



China Rainbow Media Award Media Monitoring Report 2025

Producer: China Rainbow Collective Foundation





Executive Summary of Key Findings

- **Dramatic Decline in Positive Narratives:** The proportion of positive reporting in print media has plummeted from 48.1% in 2020 to just 15.3% in 2025, with rights advocacy narratives virtually extinct.
- **Defensive Neutrality Dominates:** In 2025, 76.1% of reporting stances were neutral, with media commonly employing de-emotionalization through medical terminology or factual summaries to avoid regulatory risks.
- **Narrowing of Reporting Topics:** Domestic reporting displays characteristics of medicalization, with 69.2% of topics focusing on HIV prevention and treatment, reducing sexual minorities to public health subjects.
- **Instrumentalization of International Issues:** International news forms a significant portion (72 articles), often using LGBTQ issues as tools to observe Western social divisions and political conflicts (e.g., anti-transgender legislation in the US).
- **Uneven Group Visibility:** Gay men have the highest visibility due to being deeply linked with HIV issues, with 100% neutral reporting stance; transgender individuals face the highest proportion of negative stances (15%) due to international political associations.
- **Nodal Silence:** A collective muteness appeared in domestic print media during June "Pride Month" (only 4 articles), contrasting sharply with the December "World AIDS Day" peak (31 articles), reflecting strategic risk avoidance.
- **Resurgence of Stigmatization in Local Media:** Some local media outlets (such as Zhengzhou Daily and Xinyang Daily) have published radical stigmatizing content, stripping the term "tongzhi" from sexual minority contexts and redefining it as "pathological."
- **Cultural Criticism as a "Safe Harbor":** Cultural critique topics contributed the majority of positive domestic reporting stances, representing the most moderate and compliant pathway for sexual minority issues to enter public view.



Research Background and Significance

This report is produced by the China Rainbow Media Award, published by the China Rainbow Collective Foundation, concerning media coverage of LGBTI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and other sexual minorities) communities. Established in 2011, the China Rainbow Media Award is China's first organization to focus on LGBTI representation in mainstream media as both a research subject and action focus. We track image representation of LGBTI communities in public media, analyze LGBTI media reporting content and trends, promote community voice through public media, and advance objective, in-depth, and diverse public representation of LGBTI communities through cross-sector collaboration with media, academic, and artistic industries to create an equal society free from discrimination.

As vital carriers of information dissemination, media reporting on LGBTQ groups profoundly influences public perception and social attitudes. How media presents sexual minorities directly affects public understanding and acceptance. Early mainland Chinese media coverage of LGBTQ issues often employed a sensationalist perspective or associated LGBTQ groups with negative events like AIDS or crime, deepening social discrimination and misunderstanding. In recent years, despite limited reporting space, some media have attempted more objective and fair reporting on LGBTQ groups by telling authentic stories and presenting diverse perspectives to promote public understanding and acceptance.

Media face challenges in their reporting, including avoiding reinforcement of stereotypes, objectively covering controversial events, and responding to censorship and restrictions. Media must take social responsibility to eliminate unfair reporting and promote understanding and respect for LGBTQ groups.

Long-term media monitoring can track changes in reporting trends, including changes in quantity, themes, stances, and subjects, helping to understand how social and particularly Chinese government perceptions and attitudes toward LGBTQ issues have evolved. In mainland China, print media



as government "opinion leaders" reflect government attitudes through which topics can and cannot be reported. Additionally, analyzing this data allows evaluation of LGBTQ advocacy organizations' work effectiveness and reflection on past media strategies.

Furthermore, media reporting analysis helps understand mass media operational patterns, such as how media pursue trending topics, select reporting subjects, and set agendas, enabling better interaction with media. Through media monitoring and analysis, reporting issues can be revealed and communicated to mass media, promoting improvements in reporting.

Systematic research not only focuses on surface phenomena but explores deeper societal, cultural, and institutional underlying motivations, helping the public gain a more comprehensive understanding of LGBTQ issues.

In summary, systematic research on media reporting about LGBTQ groups has significant importance for understanding government policy tendencies and attitudes, social public opinion, promoting balanced reporting, and fostering social understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ groups.



1. Research Description

1.1 Research Timeframe

Research period: January 1 to December 31, 2025

Data collection completion date: January 7, 2026

1.2 Data Sources and Collection Methods

1.2.1 Data Sources

This research draws data from the WiseNews database, which includes extensive news reporting covering national and local print media. Researchers conducted manual searches based on preset keywords and filtered the results through human review. The data collection period spans from January 1 to December 31, 2025.

1.2.2 Keyword Settings

To ensure targeted and comprehensive research data, researchers used the following keywords during news retrieval to cover different issues and expressions related to LGBTQ groups:

- Sexual orientation: gay men(男同), lesbian(女同), homosexual (同性恋) , bisexual(双性恋), intersex(间性), asexual(无性恋)
- Gender identity: transgender(跨性别), trans(跨性), transsexual(变性)
- Group terminology: LGBTQ, LGBT, queer(酷儿), sexual minorities(性少数)

Keywords were selected to encompass diverse social contexts and reporting angles, ensuring data representativeness.



1.2.3 Data Collection Process and Standards

This research employed a rigorous screening process to ensure data accuracy and research reliability. The specific process was as follows:

- Keyword search: Initial searches using preset keywords in the WiseNews database to obtain relevant reports.
- Preliminary screening: Exclusion of reports not meeting requirements based on initial screening criteria, such as non-original content or content unrelated to LGBTQ issues. Standards:
 - a) Topic relevance: Report core content must relate to LGBTQ groups or relevant issues
 - b) Effective content: Exclude reports that only mention keywords incidentally without substantial connection
- Manual review: Article-by-article review of preliminary screened news to ensure reporting topics meet research requirements and eliminate ineffective or low-quality content.
- Data organization: Classification and coding of finally selected news, including information such as time, media name, report type, and reporting stance, providing structured data for subsequent analysis.

1.2.4 Final Sample

After rigorous screening and organization, this research ultimately formed a final sample of 163 effective news articles, covering national and local media, including mainstream news organizations and local newspapers. The sample spans different genres including news reports, special features, and commentaries.

]



1.3 Research Limitations

1.3.1 Sample Limitations

The study only covers print media reporting, without including broadcast, television, and other traditional media forms. Each traditional media format has distinct characteristics, with television and radio having unique advantages in information dissemination and audience reach. Due to data collection limitations, the absence of these media formats prevents a comprehensive understanding of traditional media's reporting patterns on LGBTQ issues. However, print media, as the most serious and strictly controlled official media, can be considered the most reflective of government policies and attitudes toward relevant issues, which justifies the study's focus on print media.

The study also does not include online news media and social media-related reports and content due to data collection limitations.

1.3.2 Limitations of Analytical Dimensions

There may be subjective judgments in the coding process. When coding reports for stance and theme, researchers' subjective perceptions inevitably influence the process. Particularly when determining reporting stance (positive/negative/neutral), different coders might have varying understandings and judgments. This subjectivity may affect the objectivity and reliability of research results.

The classification categories may oversimplify complex phenomena. To facilitate statistical analysis, the research categorizes report themes, stances, and other dimensions into a limited number of categories. While this simplification helps identify overall characteristics, it may not fully reflect the complexity of reality. Some reports may simultaneously cover multiple themes or exhibit complex stance attitudes, and simple categorization may result in information loss.



2. Research Methodology

This study employs content analysis to systematically analyze Chinese mainland media reports about LGBTQ groups in 2025.

2.1 Coding Standards

The coding standards include four aspects: reporting stance determination criteria, event stance determination criteria, thematic classification standards, and report subject classification standards.

2.1.1 Reporting Stance Determination Criteria

Reporting stance refers to the attitude, inclination, or values held by media or journalists when reporting events, typically reflected in news selection, language expression, perspective choice, and content arrangement. Reporting stance is categorized as positive, neutral, or negative.

- **Positive reporting:** Reports mentioning anti-discrimination, elimination of discrimination, care for LGBTQ groups, and related viewpoints.
- **Negative reporting:** Reports that deepen negative stereotypes about LGBTQ groups among the public, or report on LGBTQ issues from sensationalist or critical perspectives, lacking objectivity and balance.
- **Neutral reporting:** Between positive and negative, such as reports merely stating facts without obvious value inclinations.
- **Special handling of HIV-related reports:** For HIV-related reports with difficult-to-determine stances, if they only connect relevant groups with disease relevance, they are defined as neutral or negative.

2.1.2 Event Stance Determination Criteria

Event stance refers to the viewpoints, attitudes, or behavioral manifestations of relevant parties (e.g., involved individuals, stakeholders, or third parties) in news events. Event stance is often expressed by specific participants in the event (e.g., government, businesses, individuals, or social organizations)

and is typically reflected in news through quoted interviews, statements, or reported behaviors. This study also categorizes event stance as positive, neutral, or negative, with judgment criteria similar to reporting stance, but focuses on the attitudes of event-related parties rather than media or journalists.

- **Positive event stance:** Views or behaviors expressed by event-related parties supporting LGBTQ rights, opposing discrimination, caring for LGBTQ groups, or connecting relevant positive figures and events with LGBTQ groups.
- **Negative event stance:** Views or behaviors expressed by event-related parties opposing LGBTQ rights, discriminating against LGBTQ groups, holding negative stereotypes about LGBTQ groups, or connecting relevant negative figures and events with LGBTQ groups.
- **Neutral event stance:** Event-related parties do not clearly express a stance on LGBTQ issues, or their expressed views are difficult to determine as positive or negative.

2.1.3 Report Theme Classification Standards

News Topics classification is primarily based on the core content of reports. When a report covers multiple themes, it is judged by the theme with the most reporting intent or proportion. Specific theme categories include: LGBTI rights(LGBTI 权益), anti-discrimination and LGBTI organizations(反歧视与 LGBTI 组织), celebrities and LGBTI(名人与 LGBTI), economics and consumption(经济消费), cultural reviews and related works(文化评论及相关作品), same-sex marriage and intimate relationships(同志婚姻与亲密关系), workplace and social domains(职场与社会领域), HIV and LGBT groups(HIV 与 LGBT 群体), crime(犯罪), international politics(国际政治), and others(其他).



2.1.4 Report Subject Classification Standards

Report subjects are classified according to the main groups mentioned in the reports, including: gay men, transgender individuals, LGBTQ as a whole, bisexuals, lesbians, intersex individuals, and asexuals.

When a report involves multiple subjects, it is entered multiple times in the Excel spreadsheet, recording one main subject each time and distinguishing in the report subject field.

2.2 Analysis Tools and Process

2.2.1 Data Processing and Analysis Tools

- Data organization: Microsoft Excel for data entry, organization, and preliminary coding.
- Data analysis: Jupyter Notebook's Python environment for statistical analysis, aided by Claude Haiku 3 and Gemini 3.0 models. This primarily includes statistical analysis, such as counting reports by different themes, different stances, and the number of times different groups are reported on.

2.2.2 Quality Control Measures

To ensure coding consistency and accuracy, this study adopts the following quality control measures: All data processing and coding work is independently completed by the same researcher. The researcher regularly reviews previous coding results to ensure consistent application of coding standards throughout the dataset.

2.2.3 Analysis Process Description

The analysis process mainly includes the following steps:

1. Information retrieval, screening, and entry: See section 1.2.3. Enter information such as original links, publication dates, report titles, media names, etc., of news that passed preliminary screening into an Excel spreadsheet.



2. Download and numbering: Download the PDF version of each report and assign unified numbering, recording the corresponding document number in the Excel spreadsheet.
3. Full-text reading: Read the full content of each news report one by one.
4. Manual coding: Based on the coding standards defined in section 2.1, manually code each report's media type, report subject, report region, report theme, report category, reporting stance, event stance, and other fields in the Excel spreadsheet.
5. Data analysis: Use Jupyter Notebook's Python environment for coding, aided by Claude Haiku 3 and Gemini 3.0 models for statistical analysis. Mainly count and calculate the proportion of reports with different themes, subjects, reporting stances, and event stances, and interpret the results.
6. Report writing: Write research reports based on data analysis results.

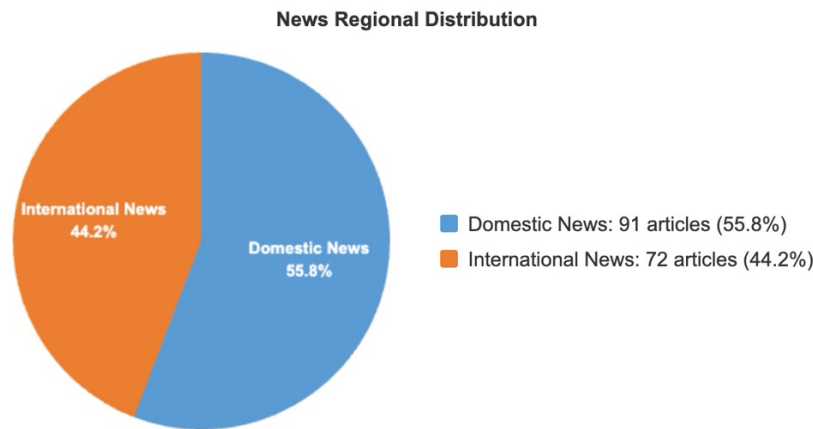
3. Data Analysis

This section statistically analyzes the collected data, examining LGBTQ-related reports in Chinese mainland media in 2025 from six aspects: report region, theme, subject, stance, time series, and discourse characteristics.

3.1 Report Regional Distribution

Table: Distribution of News Coverage by Region

Region	Quantity	Percentage
Domestic News	91	55.8%
International News	72	44.2%
Total	163	100.0%



The statistical data demonstrates that LGBTQ-related reports in 2025 show a predominance of domestic news coverage. It is important to note that all news reports in this study originate from mainland Chinese print media; therefore, "domestic news" refers to these media outlets' coverage of LGBTQ issues within mainland China, while "international news" refers to their coverage of LGBTQ issues abroad. Among the 163 reports included in the statistics, domestic news accounts for 91 articles (55.8%), while international news comprises 72 articles (44.2%).

To gain deeper insight into the implications behind this geographical distribution, this study further analyzes the differences between domestic and international news in



three aspects: reporting stance, event stance, and report themes.

3.1.1 Reporting Stance Analysis

Analysis of the reporting stance in domestic and international news reveals that neutral stances dominate in both categories, each exceeding 60%. Additionally, the proportion of positive narratives is slightly higher than negative narratives.

Table: Distribution of Reporting Stance by Region

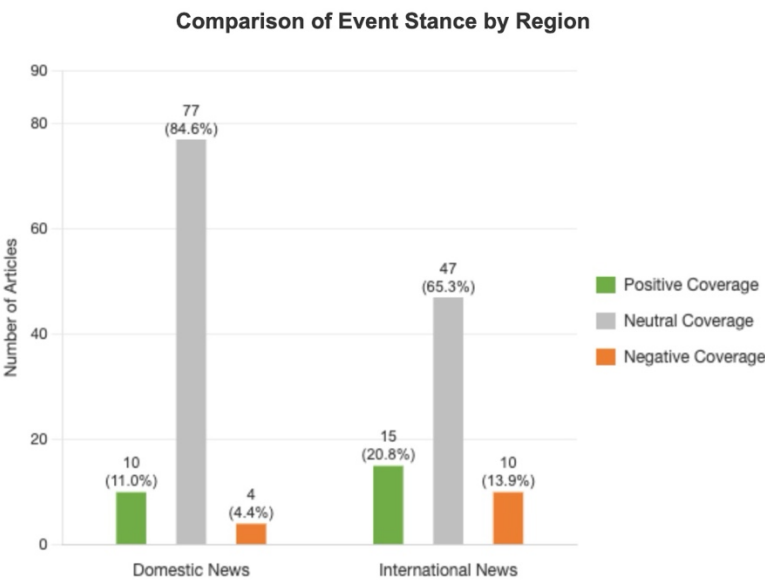
Region	Positive Stance	Neutral Stance	Negative Stance
Domestic News	10 (11.0%)	77 (84.6%)	4 (4.4%)
International News	15 (20.8%)	47 (65.3%)	10 (13.9%)

3.1.2 Event Stance Analysis

Analysis of the event stance shows that domestic news is predominantly negative, with 73.6% of reports adopting a negative stance, while only 8.8% maintain a positive stance. In international news, negative stances account for 52.8%.

Table: Distribution of Event Stance by Region

Region	Positive Stance	Neutral Stance	Negative Stance
Domestic News	8 (8.8%)	16 (17.6%)	67 (73.6%)
International News	15 (20.8%)	19 (26.4%)	38 (52.8%)



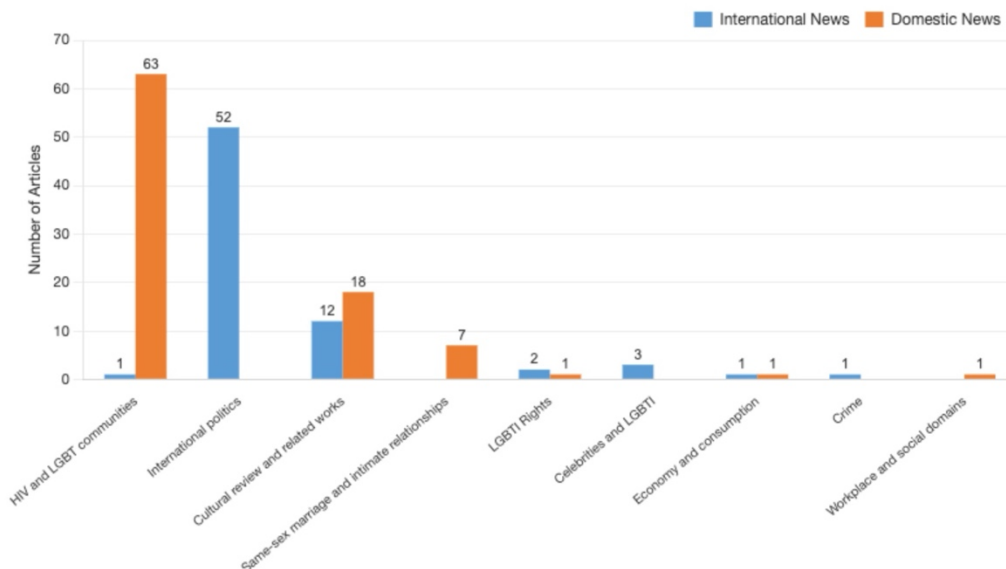


3.1.3 Report Theme Analysis

Table: Thematic Analysis of Domestic News Coverage

Theme	International News	Domestic News	Total
HIV and LGBT communities	1	63	64
LGBTI Rights	2	1	3
Same-sex marriage and intimate relationships	0	7	7
Celebrities and LGBTI	3	0	3
International politics	52	0	52
Cultural reviews and related works	12	18	30
Crime	1	0	1
Economics and consumption	1	1	2
Workplace and social domains	0	1	1
Total	72	91	163

Comparative Analysis of Domestic and International News Topics



The 2025 print media coverage exhibits highly significant features of "decentralization" and "functional transformation." In simple terms, print media no longer discusses LGBTQ individuals as "social rights subjects," but instead fragments them into public health specimens or tools for international politics:



- **Core reporting themes remain highly correlated with public health prevention.** Data shows that "HIV and LGBT groups" remains the primary pillar of domestic reporting, accounting for 39.3%. In December, due to World AIDS Day, related reports reached an annual peak (31 articles). A comprehensive review of the data reveals that domestic print media has entered a "no-activity-no-reporting" mode. LGBTQ terminology is only permitted to appear extensively within the inherently "legitimate" framework of public health prevention. This confines the group's image in print media to biological labels like "patients" or "high-risk populations" rather than social identifiers.
- **Polarized thematic division between domestic and international reporting.** According to the chart, the 2025 reports show drastically different logic in thematic distribution between domestic and international news: domestic news emphasizes "survival" over "rights." Among 91 domestic reports, 69.2% focus on HIV prevention, while reports on "LGBTI rights" amount to just 1 article (1.1%). Conversely, international news prioritizes "politics" over "daily life." Among 72 international reports, 72.2% concentrate on "international politics." This indicates that domestic print media carefully avoids legal and rights discussions when handling domestic issues, but frequently uses LGBTQ topics when discussing foreign politics or diplomatic contests (such as Global Times(环球时报)' negative assessment of U.S. human rights reports). This "internally cold, externally hot" discrepancy reflects the instrumentalization of international issues, with reporting themes and directions determined by ideological propaganda needs.
- **"Commercialization and entertainment" of cultural issues as pressure relief.** "Cultural commentary and related works" is the second-largest theme in domestic reporting in 2025 (20.4%). Reports on this theme mainly focus on evaluations of films like "Falling Judgment(坠落的审判)" and "Good Things(好东西)," or generalized gender discussions. Due to recent prohibitions on direct community activities (such as Pride) in mainland China, cultural products have become "compensatory spaces" for addressing

these issues. Print media tends to indirectly touch on gender issues through discussions of "consumer goods" or "fictional works," as such narratives offer more flexibility and are less likely to cross red lines.

In summary, the thematic distribution of 2025 reports can be characterized as: "discussing public health domestically, using as talking points in international politics for ideological propaganda, and cautiously addressing a little through cultural entertainment." In this context, print media no longer mirrors the real-life situations of sexual minorities but instead operates as a carefully filtered "safe harbor" narrative template, allowing only extremely limited expression and discussion within established frameworks.



3.2 Distribution of Report Subjects

This section analyzes the different groups covered in LGBTQ-related reports and explores the association between report subjects and themes.

Table: Overall Distribution of Report Subjects

Report Subject	Quantity	Percentage
LGBTQ	105	65.0%
Gay men	31	19.0%
Transgender	20	12.3%
Bisexual	4	2.5%
Lesbian	2	1.2%
Intersex	0	0.0%
Asexual	0	0.0%

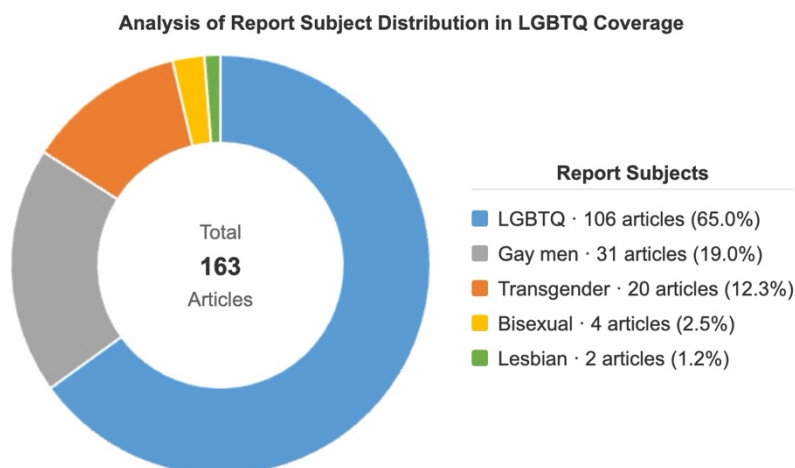


Table: Distribution of Report Theme on Gay Men

Theme	Quantity	Percentage
HIV and LGBT communities	31	100.0%

In report coverage related to gay men, health issues (i.e., “HIV and LGBT communities”) account for the highest proportion, reaching 100%. This indicates that gay men are frequently associated with HIV/AIDS in reporting, while other aspects receive comparatively limited attention.



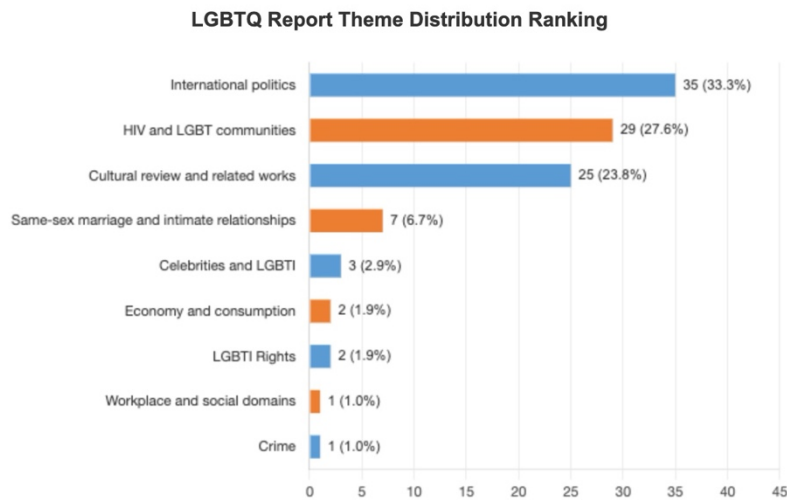
Table: Distribution of Report Theme on Transgender

Theme	Quantity	Percentage
International politics	17	85.0%
HIV and LGBT communities	2	10.0%
LGBTI Rights	1	5.0%

Table: Distribution of Report Theme in Overall LGBTQ Coverage

The 2025 print media representation of LGBTQ groups shows clear "labeling" and "polarized distribution"

Theme	Quantity	Percentage
International politics	35	33.3%
HIV and LGBT communities	29	27.6%
Cultural reviews and related works	25	23.8%
Same-sex marriage and intimate relationships	7	6.7%
Celebrities and LGBTI	3	2.9%
Economics and consumption	2	1.9%
LGBTI Rights	2	1.9%
Workplace and social domains	1	1.0%
Crime	1	1.0%



characteristics, highly concentrated toward specific labels:

- **The generic term "LGBTQ" has become the absolute mainstream, with obvious de-emotionalization.** Among the year's 163 reports, 65.0% (106 articles) use "LGBTQ" as the report subject. The keywords in these reports are generally "homosexual," with a minority using "sexual minority" and "LGBTQ." Print media tends to use a broad, collective political term to refer to the entire community rather than delving into the unique

challenges faced by specific groups. This "one-size-fits-all" approach often obscures the differentiated needs of various subgroups (such as asexual and intersex individuals) in real life. The use of the keyword "LGBTQ" in news reports will be analyzed and discussed later in this report.

- **Strong binding of "gay men" to "disease narratives".** "Gay men" is the second most frequently mentioned subject, accounting for 19.0% (31 articles). Although this figure has decreased from 2023 (67.9%), its distribution pattern is extremely singular: cross-analysis reveals that virtually all articles with "gay men" as the sole reporting subject point to the theme of "HIV and LGBT groups." This suggests that in the print media's view, "gay men" are almost equated with "public health risk monitoring objects," lacking multifaceted descriptions of this group in workplace, family, or cultural life.
- **"Transgender" groups becoming the focus of international political ideological propaganda.** "Transgender" groups account for 12.3% (20 articles), ranking third. The geographical distribution of reporting on this group is extremely uneven, with the vast majority (over 85%) concentrated in international news. This indicates that transgender issues became tools for print media to discuss the "U.S. election," "Western ideological struggles," or "human rights diplomacy" in 2025. The reporting emphasis is often not on transgender survival guarantees but on using the controversy of this issue to criticize Western society's "cultural polarization."
- **Further silencing of other marginalized groups.** "Lesbian" accounts for only 1.2%, essentially marginalized. "Bisexual" accounts for just 2.5%. "Asexual and intersex" completely disappeared (0%) from print media statistics in 2025.

This reflects a "selective focus" in print media reporting in 2025: either using generalized labels for macro narratives, or employing specific labels (such as gay men, transgender) to fulfill specific tasks related to public health prevention or political criticism.

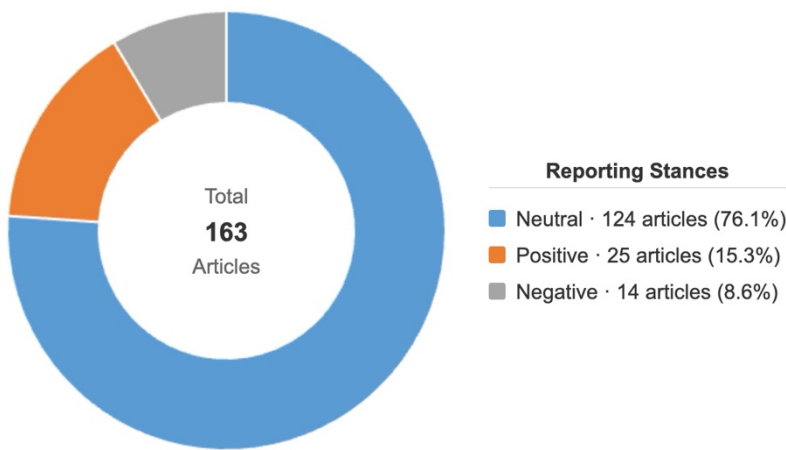
3.3 Analysis of Reporting Stance

This section analyzes the overall distribution of stances in LGBTQ-related reporting, further exploring the relationship between reporting subjects and stances, as well as differences in reporting stances across various media outlets.

The table below shows the distribution of stances across all reports:

Table: Distribution of Reporting Stances

Report Stance	Quantity	Percentage
Neutral	124	76.1%
Positive	25	15.3%
Negative	14	8.6%



The data reveals that mainland Chinese print media has experienced a transition from "diverse exploration" to "high convergence":

- **Dramatic collapse of positive stances.** Compared to 48.1% in 2020, positive reporting in 2025 has dropped to merely 15.3%.
- **Absolute dominance of neutral stances.** Neutral reporting in 2025 reached 76.1%, showing an upward trend compared to previous years.
- **Low-level fluctuation in negative stances.** Negative reporting peaked in 2024 (35.2%), but decreased to 8.6% in 2025.



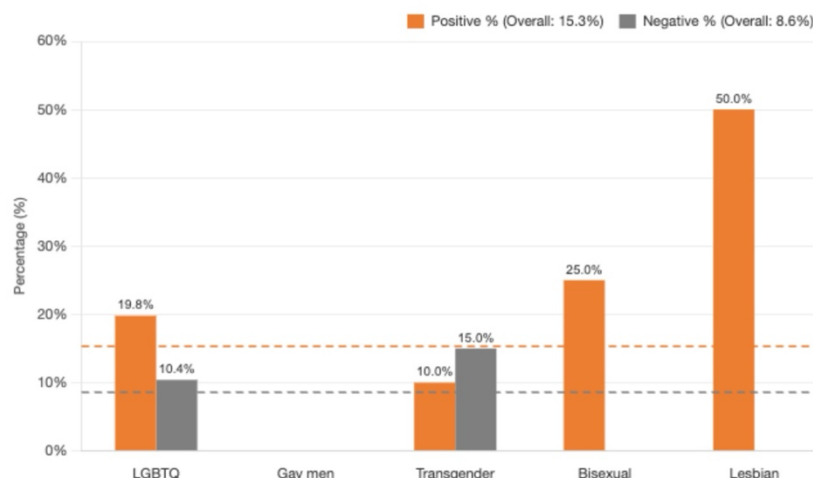
The narrative space for sexual minority issues in print media is rapidly converging toward a "neutral zone," a neutrality achieved at the expense of "positive advocacy" and "rights narratives." Additionally, considering the absence of print media in reporting major events as mentioned above, non-reporting itself constitutes a form of attitude. The neutral stance in reporting (76.1%) should not be simply understood as balanced reporting, but rather as "functional risk avoidance." Combined with the major domestic and international events mentioned later, print media collectively remained "neutral" or even "silent" on these most controversial events that demanded clear stances. This high percentage of neutrality reveals that by 2025, print media had lost the motivation to engage in deep, critical intervention regarding the social predicaments of sexual minorities, although five years earlier in 2020, there had been hope and fantasy that they might possibly take on this responsibility.

The following table shows the distribution of stances across different reporting subjects:

Table: Cross-analysis of Reporting Subjects and Stances

Reporting Subjects	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Positive Rate	Negative Rate
Transgender	15	2	3	10.0%	15.0%
Gay Men	31	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Lesbians	1	1	0	50.0%	0.0%
Bisexual	3	1	0	25.0%	0.0%
LGBTQ	74	21	11	19.8%	10.4%

Comparison of Positive and Negative Reporting Stances Across Different Report Subjects





In 2025, Chinese print media's reporting on sexual minorities exhibited obvious "objectification-based stance stratification":

- For gay men, media adopted an extreme "de-sensitization" strategy, with 100% neutral reporting confining them entirely to public health contexts such as HIV prevention, presenting them as pure "medical observation subjects" in print media narratives.
- In contrast, transgender groups, being highly involved in international political narratives, became the objects with the highest proportion of negative stances (15%), often used as evidence of Western "social division" and "culture wars."
- Lesbians, bisexuals, and the broadly termed LGBTQ groups were more often attached to cultural topics such as film reviews, retaining about 20% space for positive evaluation.

This differential treatment reveals the underlying logic of print media: neutralizing the sensitivity of domestic issues through public health narratives, serving international opinion struggles through politicization, and maintaining extremely limited windows for diverse expression in art criticism.



3.4 Temporal Distribution Analysis

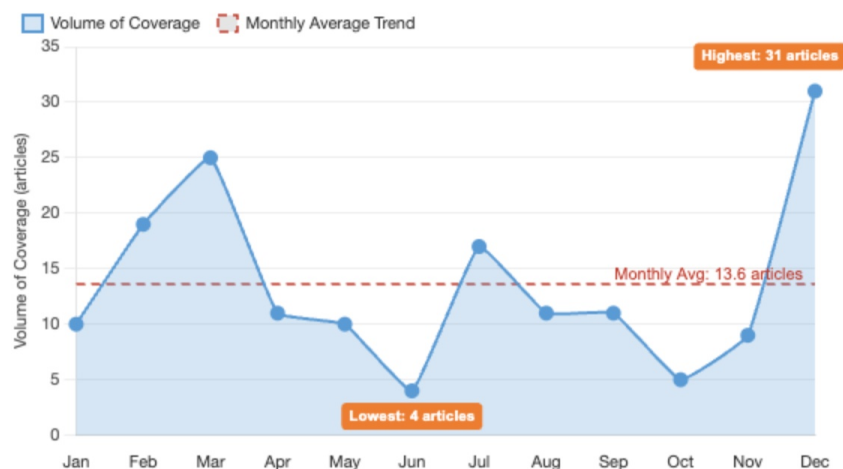
This section analyzes the monthly distribution of LGBTQ-related reporting in 2025 and explores reporting characteristics at key time nodes.

The following table shows the distribution of reporting volume from January to December 2025:

Table: Monthly Reporting Quantity Distribution

Month	Quantity	Main Themes
January	10	Cultural & Entertainment (5 articles), Legal & Policy (4 articles)
February	19	Legal & Policy (12 articles), Health & HIV (3 articles)
March	25	Legal & Policy (11 articles), Health & HIV (5 articles)
April	11	Legal & Policy (4 articles), Health & HIV (4 articles)
May	10	Health & HIV (4 articles), Legal & Policy (3 articles)
June	4	Legal & Policy (2 articles)
July	17	Health & HIV (9 articles), Legal & Policy (4 articles)
August	11	Health & HIV (4 articles), Cultural & Entertainment (4 articles)
September	11	Legal & Policy (5 articles), Health & HIV (4 articles)
October	5	Social & Livelihood (3 articles)
November	9	Cultural & Entertainment (3 articles), Health & HIV (3 articles)
December	31	Health & HIV (25 articles), Cultural & Entertainment (3 articles)

2025 Monthly Reporting Volume Distribution



In 2025, Chinese print media's reporting on sexual minority issues exhibited a significant "two-peak, one-valley" structure and cyclical pattern in temporal distribution: December reached the annual peak (31 articles) driven by "World AIDS Day," with reporting narrowly focused on ritualized disease prevention narratives that fixed group identity in the public health domain; February to March formed a secondary peak due to international changes such as Thailand's same-sex marriage law taking effect and the US election, emphasizing geopolitical competition perspectives. In stark contrast, during June's "Pride Month" when global sexual minority communities are most active, domestic print media displayed an obvious "silence effect," with reporting volume dropping to the annual low (only 4 articles), reflecting media's cautious avoidance strategy during sensitive time periods.

This temporal distribution reveals print media's "safety valve" regulation mechanism: by releasing medicalized visibility at safe nodes (such as AIDS Day), implementing strategic invisibility during sensitive windows (such as Pride Month), and selectively reporting during periods of international policy changes, print media in 2025 constructed a dynamic narrative logic that combined task-driven approaches with risk avoidance.



4. Key Findings and Discussion

This section provides in-depth discussion of key findings through systematic analysis of LGBTQ-related reporting in Chinese mainland media from January to December 2025, combining social and cultural backgrounds for deeper structural analysis.

4.1 "Parallel Worlds in Media Landscape": Analysis of Coverage of Popular Domestic and International Issues in 2025

Table: Statistics of Major LGBTQ Events in 2025 Domestically and Internationally

Date	Region	Event Description	Report Theme	Report Coverage
Jan 1	Intl	Liechtenstein Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage: The law officially takes effect, making it the 38th country globally to legally recognize equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.	same-sex marriage and intimate relationships	None
Jan 20	Intl	U.S. Signs Anti-Trans Executive Order: Trump signs an order redefining "gender" as biological sex in federal policy and terminating federal funding for gender-affirming care.	international politics	None
Jan 22	Intl	Thailand's Equal Marriage Act Takes Effect: Thailand becomes the first Southeast Asian nation to legalize same-sex marriage.	same-sex marriage and intimate relationships	None
Mar 18	Intl	Hungary Bans LGBTQ+ Public Activities: Parliament passes a strict law banning all LGBTQ-related public gatherings and promotion, including the historic Budapest Pride.	anti-discrimination and LGBTI organizations	None
Late Mar	Intl	Japan Supreme Court Rules "Sterilization Requirement" Unconstitutional: The court rules that requiring transgender individuals to undergo sterilization to change legal gender is unconstitutional.	LGBTI rights	None
Early Apr	Domestic	Chengdu Metro "Same-Sex Proposal" Staging Incident: Two men were detained for filming fake "same-sex hookup" videos. This sparked debate over the boundaries of content regulation.	crime	None
Apr 22	Domestic	"Voice of LGBTQ(同志之声)" Account Forced to Rename: The account was forced by Weibo to rename to "Pride Waves" after responding to discriminatory remarks.	anti-discrimination and LGBTI organizations	None
Apr - Year-round	Intl	U.S. Anti-LGBTQ Legislation Wave: State legislatures introduced over 850 restrictive bills targeting	LGBTI rights	None



		sexual minorities, including "Don't Say Gay" extensions.		
May - Jul	Domestic	Zhengzhou People's Park "Honey-Trap" Violence: Homophobic groups used social apps to lure gay men to offline meetings for mob beatings and humiliation.	crime	None
May - Jun	Intl	WorldPride 2025 Washington D.C.: Millions participated in one of the world's largest celebrations, marking the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Pride movement.	cultural reviews and related works	None
Jul 6	Domestic	Nanjing "Ah Hong" Lewdness Case: Police arrested a suspect for cross-dressing to lure men into sexual encounters and filming them.	workplace and social domains	None
Aug	Intl	Saint Lucia Decriminalizes Same-Sex Acts: The High Court struck down colonial-era laws criminalizing same-sex conduct.	LGBTI rights	None
Sep	Domestic	Chinese Representative "Laughing" at UN Meeting: During discussions on LGBTQ+ rights, the Chinese representative was criticized for a perceived "giggling" reaction.	international politics	None
Sep	Intl	Australia Lifts Blood Donation Restrictions: The government officially removed deferral periods for LGBTQ+ donors, shifting to science-based risk assessment.	workplace and social domains	None
Oct	Intl	Kenya Recognizes Transgender Identity: Kenyan courts ruled that the government must legally allow transgender individuals to change gender markers on IDs.	LGBTI rights	None
Nov	Domestic	Film "Together Through Thick and Thin" AI "Heterosexualized": For its mainland release, a same-sex couple subplot was censored by using AI to swap a male character's face.	cultural reviews and related works	None
Nov	Intl	U.S. Withdraws from UN LGBTI Core Group: The U.S. announced its exit from the mechanism dedicated to promoting LGBTIQI rights globally.	international politics	None
Late Nov	Domestic	Takedown of Blued and Other Social Apps: Several major gay social apps suddenly disappeared from app stores, causing widespread panic.	economics and consumption	Extremely Low

Print media's presentation of LGBTQ issues demonstrates characteristics of "harmless processing." Those landmark events that could define group memory in 2025 (such as Blued being taken down, films subjected to AI censorship, and even violent homophobic incidents) have completely "disappeared" from print media. Instead, they are replaced by popular science about AIDS prevention, pink economy growth data, or general cultural topics. This disconnection means that print media not only fails to record the era but constructs a "firewall" blocking truth, dissolving the



structural difficulties faced by the group into scattered livelihood fragments in public records. There seems to exist "parallel worlds in media landscape": on one side, the digital/real survival reality full of sharp conflicts, institutional suppression, and rights fluctuations; on the other, a highly filtered, de-politicized print media reporting landscape maintained within the "safe zone."

Core Cause Analysis:

- **"Risk Avoidance Mechanism" of Reporting**
Red Lines: Almost all major events in the table touch on current communication red lines: international diplomatic friction (UN meetings), institutional censorship (AI cuts), and negative social governance (Zhengzhou violence incident). Print media, as the most strictly regulated traditional medium, tends to avoid political risks through collective silence.
- **"Functional Transformation" of Issues:** Print media tends to embed LGBTQ issues within frameworks that have gained legitimacy. For example, "disease control" (HIV) and "economic benefits" (consumption power) are narratives acceptable to both official and commercial logic. This functional treatment successfully transforms "human rights/rights" issues into "health/commercial" issues, thereby erasing the political color behind events.
- **"Sacrificial Pawns" of Digital Space:** Many conflicts in 2025 erupted on social media and mobile platforms (such as the renaming of Voice of LGBTQ, App removal). Due to reporting cycles, target audiences, and editorial conservatism, print media often views such digital space suppressions as "internet public opinion" rather than "major news," actively filtering them out at the topic selection stage.
- **"Cold Treatment" Strategy of Social Psychology:** By maintaining "zero coverage of major negative events" in mainstream print media, an illusion of social harmony and steady progress can be created. This "cold treatment" aims to weaken sexual minorities' sense of identity and collective action power, making individuals feel isolated when facing violence or censorship. These print media perfectly avoid all these "centers of storm," turning instead to report on "painless" marginal topics. This "precise



avoidance" itself is an important component of the LGBTQ media survival environment in 2025.



4.2 Unavoidable Trends: Terminology Rights Contestation and Moral Judgment—Systematic Stigmatization of Sexual Minorities by Local Media in 2025

Since I began monitoring LGBTQ-related news in **mainland China** in 2020, the news coverage in 2025 marks the first time I have sensed such intense hostility and **systemic stigmatization** toward **sexual minorities** from the media. Through articles in three local newspapers (*Zhengzhou Daily*(*郑州日报*), *Xinyang Daily*(*信阳日报*), and *Yantai Evening News*(*烟台晚报*)), a clear trend of systemic stigmatization under the "struggle for naming rights" can be observed. These reports are not merely negative commentary; they represent a deliberate stance attempting to exclude sexual minorities from the "mainstream moral narrative."

4.2.1 Characteristics of the Stigmatization Trend: From "Passive Silence" to "Active Attack"

In these three documents, stigmatization manifests through the following three core characteristics:

- **Sanctifying the term "Tongzhi(同志)" and establishing an exclusive definition:** Articles in *Zhengzhou Daily* and *Xinyang Daily* (both authored by Wang Xiliang) emphasize that "Tongzhi" (comrade) is a "glorious title" with "sacred connotations" spanning 2,000 years. By reclaiming revolutionary history, this narrative attempts to establish the sole legitimate right to interpret the term, thereby defining its use by sexual minorities as "usurpation (篡夺)" and "defilement(玷污)."
- **Use of extremely exclusionary and derogatory language:** The text from *Xinyang Daily* is the most radical, directly describing LGBTQ-related content as "pathological and ugly things (“病态的、丑陋的东西”)," calling it a "stain" and "low-brow interest." Such characterization

"Tongzhi (同志)" has been completely taken over by pathological and ugly things (病态、丑陋的东西) such as homosexuality. This phenomenon is not only a defilement (玷污) of the sacred connotations (圣洁内涵) of the term "Tongzhi," but has also triggered alertness and awakening among upright people!"

—— *Zhengzhou Daily* and *Xinyang Daily*



is no longer a neutral social observation but linguistic violence carrying heavy moral judgment.

- **Constructing a binary opposition between "orthodoxy" and "the other":** The reports pit "upright people" against "homosexuals," claiming that the latter has triggered "alertness and awakening" in the former. While *Yantai Evening News* adopts a milder tone, it still reveals resistance toward the semantic evolution of the term. This narrative logic aims to achieve social exclusion of sexual minorities by "protecting" traditional etymology.

4.2.2 Potential Social Consequences

This aggressive narrative issued by local official media may result in the following profound negative impacts:

- **Exacerbating social discrimination and the risk of violence:** When official media outlets use terms like "pathological" and "ugly," they are essentially providing a "legal" endorsement for grassroots homophobia. This may lead to offline violence against LGBTQ+ individuals—such as the violent attacks in Zhengzhou mentioned in this report—being tacitly permitted or even justified by society, as victims have been pre-defined by the media as "immoral."
- **Shrinking the cultural survival space for sexual minorities:** The term "**Tongzhi**" is central to the **identity** of the Chinese-speaking LGBTQ+ community. Efforts by the media to "reclaim" this word through administrative or public opinion means are, in essence, attempts to erase the right of sexual minorities to express their identity in the Chinese context, further rendering the community "voiceless" in public discourse.
- **Worsening mental health and community isolation:** Such public attacks from the mainstream discourse significantly increase the sense of stigma and shame among LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The reappearance of the word "pathological(病态)" in 2025 headlines signifies a severe regression in depathologization efforts at the mainstream media level, potentially triggering deep identity crises within the community.
- **Creating a "Broken Window Effect" in public opinion:** If such malicious reporting is not corrected,



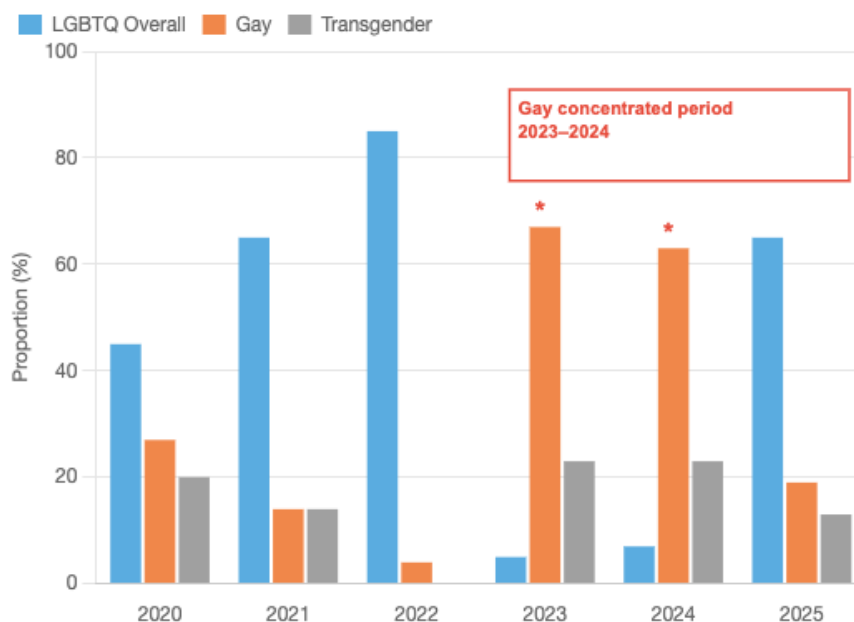
it may trigger imitation by other local media. Statistically, this explains why, despite a high proportion of neutral stances in 2025 domestic reporting, these destructive "negative spikes" appear specifically when involving "social livelihoods" and the "orthodoxy of titles."

These three news items reflect a dangerous trend in the 2025 coverage of sexual minority issues in China: the weaponization of traditional culture and revolutionary narratives to achieve moral degradation. This trend is not only a denial of the laws of linguistic evolution but also an overt provocation against diverse social values. Its consequence will be the further shrinkage of social tolerance and the intensification of social conflict.

4.3 Post-Pandemic Era (2020-2025): Observations on LGBTQ News Reporting Changes in Mainland China

Between 2020-2022, reporting subjects were relatively diverse, primarily focusing on the LGBTQ community as a whole (67.5% in 2021, 85.9% in 2022). By 2023 and 2024, reporting focus shifted significantly toward specific groups, mainly gay men (67.9% in 2023, 63.4% in 2024) and transgender individuals (22.5% in 2023, 23.2% in 2024). This change in reporting subjects closely relates to thematic concentration, with gay men more frequently associated with health issues (especially HIV/AIDS) and transgender individuals appearing more in cultural and sports topics.

Subject of Reporting	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
LGBTQ	140 (44.0%)	332 (67.5%)	352 (85.9%)	9 (3.8%)	8 (5.6%)	106 (65.0%)
Bisexual	4 (1.3%)	3 (0.6%)	1 (0.2%)	11 (4.6%)	8 (5.6%)	4 (2.5%)
Lesbian	23 (7.2%)	7 (1.4%)	3 (0.7%)	2 (0.8%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.2%)
Asexual	1 (0.3%)	19 (3.9%)	28 (6.8%)	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Gay men	85 (26.7%)	70 (14.2%)	10 (2.4%)	163 (67.9%)	90 (63.4%)	31 (19.0%)
Transgender	62 (19.5%)	61 (12.4%)	16 (3.9%)	54 (22.5%)	33 (23.2%)	20 (12.3%)
Intersex	3 (0.9%)	-	-	-	-	-

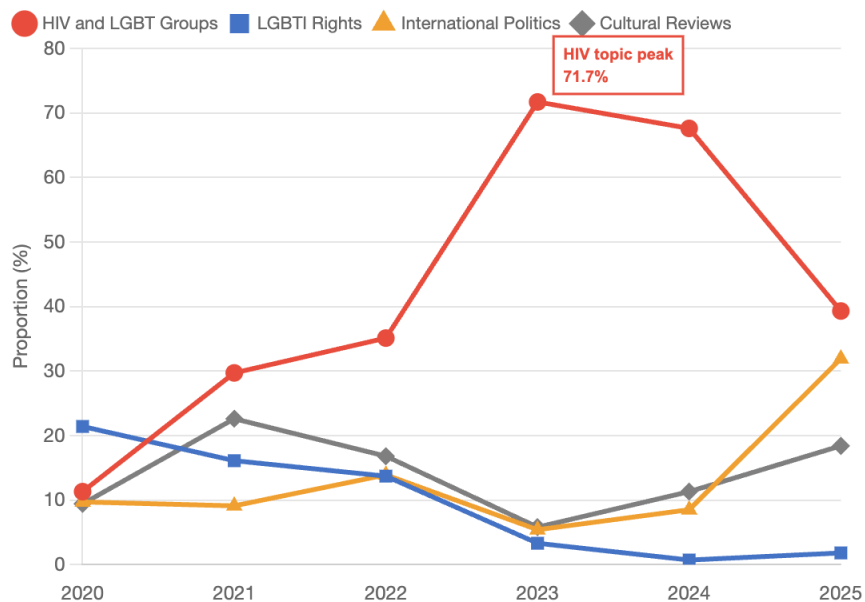


The distribution of reporting themes in 2020 was relatively balanced, with HIV-related reporting at 11.1%, rights issues at 21.6%, and marriage topics at 11.7%. By 2021, HIV-related reporting rose to 29.9%, while cultural commentary also

maintained a significant proportion (22.5%). By 2023 and 2024, HIV-related reporting dominated at 71.7% and 67.4% respectively, while same-sex marriage and intimate relationships, workplace and social domains, and anti-discrimination and LGBTI organizations topics declined dramatically, sometimes to zero. This thematic shift indicates media attention increasingly concentrated on health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS, while significantly decreasing focus on other issues.

Table: Coverage Topic Distribution (2020–2025)

Topic	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
HIV and LGBT Groups	36 (11.3%)	146 (29.7%)	144 (35.1%)	172 (71.7%)	96 (67.6%)	64 (39.3%)
LGBTI Rights	68 (21.4%)	79 (16.1%)	56 (13.7%)	8 (3.3%)	1 (0.7%)	3 (1.8%)
Others	18 (5.7%)	41 (8.3%)	36 (8.8%)	4 (1.7%)	3 (2.1%)	–
Anti-Discrimination and LGBTI Organizations	3 (0.9%)	5 (1.0%)	2 (0.5%)	–	–	–
Same-Sex Marriage and Intimate Relationships	34 (10.7%)	11 (2.2%)	8 (2.0%)	1 (0.4%)	–	7 (4.3%)
Celebrities and LGBTI	26 (8.2%)	28 (5.7%)	20 (4.9%)	14 (5.8%)	3 (2.1%)	3 (1.8%)
International Politics	31 (9.7%)	45 (9.1%)	57 (13.9%)	13 (5.4%)	12 (8.5%)	52 (31.9%)
Cultural Reviews and Related Works	30 (9.4%)	111 (22.6%)	69 (16.8%)	14 (5.8%)	16 (11.3%)	30 (18.4%)
Crime	19 (6.0%)	10 (2.0%)	10 (2.4%)	9 (3.8%)	–	1 (0.6%)
Economics and Consumption	36 (11.3%)	8 (1.6%)	5 (1.2%)	5 (2.1%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.2%)
Workplace and Social Domains	17 (5.3%)	8 (1.6%)	3 (0.7%)	–	8 (5.6%)	1 (0.6%)



4.3.1 "Roller Coaster" Evolution of Reporting Trends

Between 2020-2025, LGBTQ-related news reporting in mainland China exhibited significant "roller coaster" fluctuations. The total number of reports surged from 318 in 2020 to 492 in 2021 (55% increase), then continuously declined to a historic low of 142 in 2024 (71% decrease). Though slightly rebounding to 163 in 2025, this remained far below early pandemic levels. This dramatic fluctuation reflects profound changes in media attention to LGBTQ issues: from a "high tide" in 2020-2021, to an "ebb" in 2022-2024, and an "adjustment period" in 2025, significantly shifting LGBTQ issues' position in public discourse.

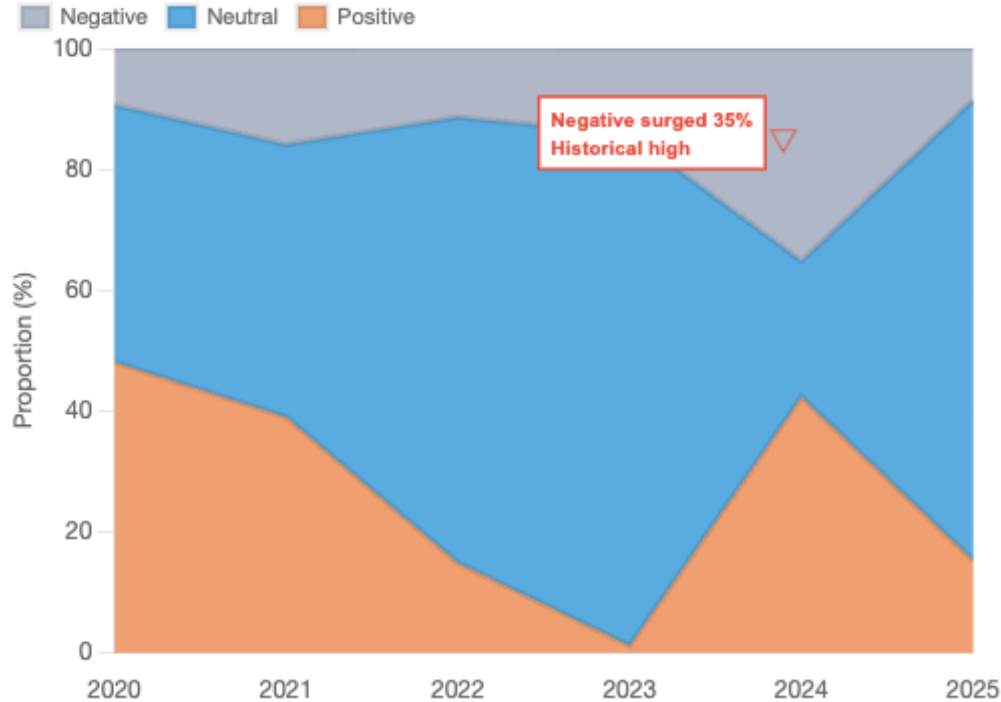
Annual Trend Analysis of LGBT-Related Coverage (2020–2025)

Year	Total Coverage	YoY Change	Primary Group Covered	Primary Topic	Dominant Tone
2020	318	–	LGBTQ (44.0%)	LGBTI Rights (21.4%)	Positive (48.1%)
2021	492	+55%	LGBTQ (67.5%)	HIV and LGBT Groups (29.7%)	Neutral (45.1%)
2022	410	–17%	LGBTQ (85.9%)	HIV and LGBT Groups (35.1%)	Neutral (73.7%)
2023	240	–41%	Gay men (67.9%)	HIV and LGBT Groups (71.7%)	Neutral (84.6%)
2024	142	–41%	Gay men (63.4%)	HIV and LGBT Groups (67.6%)	Neutral (68.0%)
2025	163	+15%	LGBTQ (65.0%)	HIV and LGBT Groups (39.3%)	Neutral (76.1%)

Coverage Volume and Tone Distribution (2020–2025)

Year	Total Coverage	YoY Change	Positive Tone	Neutral Tone	Negative Tone
2020	318	–	48.1%	42.5%	9.4%
2021	492	+55%	39.0%	45.1%	15.9%
2022	410	–17%	14.9%	73.7%	11.5%
2023	240	–41%	1.2%	84.6%	14.2%
2024	142	–41%	42.3%	22.5%	35.2%
2025	163	+15%	15.3%	76.1%	8.6%

Coverage Tone Distribution Changes

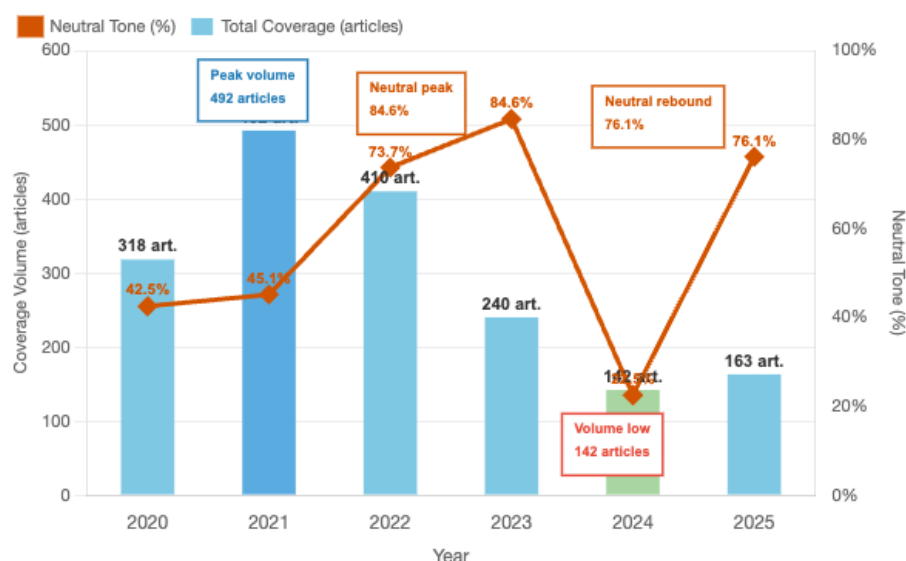


Notably, the sharp decline in reporting volume highly synchronized with a "neutralization" trend in reporting attitudes. In 2020, positive reporting accounted for 48.1%, with media generally maintaining a positive attitude toward LGBTQ issues; but by 2023, neutral reporting peaked at 84.6%, while positive reporting fell to 1.2%. As mentioned earlier, this indicates print media's narrative space on sexual minority issues rapidly converging toward a "neutral zone," sacrificing "positive advocacy" and "rights narratives." This reporting stance neutrality (76.1%) should not be simply understood as balanced reporting but as "functional risk avoidance," revealing print media's loss of motivation for deep, critical engagement with sexual minorities' social predicaments by 2025.

4.3.2 2024: A "Health Crisis Year" with Multi-dimensional Anomalies

2020–2025 LGBT Coverage Annual Neutralization Trend

Key Finding: Coverage volume declining, neutral tone rising steadily



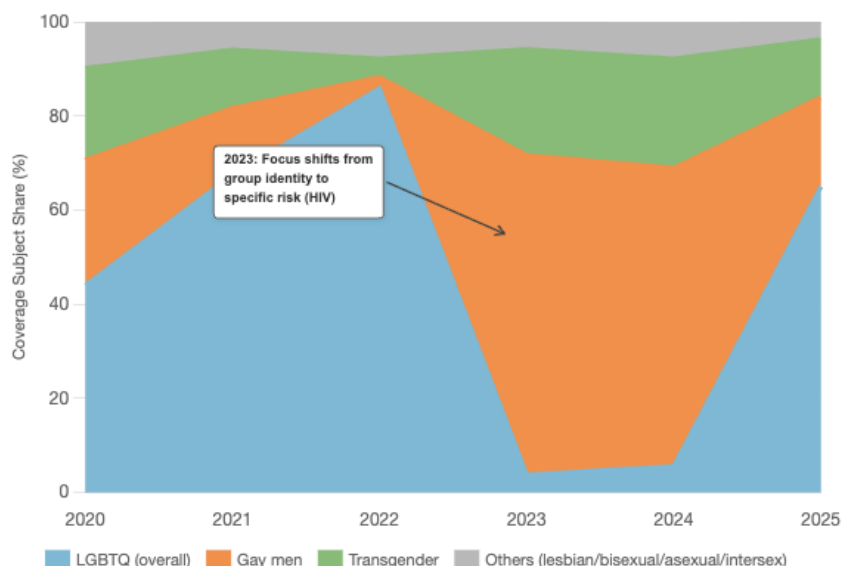
The year 2024 stands out as a critical inflection point exhibiting anomalous characteristics across multiple dimensions throughout the observation period. That year, total coverage volume dropped to a historic low of 142 articles, while the share of negative-tone coverage surged to 35.2% — the highest across all six years — and neutral-tone coverage fell to 22.5%, its lowest point in the same period. Even more striking was the heavy concentration of coverage on gay men (63.4%), with HIV-related topics dominating the thematic landscape (67.6%).

The simultaneous abnormality of these indicators is not coincidental. Between 2023 and 2024, a tightly coupled reporting pattern emerged linking gay men and HIV topics: in 2023, gay men accounted for 67.9% of coverage subjects and HIV-related themes made up 71.7% of topics; 2024 continued this trend, with gay men at 63.4% and HIV at 67.6%. This "gay men = HIV" framing, on one hand, may reflect actual public health events during the period — such as the mpox outbreak — and on the other, exposes a recurring pitfall in media coverage of LGBTQ issues: a tendency toward reductive and stereotypical reporting that over-associates specific groups with health risks, while neglecting the diverse dimensions of LGBTQ communities.



4.3.3 "Focus Shift" and Intensified Marginalization of Coverage Subjects

**2020–2025 Coverage Subject Evolution:
From "Group Identity" to "Specific Risk" Narrowing**



Coverage subject evolution demonstrates a clear trajectory from "collective to individual" and from "diverse to concentrated." During 2020-2022, the LGBTQ community as a whole was the primary focus, reaching 85.9% in 2022, reflecting the media's macro-level attention to sexual minorities. However, 2023-2024 marked a dramatic shift, with coverage suddenly focusing on gay men (67.9% and 63.4% respectively), while comprehensive LGBTQ coverage plummeted to just 3.8% and 5.6%. This transformation correlates closely with the dominance of HIV-related issues, creating a highly bound "gay men-HIV" reporting pattern.

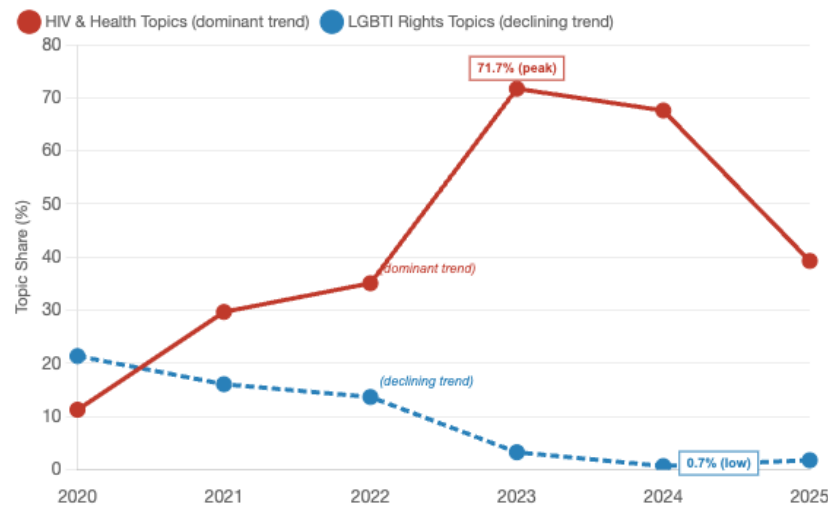
Simultaneously, other sexual minority groups became further marginalized in media visibility. Coverage of lesbian communities fell from 7.2% in 2020 to 1.2% in 2025; bisexual groups remained persistently peripheral (0.2%-5.6% between 2020-2025); asexual groups completely disappeared from coverage after 2022. Transgender groups received relatively more attention in 2023-2024 (22.5% and 23.2%), but this primarily centered on cultural and sports topics, without developing into in-depth reporting on their rights and living conditions. This imbalance in coverage subjects not only fails to accurately represent the diverse



composition of LGBTQ communities but may reinforce stereotypical perceptions of specific groups.

4.3.4 "Health Crisis" Framing and Topic Narrowing in Media Coverage

Topic "Health Crisis" Narrativization:
Public Health Narratives Displacing Rights Narratives



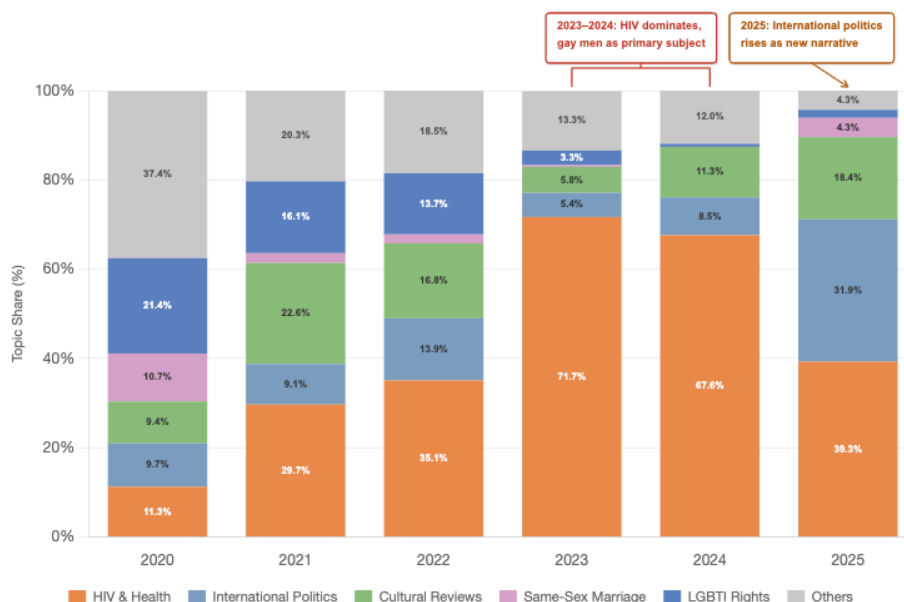
The evolution of reporting themes clearly delineates a trajectory from "diversification" to "health crisis framing." In 2020, reporting themes were relatively balanced: LGBTI rights accounted for 21.4%, economic consumption 11.3%, HIV issues 11.3%, and same-sex marriage 10.7%, presenting a multifaceted view of LGBTQ communities. However, beginning in 2021, HIV-related reporting steadily increased (29.7%→35.1%→71.7%→67.6%), reaching a peak of 71.7% in 2023, becoming the absolutely dominant theme.

In stark contrast, other topics became marginalized or disappeared entirely: LGBTI rights issues declined from 21.4% in 2020 to 1.8% in 2025; same-sex marriage and intimate relationships fell from 10.7% to 4.3%; workplace and social domains, anti-discrimination, and LGBTI organizations received zero coverage in 2023-2024. This extreme concentration of topics reflects how media in the post-pandemic era primarily framed LGBTQ communities as



objects of "public health concerns" rather than as rights-bearing subjects or components of social diversity.

2020–2025 Chinese Media Sexual Minority Topic Structure Evolution: From Multi-Narrative to Governance Tool



2025 showed some signals of adjustment: international political topics rose significantly to 31.9%, HIV issues decreased to 39.3%, and cultural commentary increased to 18.4%. This indicates that media began to broaden reporting perspectives, but rights, marriage, workplace, and other social issues directly relevant to LGBTQ communities remained absent, demonstrating persistent structural limitations in agenda setting.

4.3.5 Vanishing Terminology: Systematic Withdrawal of Identity and Rights Terminology in Print Media

In 2025's social observations, we identified a significant media misalignment phenomenon: the coexistence of "parallel worlds." While sexual minorities experienced dramatic rights fluctuations, institutional censorship, and malicious conflicts (such as social app removals, AI face-swapping in films, and violent attacks) in internet and physical spaces, these painful realities were completely isolated from mainstream print media coverage by an invisible "firewall."



Print media applied "de-politicization" and "neutralization" approaches to this topic, confining complex rights claims to safe harbors like "AIDS prevention" or "occasional cultural consumption." This disconnection manifests not only as an absence of content but as systematic terminology erasure—eliminating group visibility at the linguistic level, gradually rendering them "invisible" in public memory.



The figure clearly illustrates the evolution of terminology erasure in print media reporting. From 2020 to 2025, the use of key terms represents not merely a frequency decline but a systematic collapse of semantic space:

1. Precipitous drop in LGBT terminology frequency: 2020 represented the final "highlight" with documents containing "LGBT" accounting for 41.7% of coverage, appearing nearly 500 times. By 2025, documents containing this term fell to just 3.1% (only 5 articles), with total appearances plummeting to 9. This indicates that "LGBT"—a term with strong international recognition and identity significance—has been eliminated from print media's standard vocabulary, thoroughly marginalized by mainland Chinese journalists.
2. Dilution of single-article density: In 2020, "LGBT" and its derivatives appeared an average of 5.2 times in articles containing these terms. By 2025, they appeared



only 1-1.8 times on average, indicating that even when present, these terms merely serve as passing background information rather than core article themes.

Why have these key terms disappeared from mainland Chinese news reporting?

1. Precise anchoring of censorship red lines. "LGBT" or "LGBTQ" has been assigned overly strong "ideological" and "foreign association" connotations in regulatory contexts. For print media editorial departments, these English abbreviations function like "minefields" triggering automatic review. To ensure article approval, reporters and editors proactively engage in terminology avoidance, using vaguer terms or completely omitting group labels.
2. Return to pathologization in reporting paradigms. In 2025, reporting heavily shifted toward "HIV prevention." In public health narratives, reporters frequently use clinical medical terminology like "men who have sex with men (MSM)" rather than rights-oriented terms like "LGBT." This terminology shift successfully reduces "rights subjects" to "medical observation samples."
3. Avoidance of "Western universal values" spillover effect. With changing international political environments, terminology with Western human rights connotations faced stricter scrutiny in print media. The "international politics" theme occupied a high proportion (31.9%) in 2025 print media, but mostly from negative stances. In this context, reducing "LGBT" usage serves to narratively separate from "Western value systems."
4. "Active Extinction" of Issue Visibility. When a group ceases to be mentioned at the vocabulary level, it gradually becomes "invisible" in public consciousness. Through this "de-terminologization" process, print media effectively achieves a social outcome of "non-existence"—if the terminology is absent in media, then the real dilemmas faced by this group naturally lose their foundation for discussion.

2020 represented "discussion," 2022 shifted to "paraphrasing," while 2025 marks "erasure." The reduction to zero frequency of key terms indicates that this issue in mainstream print media has transformed from a "sensitive topic" to a "non-topic," completing a systematic withdrawal from the public view.

4.4 Reflection: The Collapse of Three-Dimensional Space for Sexual Minorities in Mainland China

Through 2025 media monitoring data and social documentation beyond media, we observe that the living space of sexual minorities in China is facing "systematic contraction." This contraction is not merely physical, but a deeper deconstruction of discourse rights and sense of identity.

4.4.1. Simultaneous Blockage of Three Spaces

- "Medicalized isolation" in public opinion space:** Print media data clearly shows that sexual minority issues have been confined to the "health and HIV" cage. Mainstream media, through a high proportion of neutral reporting, has severed the connection between this group and narratives related to law, rights, and normal life.
- "Anonymized silencing" in online discourse space:** The forced renaming of "Voice of Gays" and the removal of applications like Blued mark the severing of bottom-up community mobilization and social connections. Online space is no longer a safe harbor, but a "restricted zone" under strict supervision.
- "Violent threats" in offline activity space:** The disappearance of Pride Month parades and violent attacks against sexual minorities in Zhengzhou public toilets reveal the physical shrinkage of living space. When mainstream media collectively remained silent on the Zhengzhou violence incident, this "silence" effectively evolved into tacit consent to offline violence.

4.4.2 Deprivation of Discourse Rights and Legitimization of Stigmatization

Particularly alarming is the 2025 contestation over naming rights in local newspapers. Media has reshaped the political sanctification of the term "comrade" to characterize sexual minorities as "defilers." This moral judgment conducted at the linguistic source is more aggressive than mere ignorance. It signals that media stance is transitioning from "not reporting" to "negative stereotyping," attempting to complete social isolation of this group from a moral high ground.



4.4.3 Peculiar Resonance with Global Conservative Reflections

In 2025, a strong reconsideration of identity politics and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) emerged globally (especially in the United States). This global conservative resurgence objectively provided a certain "rationality" narrative for domestic tightening policies. Chinese print media extensively reported on American anti-transgender legislation and withdrawal from UN LGBTI mechanisms, implicitly defining sexual minority rights as "Western failed experiences," thereby further justifying the de-rights process domestically.

4.4.4 Conclusion: A Group Trapped on December 1st

In 2025, sexual minorities in print media seem to exist only on December 1st. This seasonal, medicalized visibility obscures the real predicaments of the group during the other 364 days—living amidst legal deficiencies, social communication blockages, and offline violence. The "defensive neutrality" of media narratives, while preserving fragile continuity, dissolves the possibility of changing social perceptions. Under intertwined internal and external pressures, sexual minorities are gradually transforming from "dissenters" in the public view to completely marginalized "invisible people."



5. Policy and Action Recommendations

Moving from "Functional Risk Avoidance" to "Social Co-governance"

Facing the issue narrowing and resurgence of stigmatization revealed by 2025 data, neither pure resistance nor silence can improve the status quo. We need a more resilient approach to promote the transition from "health governance" to "civilized consensus" among government, media, and social forces on their respective tracks.

5.1 Restructuring Governance Logic: Beyond the "Sanitary Cordon"

Current governance logic relies excessively on a disease-control framework — one that has served as a "safe harbor" but has simultaneously become a "quarantine wall." Relevant government authorities should recognize that sexual minorities are not merely "subjects of prevention and treatment," but taxpayers and members of society. We recommend that civil affairs and judicial bodies explore shifting the issue away from the highly sensitive domain of political rights toward the realm of "essential livelihood needs." For instance, examining specific legal applications under the Civil Code framework — such as designated guardianship and joint property protection — would not only address the concrete hardships facing this community, but also provide a basis for regulating local media expression through administrative channels, curbing the linguistic violence perpetuated by certain publications through traditional narratives, and preventing the "broken windows effect" from escalating into real-world conflict.

5.2 Professionalizing Media Narratives: Breaking Out of the "December 1st" Cycle

Mainstream media should critically reflect on the consequences of this "seasonal visibility." So long as sexual minorities exist only within the frame of "World AIDS Day," social stereotypes will never be dismantled. Media outlets should commit to "normalizing" and "de-labeling" coverage of these issues. We recommend that editorial teams develop professional reporting guidelines that naturally incorporate sexual minority participation within universally relevant topics such as eldercare, mental health, and workplace



culture. At the same time, the "cultural reviews" space that showed strength in 2025 data should be consolidated and expanded — leveraging gentle forms such as film and literature to sustain public awareness of pluralistic values.

5.3 Reorienting Advocacy Strategy: Building "Resilient Communication" and Early Warning Mechanisms

For NGOs and community organizations operating in an era of shrinking physical space, strategic "narrative alignment" is paramount. Advocates should resist framing rights claims in isolation, and instead proactively integrate sexual minority issues into broader social concerns on the state's agenda — such as peer mutual aid in the context of an aging population, workplace mental health initiatives, and non-discriminatory blood donation policy. Furthermore, a monitoring and feedback mechanism must be established to track stigmatizing coverage in print media; in extreme cases such as the *Zhengzhou Daily*, rational and professional channels — academic feedback, compliance advisory letters — should be used as counterweights. This "professional-to-professional" mode of communication is far more effective at preventing the total loss of discursive power than emotionally charged protest.



Appendix I

Data Cleaning and Analysis Standards

The data collection and processing procedure for this study comprised the following steps:

1. **Identifying data sources:** Data were sourced from the WiseSearch news database.
2. **Defining search keywords:** In accordance with the research objectives, three categories of keywords were established:
 - Sexual orientation: gay men(男同), lesbian(女同), homosexual (同性恋), bisexual(双性恋), intersex(间性), asexual(无性恋)
 - Gender identity: transgender(跨性别), trans(跨性), transsexual(变性)
 - Group terminology: LGBTQ, LGBT, queer(酷儿), sexual minorities(性少数)
3. **Setting the time frame:** The search period was set from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.
4. **Database search:** Using the keywords above, a search was conducted in the WiseSearch news database for coverage published between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.
5. **Preliminary screening:** Search results underwent preliminary screening to exclude articles unrelated to LGBTQ issues. Screening criteria included:
 - The article must contain at least one keyword.
 - The article must be an original news report; reprints, advertisements, advertorials, and other non-news content were excluded.
 - The article must be in Chinese.
6. **Information extraction:** For articles passing preliminary screening, the following information was extracted: article title, publishing outlet, publication date, original URL, and full article text (with PDF versions downloaded).



7. **Manual review:** All articles passing preliminary screening were subject to manual review and further filtered according to the following criteria:
 - The article's subject matter must be directly related to LGBTQ communities or issues.
 - Articles in which keywords appeared only incidentally and were unrelated to the primary subject were excluded.
8. **Data coding:** All articles in the final dataset were manually coded according to pre-established coding criteria (see Appendix B), covering: media type, coverage subject, geographic scope, coverage topic, coverage category, editorial stance, and event stance.
9. **Data entry:** Coded data were entered into Excel spreadsheets to form a structured dataset.
10. **Data analysis:** Statistical analysis was conducted using Excel and a Python environment in Jupyter Notebook, with by Claude Haiku 3 and Gemini 3.0 models providing supplementary analytical assistance in interpreting and analyzing the results.

Data Cleaning Standards

During data collection and processing, the following standards are applied:

- Duplicate reports: Retain only one article when content is identical or highly similar.
- Similar title treatment: Manually verify reports with similar titles to determine if they are different articles or reprints; code separately if different, retain only one if identical.
- Irrelevant content removal: During manual review, exclude reports unrelated to LGBTQ issues (e.g., titles mentioning "same-sex" coincidentally but unrelated to LGBTQ topics).
- Error correction: Correct obvious errors in reports (e.g., date errors, media name errors) as appropriate.



Analysis Tools

- Microsoft Excel: Used for data entry, organization, preliminary statistical analysis (frequency, percentages), and chart creation.
- Jupyter Notebook (Python): Used for data cleaning, statistical analysis, and visualization, primarily using pandas for data processing and re for keyword matching.
- Claude Haiku 3: Large language model assisting with data analysis, statistical analysis, framework analysis, and preliminary insights.
- **Gemini 3.0**: Assists with data analysis and more complex statistical processing.

Appendix II: Coding Manual

Stance Determination Standards

Both reporting stance and event stance are classified as positive, neutral, or negative:

Reporting Stance Criteria: Reporting stance refers to the attitude, tendency, or values held by media or journalists when reporting events, typically reflected in news selection, language, angle, and content arrangement.

- Positive: Reports mentioning anti-discrimination, elimination of discrimination, care for LGBTQ groups, using positive terminology to describe LGBTQ groups, or presenting supportive information.
- Negative: Reports that deepen negative stereotypes about LGBTQ groups, or report from sensationalist or critical perspectives lacking objectivity and balance.
- Neutral: Between positive and negative, such as reports that simply state facts without obvious value orientation, or present relatively balanced descriptions and viewpoints.



- Special handling for HIV and other disease-related reporting: For reports difficult to classify, if they only connect relevant groups with disease relevance, they are classified as neutral or negative.

Event Stance Criteria: Event stance refers to the views, attitudes, or behaviors of relevant parties in news events (such as involved parties, stakeholders, or third parties).

- Positive: Expressions of support for LGBTQ rights, opposition to discrimination, or care for LGBTQ groups by event-related parties.
- Negative: Expressions of opposition to LGBTQ rights, discrimination against LGBTQ groups, or negative stereotypes by event-related parties.
- Neutral: Event-related parties do not clearly express a stance on LGBTQ issues, or their expressed views are difficult to classify as positive or negative.

Topic Classification Standards

Topic classification is primarily based on the core content of the report. When a report covers multiple topics, the primary topic is determined by reporting intent or content proportion:

- LGBTI rights: Focus on LGBTQ groups' rights, including marriage, adoption, employment, education, etc.
- Anti-discrimination and LGBTI organizations: Reports on discrimination against LGBTQ groups and anti-discrimination actions by LGBTQ organizations and activists.
- Celebrities and LGBTI: Reports on LGBTQ celebrities or celebrity events related to LGBTQ issues.
- Economic consumption: Reports on economic activities related to LGBTQ groups, such as pink economy or gay tourism.
- Cultural commentary and related works: Reports on LGBTQ-themed films, television, literature, art, and related criticism.
- Same-sex marriage and intimate relationships: Reports on same-sex marriage, same-sex partner relationships, etc.



- Workplace and social domains: Reports on LGBTQ groups' experiences in workplaces, education, healthcare, and other social areas.
- HIV and LGBT groups: Reports on HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ groups, related prevention measures, disease education, and other sexually transmitted diseases such as monkeypox.
- Crime: Reports on criminal incidents involving LGBTQ groups.
- International politics: Reports on LGBTQ issues at the international political level, such as relevant policies of international organizations or related diplomatic events.
- Other: LGBTQ-related reports not belonging to any of the above categories.

Reporting Subject Classification Standards

Reporting subjects are classified according to the main groups mentioned in the report:

- Gay men: Reports primarily mentioning gay men.
- Transgender: Reports primarily mentioning transgender individuals.
- LGBTQ: Reports primarily mentioning the entire LGBTQ community, or not clearly distinguishing specific groups.
- Bisexual: Reports primarily mentioning bisexual individuals.
- Lesbian: Reports primarily mentioning lesbian individuals.
- Intersex: Reports primarily mentioning intersex individuals.
- Asexual: Reports primarily mentioning asexual individuals.

When a report covers multiple subjects, it is entered multiple times in the Excel spreadsheet, each time recording one main subject while maintaining consistent other information (such as document ID).



Reporting Category Classification Standards

Reporting categories include:

- Legal policy: Whether the report content involves LGBTQ-related laws, regulations, policy measures, etc.
- Culture and entertainment: Whether the report content involves LGBTQ-related cultural and entertainment activities, artistic works, media representations, etc.
- Social Welfare: Whether the reporting content involves the social life, social issues, or social phenomena of LGBTQ communities.
- Health and HIV: Whether the reporting content involves health issues of LGBTQ communities, especially HIV/AIDS-related topics.
- Scientific Research: Whether the reporting content involves scientific research, academic surveys, etc. on LGBTQ issues.
- Education Development: Whether the reporting content involves LGBTQ-related educational issues, such as campus bullying, gender education, etc.
- Economic Consumption: Whether the reporting content involves LGBTQ-related commercial activities, marketing, consumption trends, etc.
- Sports: Whether the reporting content involves LGBTQ athletes, gender issues in sporting events, etc.

Appendix III: Selected Annual Report Links (Chinese Version)

China Rainbow Media Award Media Monitoring Report 2015

<https://cnlgbtdata.com/files/uploads/2019/08/2015%E5%BD%A9%E8%99%B9%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E5%A5%96%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E7%9B%91%E6%B5%8B%E5%B9%B4%E5%BA%A6%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A.pdf>

China Rainbow Media Award Media Monitoring Report 2016



<https://cnlgbtdata.com/files/uploads/2019/08/2016%E5%BD%A9%E8%99%B9%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E5%A5%96%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E7%9B%91%E6%B5%8B%E5%B9%B4%E5%BA%A6%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A.pdf>

China Rainbow Media Award Media Monitoring Report 2017

<https://cnlgbtdata.com/files/uploads/2019/08/2017%E5%BD%A9%E8%99%B9%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E5%A5%96%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E7%9B%91%E6%B5%8B%E5%B9%B4%E5%BA%A6%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A.pdf>

China Rainbow Media Award Media Monitoring Report 2018–2019

<https://cnlgbtdata.com/files/uploads/2019/08/2018%E5%B9%B4%E5%BD%A9%E8%99%B9%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93%E7%9B%91%E6%B5%8B%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A.pdf>