

# LGBTQ and Politics: China and Japan Compared

Haoguang Li

Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University, Fujisawa, Japan

\*Correspondence: [haogli@keio.jp](mailto:haogli@keio.jp)

**Abstract:** This article explores the impact of state politics on LGBTQ individuals through a comparative study of LGBTQ groups in China and Japan. Despite both countries sharing similar cultural and demographic backgrounds, there is a great divergence in the political status of LGBTQ individuals in these two countries. Previous studies have highlighted cultural reasons for this divergence, but political factors are seldom examined. This article aims to analyze the political logic of China and Japan to explain the great divergence and examine the political mechanisms of their respective political systems. It argues that in China, the suppression of LGBTQ individuals is a complementary action towards the Second-Child/Third-Child Policy, due to the potential exacerbation of demographic challenges. Ideologically, this suppression is a form of Chinese anti-Westernism. On the other hand, in Japan, promoting LGBTQ activism is beneficial since it aligns the country with the global trend. Domestically, the LGBTQ population is considered a crucial political tool for elections, as public sentiment is influenced by a teleological social progressiveness that sees the U.S. as a model. In general, this article elucidates that authoritarian regimes tend to eradicate potential political threats by directly suppressing LGBTQ activism, which holds progressive or subversive ideologies and spreads them through various movements to avoid political instability. In contrast, democratic governments are more “short-sighted”, and tend to align with LGBTQ activism by following current influential ideologies to secure voting blocs.

**Keywords:** LGBTQ; suppression; authoritarianism; ideology; political stability.

**How to cite this paper:** Li, H.  
LGBTQ and Politics: China and Japan Compared. *Trends in Sociology*, 2024, 2(2), 1-18.  
<https://doi.org/10.61187/ts.v2i2.102>

## 1. Introduction

LGBTQ individuals have faced widespread discrimination for thousands of years around the world. However, the rights of LGBTQ individuals are now being legalized and protected by governments in many countries. Nonetheless, in many culturally conservative areas, particularly in East Asia, LGBTQ rights are still not legally recognized. Although, in general, East Asian culture is relatively unfriendly towards LGBTQ individuals, the political situations of LGBTQ individuals in different East Asian countries vary significantly. LGBTQ groups in China, a state under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), have a much lower political status compared to those in Japan, a country with a different political system from China. Such a disparity under different political systems is being intensified by the recent politicization of the LGBTQ community in both countries.

In China, LGBTQ individuals face constant political repression, which has become increasingly severe in recent times. In 2021, numerous WeChat LGBTQ accounts run by college students were shut down without any explanation. In the following year, the Chinese government repeatedly shut down many LGBTQ public accounts online [1]. Thus, although the decriminalization of LGBTQ occurred after 1997 with the lifting of the crime of “hooliganism”, which could be seen as progress, the recent political suppression of LGBTQ activism has hindered the promotion and propagation of LGBTQ rights, potentially considered a retrogression. Meanwhile, in Japan, various political parties, including the ruling party Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), prepared bills for debates in the Japanese Diet to protect LGBTQ rights in 2016. The bills passed in the Diet included provisions such as prohibiting discrimination against LGBTQ individuals in governmental agencies and



**Copyright:** © 2024 by the authors.  
Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

private entities, as well as spreading sufficient knowledge about LGBTQ to the general public [2]. During the most recent election in 2022, all political parties in Japan, without exception, highly politicized the LGBTQ community through official discourses during their election campaigns, proactively declaring their support for LGBTQ activism [3].

At large, countries in East Asia share a similar cultural background, which exhibits less tolerance towards LGBTQ activism. As a result, there are still a few conservative politicians who hold anti-LGBTQ attitudes, even in Japan [4]. The cultural context plays a significant role in the discrimination and repression faced by LGBTQ individuals in East Asia, as highlighted by numerous previous studies. In addition to the conservative traditional culture, there is a pragmatic and realistic concern regarding the connection between demographic challenges and LGBTQ activism.

Regarding the traditional cultural antagonism towards LGBTQ individuals and the current demographic challenges, China and Japan share similarities. Therefore, it is intriguing to analyze the great divergence in the politicization of LGBTQ individuals between the two countries. Why do LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan have opposite political statuses? And what can be inferred from the motives behind states' actions toward LGBTQ activism by establishing a framework to analyze the impacts of state politics on LGBTQ individuals? This article will explore the relationship between the political status of LGBTQ individuals and state politics through a comparative study of China and Japan. Despite their numerous contextual similarities, the two countries differ in terms of political systems. This article will develop a model for analyzing the impact of politics on LGBTQ individuals.

This article will be divided into three parts. The first part aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the great divergence in the politicization of LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan. It will begin by discussing the existing theories and debates in previous studies concerning the social status of LGBTQ in these two countries. Subsequently, it will highlight the inadequacy of these explanations and propose a political science approach, by demonstrating the impacts of politics on shaping contemporary culture. To facilitate a comparative analysis, the second part will initially focus on the similarities between China and Japan, particularly the cultural background in East Asia. This part will then examine the demographic challenges currently faced by both China and Japan, illustrating the similar severe socioeconomic challenges in these two countries. About the great divergence, this article will analyze the official categorization of the LGBTQ phenomenon by governments, the dissemination of LGBTQ-related information to the public, and the recent political actions taken in both China and Japan. The third part will explore the differences in the political logic between China and Japan by analyzing their differences in political concerns regarding globalization and strategies for continuing political careers. Furthermore, this part will establish a connection between the political situations of LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan in respective to their political systems. It will conduct an integrated and comprehensive study to examine how LGBTQ activism is impacted by politics under different political systems.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *LGBTQ in Contemporary China*

In East Asia, LGBTQ is constantly being suppressed and discriminated against by the majority of society. LGBTQ is seen as inferior and against East Asian values in many countries. Particularly in China and Japan, LGBTQ is under repression from various angles.

In China, the stigmatization of LGBTQ originates in Chinese values and social contexts. Hua et al. argue that LGBTQ individuals in China are culturally and socially suppressed because of the traditional Chinese values shaped by Confucianism, which emphasizes "familial responsibility, filial piety, and loss of face." Being LGBTQ is viewed as the termination of the continuity of a family in this generation and the failure to take responsibility for their families and fulfill filial piety. Consequently, it causes stigmatization for

the family and isolation from family members and the larger community [5]. Apart from the cultural context, the higher risk of HIV infection among LGBTQ groups also contributes to their social inferiority. These factors also contribute to the formulation of “loss of face”, which is extremely crucial in both physical and psychological senses. As Yang & Kleinman discuss, it leads to a “social death.” The “face”, constituted by “both moral (*lian*) and social face (*mianzi*)”, is a type of symbolic capital. Losing face results in a loss of symbolic capital, which is essential to gain access to social network resources [6].

The stigmatization of LGBTQ in the Chinese social and cultural context is further reinforced by state policies. Wang et al. offer a politics-related explanation for the exacerbated social discrimination against LGBTQ in China, noting that the ramification of the One-Child Policy has intensified the value placed on the continuity of the family lineage. The lone single children of many generations since the implementation of the One-Child Policy particularly esteem the continuity, and the LGBTQ individuals among these generations are facing such intensified “social transgressions” caused by the state policy [7]. Moreover, although Chinese culture does not prevent men from having homosexual relationships privately, the prerequisites are that publicly they must be married, have heterosexual relationships, and bear at least one child. These latent cultural norms that focus on both the “face” and the family continuity are further enhanced by the One-Child Policy, creating dissatisfaction amongst LGBTQ individuals and obstacles to homosexual relations in modern China [8]. Regarding the consequences of state policy, Jeffreys argues that the LGBTQ community in China is currently in a “lousy” state. Overcoming this state will not be easy, as it requires the Chinese government to train its officials and other relevant personnel to support LGBTQ rights, which in turn requires a strong political will and a significant amount of funding. Moreover, China lacks influential LGBTQ movements and a “domestic consumer and philanthropic” culture that can promote “sexual diversity by providing private services and sources of funding” for LGBTQ movements [9].

Indeed, traditional Chinese values play a significant role in shaping an adversarial cultural context against LGBTQ in China, but some “progressive” scholars refute the current cultural antagonism against LGBTQ and point out that Chinese culture is dynamic, globalized, and plural. Hildebrandt demonstrates that China lacks deeply rooted and institutionalized cultural injunctions against LGBTQ and criticizes the theory of Chinese Confucian roots. He uses Taiwan and Singapore, two states culturally similar to China, as comparators to defend his argument. Besides culture, he argues that the legalization would nonetheless benefit China politically since it could improve China’s human rights reputation [10]. In another article, Hildebrandt claims that LGBTQ in China has “transcended its own cultural and historical roots to become universalized”, in which the modern LGBTQ culture is transnational and has a strong connection with the international community [11]. Wei & Yan provide a similar argument to Hildebrandt, demonstrating that globality and plurality of information flow, international LGBTQ impacts, and the increasingly diverse moral landscape and individualization significantly contribute to the growing presence of rainbow parents in China. They also point out that neo-familism of LGBTQ activism, the *tongzhi* model, is rising in China, which suggests that one’s familial continuity is considered less or not important at all. Moreover, the authors claim that such a model can, to a certain extent, ease the hostile position of the government towards LGBTQ [12].

This cultural phenomenon is also linked to modernity and political ideologies. Wang et al. (2020) conducted a national survey on public sentiment toward the LGBTQ community in China. They found that economic development and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals are negatively correlated. The figures of their study showed that every 100,000 CNY increase in GDP per capita would lead to a 6.4% decrease in discrimination toward the LGBTQ community among heterosexual people [13]. Due to the rapid economic growth in China, it is predictable that Chinese culture would become more accepting of the LGBTQ community under this model. Zhang et al. argue that LGBTQ orientation is

highly related to economic development, openness to foreign cultures, and the infrastructure of cultural space. They arrived at this conclusion by conducting a big data analysis on Baidu, China's most commonly used search engine [14].

In sum, the social status of LGBTQ in China is controversial due to its complexity. "Traditional" scholars who view the LGBTQ community as still inferior approach this problem mainly from a cultural perspective. They believe that contemporary Chinese culture is predominantly impacted by Confucianism, which emphasizes family continuity and filial piety as the most crucial part of morality. State policies are viewed as contributors or intensifiers of this cultural factor, fostered by the long-lasting One-Child Policy and Confucian values. Contemporary China lacks both cultural and political will to become more inclusive of the LGBTQ community, from the government to the individuals. In contrast, "progressive" scholars, like the "traditional" ones, also approach this problem culturally. They think that although the social status of LGBTQ is currently inferior, Chinese society is becoming more open to LGBTQ individuals as contemporary Chinese culture is impacted by Western ideologies and globalization, and is transforming into a more socially inclusive one. Politically, legalizing LGBTQ is pragmatically beneficial for the Chinese government in terms of human rights reputation. Moreover, these "progressive" scholars believe the progression of Chinese culture is related to modernity and strongly suggest that the Chinese government should promulgate more inclusive policies to protect LGBTQ rights.

## 2.2. LGBTQ in Contemporary Japan

Japan is culturally very similar to China, and LGBTQ individuals in Japan have faced discrimination for centuries. By conducting massive interviews on LGBTQ individuals in Japan, McLelland et al. argue that those individuals face legislative discrimination, social exclusion, violence, and harassment. These problems lead to marginalization and isolation at work and in their families [15]. In Japanese culture, the traditional view and expectation of sex bring significant pressure on LGBTQ individuals. They are often forced by their family members to hide their identities [16]. The Chinese value of "losing face" also plays a significant role in Japanese culture, where being "abnormal" is considered akin to losing face. Tamagawa notes that the option of "coming out" to parents in Japan is gender-dependent, with LGBTQ individuals in Japan more likely to come out to their mothers rather than to their fathers, as their mothers' reactions are less demonstrative. However, a large number of Tamagawa's interviewees reported "considerably difficult experiences" when coming out to their mothers. The main reasons are similar to the discrimination against LGBTQ in China discussed above. Japanese mothers worry about public stigmatization of their children being abnormal, since in Japanese culture, mothers are "socioculturally configured as the solo overseers" of leading and educating their children to be normal [17].

Indeed, discrimination against LGBTQ is still prevalent in contemporary Japanese society, but their social status is gradually improving. As McLelland et al. point out, more LGBTQ individuals in Japan have started to express their sexual orientation, and Japanese society is gradually becoming more inclusive towards sex minorities [18]. Yamashita et al. argue that the fear of discrimination is destructive to LGBTQ individuals who were forced to reveal their identities due to the Great East-Japan Disaster. These LGBTQ individuals, as do their family members and friends, face discrimination and exclusion from society. However, in response to this discrimination, articles in "The Basic Law for Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Disaster" and "The Basic Plan on Disaster Prevention", promulgated by the Japanese government, declare that diverse citizen opinions must be reflected, and encourage social minorities to "participate more in community development", with a particular emphasis on gender equality [19].

Yamamura (2022) also examines the social status of LGBTQ individuals in Japan from the perspective of the impact of disasters but offers a global-scale explanation for the rise

of LGBTQ activism. The pandemic caused local actions to be further enlarged and accessed by global communities, and every local movement could be “transnationalized” through intensified and growing global connectedness via digital modernization. The transnationalization of LGBTQ activism in Japan has thus caused the local LGBTQ movements to cross its “spatial border” to achieve increasing international support from global communities, socially, politically, and economically. This globally supported and shaped contemporary culture in Japanese society is particularly influenced by the United States, in which the perception of Japanese people is led by American values [20]. By conducting a comparative study between Japan and the United States, Fujita points out that although LGBTQ movements in Japan are “far behind” the United States, there has been a surge in the visibility of LGBTQ individuals in recent years, due to the considerable progressiveness of Japanese society. Such progressive changes are mainly motivated by global pressure, and the U.S. history of LGBTQ movements would constantly influence Japanese society “in a positive way” [21].

Regarding the global impact on Japan’s LGBTQ activism, Wallace also discusses the particular role of the United States in the imagination of typical Japanese people. He argues that the LGBTQ community is deeply hierarchical, with his interviewees thinking that Japan is “behind the imagined West.” All responses showed that the Japanese LGBTQ community sees the United States as the goal to reach [22]. However, the largely borrowed cultural elements from the West have created problems in the indigenization of LGBTQ concepts. Fotache argues that many terminologies used in Japan are borrowed from the English language and are very Anglocentric since currently the LGBTQ movements in Japan are predominantly influenced by the West, particularly the United States. These Anglocentric terminologies usually create linguistic barriers, some of which have been used in the Japanese language for a long time to convey negative meanings. Therefore, the Western-centric globalization of LGBTQ activism faces the challenge of restructuring people’s understandings in Japan [23].

In summary, the social status of LGBTQ individuals in Japan is less controversial than in China. Most scholars agree that inclusiveness is expected to be further enhanced in Japan, given the significant influence of transnationalization on contemporary Japanese culture. While there are still cases of social exclusion among LGBTQ individuals in Japan, the traditional unfriendly view is gradually disintegrating due to social progressiveness, fostered by both domestic events, such as natural disasters, and the global atmosphere. As a result, the LGBTQ culture in Japan is becoming more vibrant, resonating with the global LGBTQ community.

### **2.3. A Political Science Approach**

The debates over current LGBTQ movements mainly focus on the dynamic cultural contexts, including both traditional social rejection and progressive social inclusiveness. Scholars who hold progressive arguments predominantly focus on the shift in the cultural atmosphere. However, other factors related to this issue are rarely examined. In the case of China, political effects are mentioned but treated as a relatively minor and indirect contributor to the formation of contemporary Chinese culture. The state birth-planning policies are treated as a minor complementary factor enhancing the traditional Chinese views. Those “progressive” scholars often overlook the key factors that enabled the Chinese people to participate in globalization: state policies and political ideology. In other words, any changes in state policies can lead to a shift in political ideology, which in turn affects the global impacts. The effects of transnationalization are much more complex than simply a one-directional linear progression. They fail to consider the changing attitude of the Chinese government toward the dynamic contemporary culture, which can greatly influence the impact of any global movements in China. Regarding Japan, the teleological social progressiveness originates from the changing political ideology after its defeat in World War II [24]. While political changes related to the social status of the LGBTQ community

are often considered the effect of changes in contemporary culture, it is nonetheless important to note that the relationship between such cultural changes and the social status of the LGBTQ community in Japan is complex and cannot be explained simply by a one-directional cause-and-effect relationship.

Contemporary cultures are dynamic, and their transformations are intricate. In shaping a culture, politics plays a pivotal role. Duncombe argues that cultural resistance is essentially a form of political resistance. He demonstrates that cultural resistance can be viewed as “an escape from politics and a way to release discontent that might otherwise be expressed through political activity”, as the content and form of culture are closely related to politics. Therefore, in researching cultural practices, it is essential to scrutinize the political context [25]. The cultural changes in LGBTQ activism in China and Japan are a reflection of political effects. Hence, clarifying the political context is crucial for understanding the current situation of LGBTQ individuals in these countries.

Traditional cultures are also highly political. Political authorities can shape and explain any “traditional” value to the masses. As noted in the book *The Invention of Tradition*, the authors argue that traditions are invented or constructed to achieve certain political or ideological purposes, particularly “to meet changing practical needs” [26]. Moreover, for the power utilized by modern governments in the Foucauldian sense, Pitsoe & Letseka argue that political authorities have the power to control discourse and formulate how people understand certain topics. Through control of knowledge access, political authorities use discourse to regulate, police, and manage people’s “language, thought and desire”, which can be viewed as “a form of oppression” [27]. Thus, the shaping of contemporary culture by invented traditions is a prototypical practice of governments utilizing such powers for political purposes. In other words, political power can shape public sentiments and ideologies in a certain period through the construction, reconstruction, and re-explanation of the so-called “tradition” to fulfill political purposes. Hence, previous studies have underestimated political power and therefore failed to consider the dynamic or consistent political relationship between politics and the situation of LGBTQ individuals. The discussion of states’ proactive political engagements regarding LGBTQ activism is lacking, which is crucial for comprehensively accessing the current situation of LGBTQ in China and Japan. Therefore, a political science approach is needed to illustrate these cultural changes and explore the nature of the dynamic social status of LGBTQ individuals in these two countries.

### 3. The Great Divergence

#### 3.1. *The Shared Tradition and Demographic Challenges*

The emphasis on filial piety and familial continuity in Confucianism is a reason why LGBTQ groups face discrimination in traditional Chinese and Japanese cultures. However, this reason is arguably practical, meaning that such discrimination does not come from the genuine theory of Confucianism but from its interpretation and application in modern society [28]. Confucianism emphasizes five core values: Ren (benevolence), Yi (righteousness), Li (propriety), Zhi (wisdom), and Xin (faith). These Confucian values establish moral standards for people and underline their obedience to social orders and moralities. In principle, Confucianism suggests a “structural emphasis” on gender roles, discipline, and obligations of males and females [29]. Thus, the Confucian gender ideology is essentially and theoretically anti-LGBTQ, as LGBTQ activism is seen as opposing nature, immoral, and disobedient to the core values.

Confucianism is a significant cultural obstacle to LGBTQ rights, in which LGBTQ civil rights and human rights in Confucian-influenced countries receive “limited recognition” [30]. Hence, within this cultural context shaped by the shared tradition, both in practical and theoretical terms, LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan face extreme difficul-

ties expressing their “authentic selves” and social bullying [31,32]. Such cultural similarities bring convergence in terms of traditional values toward LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan.

Besides the traditional cultural obstacles, contemporary China and Japan are currently facing a real threat from demographic challenges caused by the low or even negative population growth rate. These challenges would lead to many socioeconomic problems, such as population aging and labor shortages. In this context, the promotion of LGBTQ activism may further exacerbate these issues, as it is unlikely to contribute to increases in birth rates, especially in the case of China and Japan.

In China, the population growth rate has dropped significantly in recent decades. Some scholars argue this is mainly due to the strict implementation of the One-Child Policy from the 1970s [33]. In contrast, other scholars demonstrate that this is primarily caused by the reluctance of people to have children due to the increasing socioeconomic pressure after the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy in 1978 [34]. Nevertheless, these two perceptions are not inherently conflicting with each other, and both of them could contribute to the low population growth rate in China. Although the Chinese government abandoned the One-Child Policy and adopted the Second-Child and Third-Child Policy recently, the population growth rate continues to remain very low. The situation went worse this year. For the first time, the Chinese government announced that the Chinese population has declined in 2022 [35]. These pieces of evidence suggest that economic growth is sufficient to lower the population growth rate. Fang et al. identified a range of socioeconomic problems that China is likely to face in the future due to demographic challenges such as the exponential growth of the elderly population, challenges to the current healthcare system, and an intensified burden on younger generations [36]. The Chinese government is clearly unwilling to face the current demographic situation. As many political scientists suggest, the One-Child Policy was “at the heart of its (CCP’s) political legitimacy” [37]. Therefore, it could be argued that the abolishment of the One-Child Policy means that the Chinese government sees the need to reverse the current population growth rate as a top priority.

In comparison with China, the demographic challenge in Japan is more pronounced. If measured by the standard provided by Hussain et al., the replacement rate of at least 2.1 children per couple to keep the population growing [38], the long-lasting below-replacement fertility rate in Japan started in the 1970s. Japan’s demographic crisis has a longer period than China’s. It originates in the 1960s, the period when the country was experiencing a remarkable economic miracle after World War II. The first sign of it was the disproportionate increasing rate between the labor force and the total population during this period. According to Clark et al., during the 1960s, the labor force participation rate in Japan dropped by 4%, from 69% in 1960 to 65% in 1970. From the 1970s onwards, the fertility rate rapidly declined, falling to as low as 1.3 in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century [39]. As reported in the Statistical Handbook of Japan 2022, the Japanese population has been declining since 2010, and is projected to fall below 100 million by 2060 [40]. Such demographic challenges in Japan are also mainly caused by the reluctance to have children but in a different way than in China. As argued by Mikanagi (1998), due to the astonishing economic achievements in Japan, individualism and feminism were prevalent among Japanese women as they significantly improved their economic status. Japanese women became much more independent due to fewer economic obstacles. Therefore, postponing marriage and refusing to have children became much more popular [41]. Similar to China, boosting the birth rate is also urgent and formidable for Japan. In the past few decades, the Japanese government has implemented various measures, such as the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, to address the declining birth rate [42].

While how economic growth influences people’s reluctance to have children varies in China and Japan, a more vibrant economy would nonetheless reduce people’s willingness to have children. Furthermore, it is arguable that China has not yet reached the same

level of economic development as Japan, and it is likely that Chinese people's perceptions will gradually converge with Japan's due to continued economic growth and globalization. Therefore, China and Japan share similarities in terms of demographic challenges, with Japan having faced and currently facing the socioeconomic problems that China may face shortly.

As discussed above, traditional perceptions of LGBTQ groups and the current demographic challenges in China and Japan may lead to antagonism towards LGBTQ individuals at various levels, from the government to the individual. Therefore, it is likely that similar politicization of LGBTQ groups will occur in these two countries. LGBTQ activism is likely to be further proactively restricted and discouraged by the governments, with an emphasis on preserving their shared traditional values.

### **3.2. Divergence in Politicization**

Despite such convergences in the traditional cultural backgrounds and demographic challenges, the politicization of the LGBTQ community in China differs greatly from that of the LGBTQ community in Japan. This great divergence in politicization can result in China and Japan having entirely distinct social attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals.

In China, LGBTQ activism is severely suppressed by the government. Firstly, any non-heterosexual orientation is classified as a "mental disorder" by the government [43]. In response, many hospitals and clinics in China treat LGBTQ groups as having psychological disorders and provide conversion therapy to "normalize" their sexual orientation [44]. Some LGBTQ individuals have even been forced to undergo conversion treatment [45]. Furthermore, this labeling not only appears in health-related government publications but also educational materials. Many college textbooks identify LGBTQ individuals as having an illness. Although society has resisted, all those who have advocated for LGBTQ rights have failed. For instance, Qiu Bai, a college junior, wrote letters to related personnel to remove such descriptions but was completely ignored. She then sued the Ministry of Education in court, but unsurprisingly lost the lawsuit [46]. Another common form of stigmatization of LGBTQ individuals in China is how they are labeled as having a much higher risk of HIV infection. The mainstream discourse shaped by the Chinese government emphasizes the tie between HIV and homosexuality, which implicitly marginalizes LGBTQ individuals by inciting public animosity [47]. Thus, such categorization of LGBTQ individuals is systematically backed up by multiple government branches, including but not confined to health, education, and propaganda.

Based on the political stigmatization, many LGBTQ activities are banned, and their speech is under strict surveillance by the Chinese government. Recently, the Chinese government abolished a series of LGBTQ public activities. For instance, the celebration of Shanghai LGBTQ Pride Day was permanently banned in 2020 [48]. The organizers of LGBTQ activities were "invited for tea" by the police, and said that they were facing "unprecedented pressure" [49]. Apart from the repression of LGBTQ activism in real life, the Chinese government also silences LGBTQ voices online. The National Radio and Television Administration has banned all visual media productions that have scenes of the LGBTQ phenomenon, by clarifying that the contents are "vulgar, immoral and unhealthy", which may "exaggerate the dark side of society" [50]. In addition to the censorship, the Chinese government has also removed nearly all LGBTQ-related entries online and deleted those accounts belonging to LGBTQ individuals without prior notice, with the reason of "violated laws and regulations" [51].

Regarding the situation in Japan, the Japanese government has implemented a series of protections for sexual minorities. Firstly, since 1994, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has adopted the standard provided by the World Health Organization, which means that LGBTQ individuals are no longer classified as having a "mental disorder" by the Japanese government. This was followed by the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology in 1995, and since then, the entire Japanese academic community has recog-



nized sexual minorities [52]. Regarding education, the Japanese government has published guidelines for revising textbooks. According to Matsuo, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has required all textbook publishers to include content on sexual diversity in textbooks from the primary school level to the high school level, and has urged all teachers to protect LGBTQ students from possible bullying [53]. In terms of legal developments, although same-sex marriage is not yet legal at the national level, there have been many positive developments recently. Many local governments have announced that same-sex partnerships will be recognized [54]. And, surprisingly, for the first time, the local Sapporo court has ruled that not recognizing same-sex marriage is unconstitutional [55]. Therefore, it could be argued that a well-established system supporting LGBTQ rights in Japan is under construction by the government.

Despite potential differences on other issues, the Japanese government also proactively supports the nationwide LGBTQ movement, with politicians delivering speeches to promote LGBTQ rights. For instance, in 2014, Abe Akie, the wife of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, attended the LGBTQ parade in Tokyo and expressed support for sexual minorities [56]. Any politicians who make anti-LGBTQ speeches, such as the right-wing politician, Sugita Mio's criticism of using taxes to support "childless and unproductive" same-sex couples, would face significant criticisms, even from their own political party [57].

It could be concluded that China and Japan have opposite ways of politicizing LGBTQ groups. In China, political suppression is legitimized by the defamatory categorization of LGBTQ and further enhanced by the coordinated efforts across different government branches, resulting in pessimistic views on Chinese LGBTQ activism. On the other hand, in Japan, the prevalence of coordinated political promotion from the Japanese government makes it foreseeable that LGBTQ activism will become more prevalent. This great divergence in politicization will likely lead to further divergence in constructing systems toward LGBTQ rights, with China having a well-organized system for suppression and Japan having a more robust one for protecting their rights.

#### 4. Political Logic Differences

Given the convergence in traditional cultural backgrounds and current demographic challenges, it is intriguing to examine the political logic of China and Japan to explore the political cause for the great divergence in the politicization of LGBTQ individuals. Political logic determines the essential focuses of the governments, and as such, is a pivotal political cause of this divergence.

##### 4.1. *China's Irreversibilities*

Dealing with severe demographic challenges and facing the growing impacts of transnationalization, the Chinese government faces two irreversibilities: the potential intensified demographic challenge and ideological Westernization. These two irreversibilities are the critical reasons for the political suppression of LGBTQ groups.

Previous studies show that LGBTQ activism is one of the most influential trends, and following this trend, an increasing number of people in China may identify as LGBTQ rather than heterosexual. Although statistics on LGBTQ individuals in China are unavailable, it is possible to simulate the potential LGBTQ population based on U.S. data. According to a 2022 survey by Jones, 7.2% of Americans identified as LGBTQ, twice the percentage in 2012. Among Generation Z (born 1997-2004), 19.7% identify as LGBTQ, while for millennials (born 1981-1996), the rate is 11.2%, and for older generations, it is 3.3% or less [58]. Thus, the growing transnational impacts of globalization may lead to a similar proportional increase in the LGBTQ population in China.

Although there is no evidence that one's sexual orientation can be changed through psychotherapy, many LGBTQ individuals in China who previously did not recognize their true sexual orientation and continued with their "normal" lives may come to recognize their true identities through resonance with the global community, particularly among young people at childbearing age. This potential trend of self-recognition could

further exacerbate the demographic challenges in China. For the Chinese government, this potential trend is viewed as unfavorable since its consequences, such as further exacerbation of demographic structures and intensified socioeconomic pressures, are permanent and irreversible. Thus, the Chinese government's suppression can be seen as a practice of Sugita's "childless, unproductive" comments on LGBTQ individuals. The government is using political intervention to eliminate possible detrimental trends of intensifying the demographic challenges caused by globalization. Hence, such suppression could be argued as a complementary action toward the Second/Third Policy, which prevents any potential threats to the government's top priorities.

Ideological irreversibility is another potential political threat arising from the transnational impacts of globalization. The CCP has always been vigilant about ideological changes, especially after the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. Therefore, propaganda and thought work has been considered the Party's lifeline since then [59]. Ideological Westernization is particularly monitored as it can cause severe political instability. Deng Xiaoping summarized the lessons learned from the Tiananmen Incident, saying "the developments are good in this decade, but the biggest mistake is education. Political thought work was not emphasized, and the development of education is lacking" [60]. Then he further emphasized his "both-hands theory", which emphasizes the need to "grasp both hands tightly", with one hand holding onto Reform and Opening-up and the other hand holding onto political thought work [61]. With the development of the economy, Chinese people inevitably come to interact with the global community and be influenced by foreign ideologies, particularly by the West. The Tiananmen Incident was an embodiment of such impacts that escalated to a subversive level. Empirical studies of the domino theory have shown that countries can be ideologically influenced by their neighboring countries by as little as 11% [62]. However, this percentage is likely to be significantly larger with the increasing global connectivity and transnational influences.

No doubt, as discussed in the previous sections, the current LGBTQ activism in China is imported and has a strong connection with Western ideologies. Because of the government's fear of ideological Westernization, the Chinese government has labeled LGBTQ activists in China as having ties with "foreign forces". Especially under the current regime, LGBTQ individuals are facing heightened political challenges due to the patriotic ideological campaign initiated by Xi Jinping, which particularly emphasizes opposition to Western cultural erosion [63]. Moreover, beyond LGBTQ rights, the spread of such Western ideologies may lead to further concerns regarding other human rights issues in China, ultimately causing political instability. Therefore, the suppression of LGBTQ activism can be interpreted as a manifestation of anti-Westernism. Empirically, given the memory of the Tiananmen Incident, the CCP has realized that the consequences of ideological Westernization are irreversible, as they may develop into subversive protests that need to be suppressed with brutal forces. As a result, the CCP remains vigilant in preventing the infiltration of Western ideas.

It could be argued that the Chinese government has realized the growing transnational impact of globalization, and such suppression is the government's reaction towards it. With the fear of the irreversible potential demographic and ideological threats, a top-down anti-LGBTQ mechanism has been formed and backed up by the state's top priority – increasing fertility rates and heightened anti-Westernism.

#### **4.2. Cadres' Promotion**

The state's top-down mechanism alone is insufficient to explain the suppression of LGBTQ individuals in China, as many political scientists argue that the CCP is not a monolithic entity [64], and therefore, the inherent fragmentation inside the Party may cause reluctance to implement policies. Indeed, most of the suppression of LGBTQ activism in China was conducted by local governments. Hence, an analysis of these party cadres is needed to facilitate a comprehensive study of the suppression, which requires an examination of their in-party logic, specifically the promotion model. This bottom-up approach

is a crucial complement to the top-down mechanism and further reinforces the suppression.

As Landry argues, promotion is “a key weapon for maintaining organizational discipline and for structuring principal-agent relationships” [65]. It is one of the most pivotal incentives for Party cadres and can explain their compliance with the top-down mechanism in most cases. The in-party institutional monitoring and evaluation of promotion procedures lead cadres to focus on “virtue (*de*), ability (*neng*), attitude to work (*qin*) and achievements (*ji*)” as criteria for promotion [66]. However, in practice, the evaluation and interpretation of these abstract terms related to abilities and moralities mostly rely on the favor of the central government. Regarding the complex promotion mechanism, Cai offers a dual-track model to understand the promotion of Party cadres. According to this model, both Party cadres’ political achievements and their political factions are necessary for promotions [67]. It could be argued that the political achievements express cadres’ *neng* and *ji*, and the faction of cadres can determine their *de* and *qin*. Applying this dual-track model to the suppression of LGBTQ activism can further clarify the in-Party logic of these cadres, through an examination of the political incentives that form a bottom-up anti-LGBTQ mechanism.

Political achievements, as the first track of Cai’s model, are primarily evaluated by local economic achievements after the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up [68]. However, after Hu Jintao came to power, the evaluation of political achievements has been changed. Instead of Jiang Zemin’s “GDP is everything”, Hu pointed out “Scientific Outlook on Development”, which includes the terms “harmonious society (*Hexie Shehui*)” and “moderately prosperous society (*Xiaokang Shehui*).” The particularly emphasized term *Hexie Shehui* means that together with economic developments, social harmony is highly focused as well. From this point on, maintaining social harmony has become a crucial part of evaluating cadres’ political achievements [69]. According to Law & Ho, the patriotic ideological foundation is a core component of a “socialist harmonious society”, and such social harmony is the basis of maintaining political stability for the Chinese government, which the Chinese government has been always using various means to construct patriotism among Chinese people [70]. As a result, LGBTQ activism, which has great potential for ideological threats, could be argued as “inharmonious” in China, and therefore the suppression of such “inharmonious” elements can contribute to cadres’ political achievements. Furthermore, removing potential obstacles to population growth can also contribute to cadres’ political achievements, which aligns with the state’s top priority.

The second track, political faction, is more controversial. Many Party cadres either deny the existence of factions or denigrate their political opponents as a faction since an honest cadre is never “supposed to band together” with others [71]. However, many political scientists outside the Party point out that factions do indeed exist within it. In his book, Cai specifically discusses the promotion of the cadres belonging to the Jiang Faction (Jiangpai) and the Youth League Faction (Tuanpai), and argues that the political careers of local cadres are closely related to the supreme leader’s faction [72]. Since Xi Jinping assumed power, many China watchers argue that factions are disappearing. Following the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress, factional opponents were “evicted” from top leadership positions, and all members of Politburo are now Xi’s “most loyal allies”, leading to the eradication of the in-Party factional balance [73]. Thus, based on the observations of the reality in Chinese politics, it can be argued that although the factional balance is undergoing transformation, maintaining a good relationship with the top leaders by demonstrating loyalty to them remains crucial for local cadres’ promotion. Due to the prevailing anti-Westernism and the enhanced emphasis on political loyalty from the promotion criteria, suppressing LGBTQ activism provides a good opportunity for the local cadres to express their political loyalty. Hence, the local cadres suppress LGBTQ activism to actively respond to the state’s top-down anti-LGBTQ mechanism, therefore showing their ideological closeness to the central government.

The suppression of LGBTQ activism contributes to the cadre's political achievements and reinforces the presence of their political loyalty. By examining this in-Party logic, it becomes clear why there is a bottom-up willingness to suppress. Through alignment with the top-down political logic of suppression, a highly centralized state anti-LGBTQ mechanism has been constructed, with the proactive compliance of local cadres. Therefore, the Chinese government persistently suppresses LGBTQ individuals through this mechanism, driven by the deep ruling logic of eradicating potential political threats to maintain long-term political stability.

#### **4.3. U.S. as the Model**

As previously discussed, a teleological form of progressivism that equates Americanization with modernity has gradually become more prevalent among the Japanese people. This trend has also been reflected in the Japanese government. The Japanese government is keen to demonstrate the progress made in Japan and its ideological affinity with the United States to the international community.

Regarding the case of LGBTQ rights in Japan, which is considered to be "far behind" the United States, the Japanese government is eager to promote itself as "LGBTQ friendly" on the global stage [74]. This is because the government recognizes the need to improve LGBTQ rights to ideologically align with the "ahead" United States. As Itakura (2021) argues, the Japanese government needs to promote LGBTQ rights to make Japan "at least appear to be a diversity-accommodating nation", which can be beneficial for its presence in the international community [75]. No doubt, the mainstream global ideology is predominantly influenced by the United States, which tends to be more inclusive and pluralistic. If the Japanese government proactively promotes LGBTQ rights, it would be recognized as an effort to overturn the traditional cultural antagonism towards LGBTQ activism by the international community. Thus, the promotion of LGBTQ would ultimately become the Japanese government's interest, by presenting Japan as an ideological pioneer in East Asia that quickly and proactively resonates with global trends, and an exemplar of integrating deep-rooted traditional culture with modern ideologies.

As suggested by Wallace (2018), there is a prevalent teleological social progressiveness among Japanese people, which constantly pushes Japan to reach the U.S. standard. It could be argued that this social progressiveness is rooted in Fukuzawa Yukichi's DatsuA-NyuO (leaving Asia, entering Europe) theory, which is still the foundation of contemporary Japanese ideology [76]. As discussed in the previous sections, such Pro-Westernism in Japanese society is the cause of the Japanese government making changes to improve LGBTQ rights. Thus, following this political logic, there is an intrinsic mechanism within the Japanese government for the proactive promotion of LGBTQ activism, which could further encourage domestic LGBTQ movements.

#### **4.4. LGBTQ as a Tool**

Apart from the international stage, promoting LGBTQ activism is also crucial for politicians and political parties in Japan. Different from the cadre promotion system in China, Japanese politicians rely on public votes to obtain or maintain their positions. Hence, winning the election by securing public votes is essential in the political logic of Japanese politicians. To achieve this, their political agendas need to aim at gaining support from a broader range of people. Thus, the promotion of LGBTQ activism by these politicians can help build LGBTQ-friendly images among Japanese people, which is beneficial for them in terms of gaining electoral support and conveying political agendas.

The LGBTQ population in Japan is huge. According to Lee & Inuma (2023), a national survey conducted in 2020 shows that about 10% of Japan's population identified themselves as LGBTQ [77]. This high percentage means that the potential LGBTQ voting bloc is much larger, as many relatives and friends of LGBTQ individuals are highly likely to take the same supportive political stance. While Tamagawa (2017) argues that many LGBTQ individuals in Japan are still in the closet so that their relatives or friends may not stand with them [78], there are still many supportive individuals in Japanese society who

would take the same political stance, primarily due to the social progressiveness as discussed above. Furthermore, the LGBTQ voting bloc holds great potential. A survey conducted in 2015 showed a 7.6% rate of LGBTQ individuals in Japan identified as LGBTQ [79], which indicates a growth rate of 2.4% in just five years. As suggested by Yamamura (2022) and Fujita (2018), the increasing global pressure and transnational impacts of globalization will continue to fuel domestic LGBTQ activism in Japan [80,81]. Thus, the increasing rate may go higher in the future, which would result in a larger LGBTQ voting bloc. Therefore, securing such a big voting bloc with great potential is critical for building sustainable political careers for Japanese politicians. It could be argued that a cross-party fundamental political principle has been established in Japan, where all political parties should communicate their political agendas to the Japanese people based on a supportive stance towards LGBTQ activism.

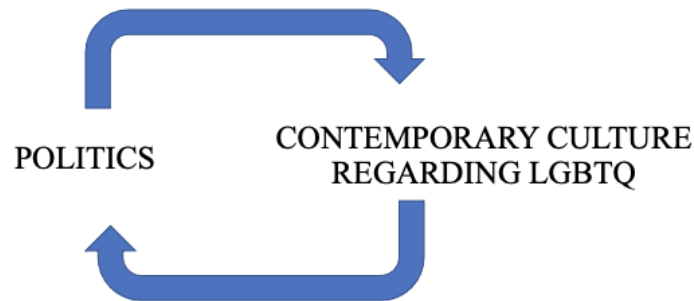
This pro-LGBTQ political stance would inevitably bring about criticism from conservatives in Japanese society. In response to such criticism, all political parties take an active and strong stance in criticizing it and expressing their support for pro-LGBTQ policies to the public. For example, in addition to Sugita's "unproductive" speech mentioned above, Ishihara Shintaro claimed that Japan has become too permissive towards homosexuals, and Hirasawa Katsuei stated that LGBTQ activism would lead to "national collapse." The LDP soon officially responded to the public with criticism of these speeches and emphasized that the fundamental ideology of the LDP is to aim for a society that accepts diverse sexual orientations and gender identities [82,83]. Through strong criticism, particularly from the same party that these conservative politicians belong to, political parties in Japan can further secure their LGBTQ voting bloc by demonstrating their progressiveness and "righteousness".

Maximizing public support, securing voting blocs, and demonstrating a positive image are crucial in the voting-based political logic. Therefore, it can be argued that political parties in Japan use LGBTQ individuals as a tool for winning elections. By utilizing this tool, parties can present themselves as caring for minorities to the public, which can further attract votes from other social minority groups. Hence, based on this political logic, there is an inherent, pragmatic mechanism among all political entities in Japan, which leads to the proactive political promotion of LGBTQ activism.

## 5. Conclusion

Social scientists have primarily approached the dynamic social status of LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan from a cultural perspective, with politics viewed as complementary and a consequence of cultural changes. However, this article has argued that political power plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary culture. Therefore, a political science approach to explaining the situation of LGBTQ individuals in China and Japan is lacking. To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of LGBTQ groups in East Asia, a political science approach is crucial for assessment, in addition to cultural perspectives. This article has examined the situation of LGBTQ individuals in contemporary China and Japan and has revealed a great divergence in the politicization of LGBTQ activism in these two countries, with the Chinese government having a systematic suppression by coordinated efforts from different government branches and the Japanese government having proactive promotions, despite their having very similar traditional cultural antagonism towards LGBTQ individuals and severe demographic challenges. Regarding the suppression in China, this article has suggested that a top-down anti-LGBTQ mechanism has been formed due to the fear of the potential exacerbation of demographic challenges and ideological Westernization, which is backed up by a bottom-up in-party logic that seeks promotion through the demonstration of political loyalty to the central government. Regarding the promotion in Japan, this article has argued that the Japanese government has an inherent political logic of promoting LGBTQ activism. Internationally, promoting LGBTQ

activism can improve Japan's image, while domestically, a supportive stance towards LGBTQ individuals can secure votes for winning elections.



**Figure 1.** Relations between politics and contemporary culture (drawn by the author)

The disparity in the political logic between China and Japan that causes the great divergence, originates in the different political systems of these two countries. China, an authoritarian state under CCP's rule, directly suppresses LGBTQ activism due to its political threats in both pragmatic and ideological senses. The same political logic applies to other authoritarian states as well. As Bruszt & Stark (1991) argues, the collapse of former communist authoritarian regimes has indicated that social movements can rapidly transform into political entities that hold subversive political ideologies and finally lead to a series of rapid collapses [84]. Thus, authoritarian regimes tend to intervene politically to eradicate such social movements that may develop into subversive political entities to maintain long-term political stability. Hence, the relationship between politics and contemporary culture regarding LGBTQ tends to be one where the former shapes the latter, which means the upper arrow in **Figure 1** is much more reflected than the lower arrow in authoritarian states. In comparison, Japan, as one of the countries that adopted the democratic political system, embraces the global trends for both international and domestic uses. As represented by Japan, democratic governments are relatively more "short-sighted", in which they often prioritize short-term political goals, leading them to promote LGBTQ activism in order to gain public support for elections. Therefore, in democratic societies, the politics regarding LGBTQ activism are influenced by contemporary culture, and in turn, reinforce such culture for political purposes. This creates a cycle, as shown in **Figure 1**, with both the upper and lower arrows reflected.

The model proposed in this article for analyzing LGBTQ activism in different political systems has been developed through a comparative study of China and Japan. However, this model has its limitations, particularly when it comes to analyzing the actions of authoritarian regimes. As Brady (2010) argues, the CCP has come to recognize that it is no longer a revolutionary party but rather a party in power. As a result, the CCP views North Korea as an anti-model, due to its extreme coerciveness and unsustainability [85]. Deng Xiaoping's "both hands" theory further demonstrates that the CCP needs to achieve economic development and maintain its one-party rule simultaneously. In relation to the fundamental idea of Reform and Opening-up, Deng's famous approach of "crossing the river by feeling for stones" implicitly implies that the CCP allows for a certain degree of Westernization as long as it remains non-subversive. As Brady notes, the CCP is "studying some of the most undemocratic practices of modern Western societies" [86]. Thus, future investigations are needed to examine to what extent the CCP, as well as other authoritarian regimes, would allow LGBTQ movements to continue, given that the transnational impacts of globalization are likely to persist and may even be enhanced in the future due to the need for economic development. Additionally, future research is needed to explore how LGBTQ movements can be controlled by authoritarian regimes as perpetually non-subversive to them.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my professors at Keio University, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Indiana University Bloomington. Additionally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my girlfriend, Ruiyi Chen. All of these individuals have provided academic and emotional support for me. Moreover, please allow me to express my respect to those people who participated in the democratic movements in China.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### References

- Zhao, Y. (2022). *Waves Under the Surface: The LGBTQ NGO field and its cultural changes in China* (thesis). The University of Chicago, Chicago.
- Taniguchi, H. (2021). LGBT. In H. Takeda & M. Williams (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Japan* (pp. 369–379). essay, Routledge, 376-377.
- Kakuto no kouyaku, seisakubetsu, jenda-, tayousei sangiin senkyo 2022 – NHK. NHK-Senkyo Web. (2022, June 16). <https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/database/sangiin/pledge/policy/08/>
- Nakanishi, Y. (2022). A comparison of human rights protection in Europe and Japan: The quest for marriage equality. *Hitotsubashi Journal of Law and Politics*, 50, 1–8.
- Hua, B., Yang, V. F., & Goldsen, K. F. (2019). LGBT older adults at a crossroads in mainland China: The intersections of stigma, cultural values, and structural changes within a shifting context. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 88(4), 440–456. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415019837614>
- Yang, L. H., & Kleinman, A. (2008). ‘face’ and the embodiment of stigma in China: The cases of schizophrenia and AIDS. *Social Science & Medicine*, 67(3), 398–408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.03.011>
- Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K., Xin, Y., Yang, Y., Drescher, J., & Chen, R. (2019). Discrimination against LGBT populations in China. *The Lancet Public Health*, 4(9). [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(19\)30153-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(19)30153-7)
- Gerkin, K. (2009). The one-child policy, gay rights, and social reorganisation in China. *Human Rights & Human Welfare*, 9(1), 57–69.
- Jeffreys, E. (2018). Public Policy and LGBT People and Activism in Mainland China. In W. W.-L. Lam (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Communist Party* (pp. 283–296). essay, Routledge, 299-300.
- Hildebrandt, T. (2011). Same-sex marriage in China? The strategic promulgation of a progressive policy and its impact on LGBT activism. *Review of International Studies*, 37(3), 1313–1333. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025422>
- Hildebrandt, T. (2012). Development and division: The effect of transnational linkages and local politics on LGBT activism in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21(77), 845–862. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2012.684967>
- Wei, W., & Yan, Y. (2021). Rainbow parents and the familial model of tongzhi (lgbt) activism in contemporary China. *Chinese Sociological Review*, 53(5), 451–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2021.1981129>
- Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K., Rechdan, J., Yang, Y., Wu, L., Xin, Y., Lin, J., Duan, Z., Zhu, X., Feng, Y., Chen, S., Ou, J., & Chen, R. (2020). Mapping out a spectrum of the Chinese public’s discrimination toward the LGBT community: Results from a national survey. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08834-y>
- B., You, Y., He, G., Yan, F., & Wang, S. (2022). Searching for the rainbow connection: Regional development and LGBT communities in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 32(140), 296–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2071925>
- McLelland, M. J., Sukanuma, K., & Welker, J. (2007). *Queer Voices from Japan: First person narratives from Japan’s sexual minorities*. Lexington Books, 293.
- McLelland, M. J., Sukanuma, K., & Welker, J. (2007). *Queer Voices from Japan: First person narratives from Japan’s sexual minorities*. Lexington Books, 171.
- Tamagawa, M. (2017). Coming out to parents in Japan: A sociocultural analysis of lived experiences. *Sexuality & Culture*, 22(2), 497–520. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9481-3>
- McLelland, M. J., Sukanuma, K., & Welker, J. (2007). *Queer Voices from Japan: First person narratives from Japan’s sexual minorities*. Lexington Books, 310.
- Yamashita, A., Gomez, C., & Dombroski, K. (2017). Segregation, exclusion and LGBT people in disaster impacted areas: Experiences from the higashinohon dai-shinsai (great east-japan disaster). *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(1), 64–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2016.1276887>
- Yamamura, S. (2022). Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the transnationalization of LGBT\* activism in Japan and beyond. *Global Networks*, 23(1), 120–131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12423>
- Fujita, A. (2018). Changing perception of LGBT people through performances – theater and television in America and in Japan. *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, 17, 54–71.

22. Wallace, J. E. (2018). *Being LGBT in Japan: An ethnographic study of the politics of identity and belonging* (thesis). University of Leeds, Leeds.
23. Fotache, I. (2019). LGBT Boom' discourse and its discontents. In C. Cottet & M. L. Picq (Eds.), *Sexuality and translation in world politics* (pp. 27–41). essay, *E-International Relations*, 30-32.
24. Dower, J. W. (2000). *Embracing defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*. W.W. Norton & C./New Press.
25. Duncombe, S. (2002). *Cultural resistance: A reader*. Verso, 6.
26. Hobsbawm, E. J., & Ranger, T. O. (2019). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 3.
27. Pitsoe, V., & Letseka, M. (2013). Foucault's discourse and power: Implications for instructionist classroom management. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 03(01), 23–28. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2013.31005>
28. Whyke, T. W. (2022). Discourses of heteronormativity and power: The ethical position of Confucianism on same-sex behaviour in China. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 70(9), 1787–1806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2022.2042663>
29. Lebra, T. (2007). Identity, gender and status in Japan. *Global Oriental*, 248-250.
30. Shanklin, R. (2021). Confucianism and LGBTQ+ rights. *Encyclopedia of Business and Professional Ethics*, 1–6. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23514-1\\_1251-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23514-1_1251-1)
31. Xu, W., Huang, Y., Tang, W., & Kaufman, M. R. (2022). Heterosexual marital intention: The influences of Confucianism and stigma among Chinese sexual minority women and men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 51(7), 3529–3540. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02229-9>
32. Kasai, M. (2017). Sexual and Gender Minorities and Bullying in Japan. In S. T. Russel & S. S. Horn (Eds.), *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Schooling: The Nexus of Research, Practice, and Policy* (pp. 185–193). essay, Oxford University Press, 190-191.
33. Feng, W., Gu, B., & Cai, Y. (2016). The end of China's one-child policy. *Studies in Family Planning*, 47(1), 83–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2016.00052.x>
34. Shi, L. (2017). *Choosing daughters: Family change in rural China*. Stanford University Press, 57.
35. Minzner, C. (2023, January 26). China's population decline is not yet a crisis. Beijing's response could make it one. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/chinas-population-decline-not-yet-crisis-beijings-response-could-make-it-one#:~:text=China's%20population%20is%20now%20declining,declines%20in%20Chinese%20fertility%20rates>
36. Fang, E. F., Scheibye-Knudsen, M., Jahn, H. J., Li, J., Ling, L., Guo, H., Zhu, X., Preedy, V., Lu, H., Bohr, V. A., Chan, W. Y., Liu, Y., & Ng, T. B. (2015). A research agenda for aging in China in the 21st Century. *Ageing Research Reviews*, 24, 197–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arr.2015.08.003>
37. Feng, W., Cai, Y., & Gu, B. (2013). Population, policy, and politics: How will history judge China's one-child policy? *Population and Development Review*, 38(s1), 115–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00555.x>
38. Hussain, A., Cassen, R., & Dyson, T. (2006). Demographic transition in Asia and its consequences. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(3), 79–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2006.tb00271.x>
39. Clark, R. L., Ogawa, N., Kondo, M., & Matsukura, R. (2009). Population decline, labor force stability, and the future of the Japanese economy. *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 26(2), 207–227. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-009-9179-9>
40. Statistics Bureau. (2023). *Statistical handbook of Japan 2022*. Tokyo: Bureau of Statistics, 10.
41. Mikanagi, Y. (1998). Japan's gender-biased social security policy. *Japan Forum*, 10(2), 181–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555809808721612>
42. Huen, Y. W. (2007). Policy response to declining birth rate in Japan: Formation of a "gender-equal" society. *East Asia*, 24(4), 365–379. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-007-9026-8>
43. National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China. (2020). *Jingshen Zhangai Zhenliao Guifan (2020 Nianban)*. National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, 386.
44. Burki, T. (2017). Health and rights challenges for China's LGBT community. *The Lancet*, 389(10076), 1286. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(17\)30837-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(17)30837-1)
45. Huang, Z. (2017, November 15). The first-hand accounts of 17 gay Chinese forced into conversion therapy. *Quartz*. <https://qz.com/1129670/you-are-sick-the-first-hand-accounts-of-17-lgbt-people-in-china-forced-into-conversion-therapy>
46. Parkin, S. (2018). LGBT rights-focused legal advocacy in China: The promise, and limits, of litigation. *Fordham International Law Journal*, 41(5), 1243–1262.
47. Pan, X., & Loopmans, M. (2020). Intersectional heterotopia: HIV and LGBTQ+?movement in China. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 112(2), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12409>
48. The end of the rainbow. ShanghaiPRIDE. (2020, August 13). <https://shpride.com/2020/08/13/ending/?lang=en>
49. Erliang. (2011). Weile huoxiaqu, zhongguo LGBTQ zuzhi gaiming, shangyehua, jiegui zhuliu jiazhiguan. *DuanChuanMei*. (2021, November 8). <https://theinitium.com/article/20211108-mainland-lgbt-ngo/>
50. Yang, Y. (2018). Bargaining with the state: The empowerment of chinese sexual minorities/LGBT in the social media era. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 28(118), 662–677. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1557943>
51. Amnesty International. (2019). (rep.). *China: "I need my parents' consent to be myself" - Barriers to gender-affirming treatments for transgender people in China* (pp. 1–44). London: Amnesty International Ltd.



52. Matsuo, Y. (2013). Gakkoukyouiku to shakai niokeru seiteki mainoriti ni kansuru gensetsu kenkyu: 1990nen ikouno kyouiku media to shinbunkiji no kijyutsu bunseki. *Shizuoka Daigaku Kyouikukenkyu*, 9, 17-38.
53. Matsuo, Y. (2023). Shougakkou, chuugakkou, koudougakkou no kyoushoku ni miru sei no tayousei nikansuru kisai no tokucho to kadai: 2018nendo~2021nendo kenteikyoushoku no bunseki yori. *Shizuoka Daigaku Kyouikukenkyu*, 19, 1-18.
54. Chi, N. (2016). What is at the end of the Rainbow?: Prospects and challenges for sexual minorities in Japan. *Annals, Public Policy Studies*, 10, 75–85.
55. Doseikon mitomenai nowa iken no hatsuhandan, kuni heno baisho wa sakeru, sapporo chisai. NHK Seijimagajin. (2021, March 17). <https://www.nhk.or.jp/politics/articles/statement/55909.html>
56. Abe shushofujin tonai no LGBT pare-do ni sanku. AFP BB News. (2014, April 24). <https://www.afpbb.com/articles/-/3013704>
57. Powell, R. (2019). Time to Go Naked? Rules and Revelations Surrounding LGBT People in Japan. *Australian Journal of Asian Law*, 20(1), 7–26.
58. Jones, J. M. (2023, June 5). U.S. LGBT identification steady at 7.2%. Gallup.com. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/470708/lgbt-identification-steady.aspx>
59. Brady, A.-M. (2009). Mass persuasion as a means of legitimation and China’s popular authoritarianism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(3), 434–457. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209338802>
60. Party Literature Research Center of the CCP Central Committee. (1991). *Shisandayilai* (Shang). People’s Press, 491.
61. “Liangshouzhua” de yuanqi, neihan, yu yanbian. (2011, February 23) *Guangming Daily*.
62. Leeson, P. T., & Dean, A. M. (2009). The democratic domino theory: An empirical investigation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(3), 533–551. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00385.x>
63. Chia, J. L. (2019). ‘What’s Love Got to Do with It?’: LGBTQ Rights and Patriotism in Xi’s China. *Australian Journal of Asian Law*, 20(1), 27–37.
64. Jakobson, L., & Knox, D. (2010). *New foreign policy actors in China*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
65. Landry, P. F. (2008). *Decentralized authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party’s control of local elites in the post-mao era*. Cambridge University Press.
66. Edin, M. (1998). Why do Chinese local cadres promote growth? institutional incentives and constraints of local cadres. *Forum for Development Studies*, 25(1), 97–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.1998.9666077>
67. Cai, W. (2011). *Zhonggong zhengzhi gaige de luoji: Sichuan, Guangdong, Jiangsu de gean bijiao*. Wu-Nan Book Inc, 193-194.
68. Cai, W. (2011). *Zhonggong zhengzhi gaige de luoji: Sichuan, Guangdong, Jiangsu de gean bijiao*. Wu-Nan Book Inc, 11.
69. Cai, W. (2011). *Zhonggong zhengzhi gaige de luoji: Sichuan, Guangdong, Jiangsu de gean bijiao*. Wu-Nan Book Inc, 183-184.
70. Law, W.-W., & Ho, W.-C. (2011). Music education in China: In Search of Social Harmony and Chinese nationalism. *British Journal of Music Education*, 28(3), 371–388. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0265051711000258>
71. Pye, L. W. (1995). Factions and the politics of guanxi: Paradoxes in Chinese administrative and political behaviour. *The China Journal*, 34, 35–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950132>
72. Cai, W. (2011). *Zhonggong zhengzhi gaige de luoji: Sichuan, Guangdong, Jiangsu de gean bijiao*. Wu-Nan Book Inc, 193-194.
73. *Decoding Chinese politics*. Asia Society. (2023, June 1). <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/decoding-chinese-politics>
74. Shimizu, A. (2017). Daibashiti kara kenri housho he: Toranpu ikou no beikoku to “LGBT boom” no nihon (tokushuu <LGBT> boom no hikari to kage). *Sekai*, 895, 134-143.
75. Itakura, K. (2021). *Rethinking Gay Liberation: Sexual Minority Movements in Contemporary Japan* (thesis). University of California Davis, Davis.
76. Wallace, J. E. (2018). *Being LGBT in Japan: An ethnographic study of the politics of identity and belonging* (thesis). University of Leeds, Leeds.
77. Lee, M. Y. H., & Inuma, J. M. (2023, April 12). Japan is hostile for LGBTQ people, but attitudes are shifting. Slowly. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/04/12/japan-lgbt-rights-same-sex-marriage/>
78. Tamagawa, M. (2017). Coming out to parents in Japan: A sociocultural analysis of lived experiences. *Sexuality & Culture*, 22(2), 497–520. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9481-3>
79. Kuwahara, R. (2019, May 20). Things to know about the LGBT community. nippon.com. <https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/c05903/things-to-know-about-the-lgbt-community.html>
80. Yamamura, S. (2022). Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the transnationalization of LGBT\* activism in Japan and beyond. *Global Networks*, 23(1), 120–131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12423>
81. Fujita, A. (2018). Changing perception of LGBT people through performances – theater and television in America and in Japan. *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, 17, 54–71.
82. Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. (2016). Jiminto seitekishikousei jinin no tayouna arikata wo juyousuru shakai wo mezasu tameno wagato no kihontekina kangaekata. *Seisakutokuho/Jiyuminshutoseimuchousakai*, (1504), 1-7.
83. Okada, K. (2019). “Fukanzen ni” kuia: Seiteki shoususha wo meguru aidentiti/bunka no seiji to LGBT no “seisansei” gensetsu ga motarashitamono. *Nenhou Cultural Studies*, 7, 7-26. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32237/arcs.7.0\\_7](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32237/arcs.7.0_7)
84. Bruszt, L., & Stark, D. (1991). Remaking the Political Field in Hungary: From the Politics of Confrontation to the Politics of Competition. *Journal of International Affairs*, 45(1), 201–245. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24357065>
85. Brady, A.-M. (2010). *Marketing dictatorship: Propaganda and thought work in contemporary China*. Rowman & Littlefield, 175-198.

86. Brady, A.-M. (2009). Mass persuasion as a means of legitimation and China's popular authoritarianism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(3), 434–457. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209338802>

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of BSP and/or the editor(s). BSP and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.

87.