CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Master thesis

2022   **Qingyun Cai**

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Sang Culture: A Pessimistic Subculture in The Chinese Cyberspace

Master Thesis

Prague 2022

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Academic Year: 2021/2022

Bibliographic note

Abstract

Since the reform and opening-up, China's economy has maintained rapid growth. However, since 2008, economic growth has shown a slow trend, and Chinese society is entering a "new economic normal". As China is currently in a period of social transformation, there are problems such as excessive housing prices, a widening gap between the rich and the poor, increasingly severe class solidification, and an unsound social security system. Against such a social background, the Sang culture emerged in 2016, which is opposite to the positive energy ideology advocated by the Chinese mainstream culture. It has the characteristics of negativity, self-mockery, and depression, which the Chinese youth group has dramatically resonated with. Mainstream news media represented by the People's Daily generally regard Sang culture as a kind of youth spiritual opium and a problematic subculture. The popularity of any subculture has its deep-seated reasons. Therefore, this thesis will combine the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis to research the significance of Sang culture on the Chinese internet, which is stigmatized by the discourse of the Chinese mainstream media represented by the People's Daily based on positive energy ideology. The result shows that Sang culture is a kind of self-mockery and helpless expression of Chinese young people. On the surface, it is negative, but it contains a positive attitude. Therefore, Sang culture is more like an emotional performance. As a result, Sang culture, which is negative on the surface but contains positive elements inside, reflects the current social situation and collective anxiety of Chinese youth and mirrors the condition and mentality of contemporary Chinese youth.

Keywords

Range of thesis: 76 pages and 145166 characters

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.

2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.

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Prague 02.08.2022   Qingyun Cai

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1. Introduction

The youth group is versatile, rebellious, open to challenge and innovation, and receptive to new and alternative things, thus creating a variety of subcultures. As the American psychologist Erikson (1994) said, "In any period of time, adolescence means above all the louder and more visible part of the peoples." Therefore, the youth subculture is an indispensable part of the human cultural structure. With time, the youth subculture has increasingly attracted the attention of society and academia. It has become the hot spot and focus of current cultural research. Entering the 21st century, the new network media technology is advancing by leaps and bounds. The Internet has penetrated every corner of human society, and the entire media environment has profoundly changed. The new network media context provides new living space and communication platform for the creation and development of youth subcultures. Compared with the traditional mass communication period, the online youth subculture has taken on a brand-new appearance regarding expression or communication mechanisms. Thus, Sang culture is such a new look.

Subcultures are frequently viewed as either threats or dangers; some see them as mainstream consciences (Tao and Hu,2011:86). The Sang culture has been regarded as a "problem" and a "threat" by the mainstream media since the moment it attracted attention because the nihilism it represented ran counter to the positive energy ideology advocated by Chinese mainstream values. On January 9th, 2019, mainstream media released the review standards for short online videos in China, one of which is to prohibit short online videos from promoting Sang culture. But at the same time, some scholars have different voices. They think that the Sang culture should not be demonized, the reason why contemporary young people are "Sang" is not because they are not trying to work hard. Instead, Sang youth group has tried to pursue success, but they failed due to various problems such as the high competition in today's Chinese society. After many failures and setbacks, they then became a group of "Sang". Through the Sang culture, they appropriately lowered their goals to adjust their mentality and avoid falling into despair, which is a way of self-protection.

Therefore, this chapter will first introduce Sang culture's development in China. Secondly, different perspectives on Sang culture in the academic field will be analyzed. I will then point out in what sense the previous research on Sang culture lack and how my analysis of Sang culture might help compensate for it.

1.1 Introduction of Subculture

Culture is the sum of the material and spiritual activities and survival of a social group different from similar groups (Tao, 1998). Although culture is rooted in history, it changes frequently. Every cultural group has the right to maintain and develop its own cultural identity (Cultural rights in a global world, 2006). As a significant social and cultural phenomenon, since the mid-20th century, the subculture has had a more significant impact and influence on the dominant culture, social order and moral norms. When the word "subculture" is mentioned, it is essential to note what culture is called a culture? And why does it have the attribute of "sub"? What is its chosen reference scale? First, what culture represents is an ability, a human ability to use symbols to convey meaning and value. As Leslie White pointed out in the book "Science of Culture", Culture is the only way of life that only man has (2005). Therefore, culture is a unique window to understand human behavior. In the long-term development process of the interaction between culture and human beings, culture has shown the characteristics of pluralism, behind which there is a unique contextual understanding of a type of people. Blending and intervening, in short, will lead to a comparison of cultural forces, resulting in a distinction between strong and weak. In the process of western industrialization and urbanization, society has changed. The class and cultural consciousness have been fragmented and reconstructed. More and more groups have begun to want to integrate into the new society and to speak out together through the understanding of cultural homogeneity within the group (Hu, 2008).

In such a context, a different sense of belonging, identity, resistance, and rebellion are on the stage of culture, and together they form the boundary between mainstream culture and subculture. Subcultures are non-mainstream, niche, and localized cultural phenomena that correspond to the mainstream culture. In the 1940s, the Chicago School of American sociology formally introduced the term subculture to describe the deviant groups in the emerging cities. In the perspective of cultural studies, subcultures are subordinate cultures that challenge the dominant culture through stylized and alternative symbols to build identity (Gordon, 1997). It

has three main characteristics: first, the subculture is "resistant"; second, the subculture is "stylized"; third, the subculture is "marginal". A youth subculture is a cultural form that is different from and interacts with the dominant culture of the society and is an indispensable part of the overall culture of the community. The concept of youth subculture highlights the resistance consciousness of youth consciously keeping a distinction from the dominant mainstream society and can better reflect some specific behavioral expressions and cultural and political demands of youth. The development of youth subculture research has gone through three stages: the Chicago School period (the 1920s-1960s), the Birmingham School period (the 1960s-1970s), and the post-Birmingham School period (the 1980s-present).

The Chicago School Robert Ezra Park explained the deep roots of urban subcultural communities with the theory of "Social Disorganization" and laid an early theoretical foundation for the study of youth subcultures (Gelder and Thornton, 1997:24). His idea of "deviant youth" holds that the marginalized youth groups are unable to keep up with the rapid urbanization movement due to their weaknesses and difficulties and are thus thrown out of the leading social structure, resulting in the failure of traditional norms and community relations to regulate and monitor them, thus forming a marginal subculture. In the view of the scholars of the Chicago School such as Robert Parker, the subcultural groups are marginalized minority groups who are expelled from the social structure by the leading social groups and incompatible with social norms and ethics, causing problems and disturbances to society. In order to fight against the dominant social culture, they have formed unique counter-cultural and anti-social cultural practices, such as drug addiction and promiscuity. When the Chicago School scholars analyze the relationship between marginalized groups and the mainstream social structure, they ignore the active resistance of marginalized groups and the multiple expressions of their forms of resistance" (Hall and Jefferson, 2006).

Different from the Chicago School's theory of youth subculture, the Birmingham School has a more positive value judgment when explaining the meaning of youth subcultures, initiating the second phase of youth subculture research. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was established at the University of Birmingham in 1964, represented by scholars such as Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Dick Hebdige. They explored the symbolic representation of youth subcultures from a deeper political context, especially the practical political significance of "ritual resistance" (Hall and Jefferson, 2006:4). They also conducted a more in-depth and detailed investigation of various subcultural phenomena that emerged after World

War II, for example, rogue youth, punks, moderns, etc. They tried to incorporate many dimensions such as class color, intergenerational conflict, and gender difference. The study of Birmingham's early subcultures is a good example of how to explore the profound meaning behind the phenomenon of youth subculture and broadens the vision and path of subculture research. One of the scholars who laid the foundation for studying early subcultures in Birmingham was Phil Cohen, who put forward the theory that subcultures are for problem-solving. In his book "Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community", he used ethnographic methods to investigate the working-class youth subculture in the East End of London. He interpreted the youth subculture from a class perspective, linked the disintegration of the working-class community to the subculture as an imaginative solution for the working-class youth, and for the first time used "class" as an essential indicator for examining the youth subculture, turning the long-standing "generational model" of the youth subculture into a "structural model" (1997).

At the same time, "resistance", "style", and "inclusion" have become the keywords of the Birmingham School's subculture theory. "Style" is the core issue in the Birmingham School's subculture theory. Stuart Hall and other scholars emphasize that "the interpretation of the style is actually the interpretation of subculture" (2006). Scholars of the Birmingham School have carried out research on subculture style from different perspectives such as construction, expression, and meaning. Cohen (1997) believes that the style of subculture groups provides important social significance and is intrinsically related to social and cultural changes. It is mainly composed of three elements: image, conduct and jargon. In "Subculture: The Meaning of Style", Hebdige (1979) concluded that the style of subculture is mainly constructed by three means: bricolage, parody, and homology. He believes that the provocative color and resistance meaning contained in subculture is manifested through style. Group style indirectly expresses the challenge to the hegemony of mainstream culture and shapes the image of subculture group cultural rebels. In the view of the scholars of the Birmingham School, the subculture of working-class youth is not only not a manifestation of decadence and depravity. On the contrary, it consumes cultural products and media texts in a positive way, appropriates all the commodity symbols that can be used, and forms its own cultural meaning. It uniquely critiques the current society, forming a symbolic and ritual resistance to the discourse of ruling power. However, this kind of subcultural resistance style is mostly focused on the entertainment and leisure field. It is just a means of imaginative problem solving by the subcultural group.

Both the Chicago School and the Birmingham School regard the youth subculture as a whole, which is a cultural practice with a high degree of commonality that is excluded from the dominant culture. And the relationship between the subculture and the mainstream culture is more attributed to the "Resistance and Incorporation" model. But since the 1980s, influenced by Western neoliberalism and consumerism, and the rise of the Internet, the youth subculture has presented a series of new cultural symptoms. The subculture theories and positions of the Birmingham School have also been widely questioned both internally and externally. The term "post-subculture" was first coined in 1987 by Chambers in his book "Maps for the Metropolis: A Possible Guide to the Present." As a derivation of the concept of "post-modern society" in the field of subculture, post-subculture is intended to illustrate the mixed identities of subcultural groups in the increasingly pervasive age of cultural symbol consumption and the age of complex and changing new media era (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Stephen Redhead, one of the representatives of post-subculture research, believes that post-subculture theoretical research needs to break away from the social restraint model, pay attention to individual people, and focus on the practical significance of personal subculture (Ma, 2010). Post-subculture theorists also generally believe that the Birmingham School's research on youth subcultures concentrates mainly on age and class, ignoring other variable factors to a large extent (Ma, 2015). Therefore, it has certain limitations of the times, and it is urgent to change the observation perspective. In general, the related research on "post-subculture" provides new analytical tools and conceptual methods to deeply analyze the behaviors of subcultural groups in postmodern society. The prominent representatives include scholars such as Andy Bennett, Douglas Kellner, Angela McRobbie, and Stephen Redhead, whose theories have been called "post-subcultural theory". The post-subculture school believes that contemporary youth subcultures are complex and changeable. Those subcultural groups that the Birmingham school used to value because of their weak identities (such as proletariat, youth, people of color, women, or homosexuality, etc.) have lost the social basis to which they can attach themselves in the current era of consumer culture with extremely mixed and varied identities, and naturally have lost the 'heroic spirit' of' ritual resistance, or even the possibility of ritual resistance (Li, 2018).

In the early 21st century, under the influence of the Internet and the wave of globalization, subcultural groups and subcultural styles have presented new and diversified patterns on a global scale. On the one hand, youth subcultures are dependent on the media and cannot be separated from the media as a carrier; on the other hand, the media are also shaping,

reproducing, constructing, stimulating, and giving birth to various forms of youth subcultures. These new subcultural groups and the status-expression behaviors present a state of fusion and hybridization. Therefore, scholars from the post-subculture school such as Sarah Thornton, and Michel Maffesoli put forward a series of new concepts such as subculture capital, scene, and neo-tribe. According to Will Straw, "scene" is an essential concept in post-subcultural studies, which is opposed to the fixed idea of class that often transcends regionality. The spatiality of the scene - the gathering of people who transcend class because of hobbies and related aesthetic feelings, the variability and temporality of the scene show the characteristics of the post-subcultural turn (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004).

Michel Maffesoli (1996) proposed the concept of "neo-tribe", which emphasizes the increasing fluidity and instability of various social relations in the post-subcultural period. In his view, the new tribe does not have the rigid color of various organizational forms in traditional society. It no longer simply relies on central power to maintain internal order, but more points to a particular atmosphere or mental state, which can bring members a certain sense of belonging and strengthen the emotional bond between subcultural groups. Because postmodern individuals seek not only self-identity, but also group identity. Under this concept, taste, aesthetics, and hobbies replace the dimensions of class, race, and gender as the main factors that divide youth cultural groups. Bennett (2004) introduced this concept to post-subcultural studies, noting that "new tribes" capture better than "subcultures" the changing nature of young people's musical and stylistic preferences, and the essential fluidity of youth cultural groups.

The post-subculture research also conducts in-depth research and reflection on the relationship between subculture and business, power, and media. In the research paradigm of the Birmingham School, subculture and business are in an antagonistic relationship, and subculture is always facing the crisis of being incorporated by the business. Sarah Thornton (1995) examines the relationship between subculture and power in detail in her book "Club Culture: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital". Through in-depth research on dance clubs and rave culture, she argues that the relationship between subculture and dominant culture is not an absolute confrontation but is more complex and subtle. Although subcultures often contain resistance ideas, group members are usually in a state of uncertainty and unconsciousness when participating in subcultural practices, and the Birmingham School over-politicizes the intentions and behaviors of young people. Thornton (1995) also puts forward a different view on the relationship between subculture and media. She believes that the formation and

development of subculture often depend on the propaganda of the media. However, the media's criticism of subculture for the purpose of suppressing may cause a certain degree of moral panic. On the other hand, it also increases the popularity of subcultures and their groups, accumulating subcultural capital, and she even calls it "a priceless public relations activity". In general, post-subcultural theory downplays the class factor and emphasizes the important role of hobbies, consumption and media in the formation and maintenance of subcultural groups.

1.2 The Development of The Chinese Subcultures

Hu (2008) used the term "spreading" to describe the growth state of the Chinese subculture, which is unable to find a starting point, or even a center, and it swept over silently and uncontrollably. Generally speaking, different from the overall radicalism of Western subcultures, Chinese subcultures grew up in the matrix of Confucian traditional culture. Although they also showed differences or dissatisfaction with mainstream culture, their spirit of resistance was relatively weak. Instead, they tried to express their voices, hobbies and self-entertainment more. The reasons for the emergence of contemporary youth subcultures in China are complex. Youth subcultures sometimes manifest the generation gap, caused by the excessive cultural gap between young people and their parents in education, leisure and entertainment. Sometimes they are the product of ideology and the media, the result of the exaggerated and demonized treatment of them by the power class and the media due to moral panic (Hu, 2008). Fundamentally, the emergence of subcultures has a profound and specific social psychological and cultural context. From the perspective of social psychology, youth subcultures come from the identity crisis of adolescents. As a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, adolescence is the most prone to identity crisis or confusion and is in the stage of self-exploration. As Erikson (1994) argues, identity is the individual's confirmation of self-identity, representing the most important achievement of the adolescent self. When unable or unwilling to solve problems, some teenagers adopt an evasive attitude and collectively try to create a new set of value systems, such as advocating fashion and being obsessed with common idols, in order to confirm a collective identity and strive for cultural space. This is also the reason for the emergence of the fans subculture. At a deeper sociocultural level, the youth subculture is the result of the resistance of disadvantaged groups to hegemony, a symptom and metaphor of social change and crisis, providing symbolic solutions to unfair

and unreasonable social lesions, and an extended challenge to the strong culture and power class (Hu, 2008).

The 1980s belong to the "shout" culture of the "angry youth generation". In China, the "angry youth" as a subcultural group formed in the late period of the "Cultural Revolution" and appeared among those educated youth who could not return to the city for various reasons during the movement to go to the mountains and go to the countryside. The actual contradiction between wanting to return to the city and having to stay in the countryside caused them to feel firmly abandoned by society, and the loss of ideal disillusionment turned into a strong sense of cynicism. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1978 ushered in a new era. Romantic expectations for the future, reflections on pain of the past, genuine curiosity about foreign affairs, and all kinds of emotions are intertwined, making young people want to stride forward but at a loss. When this kind of confusion mixed with depression encountered rock music, the angry youth culture with subcultural characteristics was born. With a distinctive style of music, Cui Jian sang the young people's desire for love, the fearlessness of "having nothing", and the yearning for freedom, giving the most distinctive features of the angry Chinese youth in the 1980s. For example, unique and profound thinking about social reality; the ideal and romantic construction of the future; the fanatical pursuit of freedom, and the true love for life (Yan, 2019). The 1990s and 2000s belong to the mockery culture of the nonsensical generation. The absurd culture originated in Hong Kong, with Stephen Chow's comedy films as the primary means of communication, language, and behavior, which seem to have no logical connection as the main narrative method. Exaggeration, self-mockery, and jokes are the main styles, showing a kind of neurotic humor in conflicts, and disrupting order in neurotic humor (Bie, 2016). The 2010s belong to the participatory culture of the virtual generation. The participatory culture was initially proposed by the American communication scientist Henry Jenkins in his famous book "Textual Poachers" in 1992. He points out that participatory culture is a new paradigm of media technology construction, characterized by relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic participation, supporting the creation and sharing one's own breakthroughs with others. It is also a kind of mass culture, because every individual has the opportunity to participate in the creation and dissemination of culture and become a producer and circulator of meaning (Jenkins, 2012). Participatory culture is a social process, emphasizing cooperation and co-production. And the interpretation of individuals is constantly consolidated and shaped through discussions with others (Yan, 2019).

To sum up, no matter whether the style of the Chinese youth subculture since the reform and opening-up is radical, mockery, or participatory, its value function is not like the youth subculture in Western society, which inherently contains class antagonism, power suppression, and conflict confrontation. It has a complex and even serious contradiction and conflict relationship with mainstream ideology. Therefore, regardless of the expression of the Chinese youth subculture, it always operates within the framework of the mainstream ideology, and always maintains the same direction as the mainstream ideology.

1.3 Genealogy of Sang Culture

In early 2016, a photo of actor Ge You from more than 20 years ago became popular on social media such as Sina Weibo. The stills are from the most popular sitcom "I Love My Home" in the 1990s. In the stills, the character played by Ge You is slumped on the sofa with half of his body slanted. His catchphrases are "I don't want to do anything", "I just want to be paralyzed like this", "It's boring to live" and so on. Chinese netizens said after seeing it, "isn't this the state of me at home? Life is so tiring, I want to lie down." The stills were then widely disseminated and made into emojis with text, named "Ge You-esque slouching" with the word "I'm almost a waste" attached (See figure 1), arousing public solid resonance.

Figure 1. The image of Ge You-esque slouching (I'm almost a waste)

Subsequently, in the process of spreading Ge You-esque slouching emojis, the word "Sang" gradually emerged, which was used to refer to this kind of exhausting physical or emotional

state. At the same time, around "Sang", a series of cultural expressions such as emojis, texts, and videos appeared. Therefore, the so-called "Sang culture" first refers to the emotional state of "Sang" and its cultural representation. In the ancient Chinese language, the word Sang means to escape and loss. In the modern Chinese language, one meaning refers to feeling down and unlucky, and another definition refers to something related to death such as the funeral. However, in modern Chinese language usage norms, the word Sang (丧) is usually used to describe negative mental states such as feeling down and unlucky. The extended meaning related to death is only used in specific situations (Du, 2017).

The Sang culture was initially called "a small bad thing", a term related to the once-popular Japanese subculture of "*shōkakkō*", which means a small good thing or little but certain happiness. The connotation of "*shōkakkō*" is very rich. To trace its origin, it first came from an essay "Afternoon on Langerhans Island" by Haruki Murakami, a best-selling Japanese author. He writes,

> "buying back the fragrant bread that has just come out of the oven, standing in the kitchen while slicing with a knife and grabbing a corner of the bread; the feeling of jumping into a swimming pool with no one and no ripples in the morning and pedaling on the wall; listening to Brahms chamber music while staring at the autumn afternoon sun, drawing the shadow of leaves on the white paper window; on a winter night, a big cat quietly and lazily burrowed into his bed..."(Wan, 2013).

In his book "The Way to Find the Vortex Cat", which was published in 2007, Haruki Murakami said:

> "In order to discover 'A small good thing', you need to have some kind of self-discipline. It's like drinking a cold beer after a strenuous exercise... If you don't have this kind of 'A small good thing', your life will just be a desert." (Lin, 2005)

It can be seen that Haruki Murakami's original interpretation of "A small good thing" refers to the small and certain happiness in daily life. This kind of happiness is different from significant

achievements, big ambitions, and big careers. It is both small and easy to obtain. On the contrary, "a small bad thing" refers to some unavoidable, ongoing daily life troubles. "A small good thing" focuses on the gain, but "a small bad thing" focuses on the loss. Therefore, many young people like to use words such as "nothing" and "nothingness" on the Internet to express this loss emotion of Sang culture, which reflects the fragile mental state of Chinese urban youth under high pressure.

One year after the term "a small bad thing" appeared, in early 2017, an article titled "The first batch of post-90s generation has become a monk" attracted many people's attention. The article introduced a kind of Buddha-like lifestyle for young people born in the 1990s. The term "Buddha-like" is derived from Chinese Buddhism, which means whatever will be, will be. Just let nature take its course. The article is accompanied by a still of the Korean drama named "Reply 1988" (See Figure 2). The still shows the protagonist standing in front of the temple gate and looking into the distance. Since then, the still has made the term "Buddha-like" popular in China, becoming one of the top ten popular buzzwords on the Chinese Internet in 2018.

Figure 2. The image of a Buddha-like mindset

In 2021, Sang culture had a third manifestation, Tangpingism, which means lying flat. The term comes from an article named "Lying flat is justice". In the article, the author writes,

"I haven't worked for more than two years, and I've been playing. I don't think anything is wrong. The pressure mainly comes from the positioning of the people around you after comparing each other and the traditional concepts of

the elders. I can be like Diogenes who only sleeps in his barrel and bask in the sun, or like Heraclitus who lives in a cave and thinks about 'Logos'. Since this land has never really had a thought that exalts human subjectivity, then I can make it for myself; lying flat is my wise movement, only lying flat is the measure of all things. Since there has never been a trend of thought that raises the subjectivity of man in this land, I can make it for myself. Lying flat is my wise movement, only lying flat is the measure of all things."

Therefore, "Tangpingism" refers to a life philosophy in which people decide to give up the traditional Chinese lifestyle that everyone works hard to save money without concerning their health and constantly produces anxiety, and take the initiative to reduce their own desires, thereby relieving the pressure of survival. The emergence of the term "Tangpingism" is related to the 996 work system in China, which involves working six days a week from 9 am to 9 pm. Chinese people not only accepted this work system, but even began to involution it. When the term "involution" was first used, it meant that after human civilization had reached a specific, generally stable stage of development, and the following development situation may stagnate or it may not be able to be transformed into another advanced model, so that under the same investment, the marginal benefit will decrease (Liu, 2020). But during the discussion of the term "involution" on the Chinese Internet, the meaning is gradually transformed into a description of excessive competition. For example, if more individuals compete in the same competition with the same set of resources, the bar for gaining resources will be increased, and all competitors will need to put up much more effort to achieve it. However, this sort of effort frequently serves to force people into a pretty straightforward and homogenous rivalry that takes place in a relatively confined competitive environment, limiting their ability to access resources and opportunities. Tangpingism consequently developed in opposition to this form of unwarranted rivalry.

When commenting on Sang culture, many commentators tend to regard it as a sudden cultural phenomenon, ignoring that any cultural phenomenon has its continuity. In fact, Sang culture can be traced back to the former diaosi/loser culture in China. The term "diaosi/loser" is synonymous with self-referentiality among grassroots youths in China. They regard "tall, rich and handsome" and "white, rich and beautiful" as imaginary enemies, and call themselves "diaosi/loser" which refers to "short and poor", and "soil, fat and round". They focus on highlighting their low-income family background, poor image and low culture, placing them

vulnerable and disadvantaged position, reflecting Chinese society's social structural contradictions. The "diaosi/loser culture" has then formed a deconstructed subculture, which has both the courage to challenge authority and the decadence of self-contempt. Therefore, in a sense, the Sang culture is a youth subculture developed based on "diaosi/loser culture". However, compared with the original diaosi/loser culture, the particularity of the Sang culture is that it jumps out of its own emotions to generalize emotions, and does not explicitly point to a specific personal emotion and feeling. So those people who want to express but dare not express, will gain the confidence to express it. As a semi-joking buzzword, it finds an intersection between public and private, as well as a safe zone between melancholy and depression, which will not seem to make a fuss, and will not be misinterpreted as having a mental disease.

At the same time, due to the popularity of Sang culture, a number of cultural products have also been produced and entered the consumption space. One of the representatives is Sang Tea, which is a milk tea shop that promotes the marketing of "Sang culture", and it has only been open for 4 days. It features depressing names for drinks, such as mediocre black tea. In addition, a song called "Feeling My Body Is Hollowed Out", which is from the Shanghai Rainbow Chamber Music Troupe, has become a representative of Sang culture. This song describes scenes of young white-collar workers being forced to work overtime by their bosses, while satirizing workplace chaos and telling how difficult life is in a humorous and absurd style, which has aroused enthusiastic responses among young people. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sang culture refers to people's depressed words and deeds after being frustrated in study, work, love, and so on. It may be a decadent word, a desperate expression, or a sad piece of music, etc (Qi, 2018).

1.4 Literature Review on Sang Culture

As a definite concept, Sang culture was first proposed in 2016. In September 2016, Guangming Daily published a current affairs commentary titled "Guiding young people to stay away from the erosion of Sang culture". The article argued that long-term immersion in a negative "Sang culture" will have a great negative impact on personal growth and social harmony. It is necessary to guide Chinese young people to be positive and completely stay away from the erosion of Sang culture. Since then, reports on the topic of Sang culture topic have gradually

increased, which has aroused research interest in Chinese academia. Many academic papers have emerged to research the problems and causes of the "Sang culture" of Chinese youth from multiple perspectives.

According to China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), which is an integrated national web database system providing almost all the Chinese academic and professional publications, 97 literatures are found by searching the keyword "Sang culture". Through the analysis of these literatures, it can be found that the research on Sang culture in Chinese academia mainly focuses on the following aspects.

First of all, there is currently no specific, clear, and unified definition of Sang culture in Chinese academia. Some people think that current name "Sang" is not a strict name, it generally refers to a subcultural phenomenon that is popular in online social media. The main manifestation of this phenomenon is that some young people use decadent and sad emojis, pictures, videos, and texts on the Internet and social media to express that they have lost their goals and hopes in real life and have fallen into a state of decadence and despair. While some believe that the rise and acceptance of Sang culture is a microcosm of young subculture in the age of new media, reflecting the spiritual traits and general angst of contemporary Chinese youth. It serves as a reflection of young people's social attitude and psychology in contemporary Chinese culture to some extent (Li, 2018).

Xiao (2017) is the first scholar to define "Sang culture" in Chinese academia. He defines "Sang culture" from the perspective of popular groups, manifestations, and essential characteristics. He believes that "Sang culture" is language, words or pictures with emotions and colors such as decadence, despair and pessimism that was popular among Chinese young people. It is a new form of youth subculture, mainly represented by the image of "Ge You-esque slouching". There are also many scholars having revised, supplemented, or re-elaborated the "Sang culture" definition of Xiao's. Among them, Shi (2017) believes that "Sang culture" is not a strict name, but a generalization of a subcultural phenomenon that is popular among young people on the Internet, showing a decadent state of Chinese youths losing their goals. You (2018) believes that "Sang culture" presents the reality of young people's self-mockery and hopelessness through symbols and other forms, and is a negative expression of Chinese youth values under the combined influence of consumerism and social media. Pang (2018) believes that the previous definition of "Sang culture" is too general. Based on her analysis of the formation

process and group characteristics of "Sang culture", she defines "Sang culture" as: "Relying on the Internet social platform, the Chinese post-90s youth group expresses their dissatisfaction and helplessness with the pressure of reality in a self-deprecating and entertaining way through pictures, text, music, video, etc. It is a youth subculture that reflects the cultural representation of the decadence and powerlessness of Chinese youth". Dong (2018) explains from the literal and extended meaning of "Sang", and argues that "Sang", as a kind of subculture, has surpassed its original meaning, has become a set of exclusive words with rich cultural connotations, and is also an attitude integration. Wei (2017) focused on discussing its origins when he defined "Sang culture". He believed that there are currently three views on the origin of "Sang culture" in Chinese academia. The first is that the Sang culture comes from Japan's *shōkakkō* subculture; the second is emphasizing that the "Sang culture" is a social product of a specific period; the third is that the "Sang culture" is the product of the combined effect between Chinese culture and foreign culture in the context of the digital internet era. Zhu (2018) argues that since the "Sang culture" is still developing and changing, it is difficult to define such a youth subculture accurately. To sum up, due to the fact that the youth Sang culture is still in a state of flux; the formation process of the Sang culture is relatively complex; and the source of the Sang culture is still unclear, etc. It is difficult for Chinese scholars to define it precisely. And most of the Chinese scholars mainly explain the Sang culture from a single perspective. Thus, the Chinese academia need to further define, unify, and improve the concept of Sang culture in the future.

Secondly, for the analysis of the causes of Chinese youth Sang culture, scholars mainly focus on social psychology, journalism and communication, linguistics, youth subculture and other perspectives. In terms of linguistics, Wei (2018) believes that the word "Sang" has multiple meanings with changes of context. He interprets the meaning of "Sang" in ancient Chinese, modern Chinese, buzzwords, and other semantic systems to compare, and believes that the word "Sang" now obviously has the meaning of self-mockery and depression and is more used to relieve the pressure of life, and its usage is more open. In terms of the style of Sang culture, Chinese scholars mainly study the construction, decoding, and the transformation of Sang culture style. Pang (2018) used in-depth interviews, online ethnography, and questionnaires to find that the post-90s youth group in China constructed the style of Sang culture using bricolage, parody, and homology, and comprehensively used the two modes of structure and generation to interpret the meaning of "Sang culture". She finds that gesture of resistance has become a strategy for the Sang group to build cultural identity and achieve self-preservation. Li (2018) follows the ideas of the Birmingham School, and mainly used the structural model to decode

the style of Sang culture. He argues that Sang culture is the imaginative solution of the contradictions in the class structure by the post-90s youth group and the mild resistance to the mainstream positive energy culture. Zhu (2018) proposes that the resistance meaning of subculture formation in the past has been weakened in the phenomenon of Sang culture in China. There is a transition of Sang culture from the specific behavior of small groups to the generalization of the masses. Shi (2017) also puts forward a similar point of view. She thinks that Sang culture as a digital era subculture has distinct postmodern characteristics, showing a state of powerlessness and boredom that is different from the characteristics of carnival, and replaces resistance with emotional catharsis. The Sang culture, as a subculture, has weakened or even disappeared the resistance characteristics that it should have.

The third category studying the reasons for the popularity of Sang culture is based on the perspective of social psychology. Du (2017) explores the internal motivation of Sang culture from the perspective of individual psychology and uses the theory of "learned helplessness" to analyze the psychological motivation of young people's loss. He pointed out that the current Chinese living environment and the pressure of life are the causes that lead to the inner "loss" of young people. Sang culture contains complex cultural connotations, not only numbness and self-denial, but also self-reinforcement and carnival, which form a self-irony that is different from other youth subcultures by means of denial. Xiao (2017) argues that Sang culture is an emerging youth subculture, and its emergence and popularity are caused by the widespread anxiety among young people in the Internet age. Therefore, Sang culture reflects the social mentality and social psychology of young people in the new era of China. Dong (2017) believes that the relative sense of deprivation caused by social structural contradictions, the uncertainty of risk society, and the excessive consumption of emotions under market economy conditions are the realistic reasons that affect the positive mentality of the post-90s youth group. Therefore, from this perspective, it can be concluded that there are four main reasons for the emergence and popularity of Sang culture. First is the simulation of reality by Internet technology; the second is the "self-stigmatization" of youth; the third is the role of the collective unconscious; the fourth is the emotional contagion effect of the digital age.

From the perspective of journalism and communication, Dong (2017) emphasized the role of technological progress in promoting Sang culture. In addition, Ma (2018), Shi (2018) and other scholars believe that the rapid development of new media platforms is an important social background for the dissemination and popularity of "Sang culture" among Chinese online

youth. It can be considered that "Sang culture" is the product of the integration and localization of foreign cultures and youth subcultures in the context of new media. From the perspective of semiotics, "Sang culture" is usually spread rapidly on the Internet in the form of emoji pictures, which has also caused many scholars to analyze and study it from this perspective. Ma (2018) used the concept of semiotics to analyze and interpret "Sang culture", arguing that audiences with the same emotions are likely to resonate with the coders, so as to spontaneously reveal their emotions and psychological states through "Sang" symbols. Therefore, it can be concluded that the popularity of Sang culture has the following four reasons. The first is the fragmentation characteristic of the digital era; the second is the batch of emojis and the arrival of cultural carnival; the third is the combination of technology and capital has led to the intensification of Sang culture marketing; the fourth is the tribalization tendency of social media has led to the formation of Sang culture into a specific cultural circle.

There is also another category studying the influence of the negative impact of Sang culture on Chinese youth, especially college students. Su and Jia (2019) start from the post-subculture theory, through the analysis of Sang culture's style construction, online scenes, and ideographic practice, to reflect on the value of Sang culture. They think that Sang culture is an idealized solution to social and self-problems for young people, and they need to be vigilant about the values behind it. Liu (2020) uses semiotic theory to select various popular symbols on the Internet as the research content to analyze the main elements of Sang culture. He believes that Sang culture can give young people a sense of self-release and ease their emotions, but it should also be noted that Sang culture also contains nihilism. Hao and Zhang (2020) believe that Sang culture is no longer simply an online subcultural form that triggers inner resonance and self-mockery among young people. Nowadays, due to the wanton marketing of young college students by online media using the subculture elements of "Sang", some young students' material desires continue to expand, which can easily lead to psychological imbalances and become more frustrated. Therefore, colleges and universities must attach great importance to the dissemination of Sang culture, so as to prevent college students from going astray due to Sang culture.

To sum up, there are three factors that contribute to the prevalence of Sang culture: first, a significant proportion of young people use the Internet as a platform to subtly express their negative emotions that cannot be resolved in daily life; second, young people engage in Sang culture as a form of "active stigmatization" in opposition to "stigmatization" from mainstream

culture; and third, the prevalence of Sang culture is a result of the unintentional influence of the collective unconscious. Most of the research content of Chinese scholars is to analyze the overall style and popular factors of youth Sang culture. They summarize the content, characteristics, forms, and mechanisms of Sang culture from the specific production and dissemination, so as to answer what Sang culture is, why it is popular and how it is spread. They basically use qualitative research methods especially interviews, and problem-solving perspectives to analyze what is "Sang culture". There is no quantitative method being used to analyze the Sang culture group, nor the discourse analysis perspective for the Sang culture. Besides, by reviewing the relevant literatures, most scholars have emphasized that Sang culture has important harm to the values of contemporary Chinese youth, and corresponding measures need to be taken to correct it. Only a few scholars believe that the popularity of youth Sang culture may have potential positive effects.

2. Theoretical Framework

Sang culture is a post-subculture associated with emotional expression. Thus, this research will be based on the following five related theories. They are stigma power and labeling theory, panopticon theory, dramaturgical theory, and carnival theory.

2.1 Stigma Power and Labeling Theory

Stigma originally referred to the use of a scorching iron to leave marks on those who serve God, with religious connotations. Later, it was changed to refer to the use of thorns or irons to leave marks on the bodies of slaves or criminals to indicate their social hierarchy and low status, and to achieve the role of warning and avoidance in public (Goffman, 1986:1). In 1963, Erving Goffman published his book "Stigma—Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity", which conceptualized stigma and placed stigma in the framework of relationships and analyzed it at the level of face-to-face individual interaction. Goffman's definition of "stigma" comes from two levels. Firstly, it is the social settings that people can predict their types and characteristics through the first impression of their appearance, that is, their "social identity", and convert these predictions into normative expectations and legitimate requirements. This is the "virtual social identity" of the individual in the social situation. Secondly, it is the symbols that refer to the signs that convey the enduring characteristics of an individual. These symbols are the types and characteristics that individuals really possess and can be demonstrated, that is, "actual social identity." Taking mental illness as an example, Goffman pointed out that the reason why mental illness becomes a kind of stigma is that the behavior of mentally ill patients constitutes a challenge and threat to public order. Goffman further pointed out that the existence of stigma is not a problem of the stigmatizer, but a defect of social rules and public order (Goffman, 1986:148). Thus, in Goffman's view, stigma is a deviant label of social construction. The generation of stigma is actually the result of social construction, produced by social rules and public order.

After Erving Goffman, social psychologist Edward Jones and other scholars replaced Goffman's "symbol" with "mark" as a starting point for understanding stigma, viewing "mark" as the pre-process of "stigmatizing", and focusing on the micro-dynamic process from "mark"

to "stigma". In the view of Jones et al.(1984), the process of stigmatization begins with people's perception and labeling of deviations from social norms, and on this basis, an overall impression of the bearer of the mark is formed, realizing the transformation of stigma research from static interpretation to dynamic explanation. Signs are not stigmatized, and being marked does not necessarily mean being stigmatized. The transition from marking to stigmatizing, and from being marked to being stigmatized, is achieved through the process of "impression engulfment" (Jones et al, 1984: 8-9). From an early point of view, the sociology school continued the tradition started by Erving Goffman of linking stigma to deviance and used label theory to do so within the context of symbolic interaction theory, focusing on the process by which society continuously creates the connotation of deviance through language and symbols. Scheff (1966) pointed out that the deviance label changed people's perception and role definition of specific individuals, while the response of "deviance" to social rejection further solidifies their own role of "deviance" and strengthens their tendency to deviance, resulting in the inability to restore normal social role. Stigmatization is a dynamic process that stereotypes the negatively biased traits of a group, hiding other traits in the process, and turns into a "referential" feature that fundamentally corresponds to the traits of the group. In this process, one of the most common strategies used by the powerful and unstigmatized parties is "labeling". Labeling theory is a perspective that does not view heretic behavior as an inherent property of a particular social behavior but as the result of social explanations by which those behaviors are labeled as a heretic "label". This theoretical orientation is particularly relevant to Becker's discourse (1963). In his book "Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance", Becker argues that social groups create deviance by making rules and applying those rules to specific people (especially disadvantaged groups), marking them as outsiders (1963). Therefore, deviants are not deviant themselves, but those who are successfully labeled deviance, and deviance becomes the consequence of using rules and punishments for violators. This theory emphasizes the shaping and strengthening of deviant subcultures by the powerful state media, laws and regulations, and mainstream culture.

Bruce George Link et al. (1989) improved the labeling theory, pointing out that the combination of label internalization and social discrimination leads to the social withdrawal of the labeled person and further worsens their own living conditions. Link and Phelan (2001) introduced the concept of power based on social structure into the study of stigma, pointing out that it is a problem of "stigma power", and stigma is entirely the product of social, cultural, economic and political power. They believe that stigma is composed of five elements: labeling

(marking differences), stereotypes (negative impressions), separating (distinguishing others from me), status loss (social devaluation or self-deprecation), and discrimination (social exclusion). The power (the power difference between others and me) directly determines whether these five elements produce stigma. In Link and Phelan's view (2001), stigma is a product of power differences, manifested in the relationship between power, the dominant class and the disadvantaged. In short, only the socially, culturally, economically and politically dominant classes can stigmatize correspondingly disadvantaged groups, and never the other way around. The abstract idea of society as the subject of stigma has therefore been given a substantive substance "power" as a result of the introduction of the concept of power, and stigma is no longer only a marker of the distinction between deviance and social laws and public order. It is one of the ways that conflict between the various power classes within the power structure is expressed. Stigma is a social feature that results from a one-sided power dynamic known as "naming," in which one group places a negative label on another group or individual. Its formation process is accompanied by continuous social construction and social cognition. Stigma is a dynamic description of this process.

Phelan, Link, and Dovidio (2008) conceptualized stigma, and pointed out three purposes can be achieved through stigma, which are exploitation and domination (keeping people down), normative coercion (keeping people in) and disease prevention (keeping people way). When all three approaches are implemented, what Bourdieu's (1992) calls "misrecognition" is achieved: a divided, unequal, and irrational social order is rationally legitimized. Whether it is a higher social status group or a stigmatized group, they are right to accept this set of social governance techniques. The stigmatized person may not feel that they are stigmatized, or even get used to being in a low self-esteem situation and may not realize that they are actually serving the interests of those in power or stigmatization indirectly.

2.2 Panopticon Theory

As a discourse expression, stigma has become a means of social power discipline while formulating restricted areas and establishing authority. This can be traced back to Bentham's Panopticon. The basic principle of Bentham's panopticon (2017): a ring-shaped building surrounded by a watchtower in the center. Create a conscious and constant state of visibility in the prisoner, thereby ensuring that power operates automatically. It is so arranged that

surveillance has a continuous effect, even if surveillance is actually intermittent; the perfection of this power should tend to make its practical use unnecessary; the architecture should be a means of creating and maintaining an independent mechanism of power relations among power actors. In short, the prisoners should be conditioned by a power situation in which they themselves are the carriers. Bentham proposed a principle that power should be visible but unknowable. The so-called "visible" means that the prisoner should constantly witness the tall silhouette of the central watchtower peeping over him. The so-called "unknowable" means that the prisoner should not know whether he is being peeped at at any time. Panopticon architecture is a mechanism that decomposes the binary unity of seeing/being seen, so that power is no longer reflected in a person, but in a certain unified distribution of body, surface, light, and gaze. This kind of arrangement of the internal mechanism can produce relationships that constrain each individual (Bentham, 2017).

The spatial configuration of people in the Panopticon creates a situation where people are classified, authenticated, evaluated, compared, differentiated and judged through the norms of the organization. This in turn makes people isolated and differentiated. In addition to this, this spatial configuration provides ideal conditions to train and correct people in accordance with organizational guidelines. Thus, the eternal gaze experienced by a person living in an individual space is actually a "normalizing gaze". These people experience that they are always being evaluated according to the norms or standards of the organization. This routine gaze perpetuates all the little punishments of time, activity, behavior, speech, body, sexuality (Foucault, 2012). After the invention of archives, people's lives can be recorded at any time, and it also reinforces the practice of normalizing and individualizing people. In this way, people are "mastered and anchored in words" to facilitate the collection of statistics and the design of stereotyped norms, which means the construction of comprehensive knowledge about people as one. According to Foucault, this description of people, "transforming real life into words", became an important means of social control. Therefore, archives can be used to record, objectify, and subject people.

In 1970, Foucault's inaugural speech "The Order of Discourse" when he took office as a member of the French Academy discussed the relationship between discourse and power (Garcia Landa, 2014). Simply put, those in power have more resources and capabilities to define the society, to give meaning to some subjects, and to evaluate a fact. These discourses make the defined groups lose their power and are at the disadvantage of being defined and

constructed, so the discourses are sent again to maintain the power of those in power. Later, Foucault further realized that power not only restricts discourse in a negative way, but also creates it in a positive way. According to Michel Foucault (2012), power is not something that is exclusively possessed by some people but is diffuse and the relationship of various forces in operation. Discourse is a tool for exercising power, and it is also the key to mastering power. Every group and individual both exercises power and obeys power. Stigmatization is a way of creating discourse, and it is also a manifestation of discourse power. At the same time, this kind of power is not only controlled by the outside world, but also comes from people's spontaneous obedience and acceptance. This is because the panopticon offers a modern power structure. This system of control depends on "normalizing judgment." It offers a system of societal control that prevents individuals from evaluating themselves in light of their moral principles and personal beliefs. Instead of judging people's performance in accordance with how often they "mistake," this type of social control assesses them in accordance with a predetermined standard. Therefore, the issue is not "doing the incorrect thing," but rather "failing to perform at the appropriate level or to complete the assignment." Anyone who deviates from the organization's rules and standards ought to be disciplined. In addition to objectifying individuals and their bodies, this modern power mechanism also actively recruits people to engage in self-repression by molding their own lives to fit the expectations or standards of the organization.

2.3 Dramaturgical Theory

American scholar Erving Goffman elaborated the idea of dramaturgical theory in more detail in his book "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life", arguing that the interactive behavior of people in social life is a kind of performance to some extent, and answers the question of why and how to perform. In the early days, scholars' research on dramaturgical theory was mostly concentrated in the field of sociology. With the popularization of the Internet and the development of new media technology, the application of dramaturgical theory in cyberspace, especially the research on self-presentation in cyberspace, has begun to receive attention (Zhou, 2015: 13-15).

At the same time, according to Joshua Meyrowitz's "media scene" theory (1986), the flow of information bridges the boundaries between media and physical places. Media and space

together build a new mode of social interaction and information dissemination for people. In addition, the most fundamental thing about electronic media is that it affects people not through the content, but through changing the scene of social life (Meyrowitz, 1986). Therefore, the direct impact of media innovation and subversion on subculture is that the changed "scene" provides the possibility that the current youth subcultural groups tend to perform. The virtual stage in cyberspace gives netizens the opportunity to participate in brand-new role-playing games, and to shape and present their self-image through the performance of cyber theatre (Su and Jia, 2019).

Consequently, the behavior of the Sang culture group is in line with the "dramaturgical theory", that is, impression management strategy. Goffman (1959) argues that in order to establish an ideal image in interpersonal communication, members of society will deliberately dress up and packaging, and intentionally or unintentionally control their own words and deeds, and even hide their true thoughts and characteristics. In particular, the virtuality and anonymity of cyberspace provide convenience for every individual in it, and individual behavior presents the characteristics of more freedom, randomness, and selective self-expression. What they say and do in cyberspace can also be regarded as just for the purpose of creating an ideal image, which may not be consistent with the real-life status. People carry out series and performances on the social stage, and always manage their own impressions in the group to varying degrees. Positive and beautiful self-presentation at the frontstage may not be in line with the real backstage inner world. The negative expression of individual self-denial may also be just an impression management strategy. This kind of unique expression style can attract more attention, and the weakness of speech can also arouse the sympathy of others and obtain emotional comfort from others.

In addition, from the "Blue Book of Social Mentality: Research Report on Social Mentality in China (2018)" mentioned in the first part of this thesis, it is found that although the average happiness of the post-90s group is lower than that of other groups, the group evaluates their own living standards and quality from the past, the present to the future, showing a gradual upward trend, and they also hold a more positive and optimistic attitude towards their future life expectations. This proves from the side that the negative mentality is not the real mental state of contemporary young people. The positive cultural core is hidden under the appearance of Sang culture negative energy. The Sang jokes that young people talk about are just kind of

spices on the road to pursuing their dreams. After complaining and venting, they will still work hard on the road.

2.4 Carnival Theory

Since ancient times, human beings have had the tradition of carnival, which can be traced back to the ancient Greek civilization. As a cultural form that is highly subversive and deconstructed in the eyes of modernism, "carnival" has a long history, and its manifestations are also rich and colorful. According to research, the predecessor of various Western traditions "carnival" originated from the "Bacchus Festival" in ancient Greece in Europe and the "Saturnalia Festival" in ancient Rome. In these carnival festivals, people can talk freely, enjoy wine, and abandon the original rigid hierarchical order. They can communicate equally and intimately and indulge themselves without restraint and scruples. This is just like the meaning of "Bacchus" and "Bacchus Festival" in Western culture, that is, it symbolizes the indulgence of emotions.

Faced with the continuous and far-reaching influence of cultural forms such as "Carnival" on human society, in the 20th century, European academia began to systematically study Carnival culture from a theoretical level for the first time. Among them, the master of carnival culture is the literary theorist and critic of the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Bakhtin, who made a pivotal contribution to the development of carnival theory. In his book "Problems of Dostoevsky Poetics" published in 1929, he first proposed the discussion of carnival culture and established the important concept of carnival theory. Since then, he has made a comprehensive and rich explanation of the carnival theory in the book "The Creation of François Rabelais and Folk Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance". He has profoundly discussed the carnival culture of European folk tradition and explained the essence of carnival spirit. Bakhtin's carnival theory has an important premise, that is, the division of two worlds. In his view, the first world is a serious, hierarchical world of order. In the European Middle Ages, the church ruling class had unlimited power over the commoners and slaves, so the common people lived a routine, rule-bound daily life. The second world is a carnival square life, which is in a state of confrontation with the first world, a completely "upside-down world". Through the sorting out of Bakhtin's Carnival Theory, it can be found that it contains three important conceptual categories: Carnival, Carnival-style and Carnivalesque. In carnival theory, the most important feature of carnival is "square-style free life", which is completely different from the

regular life under the church rule, which was subject to a strict and rigid hierarchical order. Carnival-style consists of the sum of all the rituals and norms that are carried out at carnival. Carnivalesque is "a whole set of universal language that expresses the specific perceptual forms of symbolic meaning formed at carnival, from large-scale and complex mass dramas to individual carnival performances," which reveals the universal significance of carnivalesque in social culture, that is, the transformation and penetration of all carnival-style celebrations, rituals, and forms in literature, poetry, and other social literary genres.

John Fiske, one of the representatives of popular culture study, used the carnival theory to explain his understanding of popular culture in his book "Understanding Popular Culture". He believes that popular culture is produced and created by the masses themselves, which contains the original class antagonism and is manifested in TV, film, and novels. A common scenario is that people try to escape the control of the power groups over the masses. Hence, in daily life, people always resist in social conflicts in order to fight for their rights and enjoy the meaning and pleasure they get from it. Moreover, from John Fisker's point of view, this kind of pleasure is similar to the unrestrained feeling of carnival behavior, which looks like a carnival game. This game aims to let the public vent their emotions and obtain a kind of liberation (2010).

Therefore, the resistance of Sang culture is such a playful ritual resistance. Buddha-like youth is not really a monk and lying flat is not a complete abandonment. The so-called "Sang" is not a real depression, but an online carnival of youth Sang group. Because of the heavy social pressure, the post-80s and the post-90s youth groups often face many real dilemmas that are difficult to achieve and surpass in reality. Due to the technical characteristics of social media platforms, anonymity and randomness allow Internet audiences to communicate and interact without concealing their true identities, giving them greater freedom of speech. Faced with the real pressure of society and the pervasive anxiety in the virtual space, the youth Sang culture group chose to conduct the "Sang" ritual performance and worship carnivals in an anonymous way. The discourse behind this is actually a playful expression of casualness and amusement, and it is also a deconstruction and subversion of the seriousness of the mainstream discourse system in current Chinese society.

3. Methodology

The People's Daily considers Sang culture as a kind of spiritual opium, and warns against the negative impact of the popular Sang culture (2017), and that Chinese youth should resist the Sang culture and be vigilant against the cultural erosion it brings. Additionally, the article "lying flat represents justice" was deleted shortly after it was published. However, from two surveys about Chinese Sang cultural groups in 2017 and Chinese Social Mentality in 2018, they show some different results compared to the reports of the People's Daily on Sang culture.

According to the 48th "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China", as of June 2021, the proportion of netizens aged 30-39 in China is 20.3%, the highest proportion among all age groups. The proportion of aged 40-49 and aged 20-29 netizens accounted for 18.7% and 17.4% respectively, ranking the second and the third among all age groups. It can also be seen from this report that the groups in the 1980s and 1990s are currently more active on the Internet in China. At the same time, according to the "Blue Book of Social Mentality: Research Report on Chinese Social Mentality (Wang, 2018)" released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, it is found that the average happiness of different age groups shows a trend of two highs and one low in the middle. Among them, the average happiness of the post-90s generation is only 4.03, which is lower than that of other age groups. Therefore, the post-90s youth group, as the backbone of the netizens, is prone to feel a lot of pressure. In addition, young people often use alternative and unique expressions to show their individuality, which provides a group basis for the popularity of Sang culture.

In 2017, UC Big Data conducted a survey on Chinese Sang cultural groups. The study found out that among the Sang culture groups, the post-80s accounted for 50.41%, the post-90s accounted for 35.42%, the post-60s accounted for 13.88%, and the post-70s accounted for 0.28%. Meanwhile, in terms of geographical distribution, unexpectedly, the first-tier cities Beijing and Shanghai ranked fourth (1.95%) and fifth (1.87%). Instead, the top three cities are Guangzhou (2.73%); Chengdu (2.18%); Shenzhen (1.99%). The last city is Tianjin (1.4%). At the same time, occupations with greater overtime intensity are more sensitive to the Sang culture. So the top three are Internet practitioners (25.03%); advertising practitioners (20.06%), and students (15.88%). The least Sang group is scientific researchers, accounting for only

0.43%. Among them, the main behaviors of Sang culture are procrastination; staying up late; staying at home; sighing, and self-deprecating. The number one Sang song is "Feel like my body is being hollowed out." After sorting out the reasons behind Sang culture, UC Big Data found that mid-life crisis, singleness, high housing prices, and work overtime have become the main reasons for people to feel very "Sang". This report also found out that the ideal life of Sang group is actually very simple: to have a job with more money and less work close to home, no need to work overtime every day, and no need to be too leisurely. So they can have fun and live an optimistic life. Although they complain about "being hollowed out" and "don't want to work overtime" every day, they are still willing to use their work to create value for the society and constantly improve themselves in it. At the end of the report, it also draws to a positive conclusion: the young people who created the Sang culture are not passive, but only in this way as a reflection on life and humor, and a resistance to the predicament. There is no doubt that this big data report has updated the existing definition of Sang culture, which refers to young people born in the 90s who, in real life, have lost their goals and hopes, become aimless and stumbling, and can only survive like a walking dead numbly. Thus, this report describes and presents the Sang culture in a more comprehensive and detailed manner. Although this big data report only analyzes Sang culture based on users' media expression behavior in cyberspace, it provides another perspective on Sang culture to some extent.

From the above data, it can be seen that the youth Sang group has great expectations for the future, and at the same time, they work hard for it. Thus, the cultural core of "Sang culture" is not completely negative. It reflects the current Chinese social situation and collective anxiety of Chinese young people. It is also a mirror that reflects the mentality of contemporary Chinese youth, which seems hopeless and powerless, but it is actually a different way for young people to express "I want to talk to the world". Therefore, my research questions will be 1) What is the significance of Sang culture on the Chinese internet, which is stigmatized by the discourse of the Chinese mainstream media represented by the People's Daily based on positive energy ideology? 2) What kind of perspectives of Sang culture has been chosen to frame in the People's Daily's reports according to the critical discourse analysis? 3) Based on the Qualitative Content Analysis, what are the characteristics of Sang culture on the Zhihu Q&A website compared to the People's Daily? From this perspective, this research can be a supplement to the current research on Sang culture.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough formally proposed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in 1989, but critical analysis as a method of language research was first proposed by critical linguists Fowler and Kress in 1979. Unlike traditional discourse analysis, which focuses on text, grammar, vocabulary, or rhetoric, CDA is society-oriented and adopts an interdisciplinary research approach, combining knowledge from multiple disciplines such as sociology, political science, communication, and psychology to interpret discourse and reveal the relationship between language, power, and ideology. In particular, the CDA focuses on the important role of social, historical, and cultural factors on discourse, shifting the focus of analysis from within linguistics to outside linguistics, and closely linking language and social practice. Moreover, while emphasizing the influence of society on discourse, CDA also pays attention to the reaction force of discourse on society, and fully recognizes the role of discourse on social change and reproduction. CDA pays particular attention to the unequal power relations that prevail in society, focusing on issues of power and control, as well as legitimacy and illegality. A field closely related to this research focus is politics. Because the core of politics is to distribute and use power, and language is a way to achieve politics. To accomplish certain political actions or achieve certain political goals, politicians often use language as a medium to achieve. Therefore, political discourse with strong power and ideological significance has become the focus of CDA.

In CDA, there are several commonly used concepts and terms. The first is Critical. The purpose of "critical" is to expose and correct various distortions and misinterpretations of objective facts, and to reveal how language is used to exercise control and cause or maintain social inequality (Fairclough, 1995). The second is Discourse. Different scholars have different explanations for the definition of discourse. For example, Verschueren (2001: 50) argues that discourse refers to any spoken or variety of language use. Fairclough (1992) regarded discourse as a social practice of representing the world. Although different scholars define discourse differently, what they have in common is that discourse is regarded as a form of social practice. In short, discourse refers to any spoken or variety of language use. The third is Power, which Fairclough (1992: 26) defines as "domination or leadership across the economic, political, cultural and ideological fields of society". That is, power can be seen as the possibility of having one's own will within a social relationship against the will and interest of others (Weber,

1980:28). The fourth is Ideology, which in CDA refers to the viewpoints and perceptions that people hold when they understand the world, organize, and summarize experiences (Fowler, Kress, and Hodge, 1979). And van Dijk (1995) defines it as "a political or social system of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups or other collectives". In other words, ideology is the basis for the social presentation of a social group. The psychological structure that provides the group with the basic principles and principles of social attitudes and beliefs. Discourse, power, and ideology are closely related. Discourse is an important tool for expressing ideology; ideology is an important factor in establishing and maintaining unequal power relations, as well as a means of changing power. Thus, discourse can establish, maintain, or change power relations between social groups through the expression of ideology. Individual or collective use discourse to create reality so that power relations are not challenged. CDA is to reveal the relationship between the three through the analysis of the context.

From macro to micro approaches, discourse analysis can be divided into five parts according to context and text. They are discourse-theoretical analysis; critical discourse analysis; discourse analysis; conversation analysis and sociolinguistics rhetorics. (Carpentier & Cleen, 2007). The critical discourse analysis is close to the macro approach, which means the analysis is focused more on the text's meanings, representations, and ideologies rather than the language itself. Thus, Fairclough's sociocultural analysis method relies mainly on his three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, which originally referred to "discourse as text, interaction and context" (Fairclough, 1989). Later, the concepts of "interaction" and "context" were replaced by "discourse practice" and "social practice" respectively, so that these three dimensions refer to text, discourse practice and social practice respectively (Fairclough, 1992). The text dimension refers to the linguistic analysis of the content and form of the text. It also draws on system-functional grammar, mainly analyzing vocabulary, grammar, semantics, and coherence and turn-of-speech in discourse organization; the discourse practice dimension is a bridge connecting the text dimension and social practice, focusing on the production process and interpretation process of text, which is related to the social cognition of text production and interpretation, and explains the interaction between text and society; the social practice dimension focuses on social analysis, placing discourse in the relationship between ideology and power, revealing how ideology and power intervene in discourse and discourse in various ways, and how to maintain, criticize, and reconstruct ideology and power. These three dimensions include the description of the text, the interpretation of the process of text production, distribution, consumption, and the explanation of sociocultural factors. Fairclough

(1985) believes that any discourse can be regarded as a kind of (1) text, including spoken and written language; (2) discourse practice, including text generation and interpretation; (3) sociocultural practice. (See Figure 3)
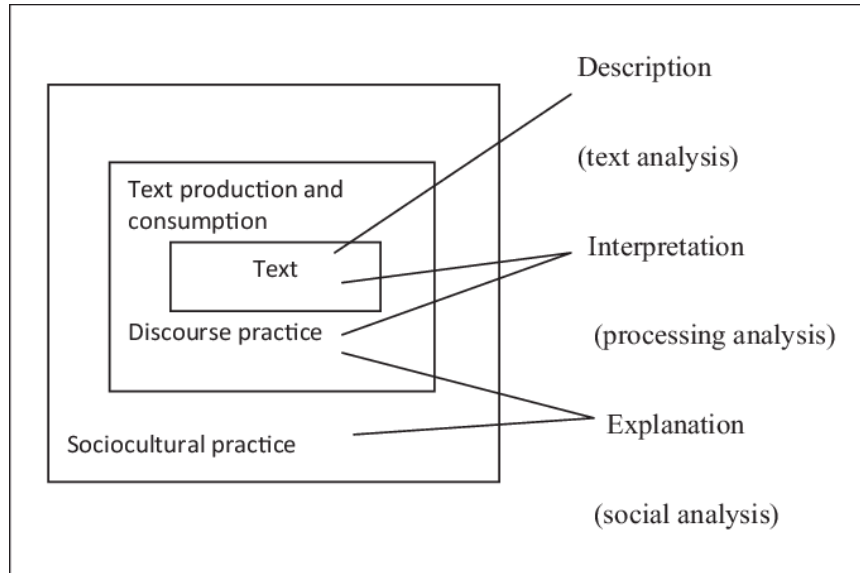
Figure 3. The model of Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989)

Discourse expresses ideology, and ideology establishes, maintains, or changes power. Hence, the critical discourse analysis theory will be the methodology in this thesis. It will be used to compare how the People's Daily and Zhihu, two different platforms, construct Sang culture. The results are obtained by comparing the differences in language characteristics such as vocabulary selection, genre structure and intertextuality of the two platforms.

3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

In contrast to other forms of social science study, content analysis does not require data acquired from individuals. It is also the study of information that has been recorded or that has been included in texts, media, or physical objects. In three ways, qualitative research is interpretative. It is concerned with symbolic content that must be interpreted; diverse interpretations of the same material might be legitimate; and it is concerned with research issues that explore personal or social meanings. Qualitative research has following features, interpretive; naturalistic; situational; reflexive; characterised by emergent flexibility; inductive; case-oriented and focused on validity (Schreier, 2012: 28). The process of methodically

characterizing the meaning of qualitative material is known as qualitative content analysis (QCA). It is accomplished by categorizing content as instances of a coding frame's categories. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is divided into two types: conceptual and relational analysis. The conceptual analysis will focus on the emergence of certain words inside texts. Aside from presence, the relational analysis will look into the links between the identified ideas.

QCA was originally designed to analyze and understand text, such as newspaper stories. The data for QCA is sometimes referred to as "text," which is used as a generic term here to describe all types of qualitative input, both visual and spoken. First, it must 'translate' all of the meanings in the material into the categories of a coding frame; second, it must categorize subsequent segments of the content based on these categories. This technique emphasizes three crucial aspects of QCA: it is a methodical procedure, it is adaptable, and it lowers data. Discourse analysis could be used with QCA. This is because discourse analysis is deeply concerned with the relationship between language and social reality, particularly when it comes to questions of power and ideology, as well as the investigation of realisations of inequality in and through language. Critical discourse analysis, in this sense, is less a method and more of an attitude toward research and your research question. 'What makes a research technique discursive is not the method itself, but the application of that approach to carry out an interpretative study of some type of text with the goal of producing a knowledge of discourse and its function in constructing social reality,' write Phillips and Hardy (2002, p. 10). In this way, QCA and discourse analysis can be combined by putting the QCA method to work for the critical-interpretive attitude underlying discourse analysis, which refers to its assumptions about the relationship between language and reality, critical outlook, concern with process, and consideration of what is left unsaid (Schreier, 2012).

3.3 Data Collections

3.3.1   The People's Daily

The People's Daily, often known as "Renmin Ribao," is the official newspaper of China. It is governed by the central committee's top-ranking propaganda division of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As a result, it is the only accurate approach to comprehend the leadership's perspectives in China and how it influences public opinion through "hegemony." This People's Daily method is also thought of as a command communication. The People's

Daily's editors must gather and communicate information from the top and ensure that the message is understood accurately. The editorial process is tightly under the central committee's authority. While this is happening, the editors must follow instructions from the CCP publicity department and do so in a proper manner (Wu, 1994). Therefore, the People's Daily is more like a propaganda agency or a government bulletin rather than a newspaper. In terms of changing public opinion, China's official media is more authoritative and powerful. The People's Daily is important to examine because of its ties to the Party-State and its guiding function as an educator. The publication's political and social ideas consequently represent the official position, and other news outlets frequently reproduce its pieces to maintain political decorum (Wu, 2005). As a result, it is the most significant media source for investigating the relationship between political and cultural hegemony and minorities (Huang, 2018).

Thus, this research chose the People's Daily reports by searching the "Sang culture", "Buddha-like", and "Tangpingism" as keywords, about 271 corresponding reports were obtained. According to the content, it can be roughly divided into two categories: one is to interpret and comment on the phenomenon of "Sang culture"; define the nature of "Sang culture"; analyze the reasons for its popularity and its influence. Another is to incorporate "Sang culture" into its own discourse system for conceptual transformation and meaning reconstruction and input official values into it to guide social ideological trends.

3.3.2   Zhihu Q&A Website

Zhihu is a question-and-answer website founded in mainland China in 2011, which is similar to the American online question and answer website Quora. With the increase of diverse community culture, Zhihu is more and more similar to a public discussion forum. Although there is a certain amount of censorship, if sensitive political information is generally not mentioned, the content on Zhihu is currently the most diverse among Chinese online platforms. Hence, this research will select the question "Why is 'Sang culture' so popular among young people?" as a sample, because this question has 50,382 followers and has been viewed 24,193,359 times. The highest answer has 82,000 likes. Therefore, the answers to this question can represent the people's point of view on Sang culture to a certain extent. The data were selected from high to low consent responses, from 82,000 likes to 10,000 likes, and 482 samples were obtained.

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1 Analysis of Zhihu Q&A Website

Table 1. Coding of Sang Culture

Opening coding	Axial coding	Selective coding
long-term negative(179). Does not study/work seriously (290). Perfunctory(311).Escape from reality(377). Retreat(204). Escape effort (341). Voluntarily lazy(231).Procrastination(267).	Negative-Sang	Type of Sang
Emotional catharsis(361).take a break (456).Important things don't lie flat(264). Lie flat orally(243). Sudden sang but short duration/easy to end the sang state(187). Regain positive energy(186). Psychological recovery(302).	Positive-Sang	
Sudden(178).moment(312).inexplicable(264)	Sudden emotion	
Study pressure is high(391). Housing costs are high(390). The cost of childbirth is high(268). Employment pressure is high(421).	Social living pressure	External environmental impact
The envy of successful people (167). Compare with people(321). Peer comparison/pressure (274).	Pressure from people around	
The pressures of the two generations are different(401). Can't relate to it(398). Wrong definition of sang (310).	Intergenerational impact	
Frustrated (378). Discouragement (341). Anxiety (451).Lost(402).Powerless(433).Unhappy(469).Sad(312).Exhausted(378).Tired(265).Distressed(402).Annoyed(290).Depressed(276).Irritable(278).Fear(411).Low sense of happiness(361).	Negative emotions	Personal Experience
Confused about the future(412).Not knowing the meaning of life(394).	A sense of meaninglessness	

Staying up late for long periods of time(403). Overtime work(435). Ineffective resistance(267).No power of choice(423).compromise(425)	Compromise of powerlessness	
Low self-esteem(249). Too many experiences of failure/Unable to accept failure/Fear of failure(462).Difficult(218).Poverty(477).	Self-doubt	
Reflection (213). Analyze the current situation(241).Country lifestyle (143).Seek new possibilities(423).The gap between ideal and reality(182).	Reflection on Reality	The purpose of active Sang
Planning life(342). Thinking about self-development(435).Life goals(361). Planning for school(276). Ideal life(413). Work Planning(217).	Future Planning	
Think about the meaning of life(437).Think about the definition of success(452).Clarity of self(378). Ordinary people(405). Low desire needs(269). Self-affirmation(304). Self-development thinking(421).Change(201).	Self-exploration	

According to Table 1, firstly, it can be found that the main reasons why young people advocate "Sang culture" include poverty (477), failure (462), unhappy (469), anxiety (451), powerless (433), compromise (425), fear (411), distressed (402) and other factors. At the same time, the positive meaning of Sang culture can also be found, that is, reflection (213), planning life (342), change (201) and so on. From this, it can be preliminarily concluded that most young people choose Sang culture because of anxiety caused by social pressure and failure experiences, which leads to the idea of compromising and escaping. "Sang culture" is synonymous with compromise. From this point of view "Sang culture" means more negative factors, but it also inspires to look at this phenomenon from different perspectives such as individuals and society. The Sang of most young people also brings some positive factors. For example, young people can get a rest (401) through Sang, so as to reflect, organize, and plan to better face future life and challenges. Secondly, "Sang" contains at least the following three meanings. First, as an

emotional state, "Sang" is a kind of "depression" with "anxiety" and "negative" emotion that makes people "unhappy". It contains both a heavy sense of "pressure" and "confusion" about the future; second, this emotional state is "temporary and has no reason", often "inexplicably suddenly lost" at a certain moment; third, when people refer to "Sang", they often involve "work" and "study", "house", "money", etc. In short, "Sang" can be understood as a kind of depression that is forced by various social reality pressures. The degree of depression is not deep, but it exists widely in the society. It occurs from time to time, and often it appears for no reason.

According to Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory (1959), the external display of self-beautification is not necessarily true, and even the self-doubt will disguise a positive face. According to the different attributes of the frontstage and the backstage, the performance area is divided. Therefore, the transformation process between the inner world of the backstage and the self-presentation of the frontstage can be divided into two categories: the inner and the presentation are consistent and the inner and the presentation are opposite. Specifically, it includes four states: positive in inner optimism, negative in inner optimism, negative in inner pessimism, and positive in inner pessimism (See Figure 4). Thus, according to the analysis, it can be seen that the "Sang culture" is basically in the blue position in Figure 4, which is a kind of self-irony and emotional release.
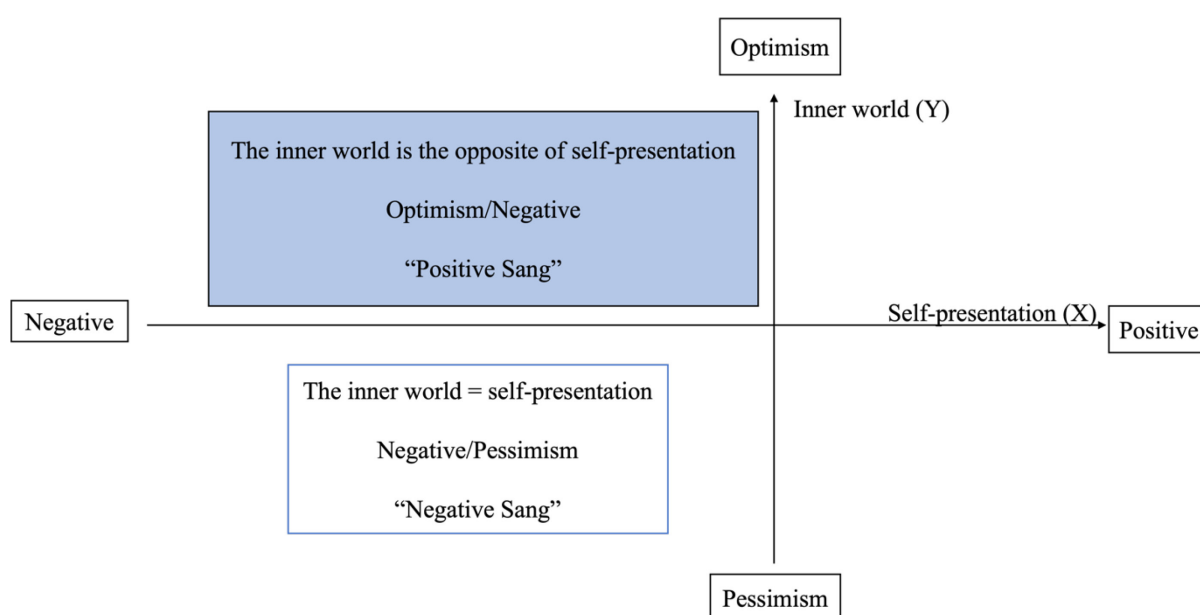
Figure 4. The model of Erving Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory

It can be seen from Figure 4 that the types of "Sang culture" are divided into "positive Sang" and "negative Sang". "Positive Sang", that is, a short-term break, restores physical strength through "Sang", maintains physical and mental health and sustainable personal development, and then be fully prepared for more important and necessary things in the future. After short-term Sang, people can get a clearer understanding of themselves, future plans, and life goals. This shows that some people support the existence of positive Sang. For "negative Sang", on the other hand, means long-term abandonment and compromise. It is more like a kind of helplessness and powerlessness about the social structure, and it is unlikely to see any possibility of change, or "can't see the future that I like", "What you see is that the increase in wages is far from the standard of buying a house, and young people need to bear a lot of debt. Therefore, if it is difficult to change this trend of the times, the only way people can choose is to adapt." As a result, "Sang culture" can be classified as such a situation (See Figure 5)
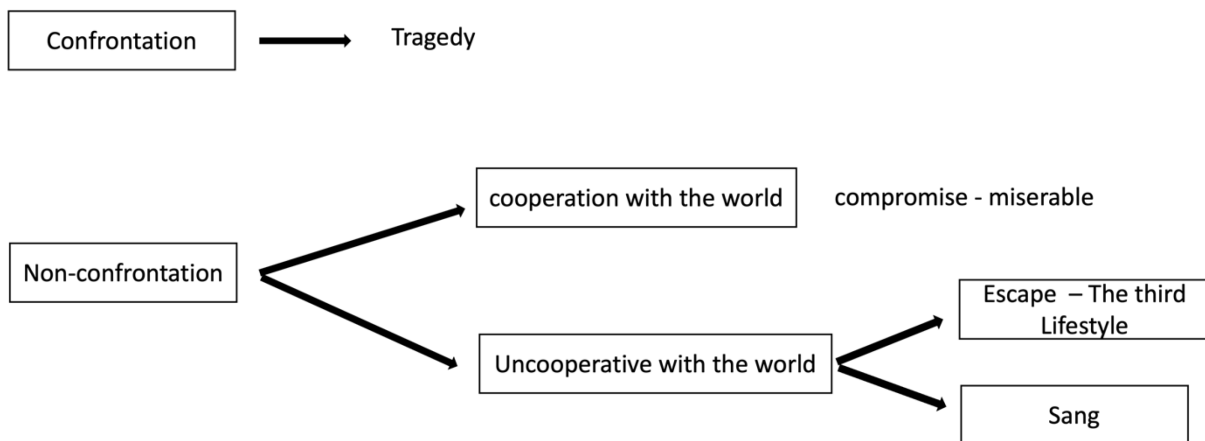
Figure 5. The situation of Sang culture

First of all, if people directly choose to confront the world or the system, then the result will be a tragedy, because the power of the individual is very weak, especially in a totalitarian state. This kind of tragedy is a life gesture that fails but still struggles, against external forces, uncompromising and finally is destroyed. Secondly, if you choose not to confront, the results will be divided into two situations. One is to choose to cooperate with the world or the system. It means choosing to compromise and will be in a passive state. That is, miserable, a kind of life gesture that compromises at the beginning without struggling against it. Perhaps there was some resistance at first, but because the external force was too strong, many chose to give up

totally. For Sang group, although it is also not resistant, it is a result of active pursuit. Not cooperating with the world is divided into two attitudes towards life. One is to live one's own life well and seek other ways of life-Country lifestyle (143), such as leaving first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai to live in cities with less stress; Another attitude is "Sang" which is an ironic gesture. If carnival is an open and overt subversion of power hierarchy, then "Sang" is a secret and private resistance to power. At the same time, it is also a kind of self-reflection, so as to recognize life and find positive forces in negativity. In term of reflexivity of Giddens (1991), Sang-culture then can also be regarded as a way of reflexive thinking about the self. "There is only one kind of heroism in the world, that is, after recognizing the truth of life, still loving life" (Zhou, 2015). This famous quote by Romain Rolland has become a popular illustration among Sang group. They think this quote is describing correctly of their "Sang" attitude, which is "Sang but not discouraging" The Sang culture in the second quadrant of Figure 4 is often manifested as longing for comfort through self-denial and venting of depression, resolving embarrassment, and a resurrection in self-mockery and ridicule. Furthermore, Sang culture can be used as an emotion management strategy and a defense mechanism, by reducing expectations as a way to deal with risk. The mention of Sang is not a pure negative emotion, but a state of relaxation and a state of comfort. Through "prevention before it happens" to eliminate anxiety about environmental uncertainty, which the so-called "think of the bad beforehand", and "If you don't have expectations, you will naturally not be disappointed."

This kind of emotional defense mechanism contains a certain degree of reflexivity, including not only self-examination on one's own behavior, but also reflection on Sang culture and its social factors. In this sense, sang culture often serves as a warning function. On the other hand, it is a reflection on self-awareness and behavior, or as an emotional outlet. As the reflexive "Sang" of the self, it has the possibility to be aware of, to face the "suffering of the self", and to provide the motivation for the action of knowing the suffering and still pursuing the self. When the reflexive thinking of the self tries to go further, it is impossible to "not lose at all". "Sang" in this sense means an ability to be aware of and face the "suffering of oneself". Allowing "Sang" means the courage to face up to anxiety and the inevitable self-suffering. This kind of "Sang" is unavoidable and should not be avoided. It may provide buffer and legitimacy for the actions of pursuing "self" despite knowing the "suffering of self". Moreover, Sang culture can be used not only as a defensive strategy, but also as a weak resistance. Since youths in Chinese society typically lack discursive capacity to achieve policy change (Meng, 2011),

the strategic usage of Sang narratives becomes a method to represent their 'thoughts as felt and feeling as thought' (Williams, 1961; Yan, 2006). Although this kind of resistance may not necessarily lead to a real logic of action, it is precisely because the actions taken after unexpectations that has a more positive meaning. As Raymond Williams (1961) argues, structure of feelings has something solid and definite that the word "structure" implies, but it also works in the most subtle and difficult-to-touch parts of behavior. This structure of feelings is the culture of an era. Today's young people see the possible direction but are held back by the heavy shackles of reality. Therefore, their enthusiasm gradually decreases in the struggle in situ, and Sang has become a way of discourse that can summarize various difficulties and uncertainties, reflecting some new clues of structure of feelings. On the one hand, Sang culture is the response of young people to an increasingly solidified society, expressing a kind of "structural despair". On the other hand, as an anxiety defense mechanism, "Sang culture" is also reflexive, becoming an outlet for the subject's emotional expression, a frame of reference for self-behavior, and a sensor of society.

In a nutshell, through the analysis of the answers of "Why is 'Sang culture' so popular among young people?" via Zhihu Website, it is found that there is a process of change and development in the state of Sang of the majority of young people, that is, they first enter a state of passive Sang under the influence of various reasons, such as being in a negative state in action and psychology. But in this pause process, due to personal characteristics and pressures from surroundings, it is impossible for them to completely give up, and there will be subconscious anxiety. At the same time, some personal experiences, such as participating in a certain activity, hearing a certain song, etc., will also lead them to discover the meaning of life, no longer be confused about the future, and establish life goals. It can be seen that the type of Sang culture is not necessarily black and white, but a fluctuating state between a positive state and a negative state. "Sang" in a positive state is a way of Sang culture that more young people choose, that is, a short-term rest in the face of various pressures. During the "Sang" process, people can reflect on life, improve self-awareness, and find their purposes of life. It can be said that actively Sang is a state of accumulation. However, few people are in a state of positive Sang from the beginning, and most young people choose Sang to silently resist because of their powerlessness and compromise against various social pressures. It is a passive defense measure and an escape from reality. How to use this escape time and how to better face yourself and your life situation is a factor that distinguishes negative Sang from positive Sang.

4.2 Analysis of The People's Daily

Table 2. The Definition of Sang Culture in the People's Daily

The Sang culture is extremely harmful to the growth of individuals and the harmony of communities.(23)
The Sang culture is negative energy. With the walking dead to describe are not too much.(11)
Distorted values, self-sinking "narcotics".(9)
Everyone should be highly alert to the dangers of the Sang culture(17)
If young people indulge in "Sang culture" for a long time and rationalize "Sang", it will also lead to distortion of their values.(21)
The young people who should be the spokesman of the ideal, the pioneer of the struggle, and the bearer of moral righteousness, how did they become the "walking corpse" with a withered description and no ambition at all?(7)
Youth should be a sunrise generation, but the result is a Sang appearance.(15)
Most of them may not be able to catch up even if they run, not to mention lying down and paralyzed.If we waste our good time in Sang, we will not let down our youth.(18)
Today is a critical moment, how can we choose to be Sang to treat our country and ourselves?(26)
Sang is an indulgence that is an excuse to deceive oneself for one's laziness, depression and even incompetence.(16)
Immersed in the "Sang culture", it is impossible to have a sense of gain and happiness in the struggle.(28)
Facing up to the loss of goals, the state of decadence and even numbness of the Sang youth, and reversing the imbalance of "material abundance but spiritual emptiness"(24)

Keywords of Definition

Fall-into(78).Bad(167).Unhealthy(198).Resist(85).Toxic(134).Self-deprecating(45).Spiritual opium(23).Wrong(198).Alert(94).Erosion(72).Anti-Motivational Quotes(32).Distortion(90).Lack(34).Indulgence(98).Excuse(21).Shameful(179).Irresponsible(201).

According to the first step of CDA (Fairclough, 1989), the text itself should be firstly analyzed. From the Table 2, it can be found that the People's Daily adopts negative words for describing "Sang culture", for example, wrong (198), shameful (179), bad (167), toxic (134), erosion (72), etc. It can be seen that the People's Daily defines "Sang culture" as young people in real life, if lose their goals and hopes, will fall into the quagmire of decadence and despair, and if they cannot extricate themselves, they will lose their minds, wander freely without purpose, no emotion, no consciousness, no restraint, and become a walking dead who can only survive numbly. This definition is too extreme and does not explain what kind of cultural phenomenon of Sang culture is; what kind of cultural style and significance of Sang culture it has, but only emphasizes the consequences of Sang culture. Besides, in the phenomenon construction of Sang culture in the People's Daily, it is defined as a kind of negative energy. The opposite of negative energy is the positive energy advocated by Chinese Communist Party (CCP). "Positive energy" is the term of spiritual psychology, which originated from the book "Positive Energy" by British psychologist Richard Wiseman. In the book, the human body is compared to an energy field. By stimulating the inner potential, it can make people express a new self, so as to be more confident, and be full of vitality. The "positive energy" in the new media culture refers to a healthy, optimistic, and positive motivation and emotion contained, generated and expressed in the words and deeds of the main body of the network (2013). But in the Chinese political context, it becomes an ideology. According to Bislev (2015), "Positive Energy" is a sort of "transcendental nationalism." The term "positive energy" emphasizes individual citizens' societal responsibilities in China. It is also used to legitimize the state's control over the internet in order to protect cyberspace's health and to create ideological consensus and public opinion. In 2013, "Positive Energy" was included in the "Chinese Inventory 2013" organized by the National Language Resources Monitoring and Research Center and the Commercial Press. Since then, it has actively promoted positive energy and opposed negative energy becoming the mainstream ideology in China.

Galtung claims that because conflict consists of inconsistencies and contradictions, it may be conceptualized as discursive and material. It is also considered as a breach of trust or hostility (2007:15). Conflict has been rendered as a topography by Lederach, referring to a diagram of the peaks and valleys of hostilities (2003: 11). Conflict may be examined via three lenses: the current circumstance, the surrounding environment, and the interpersonal relationship structure. Therefore, there is always a confrontation between victims and perpetrators when a battle is mentioned in the press. Meanwhile, news from various sides will convey different "truths" depending on propaganda, national interest, and other factors. As an illustration, the "victim" side may support their position and reject the position of the offender. Additionally, each side would symbolically destroy, demean, or vilify the opposition (Doudaki, 2020). When journalism reports on an event, it defines and affects the event rather than reflecting it, as Tuchman (1978: 184) contends. In terms of institutional news, it may legitimize the power and undermine the power of other players.

Since news may be both facts and tales at the same time, Van Dijk (2013) argued that it should be seen as a discourse for study. According to Kress, "discourse" is an ordered and structured type of language expression that generates certain meanings through a variety of means, including particular lexical combinations, syntactic structures, and other linguistic forms (1989:6). In an effort to shed light on the social significance of speech and the power dynamics that underlie it, Foucault strives to situate it in the broad framework of social practice. Considering the strong connection between discourse, knowledge, and power, it should be studied as constructive and interdiscursive. Power also has traits of its own. The power battle between discourses is, in part, determined by the political character of each discourse (1982). In the process of ideological development and reproduction, news discourse must also have news value in order to encourage spread. The distinguishing quality of an event chosen for a news story is its news value (Bednarek, and Caple, 2012). However, news may pick and choose which details to emphasize or downplay while reporting on an occurrence. News therefore reflects the presumptions of an image of social reality and organized society and also contains the naturalization and concealment of ideology. This type of technique is used to create and sustain value systems because it may foster and reinforce the public's values, political preferences, and social standards through appealing and convincing discourse (Gunster and Saurette, 2014; Doudaki, 2020:36). According to Leeuwen, legitimacy is dependent on the situation (2007:92). Only during a predetermined or chosen period of time and in particular social, cultural, or other political contexts did legitimate acts and discourses exist. Similar to

how Vaara contends that the act of legitimation is the production of an activity that is advantageous, favorable, intelligible, moral, or otherwise appropriate in a certain circumstance (2014:503; Doudaki, 2020). One of the primary themes of legitimation is naturalization. It renders the behavior or speech as common sense. As Thompson contends, because naturalization is a "state of affairs," it is possible to view a social and historical creation as a natural event. It can occasionally be seen as the inevitable result of inherited qualities (1992). Ideology may therefore become transparent and unnoticeable via naturalization.

American scholar James Scott (2021) put forward the analytic concept of "hidden transcripts" in the long-term observation of peasant resistance and peasant politics to summarize the characteristics of peasant behavior choices and ideology. "Hidden texts" are proposed as opposed to "public transcripts." As far as a confrontation is concerned, the power of the dominant and the subordinate is unequal. When the dominant is present, the subordinate's discourse appears as an "public text", while the "hidden text" is a backstage discourse to avoid direct surveillance of the power. Thus, "hidden texts" are made up of backstage discourse, gestures, and practices that determine, contradict, or change the content of the "public text". It is produced for different audiences and under different power constraints. "Hidden text", which should only be grassroots and the internal expression of groups in cyberspace, has spread from virtual space to real society through the Internet, changing the situation in which social hot words were mostly created by the official power in charge of the mainstream of society and ideology (Guo, 2002). "Hidden text", which should only be the internal expression of grassroots groups in cyberspace, has spread from virtual space to real society through online communication on the Internet, changing the situation in which social buzzwords were mostly created by the official power in charge of the mainstream of society and ideology (Guo, 2002). Furthermore, according to Bakhtin's carnival theory (1988), the subversion of the traditional order in the second world (civilian world) and the breakthrough of labels such as identity, wealth, and class in the first world have enabled the public to obtain a mutually equal status, and then they can ridicule, joke, and carnival passionately. The Sang culture group shares their own depression and helplessness through words, emojis, and videos, so as to gain resonance and achieve carnival. The discourse expressions in the "Sang" carnival of young people on the Internet imply a concern for the issues of the middle and lower classes of society based on fairness and value orientation. Therefore, in the Sang discourse expressions of jokes and irony, there is a strong sense of class antagonism hidden. For example, the concern about the

unfairness of the starting point in life between classes, "all roads lead to Rome, but some people are born in Rome".

Therefore, in the Chinese context, any discourse needs to refer to attitudes or emotions that are aligned with the ideological or value systems of the CCP party-state. When Sang culture is a discourse with negative energy, it stands on the opposite side of positive energy from the very beginning. As in Becker's (1963) labeling theory, a "deviance subculture" is created by powerful groups in society by making rules that favor their own interests and labeling a few disadvantaged groups that break the rules. The Sang culture, then, is shaped and reinforced by state media labeling it as a deviant negative energy.

Interpretation of Discourse Practice

Understanding how individuals use language to create meanings, social identities, social relationships, knowledge, or belief systems in the world and how speech serves as an ideology to uphold power relations is at the heart of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Brookes, 1995).

Table 3. Expectation-type terms of the People's Daily on Sang culture

Young people should have ideals and high aspirations while they are young, consciously enhance their studies, consciously devote themselves to youth, dare to love, dare to fight, dare to try, and insulate themselves from a decadent lifestyle. (21)
We hope that young people can get rid of the Sang and do their national responsibility with a more sunny, positive and upward-looking attitude. (27)
Struggle itself is a kind of happiness, and only a life of struggle can be called a happy life. Although the pressure from the outside cannot be ignored, but instead of complaining, it is better to catch up. Most of the aspiring young people will face the pressure and make their own way with struggle. No one's life is smooth sailing. To be defeated by small difficulties and to be influenced by the "Sang culture" from time to time is obviously not the right temperament for a contemporary youth. If we cry "involution" when we encounter pressure, and want to "lie flat" when we encounter setbacks, how can we change our lives? (14)

The coolest youth should not be defined by the "Sang culture", but should be a dream building built by struggle and sweat. The so-called "Buddhist youth" is a complete tragedy of youth, youth is too short, and it is impossible to take regret pills. Only to shoulder the national dream, carry the dream of family responsibility, is a brilliant youth without regret. If the young generation has ideals, skills and responsibilities, the country will have a future and the nation will have hope, this is the motto of life that Chinese youth should have. (7)

At any time, no matter what stage of development, struggle is always the brightest base color of youth. The choice to "lie flat" in front of the pressure is not only unjust, or shameful, such "poisonous chicken soup" has no value. (9)

China is the world's most populous country, with abundant labor resources and the advantage of a mega market, China's economic development has broad prospects. In other words, in this land, as long as one is diligent enough, one can still be self-fulfilling and self-achieving. (25)

If you are immersed in the language framework of "Sang culture" for a long time, you will inevitably be tainted with negative emotions, but in fact the real world is not like that. While a few people give up lightly, there are more young people who still choose to sweat and move forward with their dreams after recognizing the truth of life, creating a full life with their own hands. (26)

We must be alert to the erosion of the Chinese nation's spirit of hard work and tenacious struggle by Sang culture, actively guide the young people to inherit the revolutionary spirit and the spirit of struggle, maintain an optimistic and upward attitude towards life, and be strong, promising, and self-improvement. (20)

Struggle is the root of the achievement of career and dream. A good life needs to be achieved by struggle. Personal success, national prosperity, and national revitalization all need to be built on the basis of struggle. (16)

The wrong view of struggle of Sang culture is a subversion and deconstruction of the mainstream value culture, which runs counter to the spirit of the vigorous youth and is incompatible with the spirit of today's China. (14)

Unhealthy "Sang culture" can only be created by removing the "cancer" and creating a more prosperous, harmonious and beautiful cultural atmosphere(13)

Establish a correct outlook on life and values, and use them to lead your daily behavior. (13)

Keywords of Expectation-type terms

Mental state(78).Struggle concept(57).The hope and future of the country(137). The new era is the era of strivers(168). Youth is for struggle(198). Happiness is the result of struggle(201).Correct(266).Face up to the setbacks in life(189).Stay away from(54).The country is prosperous and strong(207).National rejuvenation(231).Chinese dream(255).Challenge(74).Struggle(56).Future Chance(87).Diligent(79).Chasing dreams(45).Change(70).Innovation(73).Opportunity(89).Work hard(67).Future(89).Self-worth(45)

According to Table 3, it can be found that Sang culture in the People's Daily's reports are usually connected with Chinese dream (255); struggle concept (257); correct (266); national rejuvenation (231). The choice of word, according to Dijk, is crucial for understanding semantic information. Reporters for news organizations choose a particular language to convey the many textual styles, the relationships between text-related parties, the assessment of the embedded group or organization, the reporter's attitude, the ideology driving it, etc (2017).

As the mainstream ideology of Chinese society, "struggle" is not a recent thing. The reform and opening up, especially since the 1990s, the unswerving development of socialist market economy has given rise to the social consensus that "money is not everything, but without it, everything is impossible", and then economic development has become a source of legitimacy for political parties. The widespread popularity of "success" can be seen as an external representation of the discourse of "struggle" during this period. But the "struggle" at the moment tends to emphasize that "if one works hard enough, one can eventually achieve success". Under the background of sustained high-speed economic growth in the 30 years since the reform and opening-up, Chinese society has the ability to provide young people with various opportunities, so the discourse "success" is quite convincing. However, after the global financial crisis in 2008, especially in recent years, the growth rate of China's economy has gradually slowed down, the social class has gradually become solidified, and there are fewer and fewer opportunities for individuals to achieve "success", so the mainstream ideologies that emphasize individual struggle are stretched to the limit. It is against this background that the "Chinese Dream" has been brought to the forefront as an expression, and "struggle" has been mentioned more frequently. However, at this moment, the "struggle" is often associated with the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", which emphasizes "patriotism" rather than

"individual success". Accordingly, patriotism in the whole society is on the rise, and patriotism has become a kind of political correctness that cannot be discussed. Therefore, it is no wonder that Sang culture has attracted such fierce criticism: because it is naturally on the opposite side of mainstream positive energy ideology. Criticism of Sang culture based on the logic of struggle can be found in many articles. Such articles often follow the logic of first expressing their understanding of "Sang culture" or the "Sang" of young people, but in the end, they will come to a conclusion that it is okay for young people to be "Sang" once in a while, but they still have to struggle.

When President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping proposed the "Chinese Dream" in 2013, he emphasized that the realization of the "Chinese Dream" must promote the national spirit with "patriotism" as the core, describing patriotism as the spiritual force that unites the Chinese nation. This kind of Chinese dream is a dream of a rich country and a strong country stipulated by the state power. In fact, China's official political discourse has never lacked grand discourses about "dream". Before that, there were "Three Represents (2000)", "Scientific Outlook on Development (2003)", and "Harmonious Society (2004)", all of which were constructions of political theory. The essence of the "Chinese Dream" is defined as the realization of national prosperity, national rejuvenation, people's happiness, and social harmony. There are three main sources of motivation: first, the pursuit of economic growth, life improvement, material progress, and environmental improvement; second, the pursuit of fairness and justice, democracy and the legal system, civic growth, cultural prosperity, educational progress, and scientific and technological innovation; third, the pursuit of a prosperous country and a strong army, national dignity, sovereignty and integrity, national unity, and world peace. When personal struggle is linked to the destiny of the country, the struggle at this time is no longer personal, but becomes a social responsibility.

The People's Daily reports on Sang culture downplayed the social reality of young people's Sang, abstractly regarding "Sang" as a negative emotion. Naturally, struggle has relatively become a positive value orientation. "Struggle" is a positive value, while "Sang" is a negative emotion. For the Chinese post-90s generation, the process of their growth is also the process of China's rapid economic development. In the process, the society has painted a series of beautiful life scenes for them, and constantly stimulated their desires by promoting consumerism and "success" discourse. However, when the Chinese post-90s generation entered the society, they encountered a slowdown in the development of the whole society. The

criticism of "Sang culture" is often directed at "young people". The "young people" in Chinese mainstream discourse seems to be a group concept, but when it comes to, for example, "I hope young people can get rid of the troubles of 'Sang' and have the courage to face the pressure of life", it actually means what every young person should do. That is to say, it does not propose a public solution, but attempts to transform the "Sang" as a public problem into a personal problem, and each young person faces and deals with the structural oppression of society alone. This is why the People's Daily describes the Sang culture as the fact that young people's choice of "Sang" is a lack of courage to face difficulties and competition, an excuse for not daring to face up to their own shortcomings, a cowardly manifestation of retreating and running away, and a manifestation of evading historical missions and responsibilities of the times.

5. Discussion of The Results

According to Erving Goffman (1986), Stigma means to stigmatize someone to mark them as physically abnormal or morally defective. In other words, stigma is the ability to highlight anddefine an abnormal attribute through a visual representation.Goffman believes that the essence of stigma is deviation and deviance. A "deviant" is a group of people who share certain values and follow a set of social norms related to behavior and personal characteristics. Any individual who does not follow this set of norms will be regarded as a deviant and his maverick as a deviant. Social deviants are a special type of deviants. In this way, the People's Daily labels Sang culture, a group with negative emotions, as deviant in the context of positive energy as the Chinese mainstream. The word "label" is different from "attribute," "condition" or "mark". As Link and Phelan (2001) argue, the term such as "attribute," "condition" or "mark", locates the referred-to object in the stigmatized person, thus concealing the fact that its identification and selection for social significance is the result of social processes. A label, on the other hand, is something that is attached. Furthermore, in the lack of qualifiers, phrases such as "attribute", "condition", or "mark" suggest that the designation is genuine. In contrast, the word "label" leaves the validity of the categorization up to debate—a useful alternative.

Keeping People Down

According to Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory (1959), individuals will always have to act, consciously or unintentionally, to "express" themselves, and others will have to accept the "impression" created by their expression in some way. "Intentionally or unintentionally" means that the individual's expression will include two levels: the expression of what he gives "intentionally" and the expression of what he gives off "unintentionally". Goffman (1986) argues that stigma "is used to refer to an attribute that is deeply shameful, but we will find that it is a language of relationships that really matters rather than the attribute itself. As Michel Foucault (2012) has argued that we have entered "an era of infinite censorship and forced objectification." Today's society is a normalized society, in which evaluation replaces punishment, and infiltrates justice, social control , which refers to the control of bodies, groups, and knowledge. This is the power hidden "under" the law, and the power that infiltrates the judicial process. He said that the corrective effect of the law is through statistical methods and

judgments, assess what is normal, not right or wrong, the abnormal are isolated, and corrective means are used to make them normal (2012). Therefore, people are no longer controlled by the outside world, such as ideology, but by the body from the inside out, leading to spontaneous obedience and acceptance, which is the relationship that Goffman refers to. In addition, reflected in the political context of China, the word success is objectified.

For example, in 2019, based on the Meituan platform and questionnaire survey data, a data report titled "New Era and New Youth: 2019 Youth Group Observation" showed the image of Chinese youth who dare to dream and chase their dreams. "This is an era that requires struggle, and everyone is a struggler in the new era." The report found that 47% of young people believe that the keyword of the new era is "struggle". 89% of young people are satisfied with their current life. 52% of young people have a high life pressure, and 15% of them are very stressed. Besides, according to another survey results of "Generation Z: Global Citizenship Survey - What Young People Think and Feel" released by the British Varkey Foundation in 2017, Chinese youth are the most optimistic about the future. 29% of young people firmly believe that China is the best country to live and work in peace and contentment, and they can get ahead through their hard work. 93% of the respondents believe that with the advancement of technologies such as renewable energy and medicine in China, China's future is full of hope.

In the same year, the Committee of 100 also conducted a public opinion survey report on China and the United States. The survey was conducted from December 12, 2016, to January 9, 2017, through face-to-face interviews at households in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. 3,696 Chinese citizens aged 18 and above were selected as a sample from all over China except for Macau and Taiwan, and a multi-stage random sampling method was used. According to one question "do you think if the next generation in China will be better?", the survey shows that 79% of people believe that there will be better economic conditions; 71% believe that there will be a more equal society and better employment opportunities. In the three surveys on the question of life pursuit, which were conducted in 2007, 2012, and 2017, the surveys show that the top one answer of the Chinese public is to become rich (42%; 49%; 43%). The second is to have a happy family (54%; 45%; 48%). It can be seen from the above research data that the Chinese youth group has great expectations for the future, and they would like to struggle for it. Wei (2005) believes that most of the current countries have gone through the process of political stability, economic development, social progress, and psychological adjustment, but because the development of people's ideas cannot perfectly match the progress of material and

economic conditions, people have encountered a lot of confusion and failure when social progress and spiritual satisfaction cannot be connected. This is the social context in which the "Sang culture" occurred.

The Sang culture group is a generation group that is born and influenced by the reform and opening-up in China. On the one hand, China's reform and opening up has brought development dividends to certain groups, but also brought various negative consequences such as the lack of values, the gap between the rich and the poor, the solidification of social classes, the alienation of the consumer society, and the fragmentation of decentralization. These consequences have caused the Chinese people in the modern social context to have various forms of value identity crises. For example, value nihilism, refined egoism, and naked money worship pervade the Chinese spiritual world. For the younger generation, the self is the self, and the country is the country, so there will be a special psychological phenomenon of the post-90s generation of "confidence in the future of the country, but loss of hope in the destiny of the individual", which the older generations cannot understand at all. As the post-90s generation entered the workplace, they brought in different perceptions of "labor". The popularity of "Buddha-like" and "lying flat" discourse shows the suspicion of "competitiveness" among the younger generation. However, the paradox of the phenomenon of "Buddha-like" and "lying flat" is that the main reason why the younger generation opposes "vicious competition" is that after decades of rapid economic development in China after the reform and opening-up, they can obtain material enjoyment, as well as cheap cultural entertainment, more easily than their parents. As a result, they doubt whether it is necessary to continue pursuing material wealth with high-intensity work. It is still difficult for young people to get rid of the Chinese value measurement standards of wealth and status, so they find a way to complain about this kind of value measurement standard by saying "Buddha-like" and "lying flat" discourse. Afterward, they will still start to actively participate in the tide of competition in action. The Sang culture deconstructs the mainstream culture's value expectations for young people to strive, enterprising and positive, reconstructs the Sang group's value identity of "positive towards sang", and conveys inner feelings and collective emotions with the attitude of "Sang", "Buddha-like", or "Tangpingism". The emergence and popularity of the Sang culture is a microcosm of the youth subculture in the new media era, reflecting the current Chinese youth's negative mental state and collective anxiety. Therefore, Sang culture is not just a niche self-expression, but also a social representation reflecting the changes of the times. The various

symbols of the phenomenon of "Sang culture" precisely represent the confirmation of the world in which they are placed.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons once said that the anxiety of young people comes from the marginalization of their social status (Ma, 2015). In the 1950s and 1960s, there was also a large-scale decadent cultural phenomenon among young people in Europe and the United States. On the one hand, the rigidity of social class, the intensification of peers, the continuous improvement of the industry threshold, and the pressure from the previous generation have all made the young generation extremely confused. Consequently, "Sang" is not equivalent to negative energy, and "Sang" does not mean despair, but mostly as a way of self-mockery and stress relief. Group self-mockery has become a discourse strategy for various post-subcultures to express their own attitudes, and through self-mockery, they interpret the loud and noisy online carnival. By getting rid of all the constraints of routine, people enjoy carnival to achieve the purpose of eliminating the oppression of daily norms and rebuilding the hope of survival, from which they can obtain an aesthetic experience of carnival-style world feeling (Bakhtin, 1988). The purpose of self-mockery is to reconcile with self-depression, rather than setting off an online carnival to "get rid of all the constraints of routines". As Tao (1998), a researcher on Chinese culture, said, no matter what kind of cultural inquiry study, it needs to explain the complex relationship between culture and society, and the learning and understanding of culture needs to be "contextualized". Behind the development and popularity of all cultures, there is a macro impact of social background on it. Hence, Sang culture is no longer limited to a culture style, but points to an attitude towards life in the development and evolution. But the People's Daily directly labels the Sang culture as negative culture which will have a bad influence on Chinese youth. The mainstream media that represented by the People's Daily only focuses on the presentation of Sang culture, which shows a Sang performance, but ignore the positive meaning behind that.

Keep people in

Discipline is not only the conquest of the individual body, but the establishment of a set of power relations. Through this mechanism of power itself, the human body is made to conform to a specific utility and to obey autonomously. Discipline starts with the space in which people are located, and then makes ranking arrangements to fix the possibility of flow in the space. Through the power mechanism of supervision, screening and reward, the "classification" of

people that are constantly subdivided is carried out. Next is the establishment of a "timetable". The body of speed and efficiency is the body of power from implementation to self-control. Time is money, which is practice, the basis of the "evolution" of individuals and societies. Finally, there is an examination that combines techniques of hierarchical surveillance and standardized adjudication. The exam is both an outside-in inspection and a ritual for individuals to "objectify" themselves as objects of control (Foucault, 2012). The image of Ge You-esque slouching is completely contrary to the healthy and energetic image promoted by the Chinese mainstream. According to Foucault's view, body image is socialized physical beauty. The body is the product of power, and the body is manipulated, shaped, disciplined. Power shapes everything needed to be healthy, strong, and efficient, and useful body (Foucault, 2012:172). In modern society, the body image promoted by the mainstream is to shape a better producer, and a useful body is often directed to work and becomes part of the "work ethic" of modern society. The "work ethic" of modern society originated from the Protestant "vocation concept" proposed by Weber (Li, 2016), which declared that work is the vocation of an individual, and that work itself is a value and a noble activity for glory. A healthy and energetic body is designed to better engage in work and fulfill its productive responsibilities. Although the work ethic in contemporary China is influenced by the West, it is mainly derived from the traditional Confucian ethics. Although both Confucian ethics and the concept of vocation emphasize the importance of hard work, unlike the concept of vocation, which emphasizes that work is an individual's intrinsic motivation, Confucian ethics believes that work is a realistic need (Li, 2016). Meanwhile, with the social transformation, China began to transform from a pre-modern producer society to a post-modern consumer society. Production is no longer the basic link of social development, and consumption has gradually replaced this importance.

Therefore, the emergence of Sang culture is actually a question about the definition of happiness in the current Chinese society. When happiness is displayed in the form of economic capital, cultural capital, or social capital, it becomes the legitimate power to maintain social order, which not only tells people "You must be happy", but also regulates "what is happiness". The legitimacy of the social order is not the result of deliberate and purposeful propaganda or symbolic coercion, but is caused by the fact that actors conform to the objective structures of the social world, and the structures of perception and appreciation derived from these structures tend to take the world for granted (Qiu, 2002: 165). The happiness concept in Chinese context took a huge turn during the Cultural Revolution. The struggle of the proletariat during the Cultural Revolution was regarded as the inheritance of Marxism, and this also caused the

Chinese people to change their views on the traditional Chinese concept of happiness. Accepting Marx's thought, the new concept of happiness is a scientific and complete theory of happiness created by the scientific combination of material life and spiritual life, the correct coordination of individual happiness and collective happiness, temporary happiness and long-term happiness, the creation of happiness and the enjoyment of happiness (Feng 2011: 29).

In the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, a major change is the formulation of the main social contradiction in society: the main social contradiction in China in the new era is the contradiction between the people's ever-growing needs for a better life and the unbalanced and inadequate development. However, the transition from "material and cultural needs" to "good life needs" is not as simple as developing the economy, simultaneously protecting the ecological environment, and promoting social justice. In ethics and political philosophy, "good life" is one of the most basic concepts and is also difficult to come up with a unified answer from a rational point of view, or in other words, it is impossible to form a reasonable agreement. As a result, more and more concepts of good life appeared, and the so-called "pluralistic outlook on life" was gradually formed. However, the Chinese people have only de facto freedoms. Therefore, the more fundamental contradiction in China today is that the Chinese Communist Party can neither allow the people to freely pursue various kinds of good life, nor can it provide them with a specific concept of good life. In addition, mainstream values advocate an "entrepreneur-of-the-self", that is, everyone should operate their own life like a business. Being a self-enterprise is managing one's own employability, evaluating own debt situation, and curbing the decline in wages and income (Lazzarato, 2012, p.139). Therefore, the ultimate operation of power is the concealment of power. The individual is domesticated with a kind of in uncertainty, and the individual is told that he is responsible for his own success, failure, poverty, and suffering. Because there are countless things you can "choose", it is the consequence of your free choices. Therefore, striving to find a living example that can be imitated, a happiness that can be imitated becomes the "responsibility" of the individual in the new era. As a result, people cannot use more intrinsic value to create meaning in life, and all other areas of achievements must be converted into power and money settlement. This is the reason why young people feel "Sang". Consequently, according to the above surveys' data, it can be found that Sang group people have an obvious "active and positive" tendency towards the meaning of life. They still have a very positive willingness to realize self-worth. Thus, sang group people try to re-understand the relationship between physical "survival" and

spiritual "life", so as to try to find richer sources of meaning and life goals that may exist in "labor".

Keep People Away

The birth of the stigmatizer involves a clear demarcation of power and at the same time implies the self-identification of "the normal". Social identity refers to the social structural characteristics such as occupation displayed by an individual through appearance in a certain setting. Personal identity refers to some unequivocal combination of physical or character markings, as well as biographical details. Self-identity refers to a person's subjective feelings about his own situation, his own continuity and his own characteristics formed on the basis of his social experience. That is to say, his self-image in the society is constantly receiving feedback from the society to him, and then updating his own cognition. Therefore, the construction of the above three identities is inseparable from the interaction between society and individuals. Specifically, the social identity of the stigmatized person enables him to be recognized and treated specially in society; social attitudes or prejudices affect the stigmatized person's self-perception, that is, "self-identity"; and the intermediate link - information transmission and feedback. It is connected through personal identity, that is, through the control and change of "personal identity", to improve one's "social identity", so as to obtain a greater "self-identity". In addition, knowledge and awareness affect the management of social and personal identities. According to Erving Goffman's stigma concept (1986), from the perspective of the stigmatized person, others are divided into: the own and the wise. Under the mainstream narrative of positive energy in China, individuals are highly encouraged to pursue success. But at the same time, a narrative of personal blame is formed, in which personal failures are also held to account for themselves. Therefore, because of the construction of Sang culture by mainstream media, people unconsciously acquiesce that this is a bad culture, especially the youth group should stay away from it. As a result, the Sang culture group will hide their true feelings because of the pressure of the surrounding environment, forming a positive image of struggle.

6. Conclusion

Sang culture appeared in Chinese cyberspace in 2016, which is a post-subculture associated with emotional expression. As a new form of youth subculture, Sang culture has an extremely decadent and pessimistic style on the outside, and it carries group demands and reflects social reality, which has aroused extensive attention and discussion from all walks of life. In particular, the mainstream media represented by the People's Daily has regarded the Sang culture as a problematic culture since its appearance. At the same time, some surveys have found that the Sang culture group is not a completely unmotivated group as defined by the People's Daily. On the Zhihu Q&A website, there is a question "Why is 'Sang culture' so popular among young people?" has 50,382 followers and has been viewed 24,193,359 times. The answers in it are also different from those reports described in the People's Daily. Therefore, this research selected the relevant reports in the People's Daily with Sang culture as the keyword and selected the answers on Zhihu Q&A platform, using Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis method and Qualitative Content Analysis method to answer the following three questions. 1) What is the significance of Sang culture on the Chinese internet, which is stigmatized by the discourse of the Chinese mainstream media represented by the People's Daily based on positive energy ideology? 2) What kind of perspectives of Sang culture has been chosen to frame in People's Daily's reports according to the critical discourse analysis? 3) Based on the Qualitative Content Analysis, what are the characteristics of Sang culture on the Zhihu Q&A website compared to the People's Daily?

After more than ten years of the reform and opening-up, China's socialist market economic system has gradually improved, and it has entered a new stage of rapid economic development. National income and living standards have been greatly improved. Therefore, the post-90s generation grew up in an era of relatively rich material conditions. Moreover, under the implementation of the one-child policy, most of the post-90s generation are only children, and their special status allows them to enjoy the favor of their elders. However, on the other hand, the status of the only child also puts the post-90s generation under enormous pressure from their relatives who are expecting them to achieve success since childhood. At the same time, in a society that emphasizes success, they are asked not to lose at the starting line from the beginning. After more than 30 years of social transformation of China's reform and opening-

up, the profit-seeking nature of the market economy has had a profound impact on the Chinese people. More and more people accept a unified and materialized value, and success has changed from a subjective feeling to a measurable objective indicator, that is, the amount of wealth is regarded as the only criterion for success. "If you don't get rich, you won't succeed; if you don't succeed, you won't be an adult" has become a true portrayal of Chinese society. Therefore, the sang culture has emerged against the background of such a one-dimensional social value.

There are three main reasons for the popularity of sang culture, the first of which is the role of the media. This promotion of media is mainly reflected in providing a carrier and platform for the development of sang culture, as well as some media content to guide the development of sang culture. New media, such as online platforms, have the characteristics of openness, anonymity, and low threshold. These characteristics enable netizens of different identities and different classes to express their views and ideas freely. The interactivity also enables this platform to quickly accumulate and ferment certain emotions. At the same time, the update of media technology also makes it possible to spread these views and emotions widely and rapidly, and the application of multimedia technology makes these views or cultural phenomena spread in richer forms. In addition, the dissolution of traditional media authority and the rise of self-media have made it easier for young people to develop their views and subcultures. The second reason is that sang culture just fits the state of modern people and resonates with modern people. In fact, life is never only positive because people will inevitably feel negative emotions such as depression, frustration, and decadence in social life. However, the positive energy advocated by mainstream values in the past has caused the public to suppress these negative emotions and dare not express them. The emergence of sang culture allows people to express their negative emotions, which is the basis for the widespread dissemination of sang culture. The third reason is that because the pressure of competition has increased and the pace of life has accelerated, it has become more difficult for people to meet their expectations through hard work. The failure of expectations or the increase in difficulties has aggravated people's anxiety and frustration and contributed to the sang culture. On the other hand, people pay more attention to their spiritual needs today when material life is generally satisfied. Traditional values representing positive energy have long dominated the mainstream. To a certain extent, there is a gap between these positive values and the cruel reality that people feel. This gap makes people feel tired and begin to question and reflect on traditional values. Hence, the traditional values were dissolved, and the sang culture representing negative energy became popular.

In the book "The Sociological Imagination", C. Wright Mills reminds people to "understand history and the life course of individuals, and how they are connected in society" (Mills 2005:4). The emergence of the Sang culture has provided such an opportunity for the society to make these young people who are accustomed to living atomically in an atomized society realize that the frustration and loneliness in their daily life may not only be a personal problem but may be the product of the large structural squeeze of the entire society and history. It re-publicizes the individualized public problems and establishes a common sense among young people: Look, everyone will be "Sang". The emergence of "sang culture" is the response of young people to the spiritual dilemma caused by modern society. Fromm believes that if a society wants to maintain its normal operation, it will cultivate people's specific character structure to meet the needs of this society (Liu, 2018). Therefore, the social group character or group culture in a specific period is related to the type of society. The youth Sang culture is a collection of the characters of the times that appeared in such a period of social transformation. In other words, the emergence and popularization of youth Sang culture is essentially a product of China's industrialization and a product of modernity. Therefore, a rational and objective view of the youth Sang culture should be a state of mind that the mainstream culture should have.

For most Chinese youths, in the fast-growing and fast-moving country, the formula for success remains the same as usual: study hard, make money, become a "house slave", get married as soon as possible, and finally have children. Then watch the cycle repeat. What should be seen is that "Sang" is not actually the active choice of young people, but a kind of helplessness, which implies positive factors at the same time. It is precisely the emergence of Sang culture that makes this widespread depression in society a public issue to be discussed, and gives the negative emotion of "Sang" a positive possibility. Yet the People's Daily stigmatizes sang culture as the spiritual poison. Behind this construction is related to the positive energy ideology in China. When individual struggle is associated with the rejuvenation of the nation, the individual struggle is no longer just an individual choice, but will also be associated with the nation. Therefore, when a subculture with negative connotations such as sang culture appears, it stands on the opposite side of positive energy ideology. As a result, the related reports from People's Daily have a completely negative attitude towards sang culture.

Language plays a vital role in shaping our experience of the world and ourselves. It is not only a tool of communication, but as the basis of thinking, it is closely related to the social structure

and the power relations behind it. In the environment of the mainstream ideology of positive energy, struggle is considered normal and normative, and "Sang" is stigmatized as a broken and problematic existence. The reason why "Sang" is considered an abnormal state is because the whole society respects success, struggle and the Chinese dream. "Abnormal" is not an inherent attribute of "Sang", but a label attached to the Sang group through continuous discourse construction. Stigmatization is a way of creating discourse, and it is also a manifestation of discourse power. At the same time, this kind of power is not only controlled by the outside world, but also comes from people's spontaneous obedience and acceptance. This is because the panopticon provides a contemporary mechanism of power. Thus, the People's Daily followed the concept of stigma power of Phelan, Link, and Dovidio (2008), framing the Sang culture in the following three ways, keeping people down, keeping people in, and keeping people away. At the same time, according to Erving Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory (1959), Sang culture is not actually a complete negative but contains positive connotations. Different survey data also show the Chinese youth groups have great expectations for the future and are willing to fight for it. Nevertheless, the People's Daily does not face up to the realistic demands expressed by the youth group through the sang culture and the positive meaning behind it. On the contrary, it insists on treating sang culture as the opposite of mainstream culture and labeling it as such, so that the social problems behind it cannot be recognized fairly and objectively. Therefore, how to objectively look at the relationship between mainstream culture and sang culture, how to look at the development of Chinese youth subculture with a rational, open, and accepting attitude, and how to face the social structural factors and problems behind its emergence is a new topic for the government.

Limitations of The Research

The formation and popularity of Sang culture is a relatively complex issue, which may involve many factors, such as changes in social mentality, development of media technology, and the emotional foundation shared by everyone. Due to the development of Internet technology, the traditional "frontstage" and "backstage" as mentioned by Erving Goffman have been changed, and there is a big difference between the online and offline behaviors of Sang people. Therefore, a survey should also be conducted both on the online and offline Sang culture groups. Because of the dispersion and mobility of Sang culture groups, their self-expression and dissemination

discourses are scattered all over the social network, and there is a lack of centralized voice channels. Although the Zhihu platform selected for this study has the most attention and is representative to a certain extent, it still cannot fully represent the thoughts of the whole Sang culture group. In addition, the word "Sang" expresses an emotion, so when people express "Sang" as a general emotion, do they beautify and cover up those emotions such as anxiety and depression that require medical assistance? Therefore, the emotional definition of Sang should also be defined in the further research survey of Sang culture group.

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Appendices

为什么「丧文化」在年轻人中这么流行？ *(Why is "Sang culture" so popular among young people?)*. (2018, September 20). Zhihu. https://www.zhihu.com/question/281756338

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Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism FSV UK **Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky FSV UK** **Research proposal for MARS M.A. Thesis** **Teze MAGISTERSKÉ diplomové práce studijního programu MARS**	
THIS PART TO BE FILLED BY STUDENT:	
Student's surname and given name: Cai Qingyun	**Registry stamp: / Razítko podatelny:**
Start of studies for MARS (Immatriculation date): 2020.09.30	
Your faculty e-mail: 23753329@fsv.cuni.cz	
Study program/form of study: Media and Area Studies (MARS)	

Thesis title in English:

Sang Culture: A Pessimistic Subculture in The Chinese Cyberspace

Expected date of submission (semester, academic year – example: *SS 2021/2022*)
(Thesis can be submitted no sooner than <u>eight months</u> after acceptance of the research proposal)
SS 2021/2022

Main research question (max. 250 characters)**:**

1) What is the significance of Sang culture on the Chinese internet, which is stigmatized by the discourse of the Chinese mainstream media represented by the People's Daily based on ideology?

2) What kind of perspectives of Sang culture has been chosen to frame in the People's Daily's reports according to the critical discourse analysis?

3) Based on the Qualitative Content Analysis, what are the characteristics of Sang culture on the Zhihu Q&A website compared to the People's Daily?

Current state of research on the topic (max. 1800 characters):

There is currently no universally accepted definition of Sang subculture in Chinese academia. Xiao (2017) writes that "Sang culture" is a new form of youth subculture, characterized by language use, specific use of words or pictures linked to decadence, despair, and pessimism of a specific generation of Chinese young people. Many other scholars revised, supplemented, or re-elaborated Xiao's original definition, but in current Chinese academia, his definition is still regarded as the starting point.

The current academic research on "Sang culture" in China is focusing on the following issues:
1. The style of Sang culture. For example, through in-depth interviews and questionnaires, Li and Pang found out that the post-1990s Chinese youths used bricolage and homology to construct Sang culture's style. They also found that the resistance gesture has become the Sang group's strategy for establishing their cultural identity and realizing self-protection (2018). According to Li and Peng (2020), the Sang-culture group identity can be grasped by Erving Goffman's 'dramaturgical theory'. The youths formed a unique style of Sang culture and the discourse representation of group identity in cyberspace.

2. The emergence of Sang subculture from theoretical perspectives of psychology, sociology, communication, linguistics, etc. For example, Du and Xiao found that the simulation of cyberspace and the solidification of social class caused frustration and led the Sang-culture youths to express their emotions through irony (2017).

3. The relationship between Sang culture and the economy in China, and the use of Sang culture as a subcultural capital in business activities. Taking 'Sang Tea' as an example, based on Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and Judith Butler's performance theory, Zhu (2018) analyzed how merchants use this element to attract consumers and promote consumption. According to Sarah Thornton's concept of subcultural capital (1996), when decadence and cool play become a subculture capital that is admired by youth, it can give birth to a series of cultural industry chains and scenes related to decadence and cool play. It means that the decadence may become the consumption object and performance content of a certain group of people rather than a sense of resistance. Thus, the new idea of Sang culture is being frequently used as a marketing method in brand communication.

4. The influence of Sang culture on young people, especially college students in China, and discussions about college students' education development in the environment of Sang culture. Dong (2021) argued that it is important to guide the development of Sang culture and explore its relationship with 'positive energy' mainstream culture.

In short, the current research on Sang culture is mostly focused on analyzing Sang subculture itself and on the reasons for its popularity. Researchers mainly use qualitative research methods, especially interviews. There is no quantitative method being used to analyze the Sang culture group, nor the discourse analysis perspective for the Sang culture.

According to some data such as the Chinese Blue Book of Social Mentality: Research Report on Chinese Social Mentality (2018) and the UC Big data, Chinese youth generally have great expectations for the future of China they are willing to work hard for a better life. But Sang culture occurs among them in this period. At the same time, the mainstream media such as People's Daily regard Sang subculture as a kind of spiritual opium. On the other hand, there is a question called "Why is 'Sang culture' so popular among young people?" has 50,382 followers and has been viewed 24,193,359 times through the Zhihu Q&A website, which is a kind of free space for the Chinese public to express their thoughts only if these questions are not related to politics. Thus, these answers to this question can be represented some Chinese people's point of view on Sang culture to a certain extent.

By reviewing all the answers, it can be found that the highest answer has 82,000 likes, and these answers have a different view on Sang culture compared to the reports of the People's Daily. Thus, what is the discourse ideology based on the reports of the People's Daily and what is the reason behind for them to frame the Sang culture in such a way? By reviewing relevant literature on Sang culture, there is no such research from this perspective. Therefore, this research will combine the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology and the Qualitative Content Analysis methodology to research what kind of discourse is being used by the People's Daily to stigmatize the Sang culture. From this perspective, this research can be a supplement to the current research on Sang culture.

Expected theoretical framework (max. 1800 characters):

Sang culture is a post-subculture associated with emotional expression. Thus, this research will be based on the following five related theories. They are stigma power and labeling theory, panopticon theory, dramaturgical theory, and carnival theory.

1. Stigma Power and Labeling Theory

In 1963, Erving Goffman published his book "Stigma—Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity", which conceptualized stigma and placed stigma in the framework of relationships and analyzed it at the level of face-to-face individual interaction. Stigmatization is a dynamic process that stereotypes the negatively biased traits of a group, hiding other traits in the process, and transforms into a "referential" relating to the traits of the group in a fundamental way. In this process, one of the most common strategies used by the powerful and unstigmatized parties is "labeling". The "label theory" was proposed by Howard Becker in his book "Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance" in 1963. The "label theory" argues that social groups create deviance by making rules and applying those rules to specific people, marking them as outsiders. This theory emphasizes the shaping and strengthening of deviant subcultures by state media, laws and regulations, and mainstream culture. Link and Phelan (2001) introduced the concept of power based on social structure into the study of stigma, pointing out that it is a problem of "stigma power", and stigma is entirely the product of social, cultural, economic and political power. Phelan, Link, and Dovidio (2008) conceptualized stigma, and pointed out three purposes can be achieved through stigma, which are exploitation and domination (keeping people down), normative coercion (keeping people in) and disease prevention (keeping people way).

2. Panopticon Theory

As a discourse expression, stigma has become a means of social power discipline while formulating restricted areas and establishing authority. This can be traced back to Bentham's Panopticon. Stigmatization is a way of creating discourse, and it is also a manifestation of discourse power. At the same time, this kind of power is not only controlled by the outside world, but also comes from people's spontaneous obedience and acceptance. This is because the panopticon provides a contemporary mechanism of power. This power mechanism relies on "normalizing judgment". It provides a system of social control that does not allow people to judge themselves based on their values and moral views. This kind of social control does not determine the consequences of actions according to the degree to which people "make mistakes", but rather judges people's performance according to a certain standard. This contemporary power mechanism not only objectifies people and their bodies, but also enlists people to actively participate in the process of selfrepression, shaping their own lives according to the requirements or norms of the organization.

3. Dramaturgical Theory

According to Erving Goffman's dramaticgical theory (1959), the external display of self-beautification is not necessarily true, and even the self-doubt will disguise a positive face. According to the different attributes of the frontstage and the backstage, the performance area is divided. Therefore, the transformation process between the inner world of the backstage and the self-presentation of the frontstage can be divided into two categories: the inner and the presentation are consistent and the inner and the presentation are opposite. Hence, the performance of Sang culture can be analyzed from these four states: positive in inner optimism, negative in inner optimism, negative in inner pessimism, and positive in inner pessimism.

4. Carnival Theory

The "Carnival Theory" was proposed by Bakhtin in 1929. One of the important points is his division of the two worlds. The first world is a serious, hierarchical world of order. The second world is a carnival square life, which is in a state of confrontation with the first world. Therefore, due to the technical characteristics of social media platforms, anonymity and randomness allow netizens to communicate and interact with their real identities hidden, giving netizens who are in the second world greater freedom of speech. Therefore, the youth Sang culture group conducts ritual performances and worship carnivals for "Sang" in an anonymous way. The discourse behind this is actually a deconstruction and subversion of the seriousness of the mainstream discourse system in Chinese society.

Expected methodology, and methods for data gathering and analysis (max. 1800 characters)**:**

This research will combine the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the qualitative content analysis (QCA).
The content analysis differs from other types of social science research in that it does not need data collected from people. It is also the study of recorded information or information included in texts, media, or physical artifacts. There are two forms of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA): conceptual and relational analysis. The conceptual analysis will concentrate on the appearance of certain terms inside texts. Beyond presence, the relational analysis will delve into the relationships between the concepts identified.

Fairclough formally proposed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in 1989. Unlike traditional discourse analysis, which focuses on text, grammar, vocabulary, or rhetoric, CDA is society-oriented and adopts an interdisciplinary research approach to interpret discourse and reveal the relationship between language, power, and ideology. In particular, the CDA focuses on the important role of social, historical, and cultural factors on discourse. CDA pays particular attention to the unequal power relations that prevail in society, focusing on issues of power and control, as well as legitimacy and illegality. Thus, according to the Critical Discourse Analysis of Fairclough, discourse expresses ideology, and ideology establishes, maintains, or changes power.

In short, this research will firstly utilize QCA to decide the patterns in the data consisting of the Zhihu Q&A website and the reports of the People's Daily, which guide the analysis. The results are obtained by comparing the differences in language characteristics such as vocabulary selection, genre structure, and intertextuality of the two platforms. And secondly, Fairclough's CDA will be used to research what discourse strategies are used by the Peoples' Daily to frame Sang culture and what kind of perspectives of Sang culture has been emphasized or neglected in the People's Daily's reports.

Expected research design (data to be analyzed, for example, the titles of analyzed newspapers and selected time period):

This research will firstly use QCA to find the patterns of the frequent keywords based on the selected data from the Zhihu Q&A website and category them into different groups to analyze what characteristics of Sang culture are on this website. The data will be selected from high to low consent responses, from 82,000 likes to 10,000 likes, and 482 samples are obtained.

Secondly, the reports from the People's Daily on Sang culture will be collected, by searching the keyword "Sang culture", and relevant Sang culture words such as "Buddha-like", and "Tangpingism", and finally

271 corresponding reports are obtained from September 2016 to December 2021. The time period is from the first report about Sang culture published to the year "Tangpingism" was criticized most. The reports will be analyzed in two steps. In the first step, the QCA will be used to find the patterns of the frequent keywords based on the selected reports of the People's Daily and they will be classified into different groups to analyze the characteristics of the text. In the second step, the selected reports will be analyzed by Fairclough's approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, to research how the People's Daily frames the Sang culture.

Expected thesis structure (chapters and subchapters with brief description of their content):

1. Introduction
    1.1 Introduction of Subculture
    1.2 The Development of The Chinese Subcultures
    1.3 Genealogy of Sang Culture
    1.4 Literature Review on Sang Culture
2. Theoretical Framework
    2.1 Stigma Power and Labeling Theory
    2.2 Panopticon Theory
    2.3 Dramaturgical Theory
    2.4 Carnival Theory
3. Methodology
    3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis
    3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis
    3.3 Data Collections
        3.3.1 Zhihu Q&A Website
        3.3.2 The People's Daily
4. Empirical Analysis
    4.1 Analysis of Zhihu Q&A Website
    4.2 Analysis of The People's Daily
5. Discussion of The Results
6. Conclusion
7. Limitations of The Research
8. References
9. Appendices

Basic literature list (at least 5 most important works related to the topic and the method(s) of analysis; all works should be briefly characterized on 2-5 lines):

Bauman, Z. (2021). *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor (Chinese Edition)* (1st ed.). Shanghai Academy of Social Science Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Bennett, T. (2015). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Routledge Classics)* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Bislev, A. (2015). *The Chinese dream: Imagining China*. Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 8(4), 585–595.

Fairclough, N.(2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2nd ed.).Routledge.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor.

Giddens, A. (1991). Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (1st ed.). Stanford University Press.

Hall, S., Evans, J., & Nixon, S. (2013). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities series) (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of Style (New Accents)* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Maffesoli, M. (1996). *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society (Published in association with Theory, Culture & Society)* (First ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Meyrowitz, J. (1986). *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (Revised ed.). Oxford University Press.

Thornton, S. (1996). *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital (Music / Culture)*. Wesleyan University Press.

Williams, R. (1978). *Marxism and Literature (Marxist Introductions)* (Revised ed.). Oxford University Press.

Related theses and dissertations (list of B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. theses defended at Charles University or other academic institutions in the last five years):

Hu Jiangfeng (2007), Resistance and Incorporation: Research of Youth Subculture Theory of Birmingham School, Doctoral Dissertation of Capital Normal University

Pang Yuchen (2018), The Style and Meaning of "Dispirited Culture" of Post-90 Youth—Based on the Investigation and Research of Sociology, Master's Thesis of Zhejiang University

Peng Yi (2019), "The Lost People Are Not Lost: A Study of the Dispirited Culture in Cyberspace from the Perspective of Dramaturgical Theory, Master's Thesis of Zhejiang University of Media and Communication

Date / Signature of the student:

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THIS PART TO BE FILLED BY THE ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR:

I confirm that I have consulted this research proposal with the author and that the proposal is related to my field of expertise at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

I agree to be the Thesis supervisor.

…..........................………………...…

Surname and name of the supervisor   **Date / Signature of the supervisor**

Further recommendations related to the topic, structure and methods for analysis:

Further recommendations of literature related to the topic:

The research proposal has to be printed, signed and submitted to the FSV UK registry (podatelna) in two copies, before the deadline. This deadline is published in the current academic year schedule. Accepted research proposals have to be picked up at the Department of Media Studies secretariat. The accepted research proposal needs to be included in the hard copy version of the submitted thesis.

RESEARCH PROPOSALS NEED TO BE APPROVED BY THE HEAD OF THE MARS STUDY PROGRAM.