ community. Moreover, the masses often stigmatize transgender people, or even "disgusted" by them, all of these are due to the lacking of education in the topic and we are made invisible. So all of us should unify, disregard our differences, and support each other being our true selves.

"I am now self-employed and a free-lance model, fashion is a big part of my life, so the creative industry definitely has an influence on me. Working in a creative and inclusive environment would help me gain more motivation, because the people I work with are mostly queer, they are very open minded, very bold, and they have jumpy thoughts, if they have an idea they would transform it into reality right away. And my friends from work usually have a wide range of knowledge, and various ways of getting information, so we can have all kinds of interesting conversations about international or national issues and situations, and they actually understand me. I would be more motivated working with these people, on the first hand, I don't need to hide myself, and I can make friends and have deep connections with them, and turning the job into something I enjoy doing.

"I've only just started modeling, but I think this circle inspires me to have more achievements in the future. The vibe of working is relaxed and comfortable, and I have ambition to make myself a better person to have better cooperation with other people while I'm doing something I like. I'm also learning more about fashion, gaining more knowledge spontaneously because I am very fascinated by the fashion industry. My definition of success is just to be happy and inspired by what I'm doing, and to love, to create, to experience a better life, this is the state I'm pursuing. But the pandemic changed the whole society, let alone the LGBTQIA+ community, for women in a broader sense. Chinese society is very oppressive in general, making me worried about the bad things in the news that will eventually happen to me. I watched a series call the Handmaid's Tale, I think it is almost the reality in China, being born as a woman and a sexual minority, I don't know how many years in the future, probably in the very soon future, single women would be forced to marry and reproduce by political power. I am afraid of that kind of substantial oppression such as it will be difficult to get medical treatment or find jobs.

"Catalysts and diversifiers.

"The creative industries play a role of communication and visibility for the advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community, they provide a platform to include and display differences. For future generations, the environment we are creating now is essential, if they grow up in a more diverse, more open place than what we had before, regardless of their identification and sexual orientation, the society would be kinder to the LGBTQIA+ community."

Interviewee 8 Mian, 31, they/them, pansexual, graphic designer, photographer

“As for this question, I think I came to Guangzhou because of many LGBT friends here, so I think it is a very inclusive city for me. Therefore, I think this place is more inclusive for me because of my friendship, but I still encounter some things that are not so tolerant. In reality, there are really very few of them. Most of them are heard from the Internet or from my friends.

“I think now can I say that I think that conflicts within LGBTQIA+ community are mostly because of misogyny, as for why I don’t know where to start.

“I mean, I know a lot of lesbian friends, gay friends, transgender friends, so I can sense that the atmosphere in each community is different, they perceive the atmosphere in the outside world differently.

“As far as I have experienced, I can say I almost didn’t encounter any discriminatory event and I only see, I think the reason may be the reason why I gender temperament, is I don’t know the word you have heard of misogynist, it is described to me is like China society no matter which city it would be like this, including as I though is physiology sex female, but I have a neutral gender expression, sometimes people may not know me, see for the first time and thought I was a boy, they are for I don’t have the feeling of distrust. And in the workplace, many times some of my superiors will give the job to me, and not to some other girl with the same ability as I have. This is not common, but I think this is an example.

“Then there are the lesbian community and the gay community, as well as the transgender community. For example, the gay community, when I first came to Guangzhou, there would be some gay people who were annoyed by those very feminine boys, which some of my gay friends described to me. Then some transgender people, they will feel the society people need to learn how, is to respect their pronoun, that they sometimes call themselves as they, or Ta. People do not always understand, or they have no sense of this, they also don’t care, or don’t respect them for their name. So transgender people always feel not being recognized, and visible, this is my friend’s general perception of the surrounding in Guangzhou, but Guangzhou is not alone, because my friends all over the country have actually, they are generally thinks so.

“If there must be a scale, I think 3. Yes, at the present stage, because I have been involved in the queer movement for more than 10 years, the current society is actually less inclusive for me. More than ten years ago, I was in college because the Internet was not so developed as it is today, but they actually, when I was in Wuhan, and then we could do a lot of events at the time, whether it’s predecessors to do throughout the country invited to share, or invited university teacher speak of sex and gender courses or lectures is almost without interference. In addition, this topic is supported by teachers in sociology, anthropology, psychology and other fields, so it is easy to promote a public lecture for the whole society. People back then were very politically active, advocating LGBTQIA+ rights, if that happened now, probably the organizers would be thrown into prison. Coming out is a topic, because at that time when the idea is first to the queers to be seen. In order to fight for their rights and interests in the next step, and gay marriage is also a direction, and then have been discussed, and now nothing can be done, in fact, now if we do a LGBTQIA+ related movie screening publicly will be at risk of being dragged to the police station.

“First of all, the word “queer” is not very popular in the LGBT community, and if you see a person identifying with themselves in this way, it means that they are already familiar with the culture and so-called political correctness of the community.

“Right, so going out for a social time to actually need to see what the occasion is, coming out as a queer actually, is rare, because often, if you are faced with ordinary heterosexual people, they don’t know much about what it means; if you are inside the community, we can come out as queer, which can be a continuous discussion.

“When I was in college, there were all sorts of large and small groups all over the country, and then I was in Wuhan, I know there were a lot of those kinds of groups in Guangzhou, and also very active, at the time. So after I graduated, I chose to come to Guangzhou, and then I remember to have some lectures at Sun Yat-sen University about sex and gender, during which would involve the LGBTQIA+ related topics. Yes, but that’s not possible now.

“About political and civic engagement, and then I think this may be quite hard to say, because our political environment now is too bad because of various reasons, but I’ve taken part in several events for queer movement in Guangzhou when I was younger. I was one of the organizers of a LGBT group back in Wuhan, but except for our group, all the other groups were gay, or gay dominated. They must have been involved in HIV testing in cooperation with the CDC (center for disease control), and that was the way they got funding. And because our group was mostly made up of women and lesbian and feminist people and some gay feminist people, we tended to organize more cultural activities. Then later when I was going to graduate from college, I came to Guangzhou to attend a few women’s rights advocating events, where we were inspired and found out that LGBTQIA+ problems were essentially feminism and misogyny problems, so our group then focused on gender equality advocacy, instead of LGBT advocacy. At that time, we thought it was meaningless to talk about LGBT until we reached an ideal state of gender equality. Because we thought that the root of all discrimination was misogyny, the root of discrimination within the LGBT community was misogyny, so we thought that would be more fundamental and more important. There were other LGBT things that were being done by other groups, and we felt like no one was doing this gender equality stuff, so we were also promoting feminist theater like the vagina monologues or something indigenous in the Chinese context.

“During gynecology examinations, generally I’m not coming out with other people, I just said I have had sex, but the doctor wouldn’t understand if you’re not married, but they will still give you an endoscopy if you requested.

“Although I am not diagnosed with depression, but there are a lot of friends of mine who are either diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder or autism, I don’t know why. But a lot of friends are also relatively healthy psychologically, who do not have much burden. But I still suffer from a lot of depression from time to time. I think it is because of my sexual orientation, the first one is I came out when I was 20 years old to my family, and then to now, at this time in the past more than ten years, 11 years, although I have already come out, but they still didn’t say they are opposed, but also not very accepting. But it is feeling like there is a wall between my family and me, because of this, it is hard for me to go to take the initiative to contact, although I know they are very concerned about, also very love me, but it is psychologically difficult to take the initiative to call them, and saying I feel is a kind of more embarrassed mood, even though I am very concerned about them with all my heart. I don’t

know what to talk about when calling them, nothing other than day-to-day hassles. This brought me a lot of guilty feelings, then this also led to depression sometimes. I also went to therapy because of these family-of-origin problems. And my family actually can't express emotions, they only care about you in a rhetorical or reproachful way like many Chinese families do, then they never communicate non-violently, so the whole thing is very difficult.

"Transgendered friends around me will call themselves queer, and those who understands their struggles, and become good friends with them will call themselves queer too, probably is such a situation, anyway, I know these are such, then the other I don't know, but now I know because is young people. Now I know all these new friends are undergrads or young people who have just graduated from their master's, they seem to know everything, they will bring us some new knowledge they learned abroad, which are very informative, such as description on some political views, so far I have not yet fully able to absorb.

"I'm now self-employed, and never felt happier. The people I interact with daily are all very creative and inclusive. I'm quite enthusiastic and motivated by my work. Just like every day, because my working environment and working partners are very open to communicate with everyone, this should also promote my motivation. Usually with these colleagues, our work and life are intersected, they will become friends with deeper levels of connections, not like the ordinary company, except for work, I don't talk to colleagues about anything other than work. My old colleagues and I also help each other out all the time. For example, many of my job offers are recommended by my former colleagues. We help each other and support each other.

"First of all, I feel comfortable in the current working environment, because I think LGBTQIA+ people will have a sense of trust if they connect with each other, so that we can do more work and help each other. However, I'm in China, I would like to just serve the first party at the present, providing what they need. From the second point of view, I want to create something to take this opportunity to implant some ideas into them, so as to influence some things in the society is quite difficult, but it still depends on how open the first party is. Of course, this is also related to the Chinese environment. It is very hard to get the messages out, you just have to be very subtle. Actually I had done something like that before, or the others have done such a thing. I think in China, my goal is to create illustrations, to break some stereotypes, to promote gender equality, and put these ideas into such expressions.

"In fact, the creative industry environment is created by people. And then there are more friendly places like Chengdu or Shanghai, where the creative industries are mostly LGBTQIA+ or straight allies who support us. If the environment is good, people will have a sense of cohesion and feel that they have found their own community, and then this will be more inclusive in creation and other aspects of life.

"LGBTQIA+ community plays a diversified role in the creative industry, which may make the creative people in this industry no longer limited to cis-gender and straight people. Of course, this is still inseparable from Chinese society, so it is difficult to make huge impacts. I think it might help some of the elite of the LGBT community, because, after all, creative industry services the elite, and then was sold to elite people to consume, people who work in this industry are also kind of elite, and already know this from this industry widely distributed in first-tier cities. In addition, of course, this is not to say unimportant, I think it is important, but there are still quite different classes. The ones at the bottom are the ones who

have little voice, that is, they are rarely seen. In fact, we will stereotype LGBTQIA+ people in the creative industry, that is, they will imagine what kind of image they are, generally elite image, but in fact, most LGBTQIA+ people in China or Guangzhou, they are just ordinary people. Therefore, the role of the creative industries in the development of LGBTQIA+ is nothing but visibility, but it is an illusion, a stereotype visibility. It does not represent the whole, but is regarded as an idealized figure. It seems that every class, every category, every society is like a variety of categories under the social class, and people always only see the top-tier and most glamorous people, but in fact, most people are hard to be seen. Moreover, these people are very diverse, and there is no way to be generalized uniformly. They may have general characteristics, but their differentiation is very complicated. I didn't know much about transgender people before, but now I know some transgender friends, and I find that there are many differences between them, so it is very complicated. And in this day and age, the goals of the queer movement are very different from 10 years ago. Because this topic is now a very common and wide-spread topic, there are more discussion directions, which are actually more diversified, and the possibility of smaller groups being seen is higher. But now it's actually very difficult to achieve that goal, because the social and the political climate are not as good as they used to be, so now it's actually a discussion or a debate within the community. In fact, the final discussion within the community came to a conclusion, in fact, they are difficult to pass on to the public. Because in the face of public advocacy and within the community, there are also a lot of things that need to be popularized within the community, such as LGBTQIA+ each letter of the stereotype of the other side and some cognitive bias of the other side are very many, to each letter. As someone who works in the creative industries, I'm always tempted to poke around and get the message out. But all I can do now is avoid misogyny in the contents I am in charge of because it's something that women can identify with, because LGBTQIA+ is too niche and too obvious to them, like a drop of ink falling into water and the whole bottle of water changing color."

Interviewee 9 Lydia, 27, she/her, bisexual, bachelor's degree in English and creative writing, now working as an English teacher

"I thought about this one and I went for three, just in the middle, because I'm from Northern Ireland. I don't think the LGBTQIA+ scene is very developed or large. And I wasn't really part of it when I was younger. When I came to China, I also wasn't expecting a big LGBTQIA+ scene. I didn't know anybody else who was queer for a while. But then once I did make some friends, I found the community and it's much larger than the community I ever had before. So for me, it feels like a lot. But then for some of my other friends who have come from, maybe America or England, for them, they are used to a more open, larger community. So I just kind of went for the middle. And I also think it's because for a lot of queer people, maybe you feel more free when you're not in your own culture. It's maybe a little easier to live in another place where people don't know you. So I really behave a little differently here than how I would back in my own country. And in my country has gay marriage. They only got it a few years ago. I know it's not here yet, but for some reason, I just feel I'm much more free to be myself here. Maybe it's because of the language because I don't understand a lot of the things that are said about me. If someone says something

negative about me in Chinese, I can smile at them and walk away. Because like if I'm walking around my own country, holding hands with a girl, people will say things to me, people will call me names. And I feel it because I understand, so I think when you're moved to a different place, sometimes it gives you that little bit of distance where it doesn't hurt. You're like, I'm already a stranger here. I'm already weird looking, so it doesn't hurt my feelings.

"I really like Guangzhou, I've been here, the plan was to stay here for like 1 year and now I've been here for five so that's what happened. I think the weather is great, it's nice and hot. The city is a really nice mix of very modern and also very old. So some of the districts feel entirely different from each other. And I really like that. And it's quite relaxing. I think the whole attitude in the south is much more laid back and relaxed then like Beijing and Shanghai in the north. And I am quite fond of the Cantonese way of life and the food. Food is very good.

"As you came from wise, I work as a teacher. I'm quite careful. I'm out everywhere, I'm out with my family, I'm out with my friends, but I'm careful at work. I dress in a very queer style. I think it's quite easy to recognize for other queer people. I think that's important for students to see. And I teach teenagers and I do recognize some of the kids in my class who are LGBTQIA+, like I know. But I also have to be really careful because some of them come to me and they want to talk about their identity or my identity. And just especially as a foreigner, I feel like I have to watch what I say. As if it was to be spread around the school, or I don't know who it would get back to, maybe it would be a problem. Maybe I could lose my job. I have heard of other lgbt people losing their position because they are queer. So maybe there's not as much protection in the law. Yet, in certain circumstances, also as a foreigner, maybe I don't know how to navigate the legal system if something like that happened to me. So it's difficult. I want to be out everywhere. But I feel like I can talk to my kids in a way that they know, I guess it comes up in my classroom. Sometimes if kids make jokes about gay people, I'll kind of stop them and ask them like why like why are you making this joke, why do you think it's funny? So I think we need more lgbt people working in schools for sure like a role models and to kind of put a stop to some of the like hetero-normative ideas that kids are being taught, you can do it in a subtle way. Like my kids, I remember them asking me like, do you have a boyfriend? And I was like, no, I don't. And they were like, do you have a girlfriend? And I was like, ohhhh, next question. I was like. I know there's ways I have to protect myself here. I'm not gonna lie to you, but I also don't want my teenagers talking about my love, life or details that might get me in trouble. But even in the last few years, I've noticed a big change. A lot of my teenagers are really open minded. And the kids some of, them are very passionate about like feminism and queer history, and I teach writing and stuff like that. So they'll tell me about topics they find interesting. And it's really encouraging. Also the kids you are LGBTQIA+ in the class that are showing their particular interest. I have my own way of being like, "good job guys". I hope so maybe in a small way my presence at the school is something that can bring influences to younger people. It will change their ideology and how to think about sexuality. Even though like I present quite androgynous, I normally dress in a more masculine style. And my kids have found that confusing. I used to be bald, and they would ask me like, why would you look like that? You're a woman. And I would be like, "well, you can look whatever way you want to. You can express yourself

whatever way you feel comfortable". It's just keeping that balance between keeping myself safe. I think a lot of queer educators have this anxiety. Sometimes lgbt people are equated with pedophilia and child abuse. So sometimes there's this anxiety of I have to be extra extra safe, so no one ever accuses me of being anywhere near my students. Like sometimes I've had little things. Maybe with some of the girls, they get crushes, some of the boys, they get crushes. You have to teach them about boundaries and like you don't touch people like that behavior is not appropriate. So it's just a lot, and it's a difficult balance. I know other people who I know a lot of LGBT/queer teachers and they have the same thing of being like very proud of themselves and being out. But also just trying to navigate this system, because there is also this attitude that homosexuality and queerness is a western influence, it's coming from outside and people are trying to force it on our kids and I never ever want to be accused of doing that. So I think just existing being visibly a very queer person, I hope that's enough for my kids to be like "We have stuff like this". I hope that when I was a little gay teenager, I definitely was looking around to see if anybody else was like me.

"For political stuff, again, trying to be very careful as a foreigner. It's hard to protest or organize things here. Sometimes I would go to events in the consulates or the embassies like if they have gatherings for LGBT film seasons. The most I would do is that I volunteer with an organization called Zhitong. It's an NGO, fully legal and registered, they mostly focus on HIV treatment and prevention, I volunteer with them. That's probably the most I do, queer wise. My experiences can't think of too much on the health aspect. Maybe recently I went to a doctor and she was asking me if I was sexually active with her presumption being that I was only sexually active with men. And I remember that quite upset me. Like someone asks you if you're pregnant and you're like, yes, I'm having sex, but no, I'm not pregnant. And they're like, are you sure, let's see your pregnancy test. And I'm like, I can tell you I'm not pregnant like I'm having sex with my girlfriend, I'm not pregnant. And I think a lot of health care providers, they just don't think of queer people. Like it's not part of the conversation. They don't have an education for medical people and think in society in general, they just don't have knowledge of LGBTQIA+ people's presence. And they just try to ignore or not try to, they just ignore. They're oblivious. Because maybe there is something specific to who your partner is or who you're having sex with or your identity. It can really affect your treatment. I have some friends who share resources about lgbt friendly doctors or psychologists. I know a lot of queer people who really, really want therapy, but it's hard for them to find therapists who are lgbt positive. It's so important to have like these lists of doctors who are lgbt friendly, and other doctors who are homophobic, transphobic. So, that's just like volunteers doing that themselves. But it's helpful, it helps people.

"Economic well-being, I guess just the anxiety of, I wish I could be out at my work. But if I lose my job, there's that concern for economic well-being. Like I wouldn't want to test it and end up in trouble, which is problematic sometimes because my colleagues, I don't wanna lie if some of my colleagues will assume I'm straight or ask me questions about myself, and it just gets uncomfortable because you don't know who they are, and you don't know if you're safe with that person. When I go to work, that's my only time in a heteronormative space. And then I have my colleagues at the school asking, do I have a husband? Am I married? What's my boyfriend's name? And I'm like this would end so badly for me. So I just tell them nothing. I just don't exist outside of the school. I don't exist. Don't think of me. Just because I

am very, very gay and very, very out outside of work and don't need those words to collide, because if someone has a problem with it, they can make your life really miserable. I think a lot of people are living like that in China for sure.

“The last one, personal safety, I always feel very, very safe in this country. I walk around at night. I don't particularly worry about anything, I've had some bad experiences, but that can happen in any place, any country. The only times I've really felt scared from my safety being queer is like when men try to maybe hit on me or my partner. And you tell them you are not interested. Sometimes they become quite aggressive. That's also one of the very few instances where I put myself in the closet like, because in the past, if I've told men, I'm gay or like I have a girlfriend, they sometimes take it as a challenge or they get aggressive with you. So the only times I've found myself feeling unsafe and that I need to get out of this situation because of their reaction. And also you don't know where they come from, what their backgrounds are, their culture, or their opinions. So sometimes it's just safer, like I hate having to do that, but sometimes it's safer. And I've been called a faggot a few times in Guangzhou, when certain people have found out that I'm queer, I've been called a faggot. And I'm like, “yeah, I am!” I just don't take those words so seriously, and they can call names whenever they want, and you just don't take it. And like maybe you're out having a nice night with your friends, you don't need a random stranger to tell you that they don't agree with your life strikes. Fuck off. I don't care what you think of me. I don't think of you. So leave me alone. So I feel super safe here, but I think in certain situations, it's unpredictable. You don't know who that person is. Like a while ago, I was with my girlfriend in a bar, and there was one man who really, really liked her. And he wouldn't leave her alone and I wanted her to be comfortable and it started to piss me off. But if I could have made the situation a whole lot worse, like if I had been like “we're a gay couple leave us alone”, I really would have seen it getting out of hand. So like we were nice to him. We were like, we're not interested. Thank you, bye bye and he kept trying to buy us drinks. And I was like, I'd love to say something, but it's not the smart thing to do sometimes. So, yeah, occasionally I've had unpleasant reactions, but still I will walk down the street, I will hold hands with someone, I will kiss my girlfriend in public, I don't feel like I need to change for other people, but you never know these things can turn out.

“If I was to move to a new city, like the cost of living, they can afford to live there. But the LGBTQIA+ community would be huge for me now. Like I grew up without one and I found one here, one that is just growing and developing. So if I was gonna move somewhere else, I wanted to have a really good queer scene by that would probably might be my first thing. If I was gonna move to another city in China, it probably would have been Shanghai because they have a really vibrant, bigger scene.

“I think sometimes we're guilty of making a little bubble like we have our own base and our own group chats. And we feel like we can be open there and free there. And I definitely don't realize sometimes outside the bubble, maybe the rest of the world is not so accepting. Like even some of the things that get posted in our queer group chat, sometimes really shocked me like with the recent surge in like omicron cases, even in Beijing, there was an article say trying to blame like gay people for it, saying that is this public bathroom and gay men were using it for sex, I guess our faults like it can kind of shock you sometimes to be like people don't like us as much as we thought you kind of live in your bubble. So I think most people



are kind of under the radar. I think the whole notion of coming out is difficult here for a lot of people. But I think the community is growing. Like it's kind of exciting. Even in the few years I've been here, there are more events, people are trying to open up the community and like it's quite small, I think we all know each other, when we go to these events, it's always the same group of people. And it's an interesting place, even like the ballroom community is growing here, which is so exciting. And I think there's just so much potential. There's people doing amazing things, but they're kind of doing it on their own. But it's quite underground, like experimental. So, yeah, one day I'm sure it will be like big organizations with funding and support. But for now, it seems like few people in the community are really passionate about particular things. We tried it as well. Me and a friend of mine, a few friends of mine, we tried to organize watching parties for drag races because it's a very common thing in a lot of western countries, and they have this in Shanghai as well. So we did the first screening in Guangzhou. It's kind of exciting sometimes to be like we're the first people to do this, it's also exhausting being the first person to do something and sometimes it doesn't work out or you have problems, because even some of the gay bar here, they can't openly be gay bars. Maybe they get harassed by the police, maybe they get shut down. They also have to operate under the radar. So it's like a really difficult balance of trying to grow our community, but quietly, so that we don't get harassed for it.

"As far as I know, there is like a lot of marginalized queer people, like especially some Chinese people, they are not coming out anywhere, only to some close friends how to reach those people. It's a really hard thing.

"And also moving beyond just parties, like when I first joined the queer community, it was just like parties like drinking in the gay bar and you know. I'm getting a little bit older as well, and I'm looking around and I'm like, we need different things. We need other activities, not around alcohol where people can come and make friends. I also have a book club. I tried to start at an LGBT book club. I know other people who are like, I don't see this thing in our city yet. So I have to do it. You're looking around like who's gonna do it. They're like, I guess I have to do it.

"I guess I don't think I'm really employed in creative industries like I work as a teacher, but I kind of have to follow a curriculum in the books that the school gave me. I make my own materials if possible, I guess, just in my free time. I do enjoy volunteering at Zhitong and trying to make events with other people, some of my friends are very talented in making arts. There's a lot of things that go into making an event like promotion and poster. We organize queer talks, queer movie screening, and then we sit and we discuss afterwards. We're just trying to think of more events in the future for community building that bring people into space. Instead of just drinking and parties and stuff like that, I have a lot of very creative friends and sometimes ask them to help make things for hoping our next thing might be something like a drink and draw. Where like you just show up and you sit and you draw together something like that. So we're always just trying to think of these, I guess that's how I'm connected to the creative sides. We're always trying to think of these new events that might bring people together. Maybe they don't like what they see in the city so far, or there's not a space for them. And we're like, how can we include people? Because it's one of my favorite things, too. Sometimes people will come to an event and they'll say, it's my first time, like I never joined any queer meeting before. I don't know any queer people, and we're,

just like this is why, you know, this is a nice feeling. I'm just seeing people find their care. Yeah, but it gets tiring, but it's very worth it.

"Yes, I currently don't work in that kind of environment, but I want to, absolutely, I want to get to a point in my life where I am out everywhere. I don't have to worry about my employment or safety, etc. For now, I work in teaching, but in the future, I would love to work with an NGO. I'd love to work with the LGBTQIA+ services. So my dream is to constantly be in that environment.

"I guess it's just more of the same, like my current environment. It's also in my contract that I'm not allowed to discuss certain things with my students like religion facts. My long term goal is not to be a teacher. I do it, but I don't think it's my career. So I guess it's giving me that motivation to get myself somewhere where I can talk about wherever I want. All the time, I like a talk about religion and politics and sex, because like my kids are amazing and they're so smart, and they are capable of having that discussion. But sometimes they ask me questions and I'm like, I can't say anything. I would love to talk to you like I also don't want to influence you with my opinions. I'm trying to be careful and let them make up their own mind.

"I think we shouldn't just be tolerated. We should be welcome. Yeah, I have friends who work in fashion and arts. A lot of people who are self-employed, like arts or designers and they have so much more freedom. It's amazing. And that's not like we're everywhere. Creative people are absolutely everywhere. But maybe in the creative industries, they feel much more comfortable in being out and they feel safer. Because again, like I have some friends who are trans and they really struggle to get employment, sometimes or they lose their jobs in like these big companies etc. But if you are self employed, if you can make money for yourself, you can do whatever you want. I know other people who just work from home. They use their talents and nobody can stop them or tell them what. I think creative industries give us a lot of freedom.

"I think a lot of creative industries are very much inspired by queer people, LGBTQIA+ people, maybe even without realizing it, sometimes, you know like fashion, art, film, design, throughout history, queer people have always sort of like pushed boundaries, challenged, like existing, societal norms, express gender and like whatever way they feel like. And slowly society is kind of getting more comfortable with that. But I think it is, there's a great debt owe to queer culture and like ballroom and things like that. It's just not really accepted. I think a lot of industries kind of take from our community without giving credit or recognition for it, even within the queer community, like they take a lot from like people of color, from trans women, from trans people, and they haven't are given from the recognition for it. I think there's a big debt owed creatively. There's a lot of queer people who've always been in creative industries. For a long time, they weren't being given the credit that they deserved. Yeah. I think it's very important for us to be in creative industry as well, like there's more freedom for self expression being understood, and also like encouraging empathy, like if, we can make material that shows LGBTQIA+ people, queer people in like a empathetic way like people can understand us and feel more empathy. Instead of being like, I don't know these people, they're so scary and different from me like they actually recognize that we are everywhere all around them and they probably have friends too who are queer and they just don't know it. I think it would change a lot of minds."