

# **LGBT+: China unleashes the moral police against what it calls an ‘abnormal’ community**

Sunday 16 July 2017, by [KEATING Fiona](#), [WILLIAMS Shan](#) (Date first published: 15 July 2017).

China has sent out the moral police. And in doing so, it has essentially designated the entire LGBT community as “abnormal”.

## **Online regulation**

The China Netcasting Services Association (CNSA) recently published regulation [[1](#)] banning images of all “abnormal” sexual behaviour online. But alongside talk of sexual violence, the list also includes images, video, documentaries, and anime of LGBT relationships. In other words, the whole gay community in China was essentially labelled “abnormal” and compared to violent criminals.

The regulation read [online translation]:

*"Internet audio-visual program service-related units should adhere to the correct political orientation, value orientation and aesthetic orientation, prohibit the production and playback of the following contents of the network audio-visual programs..."*

### **(6) rendering obscene pornography and vulgar low taste...**

2. Performance and display of abnormal sexual relations, sexual behavior, such as incest, homosexuality, sexual metamorphosis, sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual violence..."

Social media and video upload sites would be required to employ censors to trawl through content.

## **Tightening online control**

In 2016, US human rights group Freedom House called China the world’s “worst abuser of internet freedom” [[2](#)]. Human Rights Watch, meanwhile, insists that the government has “tightened control over nongovernmental organizations, activists, media, and the internet” since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2013 [[3](#)].

The latest regulation is seen as another step in Chinese authorities’ efforts to tighten control over online media. Last week, for example, China’s top micro-blogging site Weibo vowed to block unlicensed videos after warnings from the government; which in turn caused its stock value to plunge.

## **It’s a long and winding road**

Homosexuality was decriminalised in China in 1997, but it was still deemed a mental illness until 2001 [[4](#)]. And while a Chinese court recently ruled against a case of forced “conversion therapy” in an unprecedented case [[5](#)], such “compelled treatment” is reportedly not uncommon [[6](#)].

China is experiencing a growth in LGBTQ+ civil society [7] and a shift in traditionalist values. But the community is still pushing for more rights. In 2015, for example, a college student sued China's Education Ministry over academic textbooks that described homosexuality as a 'disorder' [8]. And in the same year, as the US Supreme Court extended gay marriage rights nationwide, a Chinese same-sex couple demanded the same right from the Chinese government [9]; suing the Chinese registry for refusing their application to marry in December 2015.

Many scientists recognise that diverse sexuality is normal [10], and that there's a wealth of scientific studies which show sexual orientation is determined biologically [11]. But China is far from being the only government which doesn't appear to accept that [12]. So in China and around the world, the fight for equal rights continues.

**Shan Williams**

\* THE CANARY. JULY 14TH, 2017:

<https://www.thecanary.co/2017/07/14/chinas-internet-crackdown-abnormal-lgbt-images/>

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## **China causes outrage by banning online content of 'abnormal' homosexual relationships**

**Human rights group condemns China as the 'worst abuser of internet freedom' in the world.**

New regulations issued by Beijing will prohibit portrayals of homosexuality, prostitution and drug addiction. The China Netcasting Services Association (CNSA) is targeting what they consider "abnormal" sexual activity.

The rules which were issued on Friday demand that online video platforms hire at least three "professional censors". They were ordered to view entire programmes and take down any considered not sticking to the "correct political and aesthetic standards," according to the latest regulations.

The move is seen by human rights groups as the latest tightening of censorship in China [13]. Government officials had closed down celebrity gossip blogs that authorities claim were "catering to the public's vulgar taste," according to Channel News Asia [14].

Other online material deemed offensive include damaging the national image, criticising revolutionary leaders or portraying the supernatural such as "conjuring spirits".

Those who don't adhere to the new rules face being reported to the police for further investigation, according to Xinhua state news agency.

One of China's most famous sexologists condemned the latest move. "First of all, from the perspective of an artist, very few countries in this world set up a censorship system that violates its citizens' freedom to create arts," Li wrote on Weibo, a Chinese microblogging website. "Second, it also violates the rights of sexual minorities to express their sexual preference."

In 2016, Freedom House, which promotes democracy and human rights, condemned China as the “worst abuser of internet freedom” in the world.

China has a poor record on gay rights [15]. According to a survey by Peking University, less than 15 per cent of homosexuals said they had come out to their families, and more than 50 per cent of those who had revealed their sexuality, said they had suffered discrimination as a consequence.

Homosexuality in China [16] was decriminalised in 1997 and remained on the official list of mental illnesses until 2001.

The Chinese government banned all representations of LGBT people on TV in 2016, stating that “No television drama shall show abnormal sexual relationships and behaviours, such as incest, same-sex relationships, sexual perversion, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, and so on.”

### **Fiona Keating**

\* *The Independent Online*. Saturday 1 July 2017 15:20 BST:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-gay-online-ban-homosexual-a7818166.html>  
munich-traffic-lights.jpg

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### **Footnotes**

[1] <http://www.cnsa.cn/2017/06/30/ARTI0Qg4cp7jtd1Z5o0RnfzM170630.shtml>

[2] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/same-sex-marriage-gay-chinese-man-launches-legal-bid-for-right-to-marry-in-landmark-case-a6799646.html>

[3] <https://www.hrw.org/asia/china-and-tibet>

[4] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/mar/07/china.johngittings1>

[5] <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2017/07/03/world/asia/ap-as-china-gay-therapy.html>

[6] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/10/china-court-rules-against-forced-conversion-therapy>

[7] <https://www.statista.com/topics/2314/lgbt-in-china/>

[8] <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20150821/c21sino-texts/>

[9] <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/27/asia/china-first-gay-marriage-court-case/index.html>

[10] <https://theconversation.com/african-scientists-recognise-that-diverse-sexuality-is-the-norm-43050>

[11] <https://theconversation.com/the-science-behind-a-more-meaningful-understanding-of-sexual-orientation-42641>

[12] <http://ilga.org/what-we-do/maps-sexual-orientation-laws/>

- [13] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-wikipedia-chinese-version-government-no-public-authors-contributions-communist-party-line-a7717861.html>
- [14] <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-bans-online-videos-showing-homosexuality--affairs-8993558>
- [15] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world-0/us-politics/trump-pride-month-lgbtq-failure-recognise-white-house-june-gay-lesbian-president-a7817821.html>
- [16] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/same-sex-marriage-gay-chinese-man-launches-legal-bid-for-right-to-marry-in-landmark-case-a6799646.html>