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Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Department of Applied Social Studies

Exploratory Study on Hong Kong Chinese Gay Couples

By

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Abstract


The present study has adopted a qualitative in-depth case study approach to study four gay couples. The findings revealed one distinct issue has been encountered by gay couples in the local gay community. It is the issue on sexuality - monogamy or open relationship. The findings also revealed that the values in the gay sub-culture are not conducive to long term relationship. The lack of role models and the lack of family and social support are also roadblocks to a lasting relationship.

Comparing to overseas experiences, our local gay couples encountered similar related experiences. Gay couples have to negotiate their way through monogamy or open relationship with their partners. The gay sub-culture is focused on youth, singlehood and the belief that relationships are doom to fail. The lack of role models further fosters this belief and the lack of support from family and community discourages the couple to have a life together.
Several recommendations for social work intervention have been suggested. First, social services especially targeted for gay couples and persons with different sexual orientations are required. Second, training for social service providers is essential and information on homosexuality and gay lifestyle must be included in the training of social workers. Third, public education is needed to correct misconceptions and fears of homosexuality. Social workers can assume the role of educators by educating the public on issues related to homosexuality. Fourth, social workers can also assume the role of advocates in promoting an equal and just society for all.
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I am grateful for the emotional support of many friends who provided encouragement and faith when it was soley needed. I am especially grateful to my parents who have taught me love, acceptance and understanding for self and others.

I extend special thanks to the gay community and to every gay person I encounter, they have so generously trusted me with their own stories and conversations.

Finally, to all the men who participated in this study who so graciously shared their time, stories and feelings so that myself and others can benefit from their life experiences. My greatest debt is to all of them.
CHAPTER I  INTRODUCTION

MY INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT

In this study, the researcher tries to share some of her personal learnings and understanding of the gay community in Hong Kong. As the researcher has been involved in the local gay community for some time, it is inevitable that her feelings are involved. In order to maintain spontaneity and to respond right out of her heart, the researcher proposes to use the subjective pronoun "I" in her presentation.

Before I start my presentation, I would like to share with my readers the semantic dilemma that I encountered when describing the gay relationship. In the case of heterosexual marriage, the terms used to describe the partners in the marriage is simple and direct: "Husband" and "Wife". People understand the meaning conveyed by these two words. However, in the case of gay relationship the terms used to describe the partners as well as the relationship are ambiguous. Some call it lover, partner, husband, wife and there is no available term that describes the relationship. For the sake of simplicity I have chosen the term "couple" in this study to signify a stable gay relationship. The
interview subjects prefer to use the more local term “keep” to indicate their relationship. This will be further elaborated in the section on methodology.

PERSONAL LEARNINGS

In 1993, one of my close friend who happens to be gay talked me into offering relationship courses to gay men. At first I wondered, why me? First, I am not gay. Second, I am not a man. Third, I know nothing about gay relationships though I as a divorce mediator and counsellor know a lot about heterosexual relationships. I tried to enrich my knowledge and understanding of male couples through literature, journals and books. To my dismay, few written materials are available in libraries in Hong Kong. There are hardly any materials on gay couples in the local scene.

Whether or not I liked it, or felt prepared I started courses after courses and have been asked very frequently by my gay students why their relationships often failed? It seemed that they all wanted to have a long lasting relationship with their partners but somehow found it very difficult to maintain.
In 1994 recognizing a strong need for services among gay students, and having no resources available in our local social services for gay persons, my friends and I set up a non-profit organization, the Satsanga, dedicated to serving lesbians and gay men. We offer professional counselling on issues such as sexual identity, relationships, family and job stress and also organize courses and seminars to enhance self-awareness and to promote healthy, intimate relationships among homosexual couples. I became involved in the gay community ever since.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSES FOR THE STUDY

Counselling needs for gay persons in our local community have received little attention and have hidden in the therapeutic closet. Many helping professionals acted as if this significant minority does not exist and the lack of knowledge resulted in prejudicial attitudes and stereotyping of homosexual clients. Special problems and dynamics of the same-sex couple are often ignored or neglected. Some take the politically radical position that gay couples do not have anything in common with non-gay couples and others take the well meaning liberal
position that gay couples are just like heterosexual married couples and thus do not require any special understanding (Schoenberg et al., 1984).

My clinical experiences revealed that many of my clients have sought help in social service agencies prior to my clinical intervention. However, majority of the feedback regarding social service providers were negatives.

According to gay clients, some of the workers from religious social service agencies condemned their behaviours as immoral and sinful and advised them to repent and stop engaging in homosexual acts. Some workers did not know how to respond and felt as helpless as my client therefore exacerbated the situation. One psychiatrist carrying the "disease and sickness" mentality told my client that he is "mentally sick" and gave him shock therapy (aversive conditioning) to change his sexual orientation.

The lack of knowledge and understanding of gay persons and in particular same-sex couple among our social service providers might generate behaviours that are counter-therapeutic and counter-productive to our gay clients. Studies and research are needed to
provide more in-depth understanding of gay lifestyle and the gay culture.

Homosexuality is the least researched topic in our local community. The stigma associated with homosexuality is so strong that many researchers would pursue more "socially acceptable" research. So far there is only one study on the relationship of gay couples (Au, 1992) in Hong Kong. However, there isn't any study on the problems and difficulties encountered in a gay relationship.

My clinical experiences with gay men in relationships led me believe that they face additional challenges that are unique to them. They often asked the following questions: Can gay relationships last? Why so many gay relationships fail? Which one is better, monogamy or open relationship? Where have all the couples gone? How come they are not active at the gay scene? Are others gay couples like us? I have no answers to these questions.

Their questions have triggered and motivated me to search for an indepth understanding of gay relationship. I would like to explore and find out the difficulties encountered by them in maintaining a stable relationship.
My research questions are:

**Proposition 1:** In western society, gay couple has to deal with the issue on monogamy versus open relationship.

Does Hong Kong Chinese gay couple has to struggle with such an issue?

If so, how does it affect their relationship? How are they going to resolve it?

**Proposition 2:** The gay sub-culture in the west has upheld a certain set of values and much emphasis is placed on youthfulness, singlehood and sexual marketability.

Is there a distinctive set of values about relationships that is unique to the gay society in Hong Kong? If so, what is it? How do these values affect the couple's relationship?
Proposition 3: The unsupportive atmosphere for couple relationship in the gay community, in the family and society at large discourages couple's relationship.

How may the couple be affected by these forces? To what extent does the couple give in to such forces?

These research questions deal with prominent factors affecting the stability in maintaining gay couple's relationship. The three dominant factors are: open and closed relationship, the values in the gay subculture and the unsupportive social and family atmosphere. The first factor is related to the couple's relationship on sexuality and their preference on an open or closed relationship. The second factor is related to the gay subculture and its values. The third factor is related to the unsupportive social atmosphere in gay subculture and in the family. These three factors are inter-related on different levels, relationship on sexuality is dealing with the internal couple system. Values in the gay subculture and the unsupportive social and family atmosphere deals with external factors. I would like to adopt a wider perspective to look into the internal as well as external factors that are affecting the gay relationship.
I feel strongly that the assessment and treatment of our local gay couples can not be effectively carried out if we do not have an understanding of the dynamics in gay relationships. I hope that my research on the issues and difficulties encountered in gay relationships in the local context could help to gain a new perspective on gay relationships and to identify some of the relationship stressors that block the development of a healthy intimate relationship among gay couples. Furthermore, I hope the study can also contribute on the building of knowledge so that we can provide optimal help to gay couples in counselling.

If we can learn more about the dynamics between gay couple themselves, the gay culture and their interaction with the predominant heterosexual society, then we can help to develop strategies that can help them overcome their difficulties.

I also would like to remove our fear and ignorance and to replace it with knowledge and understanding. I believe that it is part of our responsibility as practitioners to advocate and protect the rights and dignities of all individuals.
Chapter II  The Gay Community in Hong Kong

BACKGROUND HISTORY

The emotional and sexual relationships between the same sex has existed all through the ages and in different societies. From Socrates (469 - 399AD), Plato (427 - 347AD) in Greece to Sheung ( Antarctica ) and Chow ( Antarctica ) dynasties in China ( 1994 ), from old wives tales to proses, poems and books on the subject; one can easily conclude that same sex relationship exists across culture, time and space. However, the focus of homosexual as a person and as an identity is a fairly new concept in our Chinese society. The concepts of being a homosexual, a gay person or most recently as a queer individual have existed only for the past twenty years.

In traditional Chinese society, people are not defined by their sexual orientation. They are defined by their social roles in the cultural relationship hierarchy ( 1995 ). For example, Ah Wing is the son or son-in-law of so and so. There are many rules that help to regulate a person's behaviour and one is not supposed to go beyond one's position in the relationship hierarchy.
In traditional Confucian thinking, the concept of "self" is defined in relation to others in the hierarchy of relationships (_attempt to write hieroglyphics). Self is conceptualized as ta wo(big me)(_attempt to write hieroglyphics) and hsiao wo(small me)(_attempt to write hieroglyphics) and there is no real self as hsiao wo(small me) is so small that it is suppressed by ta wo(big me). (Lau, 1996). One's wants, needs and desires are being repressed and one is supposed to sacrifice oneself for the greater good. e.g. for the benefit of family, clan and society. Thus, even though homosexual behaviours and desires exist, it is not seen by the individual as a "self-identity" and it is not interpreted by others that the individual is a "homosexual person" (attempt to write hieroglyphics). In fact, the concept of "homosexual" as self-identity and as identification of a particular group of individuals has its historical development. It first started in the 70's when society was becoming more open and the concept of "homosexual" as an identity was constructed during this period(Attempt to write hieroglyphics), 1995). A new generation emerged and this generation consisted of baby bloomers who were being socialized into "western" thinking. They value independence, freedom, the right to privacy and economically they were also independent. Consequently, they adopted the western cultural criteria and thus labelled oneself or others according to one's sexual orientation. Therefore, one's social roles in the traditional society were being de-emphasized and the "individual" as a person became the focus of attention.
The death of Inspector John MacLennan, a young English Police Inspector who was found dead in his quarter prior to his arrest of gross indecency exposed the issue of homosexuality in the local community (1995). The concepts of "homosexuality" (同志), the "homosexual" (同志), "gay" person (基佬) were made common into everyday language by the media. Newspapers, magazines made coverage on homosexuality and as a "secretive" minority, they aroused much public interest.

In late 70's, a disco for homosexuals was opened in Central and the first social club organised for homosexuals, the 10% Club was established in 1986. To this date, we have many terms made up to describe homosexuals or gay persons, e.g. (同志), (基佬), (基佬) etc.

HOMOSEXUALITY IN HONG KONG

In Hong Kong prior to the decriminalization of the homosexual acts, the Hong Kong Police Special Investigation Unit had under its surveillance an estimated 100,000 homosexuals community(Lau, 1990).
It was also estimated that in 1981 between 125,000 and 250,000 men were homosexuals (Law Reform Commission, 1983).

Laws regarding homosexual acts in Hong Kong prior to decriminalization was extremely strict. It was an offense in private to commit buggery (Law Reform Commission, 1983). Homosexual offense attracted little attention until August, 1978 when an English lawyer was convicted to three years imprisonment after pleaded guilty in buggery and gross indecency with four Chinese boys aged 15. It was due to this case that the Criminal Investigation Department of the Royal Hong Kong Police started to investigate homosexual prostitution and started a sequence of arrests (Law Reform Commission, 1983).

In mid 1979, a group of individuals collected 424 signatures on a petition to request Hong Kong's laws to be in line with England and Wales. As mentioned earlier, the death of Inspector John Maclennan, a young English Police Inspector who was found dead in his quarter prior to his arrest of gross indecency triggered intense attention to the issue of homosexuality. After the inquest into his death, one of the juries recommended that the law in Hong Kong should be in line with that of England and Wales (Law Reform Commission, 1983). Thus, in early
1980 the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong was set up to review
a number of laws including laws governing homosexual conducts.

LAWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

According to the Law reform Committee which agreed with the
Wolfenden Committee that the function of the criminal law is:

"to preserve public order and decency, to
protect the citizen from what is offensive
or injurious, and to protect sufficient
safeguards against exploitation and
corruption of others, particularly those
who are specially vulnerable because they
are young, weak in body or mind,
inexperienced, or in a state of special
physical, official, or economic
dependence", but not "to intervene in
the private lives of citizens, or to seek to
enforce any particular pattern of
behaviour, further than is necessary to
carry out the purposes we have outlined".
Thus, it follows that their recommendation to retain or to repeal a certain law does not entail a moral judgment and to decriminalize the law does not mean to legitimatize it (Law Reform Commission, 1983).

Finally, after 7 - 8 years later and after much heated debate the Legislative Council passed a motion in favour of removing criminal penalties relating to homosexual conducts by consenting adults (over 21 years old) in private. Consequently, the Crimes (Amendment) Bill was enacted in July 1991 to protect boys from sexual exploitation (Consultation Paper, 1996).

MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

Sterotypes in general help people classify and process information and to create stereotypes society identifies a certain group of individuals and ascribes certain characteristics to it (Biery, 90). Most stereotypes traits or characteristics are negatives more than positives. In our local culture, we have ascribed many negative traits to homosexuals and in particular to gay men e.g. sissy, femme, wimp, fairy, effeminate. All these characteristics derived from man's fear of being associated with women. Most put-downs are terms describing feminine characteristics in man. This reveals that in our local context, being like a
woman is the most detrimental insult to man. This also signifies that being male is more superior and better and male with feminine characteristics are being devalued and looked down upon.

The major function of stereotypes is social control and our heterosexual society "purposely" created the negative stereotypes of homosexuals with several intentions. First, it teaches a moral or social rule so that we are aware of the majority's attitude toward this deviant group for disobeying the norm and violates socially approved behaviours (Biery, 90). Second, it serves as a social control factor by providing a negative role model (Biery, 90). The homosexuals know that they would be punished if they act that way. I think that these two factors are very detrimental to the psychological made-up of homosexuals. Many of my clients have low self-esteem and I speculate that they have introjected the values of society and thus believe that there is something "bad" or "wrong" with them. Many denied their feelings for fear of facing rejection and disapproval from others. Often they feel isolated as they are hesitant to reach out to others and this denial of self causes many psychological problems. I have encountered many gay clients who are suffering from loneliness, anxiety, depression etc., and the roots of their problems are due to unresolved issues related to their sexual orientation.
THE STEREOTYPICAL GAY MAN IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

I have asked people about their perceptions of homosexuals and the following are a summary of the gay male stereotypes:

"Sissy boy who sways while walking, a guy who wears lipsticks or wears one ear ring on his right ear."

"Womanish, likes art or music and most often working in show business, hair salon and the fashion field."

"Promiscuous, sexual or sex crazed, solicit young boys or even children to fulfill their sexual appetite."

"Psychologically sick or abnormal, needs to see a doctor."
I have met many homosexuals in my practice and they come in different sizes, shapes and personalities. I have met gay men that are "cissies" and feminine and others that are macho and masculine. Homosexuals are no different from heterosexual socially and physically. However, the stereotype images are so strong that heterosexuals often think that they could identify homosexuals by their dress, mannerism and likings.

HOMOPHOBIA IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Homophobia is the expression of prejudice against homosexuality in general and gay persons in particular (Isenee, 90). Homophobic attitudes are being expressed in the following ways: individual prejudice, institutional discrimination and internalized homophobia.

Individual prejudice against homosexuals is fairly common in our local community. This can be exemplified by the following incident: A British young gay man was hired to work in Hong Kong branch office and after he was found out by his colleagues that he is gay they reported him to the branch manager. According to the manager, his five
other local colleagues could not accept his sexual orientation. He then confronted his colleagues and explained to them but he could not get their total support. Only three out of five voted for him to remain working with them and as he could not get their total support he was then discharged from his job (Sunday Morning Post Magazine, April 10, 1994). To homosexuals, this is their "reality" and our ignorance and lack of experience with homosexuals foster individual prejudice.

Besides individual prejudice, homophobia is reflected everywhere in our social system and social institutions: media, employment, churches, schools, government policies etc. The following is an example of how the media views homosexuality.

The local media is often biased especially on coverage or articles regarding homosexuality. This is exemplified by the following article on a weekly magazine: The story was about the death of a two years old boy suspected of being thrown out of the window and though nobody had any cues of the murderer, however, the magazine alleged that the boy was murdered by a homosexual. The first sentence of the article described that if homosexual oriented persons could not find any partner, then there would be a possibility that they would become serial
Besides magazine, newspaper reporter had often taken pictures of drag queens (gay men who dressed to impersonate females, often in a deliberate attempt to exaggerate female roles to the point of parody) in parade even though they represent only a small number in the homosexual community (1995). The media is very selective and unfortunately they are selectively biased by presenting only the stereotypes of homosexuals and thus perpetuating the everlasting myths that homosexuals are sexual, promiscuous, abnormal and sick.

Besides institutionalized prejudice and homophobia, gay persons have also internalized the fear of homosexuality (internalized homophobia) to such an extend that they will develop guilt, shame, self-hatred and a low self image (Isensee, 1993). One client has told me that his friends will listen to me and respect me more because I am not one of them. According to him, the same statement made by a heterosexual person has more weight than by a gay person. Gay persons often have a damaged self image in the eyes of family and friends and as a result they will not openly disclose their sexual orientation to others for fear of rejection and non-acceptance.
CHAPTER III  LITERATURE REVIEW

STUDY AND RESEARCH ON GAY RELATIONSHIPS

In the past, homosexuality was studied mainly by psychologists and psychiatrists. The psychoanalytic theories viewed homosexuality as pathological and as a result early studies emphasized on the etiology, cause and cure of homosexuality. The Freudian theoretical perspective was adopted and the parent-child relationship was said to be the major cause of homosexuality (Weinberg & Williams, 1974).

Kinsey's studies on sexuality provided knowledge on the extent of homosexuality in the States. As a result, homosexuality is then seen as a sexual variation and its focus is no longer solely on pathological cause. In 1973, due to the Civil Rights Movement, ego-syntonic or self-accepting homosexuality was removed from the list of psychosexual disorders in DSM III (Diagnostic Statistical Manual) by the American Psychiatric Association (Biery, 1990). Hence, resulting a shift in the studying of etiology and psychopathology of homosexuality in the past to focusing on intimacy and close relationships.
Prior to the 1970's, most studies relied on gay men in counselling, therapy or in prison. The focus was on psychological well being or social characteristics of the gay person and couple's relationship was seldom mentioned. It was in the mid 70's that researchers began to ask questions on male relationships and the following depict some of the major study on gay couple relationship.

The first large scale study of male couples being conducted in the late 1970's by two sociologists, Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz. It was a part of a larger project which included studying heterosexual couples and lesbian couples. The researchers put their findings together in a book, American Couples(1983). As for gay couples, 969 gay male couples involved in the study and both partners had to complete a very long questionnaire on information about themselves and their relationship. The study asked couples on various issues related to sex, finance, career and work. 100 gay male couples were later being interviewed by researchers. The couples mainly were from New York, Seattle and San Fransico. They were fairly young and 80% were under 40 years old and more than half of the participants had been together for less than five years.
The findings in American Couples (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983) revealed that like heterosexuals couple, those gay male couples who were most committed financially, emotionally and sexually were more likely to maintain an enduring relationship. But for gay men in relationships, it was found that financial equality and similarity of educational levels were particularly important in gay relationship.

Bell and Weinberg (1978) were the first in creating a typology in gay couple relationship. According to them, there were two types of gay couple. The "close-coupled" and the "open-coupled". The "close-coupled" were very similar to the heterosexual married men. Their psychological adjustment level was the same as heterosexuals and they had a close emotional bond with their partners. They had few sexual problems and they were monogamous in their relationship. They were also well adjusted and comfortable with their homosexuality. Unlike the "close-coupled", the "open-coupled" though living with a special sexual partner but they were not very committed to the relationship. They were open in their relationship and seek outside sexual experiences, they were not entirely happy with their partner. The study found that they were less happy and less self-accepting than the "closed-coupled".
McWhirter and Mattison, both of them are a gay couple and experienced practitioners. Like Blumstein and Schwartz, they summarized their study and published the findings in the Male Couple(1984). Unlike Blumstein and Schwartz, their participants were all gay male couples with no other couples for comparison. 156 couples participated in their study and the majority of them were from San Diego area. The participants in general were older and less educated than the Blumstein & Schwartz study.

McWhirter & Mattison(1984) conducted indepth interviews with their 156 participants and their findings revealed that gay relationships could be long lasting. Approximately 30% of their participants had been together for more than ten years and on the average the couples had been together for nine years or so. They concluded that equality, compatibility especially in sexual relationship are important factors that help to keep the couple relationship for over ten years. They found that all the couples who had been together for over five years were not continuously sexually exclusive with each another. Many couples in their study had mentioned that the mutual freedom for them to express their sexuality with others helped to maintain their relationship.
Furthermore, through their findings, they postulated a theory of developmental stages in gay couples. The following depicts the six developmental stages in gay male couple:

1. Stage One- Blending(First year)

This stage the couple often experience an intensity of togetherness, even to the extent of excluding others. There is an equal sharing of responsibilities and a tendency to overlook mutual differences.

2. Stage Two- Nesting(One to three years)

Both partners attend more to their living environment and finding ways to enhance their compatibility. Couple tend to recognize their shortcomings and their complementary differences. They may be worried about their sexual relationships and fears of being dumped.

3. Stage Three- Maintaining(Three to five years)

At this stage of the relationship, the couple needs to balance between individualism and togetherness. Trust develops if couple is capable of resolving conflicts.
4. Stage Four - Collaborating(Five to ten years)

Couple's mutual collaboration over the years leads to a sense of productivity. This is seen in material or professional success and whether each partner can get support, guidance and affirmation from the other. Conversely, distancing or boredom may take place if one partner is "left behind".

5. Stage Five - Trusting(Ten to twenty years)

Lack of possessiveness and mutual positive regard may occur and this is exemplified by the merging of money and possessions.

6. Stage Six - Repartnering(Twenty Years)

The relationship is stable and there is an assumption that till death do they part. A new commitment to each other may occur as couple has realized their financial security.

From the above studies, we learnt that financial equality, emotional commitment and compatibility especially in sexual relationship are important factors that contribute to the stability of gay couple's relationship.
In this study, however, I would only focus on the sexuality issue because my clinical experiences revealed that the most prominent relationship issue confronting my clients is monogamy versus open relationship.

COMMON AREAS OF DIFFICULTIES IN GAY MALE COUPLES

SEXUALITY - OPEN OR CLOSED RELATIONSHIP?

Open or closed relationship, monogamy or nonmonogamy is the most controversial topics in gay relationships. Many gay men challenge the "traditional heterosexual marriage model" of sexual exclusivity and advocate sexual openness. It is opined that this issue of monogamy or non-monogamy is an universal conflict to gay men (Isenee, 1990). First, we have to understand that this issue of monogamy or non monogamy amounts to a conflict when one partner wants a closed relationship whereas the other partner wants an open relationship. According to Isenee (1990), many gay couples have to struggle with conflicting desires for the stability of their relationship and their interest in outside sexual contacts.
Many studies and researches have confirmed that prior to mid-eighties sexual exclusivity is not the norm for gay couples (Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Peplau, 1981; McWhirter & Mattison, 1984; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986). Peplau (1981) found that sexual exclusivity is more important to heterosexuals than to homosexuals. In a 9 point rating scale (9 is the most important rating), gay men gave sexual fidelity a 5 point rating whereas heterosexuals gave a little over 7 point. Peplau & Cochran (1981) also found that over 70% of gay men in their sample reported having sex outside their primary relationship and over 54% had sex outside their primary relationship during the past two months. McWhirter & Mattison (1984) found that all couples who had been together for more than five years had open relationships. They even suggested that openness may help in maintaining and prolonging coupledom in gay relations. All these findings revealed that sexual openness is the norm for gay relationship.

Sexual openness is common in gay relationships and this can be explained by the following factors. First, gender-role socialization often encourages man to be more interested in sex. Men are taught to be more sexually aggressive than women (Berzon, 1988). Men are socialized to look for sexual excitement and variety in sex. Love and sex are not linked and many men have sex without
having any emotional involvement with their sex partners. This can be exemplified by the presence of paid prostitution as money is exchanged for services. On the other hand, women are being socialized differently and sex is often linked with love. Furthermore, society supports male sexual experimentation but does not support female sexual expression. Second, unlike heterosexual men, gay men have less constrain when engaging in casual sex. It has been suggested that in heterosexual marriage, there is a functional aspect in practicing monogamy. Monogamy helps to keep the family together and to protect children of their legitimate status(Blasband & Peplau, 1985). As for gay men engaging in casual sex, they do not have to worry about pregnancy and being responsible for their sex partner. Consequently, they feel more free to venture and explore their sexuality in casual sex. Needless to say, sexual openness is being the norm among gay men. Third, the gay culture fosters a carefree spirit and casual sex is easily accessible in bath-houses and pubs(Browning, 1994). All these factors help to foster a sexual culture that centers on sexual consumerism and excess. However, conflicts arise if one partner wants monogamy and the other one does not. Consequently, the debate on open or closed relationship is still very much viable among gay couples and the incompatibility on sexuality affects the stability of the relationship.
VALUES IN GAY MALE SUB-CULTURE

According to Blumstein & Schwartz (1983), the values in gay culture is formed around being young, single and on one's sexual marketability. This can be exemplified by the following:

"Who you are is not valued in the bars, on the street, in the baths. Who you look like and what you represents that matters. In gay life, very few look for the person." (Ebert, 1976).

The values in the gay male subculture emphasized much on the appearance and body build of the individual. The culture centers around the young as described by the following: "The young inherit the earth in gay life." (Ebert, 1976). Though some gay men find the sexual culture especially the gay bars and disco scene exciting, liberating whereas others opined that it is a culture of instant sexual gratification, competitive sex and young men are treated well and adored whereas older gay men are like scraps of garbage (Rotello, 1995).

The values in the gay subculture in the States have undergone several stages of development (Driggs & Finn, 1991). During early
1970's which was the beginning of Gay Liberation, gay male culture was anti-authoritarian and emphasized on individuality and personal freedom. The focus was on gay rights and the motto was "Gay is good". Intimate relationships were not emphasized and gay men were having lots of fun.

In the early 80's, the political values were not emphasized that much and the gay culture centered on "beauty, excitement, romance and material possessions" (Driggs & Finns, 1991). There were several factors that had affected intimate relationship among gay men. First, there were high rates of alcohol and drug abuse. Second, many gay men supported casual sex or anonymous sex. As a result, gay men learn to separate sexuality and intimacy.

Recently, there is a change of values as AIDS is a constant reminder for gay men to shift away from anonymous sex. Many gay men have lost friends and lovers and AIDS has become a part of their lives. The present trend for gay men in the States is towards intimacy and relationship building (Driggs & Finn, 1991). AIDS in a way helps to change the value structure of the gay community in the States. There are more emphasis on commitment, involvement and the compassion for others and less focus on beauty, appearance and external
qualities (Driggs & Finn, 1991). The impact of AIDS has aroused the awareness of gay men on the need for safe sex and provided an opportunity for them to re-evaluate their values on sexuality and intimacy.

Though there is a steady change of values in the gay subculture in the States, however, physical attraction is still the most common attraction among gay men (Marcus, 1992). The emphasis on youthfulness, singlehood and one's sexual marketability is still present in the values of the gay subculture.

**LACK OF ROLE MODELS**

For heterosexual couples, there are numerous models that they can identify and base their relationship. From one's grandfather and grandmother to one's parents, from politicians to movie stars, heterosexual couples have lots of models they can identify. However, for gay couples they do not have any models that they can rely on. The lack of opportunity for role learning can affect the stability of their relationship. Role learning not only includes learning to behave, feel and see the world as the person occupying the same role. It also helps to learn certain skills and techniques associated with the role (Secord &
Backman, 1974). Heterosexuals can learn from their parents and many husbands and wives how roles are played in intimate relationship. By contrast, there are few visible evidence of long term relationship in the gay community (Berzon, 1988). Having no “elders” to guide them, gay couples have to negotiate every issue and come up with their own resolution.

Unfortunately, men in general are being socialized to be task oriented and they are quite unskill in revealing their feelings (Tannen, 1990). In intimate relationship feelings are often more crucial and often times feelings are not even discussed between gay couples.

Moreover, it has been suggested that many successful couples stay out of the gay community either out of fear or they think that it is necessary for the survival of their relationship (Driggs & Finn, 1990). As a result, few couples are left to function in the gay community and there is no or less evidence of long term relationship. Consequently, having no role models to look up to, gay couples definitely encounter more confusions and problems.

Besides role models, there are a lot of resources that are very helpful in helping heterosexual couples in maintaining their
relationships. From magazine articles, self-help books, to pre-marriage counselling, marriage enrichment courses, all these resources are readily available to help heterosexual couples in maintaining and enhancing their intimate relationships.

As for gay couples, few resources are available to them even if they are willing to develop their relationship. There are a few books on improving gay relationships but they are all written in English and has a very strong American cultural dimension which may not be appropriate for the local Hong Kong Chinese gay men. Hence, they may not be able in presenting useful suggestions as they are limited by their American experience.

LACK OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Our society is mainly oriented towards married heterosexual couples and family in particular. There are numerous benefits that are available to heterosexual married couples, e.g. tax cut, insurance, loans, legal recognition etc. Whereas, gay couples not only are being excluded from these benefits, but they are not even legally recognized. Gay couples do not have the right to be legally married nor can they claim any spousal benefits no matter how long they have been together.
The lack of formal recognition is one of the best examples of the lack of social support (Driggs & Finn, 1990). This can be exemplified by the following: Gilbert, overheard his mother bragging to her friend that she had never missed sending birthday greetings to her children and their spouses. However, Gilbert's lover who has lived with him for over twelve years had never received any greetings from his mother. Accordingly, his mother has never count his twelve years relationship with his lover as legitimate (Driggs & Finn, 1991). Gay couples often have to face additional hardships as a result of a lack of support from families, communities and society at large.

Furthermore, the lack of social support and disapproval for gay couples may lead to social isolation and secrecy. Couples tend to focus on themselves and thus develop a "Two against the World" phenomena. They will spend most of the time to themselves and forget about the world outside. As a result, gay couples may have a tendency to neglect outside friendships and maintaining same sex friends and a support network is a challenge to gay couples.

Besides the lack of social support, many gay men have difficulties with their families. Many of them hide their homosexuality from their family and thus creates a kind of emotional distance as they
do not dare to reveal their "secret" for fear of rejection (Driggs & Finns, 1991). Consequently, they can not maintain real closeness to their family as intimate relationship requires honesty and trust.

In our local context, Chinese gay men face tremendous difficulties with their families simply because they are gay and they are "Chinese" men. The reason is that in the Chinese culture the father and son relationship is the most important relationship in the family system (Chao, 1983). According to the doctrine of filial piety, having no heir to pass on the family name is the greatest act of disobedience. Children are constantly reminded of their filial duty towards their parents. This can be exemplified by the classics:

"Filial piety is of three grades: the highest is to honour the parents by achievements, the lesser is not to disgrace oneself, thus casting reflections on the parents, and the least is to be able to support the parents...."

(Chao, 1983)

Family obligation and the measuring up of family's expectations are factors that hinder the development of a stable relationship among
Chinese gay men. My clinical experience revealed that the majority of gay men would not disclose their homosexuality to their family for fear of bringing shame to the family.
CHAPTER IV  METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN - CASE STUDY

First of all, I like to choose a research design that can help me to collect reliable, reproducible data about the couples so that I can present accurately their views on gay issues. I reject the idea of using survey or questionnaire because I want to learn more about the couples through personal interviews. The case study method is chosen to explore issues encountered by gay male couples. The case study method is adopted because it is a very powerful tool that can tap into the mental and inner world of the research subjects. It helps us to have a glimpse of the categories and logic by which the individual sees the world (McCracken, 1990). It provides the researcher an opportunity to enter into the mind of the subjects and to see and experience the world as they see it. As a result, the researcher can have an in-depth understanding of the research subjects and the meaning of their experiences.

The case study method is technically defined as:

An empirical inquiry that:
• investigates a contemporary phenomenon within
  its real-life context, when

• the boundaries between phenomenon and context
  are not clearly evident; and in which

• multiple sources of evidence are used. (Yin, 1984)

Gay relationship is a contemporary phenomenon and according
to gay persons, it is part of their reality. They have to come to terms
with their identity, have to make sense of their world and to negotiate
their way through life. Case study method can help us to have a more
in-depth understanding of their struggles, their pains and sufferings as
well as their joys and fulfillments. Their own perceptions of themselves
and the way in which other perceive them can be accounted for in using
case study method. As researchers, we can come to grips of the
innerworld of our subjects and to share their past as well as their
present. No other methods can be able to reflect the complexity and
diversity of the subject under scrutiny.

Thus, the case study method is the most appropriate method for
this study as I want to explore the difficulties of being a gay couple,
what values are being shared among the gay community and to question
the extent in which "being gay" affects the couple's relationship and
their relationship with the heterosexual world. All these questions require tapping into the inner mental world of the subjects and it is only through in-depth interviews, direct observation and participant-observation can researcher unveil incidents and feelings which have lain hidden in the inner world of the subjects. As I have been involved in the gay community for a period of time, I have made contact with gay persons in formal and informal meetings and gatherings. My direct observation as well as participant-observation in gatherings allow me to be more knowledgable and understanding to our local gay culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Proposition 1: In western society, gay couples has to deal with the issue of monogamy versus open relationship.

Does Hong Kong Chinese gay couple has to struggle with such an issue? If so, how are they going to resolve it?

Proposition 2: The gay sub-culture in the west has upheld a certain set of values and much emphasis is placed on youthfulness, singlehood and sexual marketability.
Is there a distinctive set of values about relationships that is unique to the gay society in Hong Kong? If so, what is it? How do these values affect the couple's relationship?

**Proposition 3:** The unsupportive atmosphere for couple relationship in the gay community, in the family and society at large discourages couple's relationship.

How may the couple be affected by these forces? To what extent does the couple give in to such forces?

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The title of the study is "Exploratory Study on Hong Kong Chinese Gay Couples". This study pertains to the experience of being Chinese gay couples in the local context. Past study on gay couples in Hong Kong (Au, 1992) included subjects that are not ethnical Chinese. There is no research on Hong Kong Chinese gay couples and I think that since our clients and us were mainly brought up either in Hong Kong or the Mainland China, we are inevitably being influenced by our Chinese heritage and our personality has a cultural dimension. Being
Chinese gay couples have its unique characteristics and problems, and I would like to tap into the dynamics of our local gay couples.

Terms need to be defined. In this study, gay male refers to whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward same-sex partners (Weinberg, 1983). According to this definition, gay male is a male person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward male-sex partner. The second criteria deals with “self-labelling”. When a person finally decided that he is a gay man and labelled himself as such, and if he fits into our definition of gay male then he is eligible to be the subject of our study. Thus, a gay man who has privately labelled and identified himself as such but has not “come out” in public may also be included in the study.

Besides gay male, the term couple is defined as individuals who have committed to each other for three months or more and both has acknowledged the other person as one's partner. The research subjects used the local term “keep” to signify their relationship. According to them, “keeping” a partner is acknowledging that one’s relationship with the partner is based on a more permanent position with the intention to last. The criteria for three months is set to such an extent that it fits into the implicit rules of the local gay sub-culture. Gay relationships are
more transient and three months or more in a relationship is fairly ensuring. This is the reason why three months or more is used as a criteria for couple. However, due to external factors, the environment in Hong Kong is not conducive for gay couples to live together. Hence gay couples that live together or apart are also included in the study. Though the couple does not live together, they do have the desire to maintain a permanent relationship.

RECRUITMENTS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited through a variety of means. Some participants responded to an announcement made by researcher during a seminar session organized by a gay group in which the researcher was one of the speakers. Other participants learnt about the study through activities organized by various gay groups. Some participants recruited friends for the study.

I have difficulty in recruitment because of the sensitivity and secrecy of the subjects under studied. First, the gay population which can be termed as an invisible minority is difficult to be contacted with. They do not dare to expose themselves and consequently they have kept
themselves closeted. Besides problems with identifying them, even after some of the them have come out and were willing to enroll in the research study, however, his partner was unwilling to do so. Moreover, couples were not very accessible in the gay scene and researcher had to rely solely on personal contacts and connections with gay groups in order to get participants.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviews with participants were conducted in a neutral setting. Prior to the interviews, researcher contacted participants either by telephone or in person. There were consensus among participants that they preferred the interview to be conducted at a neutral setting.

The interviews with participants were taken between two months, from October, 1995 to December, 1995. To ensure accuracy, all the interviews with participants were tape recorded and verbatim transcript of the interview testimony was created (Appendix I). All transcriptions were done by researcher to ensure consistency. Transcription took place on a word processor and files were created for each couple under studied.
Background information of the participants were collected prior to the interview and all participants were briefed on the procedure of the research. All participants signed the research consent form and a copy was given to them for keeps (Appendix II). The enquiry to the background information of the participants helped to create an atmosphere of face-safety (McCracken, 1990). These simple open questions allowed the participants to prepare for the interview and the reassurance of confidentiality on the part of the researcher further put participants at ease (Appendix III).

The interview was semi-structured. The researcher made up an interview guideline that served as reminders to the researcher regarding questions or information that needed to be answered by the participants (Appendix I). It also served as prompts during the interview process so that the interview would not be off track (Yin, 1984). All of the questions were open-ended in nature so as to allow the participants to express freely his perceptions, feelings, opinions regarding the research questions.

The interviews took more than one and a half to two hours, and both partners were jointly interviewed. Attention was given individually so that each participant had his share to voice out his opinions and feelings regarding the research questions. All of the interviews went
very smoothly and participants were very willing to talk and discuss about the issues.

Besides in-depth interviews, researcher also used direct and participant-observation as other sources of evidence in the case study. Researcher went to meetings, gatherings and activities organized by the gay community and was also invited by one of the gay groups to speak on "How to avoid pressing concerns from parents regarding marriage?" This in turn helped the researcher to have access not only to the gay community but to actual behaviours of gay persons in their everyday interactions with each other. The researcher then can perceive reality from the viewpoint of the participants, therefore gaining an insider perspective of the subjects under studied.

I had joined different kinds of activities organized by various gay groups i.e. hiking, seminars, gay pubs and have observed that most of the participants were fairly young and the majority of them were in their twenties. Most of them came to the activities with friends and few came by themselves. This observation would further be discussed in the latter section.
DATA ANALYSIS

Data was collected, organized and analyzed according to the methodology for qualitative research. Researcher adopted the social anthropology approach to qualitative analysis. Social anthropology is described as:

"... extended contact with a given community, concern for the mundane, day-to-day events, as well as for usual ones, direct or indirect participation in local activities, with particular care given to the description of local particularities; focus on individuals' perspectives and interpretations of their world; and relatively little prestructured instrumentation."

(Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Research on life history, grounded theory, ecological psychology, narrative studies and many applied studies often take this line of thoughts. All of these studies focus on simple ordinary events in its natural setting. There is a sense of local groundedness (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the data are collected as close to "real life" as
possible. Its emphasis is on the meaning derived from the subjects' own interpretation of events and the connection of these meanings to the subjects' social world.

The following is a step by step procedure which is used by the researcher in data analysis.

1. Researcher did not precode any datum nor made a "start list" of codes prior to data collection. Researcher coded the transcripts by hand and adopted the "Grounded Theory" approach detailed in Strauss(1987) and Strauss and Corbin(1990).

2. Initial data were reviewed line by line and categories and labels were generated and written down besides the paragraph. Different categories represented different conceptual ideas and were later summarized into different patterns and themes depending on their occurrence. Repeated patterns were used to identify regularities and common themes. As data analysis and organization continued, the categories became more refined and themes, patterns and regularities developed. They were then used as tools to illustrate the propositions or refute it if they did not fit in with the findings. Literature was also used as a reference for comparison with the data collected.
3. A number of patterns and themes were discovered and they included the following:

Themes, rules and beliefs

Explanation and causes

Theoretical constructs: value orientation in gay sub-culture

Relationship among people: internalized homophobia and relationship isolation among gay couple.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

Research on intimate relationships, no matter the focus is on gay relationships or heterosexual relationships, is limited in a number of ways. First, the research is mainly relied on interviews and self-reports and self-reports can be quite biased. People usually are not truthful in describing their intimate relationships to others or they themselves may lack insight into their relationships. Second, the people who volunteered to be interviewed may differ from non-volunteers as they may be more liberal and open. This is especially true with the participants in this research as most gay person is secretive about their sexual orientation. Past studies on gay issues revealed that those gay persons who
volunteered for studies tend to be younger, educated, middle-
class (Peplau & Gordon, 1983).

We have also to bear in mind that ourselves as researchers are also a source of error. In qualitative studies, data are not immediately ready for analysis. It requires some kind of processing, e.g. interviews have to be transcribed and typed up. Our preconceived ideas regarding the subject to be studied may affect our perceptions and interpretations of the results. Thus, as researchers we have to be highly aware of ourselves so as to minimize any bias on observations and interpretations of the data.
CHAPTER V  FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Four couples participated in this study and each person has his unique characteristics and each one of them has an interesting life history. Though it is beyond this study to describe each participant in depth, researcher will try to use actual responses to give life to each participant. To protect confidentiality, names and essential identifying characteristics are fictitious, and any resemblance to a single person is coincidental. However, for easy reading and to give life to the subjects, I have renamed them alphabetically from A to H. Adam and Brian(Couple 1), Charles and Dave(Couple 2), Eddy and Fred(Couple 3), Greg and Henry(Couple 4).

PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

AGE

The average age of the men in this study is 29.7 years, ranging from 22 to 34 years. This age range, from early twenties to early thirties is the most frequent age range found in the local gay scene. The
following example depicted by Dave (Couple 2) highlights this phenomena:

"...What I have seen are gay persons in their twenties, for the older generation, I don't know where they are..."

Though age in and of itself is only a single variable, but in the gay community, it is a very important factor. For those who are active in the gay scene are people from the younger age group and for the older men, it seems that they are not visible anymore. As mentioned earlier, my own participant observation in gay social gathering places have revealed similar observation. In a subculture that idealizes youth, old and gay seems to be out of place.

EDUCATION

Six of the participants are secondary-school graduates. One is an university graduate and one is still studying at the university. Although the majority of the participants did not have a formal education beyond secondary-school, but their informal education, knowledge and their life experiences have been so full that they gave researcher an impression that they are well beyond secondary school level. All of them are well articulated and expressive and they are also willing to reveal their feelings and share them with researcher.
EMPLOYMENT

The participants occupied different occupations and the job they hold varies from being a full time homemaker to sales manager. Each participant has a different occupation and they are as follows: fashion designer, actor, trading supervisor, journalist, sales manager and a full time homemaker. As mentioned previously, one participant is an university student and another participant who had recently graduated from an overseas university is unemployed at the time of the interview.

The general public often has a misconception that gay men work at traditional female occupations such as hairstyling, dancing, singing, nursing, interior design. However, the participants in this study occupied different jobs except one participant who is a full time homemaker. This participant informed researcher that he is planning to get back to work in the near future.

LIVING TOGETHER OR APART

Among the four couples, two lived together and share the same accommodation whereas two couples lived apart. The two couples that are living apart are living with their family and even though they would like to move in together, however due to family obligation they have to
stay with their family. Unlike gay couples in western society, local gay couples have difficulties in moving out of the family home. Living together seems not to be the norm for gay couples in the local scene.

PLACE OF GROWING UP

All of the participants grew up in Hong Kong and seven out of a total of eight participants were born in Hong Kong. One was born in Mainland China but arrived in Hong Kong at the age of two. All participants are native Chinese. It is not the place of birth that is important but the environment in which one is being raised that has immense influence on the individual. This can be exemplified by the following remarks made by Charles(Couple2) regarding the conflict he has with his partner on open or monogamous sex:

"... I grew up in Hong Kong... I accept the traditional values, for example, watching old Chinese films, the second wife(concubine) is usually bad and the first wife suffers. I have never been overseas, I don't know. They may accept alot on being independent and individualism... As for me, being predominantly Chinese, I buy the congomalate idea and the emphasis on doing things together. Stresses on bonding... I
being in Hong Kong, I am used to this kind of culture. Moreover, I think that in Hong Kong the majority has this kind of thinking and I am comparatively speaking, a traditionist and thus have this kind of thinking in this environment.

**LENGTH OF TIME IN RELATIONSHIP**

The duration of relationship varies from couple to couple. Adam and Brian (Couple 1) have been together for two years and nine months. Charles and Dave (Couple 2) have been together for only three months. Eddy and Fred (Couple 3) have been together for four years and eight months and Greg and Henry (Couple 4) have been together for one year and ten months. Hence, the shortest duration among couples in this study is three months and the longest duration is four years and eight months.

Researcher has difficulty not only in recruiting couples but recruiting couples in long relationships. It seems that they are not active in the local gay scene.
SELF-ACCEPTANCE OF BEING A GAY MAN

Researcher requested participants to rate themselves on self-acceptance level on a rating of 1 to 10 points scale. 1 being the lowest self-acceptance rating to 10 the highest self-acceptance rating. Participants vary on their self rating from the lowest one who rated himself with 4 points to the highest one who rated himself with a perfect 10. The mean acceptance level is 7.8 and the two participants who rated high(10 points) on the scale have a stronger gay identity and they are more better adjusted than the other participants.

SELF-LABELLING AND COMING OUT

Coming out is a process and it takes time. The length of time from initial self suspicion to labelling oneself as a gay man varies. Moreover, self-labelling does not necessary mean total self-acceptance of gay identity as exemplified by the participants in this study. It is difficult for gay men to give a precise time for coming out as it is a process(McWhirter & Mattison, 1984). However, there are some events or milestones that remind gay man of his coming out. For example, disclosing his sexual orientation to his friends or family. The
length of time of coming out also varies among the participants. From the shortest five months to the longest fifteen years and with a mean of 6.5 years.

SUMMARY

The background information and personal profile of the participants have revealed that gay men are as diverse as their heterosexual counterparts. They come from different backgrounds, their self-acceptance level varies, they hold different jobs. The dissimilarities regarding the background profile further refutes the stereotypical images held by the general public as mentioned in Chapter II of this study. However, one commonality among them is that the younger men is the only visible or active group at the local gay scene. The older generation seems nowhere to be found. This issue will be thoroughly discussed in the latter part of this paper.

One unique feature of local gay couple is that the majority of them can not live together and living together is not the norm for gay couples in Hong Kong.
COMMON AREAS OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY
GAY MALE COUPLES IN HONG KONG

MONOGAMY OR OPEN RELATIONSHIP?

This age old question is still haunting our local gay couples especially those who have not negotiated their way through this issue. This can be exemplified by Couple 2, Charles and Dave. Charles having a set of traditional values on love opted for a monogamous relationship whereas his partner, Dave, wanted an open relationship.

"... I am open and he is monogamous, the conflict is there..." answered Dave. Charles replied," ... I can't accept loving one person and knowingly accept and enter into a few more relationships. Maybe, if I experience more and then I will understand the rule of the game. Maybe others know the rules and they accept more."

Charles is torn between his value of a monogamous relationship and his view of his partner and the gay sub-culture's values regarding
open relationships. He further goes on explaining his reasons in supporting a monogamous relationship:

"... when you love someone, it is natural that it is selfish. Can't help it. ... When you talk about gay issues or problems, many give very negative view like. Everybody is fooling around, so don't be serious...maybe I haven't seen much, I can't accept. Having come out for a few months, what I have seen is very different from my past, straight community. Different from my values and expectations. I can't at once accept and I need an adjusting period."

Charles also had figured out the difference between him and his partner and the rationale behind them that causes that difference.

"He thinks that sex and love can separate. I think that sex and love should be stuck together."

To help himself get out of the conflict, Charles adopted an avoidance approach by putting much emphasis on the process of the
relationship and not the result. He said that he would just enjoy the
process and tried not to think about it at all.

The other couples somehow negotiated their way through this
issue by having similar preferences. Adam and Brian (Couple 1) and
Greg and Henry (Couple 4) opted for a monogamous relationship
together. Whereas Eddy and Fred (Couple 3) opted for an open
relationship.

For Adam and Brian (Couple 1) they have chosen monogamy for
varies reasons. On referring why he has chosen monogamy, Adam
comments:

"...this is my habit. In the past when I am with other
people, I found out that I am not capable of caring for
more than one person and the relationship... Another
thing is that I am being influenced by my parents’
traditional view point. I think if you go haywire, it's
not good."

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Brian sees monogamous relationship as a kind of commitment and love. He sees no differences between a heterosexual married couple and them. He further explains his concept:

"In my opinion, a man and a woman married and they have a commitment or whatever, they treat the partner as the only sex partner, why can’t us? Before, I can have a number of dates at the same time... now I lived together and I think it is monogamous... I choose monogamy because to me, if you really love someone, you don’t go out to find one night stance."

Greg and Henry (Couple 4) also opted for a monogamous relationship and they have their reasons in choosing such a preference. Greg explained:

"I think that human is very elegant, we can not go wild on sex. I think like that, even with my first love, I have the same feelings. If he is not monogamous, then I’ll leave him. That is my concept."
He then further explains his concept of love:

"...I think that if both partners want a monogamous relationship then it shows that you want to build a relationship with a future. If open, then it means that you do not have trust in him. You accept him having other partners and even if he tells you, I don’t think that is possible."

As for Henry, he said it is his habit that he practices monogamy. However, he explains that most of his past relationships are short term. He now realizes how monogamy works:

"It needs time, sacrifice and compromise. I think that if you want a good relationship then you have to sacrifice, compromise and needs lots of time. One relationship takes so much already..."

From these two couples who opted for a monogamous relationship, we can find a number of similarities in their justification of their preference. First, one partner in each couple associated monogamy with certain values such as love, commitment and trust. Second, the other partner found it impossible to handle a number of relationships at
the same time. One even mentioned about the need to sacrifice quantity if one wants a quality relationship. Third, there is an expectation of permanency in their relationship. One mentioned that their relationship is similar to a married heterosexual couple, the other expected having a future in the relationship.

Couple 1 resolved the monogamy versus open relationship issue by making internal adjustment. Brian mentioned that prior to coupledom he had many dates but chose monogamy after living with Adam. Similar to Brian, Adam has a number of past relationships at the same time but found them difficult to manage. Hence, he opted for a monogamous relationship with Brian.

Couple 4 did not need to resolve any conflicts as both of them practice monogamy in their past relationships. Henry had many short term relationships which he claimed to be monogamous. Greg would never tolerate open relationship and emphasized that he would leave his partner if he is non monogamous.

Unlike the other two couples, Couple 3 (Eddy and Fred) opted for an open relationship. According to them, open relationship is not very acceptable to many people. Fred made the following comment:
F: "In this circle, we are very strange. All have said that we are a strange couple..."

E: "Many people don't understand how come he lets me go out and fool around, having sex and playing late. He is not constantly with me as he seldom goes out..."

When asked Eddy his reasons for his preference of an open relationship, he made the following comment:

"...Since I was eighteen, I'm open from then till now... I keep a number of lovers... I think you can not bind them. What you can bind is their body and not their heart. Also, the other person is a human being, he is not your possession nor your dog, nor your caged bird, nor your jeans or CD. He is a human being... he has his own thinking. Have to treat him as a person having his will and control... To love someone, you have to respect him."
Fred not only agreed with Eddy’s philosophy of treating the partner with respect, he also emphasized that their relationship is based on honesty.

F: ... both of us are very frank...

and Eddy continued the explanation:

E: Our relationship is always open, we are very frank with each other, though not loyal...

According to them, respect, honesty, truthfulness, and giving each other a lot of freedom and breathing space are essential ingredients in maintaining their open relationship.

Though they have opted for an open relationship, they still have their relationship problem. At one point in time, Fred was torn between choosing Eddy or the third party. The reason was that the third party knowingly entered into their relationship as a third party. However, after some time he felt that he would not want to be in such a relationship and requested Fred to leave Eddy. Fred commented that emotionally it was too much for him to handle. We can learnt from this incident that the issue of monogamy versus open relationship is
constantly haunting gay couple’s relationship. Even for couple who had opted for an open relationship i.e. Eddy and Fred, they still have to confront the issue if the third party suddenly changed the “rule of the game” and wanted a monogamous relationship with one of the partner.

The issue of monogamy or open relationship affects the couple’s relationship especially the partner who wants a monogamous relationship. Charles(Couple 1) made the following comment when talking about third party intrusion:

I am scared that the other person is more experienced
and he knows more techniques of getting to know others.
I am scare that he is greedy(meaning D), after knowing another one, he might as well know some more... I’m scare that he feels alright that I’m his terminal but the other person is just a station... he advocates a many.. open relationship and I think that relationship is not fair then Unfair and unbalance relationship...also scare of sickness...(meaning AIDS)

Charles had revealed alot of his fear and his insecurity in such an “unfair” relationship. The couple had argued over the issue and Charles
felt very helpless. He had even mentioned that he would leave the gay community if he and Dave broke up.

SUMMARY ON THE ISSUE OF MONOGAMY VERSUS OPEN RELATIONSHIP

From the literature, we learnt that sexual exclusivity is not the norm for gay couples. As a result, gay couples are more open to explore different patterns in their relationship. The freedom to explore monogamy or open relationship may lead to relationship conflict if partners prefer different relationship pattern.

In this study, two couples preferred a monogamous relationship whereas one couple opted for an open relationship and the other couple had conflict over the issue. Two out of four couples in this study had no problem with adhering to sexual exclusivity. Their justifications of opting for a monogamous relationship include the following values: love, commitment, trust and a goal directed future. The couple who opted for an open relationship has its own justifications for such a preference. It includes respect, honesty, openness and being true to each other.
This study confirms the proposition that gay couple has to deal with the issue on monogamy versus open relationship. This can be exemplified by Couple 2(Charles and Dave) who have conflicts over the issue and also Couple 3(Fred and Eddy) who opted for open relationship but was confronted with the issue when the third party broke the rule of the game and wanted a monogamous relationship with Fred. He forced Fred to choose between him and Eddy. Hence, this issue is ever present among gay relationship as long as there is a freedom of choice or a change of agreement later in their relationship when needs change.

Couple 3(Fred and Eddy) is the only couple who opted for an open relationship and they had been together for nearly five years. This is similar to the findings of the McWhirter & Mattison's study(1984). They found that all couples who have been together for more than five years had open relationship. It would be interesting to find out if the other couples would gradually opt for an open relationship when they reach the five years landmark.

From these couples, researcher learnt that gay couples have to negotiate their way through this issue whether internally by oneself or externally with one's partner. Monogamy or open relationship is an
unique feature of gay relationship whereas heterosexual couples have taken monogamous relationship for granted.

VALUES IN THE GAY SUB-CULTURE

According to participants, the gay sub-culture and its atmosphere are very unfavourable to couples. It centers around singlehood and most of the activities in the gay scene are organized for singles and there is almost no activity for couples. Of the four couples in the study, Couple 2, Charles and Dave are more active in the local gay scene. They attend social functions organized by gay groups, they go to gay discos and pubs whereas the other couples have minimal involvement. Couple 2 is more active, partly because they are the youngest couple in the group. Both of them are in their early twenties and comparatively speaking, they have committed to each other for the shortest period of time. Thus, they are still very active in the gay world. For the other couples, they are semi-retired from the gay community. They have coupled longer and as they have each other as companions, their needs to mingle with the gay community are not strong.
According to Couple 2 (Charles and Dave), the gay culture emphasized much on youthfulness. This can be exemplified by Charles’s statement:

My friend had given the following comment:

One should not “keep” in their 20’s. Why?

Because in this circle, the young has their youthfulness, the old ones have money. When you are young, you should get to know more people, enjoy your youthfulness in exchange for others services. i.e. treating you out, chasing after you and wanting to get to know you. When you are older and you have money, then you can consider “keeping”. You have to spend all your youthfulness while you are still young.

Besides referring to the emphasis on youthfulness, Dave commented that relationship focuses on material things and appearance. Charles further reinforced Dave’s statement:

Our circle is very common, they consider material things and appearance. In male circle, this is strong. You can say, though it isn’t a rule, but generally it
is like that. Man looks for the appearance and depends how much he can afford for material things... if the appearance is not good, they can not accept. Maybe, one or twice for sex is alright, if you ask them to stay with him all the time, they can not accept... I don’t understand but in Hong Kong, especially the younger generation, they are more realistic...

Charles also commented that he had heard from his friends that they would treat handsome guys better, or they would consider the other person’s financial situation.

My personal experience in the local gay community also confirmed Charles’s observation. Many of my students had told me the importance of owning a nice body. Many of them spend hours in the gymnasium to work out.

The other couples’ confirmed that the subculture is centered around singlehood. All the activities organized by gay groups targeted for single men. Adam and Brian (Couple 1) has the following comments regarding the lack of activities for gay couples.
B: In Hong Kong, the gay circle does not have any activities for couple.

A: (sigh!)

B: For singles, there are a lot but activities for couple there are none.

They then explain why there are only activities for singles and Adam comments:

A: It's hard to say, those who initiate the activities are single, so they will attend to their needs first. ... find their own prey first... they don't even have (meaning a partner), how can they serve you?.

They also mentioned that they have joined the only couple support group organized by a gay organization. However, the support group turned out to be a failure.

A: ...Couple's meeting... yes, there are, but I think it's a failure. xxx support group called couple's group. They are for couples and those want to be couples, but ended up only a number of pairs...
B: There are xxx, us and ...

A: No...

B: They broke up...

A: Only us left as couple attending the meeting... and the one who is in charge broke up. Now the one who is responsible is at the edge, .... they haven't seen each other.....

It is very disappointing to Adam and Brian as this couple's meeting is the only couple function in the gay scene. Ironically this group can not give them support and they feel even worse as what they have seen is that couples in the group broke up one by one.

Besides the lack of couple's functions, the participants also found that there is a BELIEF among the gay community that relationship is doom to fail.

Dave (Couple 2) has the following comments regarding the gay community:

D: ... there are few couples in this circle. The atmosphere is not strong. The community, the messages send out are all negatives. That it is impossible for long term relationships.
I think that all these sayings have an effect on people. They think that "keep as you can" (就将耐) or "keep as long as it is" (就将耐). There is a culture here...

The belief that relationships do not last long can be depicted by questions asked by the couples' friends on their relationship. The wordings and the way they phrase the questions indicate that they have little faith in long term relationships.

A: ... my gay friends sometimes ask like this:

How come we haven't seen daughter-in-law ( refereing to B) What has happened? I forgot what they actually said...

B: Some even called and asked, when will you guys break up?

This is further exemplified by Dave(Couple 2):

D: You often heard, for example:

Are Dickson and John still together? They haven't broke up yet? Doing well? This reflects the atmosphere unlike straight couples, seeing John and ask for how Mary is doing. But seeing John, they asked, how's Dickson? break up yet? The
intonation is different. The questioning is different, the
culture is different and the questioning is different then.

Henry and Greg(Couple 4) also have similar experiences:

H: Yes, I can sense that. I feel that if G didn't show up for once,
some people will think that we break up. I sense it from their
body language. I think that they are very nosy, and they are
quite sick, but I think that is because they don't have
successful past relationships....

G further confirms this belief:

G: ... I feel that the gay circle can't give me a longlasting feeling.
It seems that it's easy to break.... I heard a few cases, I don't
know that they will break up but I don't know what
happens. It seems that breaking up is easy. Maybe they
haven't try hard to work things out.

H: It seems that it is a MUST ... it seems that breaking up is
NORMAL.
The belief among gay community that relationships are doom to fail inevitably has its effects on couple's relationship. This belief serves a very self-defeating purpose and we understand from psychology that our perception of things affect its results. Hence, the self-fulfilling prophecy of relationship failure will inevitably influence the outcome of the relationship.

SUMMARY ON THE GAY SUBCULTURE

No matter in the east or west, the gay subculture adheres to a similar set of values. First, it is a subculture that idealizes youth, being young has many of its advantages and the young are often being pampered and adored. Second, the subculture centers around singlehood as all of the activities are targeted for single men. Physical appearance is also important and many go for the looks rather than the person.

Besides these similarities, the local gay subculture has adhere to other values and beliefs. Money has quite a position in the relationship hierarchy of the local gay men. As suggested by Charles, if not for looks, they go for money.
There is also a belief among gay couples that their relationship is doom to fail. This belief of failure inevitably resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy of unsuccessful relationships.

The values of the subculture are not conducive for permanent relationship. Characteristics such as physical appearance, youthfulness are very transient. The emphasis on such characteristics is superficial and unstable and I think it is time for the gay community to re-evaluate their values and to establish a concept of permanence.

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE GAY COMMUNITY

LACK OF ROLE MODELS

According to the couples, they do not have couple friends and even if they have couple as friends, few couples are out in the gay scene. Refering to gay couples not being active in the local gay community, Adam(Couple1) comments:

A: Three years to someone is a miracle (referring to the length of relationship). But there are many people that said there are
lots that have been together for many years, but they(sigh)
you know... don't know where they are...

Henry(Couple4) has the same feelings that gay couples are
nowhere to be found.

H: Very few couples friends, I don't know where they are.

This is further emphasized by Dave(Couple 2):

D: ...for the older generation, I don't know where they are, as if
they have disappeared...they might have coupled and hid
away.

Gay couples have to struggle on their own and have to search
for a relationship model that they can rely on as they do not have any
hands on experiences from the previous generations. As a result, this
may cause much confusion and disappointment.

D: ... we learnt from straight relationship since birth, how
straight relationship works and we do not have the
opportunity to learn or see, we are the first generation that is
more active in Hong Kong gay culture. The previous
generation has left us nothing at all. That is why we borrow
from straight relationship. Maybe, we can be models for younger generation and they can learn from our problems. I think I am searching for gay relationship and I'm more acceptable to different patterns, whether it's monogamous or open, I think that right now the people in Hong Kong are searching....in such a stage.

The phenomena that couples tend to hide away from the gay scene seems to be the norm in the gay community. All the couples being interviewed have confirmed this. Furthermore, their explanations revealed that there is an underlying FEAR among the gay community. Adam(Couple 1) explained why gay couples hide away:

A: ... Hong Kong's gay work is mostly volunteer work. It is the only opportunity for them to meet other members openly. By members, I mean gay persons. For once they have got what they wanted, they want to treasure the relationship and they don't want any changes in the relationship. This desire is stronger than the desire to continue volunteer work. If you ask them to help, it is alright. But you can not ask both of them. If there is a meeting or an event, I can go but do not expect both of us to go. ... Too many people think that if
you bring your partner along, he will get snatched ( ráo ).

... they think it is a phenomena and a fact...

Adam used "disable society" to describe this phenomena:

There are many gay developments which are disabled. How should I say? The whole society is disabled. People feel that once you "show" ( shào ) something out, that person will go away. Will be snatched ( ráo ) by someone or robbed off ( bāo ) Or may be... very high in fear. This is why I think that couple disappear.

Charles (Couple 2) has a similar explanation:

... alot of old timers remind me that once you keep someone, don't go out to those activities or have too much interface with the gay community... They say it from their hearts. Heard an example that one guy has kept a partner for a few months but did not go out to any activities. Finally, he brought him out for a few months and someone knew that he has a partner ( is keeping) but likes to snatch the partner ( ráo ). Nobody
mentioned it to him even though they knew. The relationship broke up...

Besides taking advice from old timer, Charles in practice avoids going out with his partner to gay activities:

...after being coupled, I don't want to go to those places as I am frightened that it will affect our relationship. Because there can be attractions in those places and as for the male sex, sense stimulation is important and if he meets someone better looking that he wants and the other person also comes up to approach him then I feel unhappy.

Henry(Couple 4) comments on not knowing the whereabouts of other couples:

I guess they are afraid and frightened. They are frightened that once they are introduced to each other, the relationship is being threatened. e.g. If A & B, C & D are couples, once introduced, they are worried that A may go with C and so on so forth. The underlying fear is so strong that gay couples tend to avoid the gay scene and deliberately cut themselves off from the gay
community. Even for those couples who are active in the gay community, they can not get any support as couples activities are almost non-existent in the local gay scene. As a result, couples rely more on themselves rather than on the gay community. As long as this vicious cycle is present, there will never be any role models available for couple relationships. One generation after another, gay men have to depend on themselves and struggle by themselves alone in the searching of a relationship pattern.

The lack of visibility of long term relationship in the gay community further confirms the self-fulfilling prophecy that gay relationship is transient. Many factors help to perpetuate the non visibility of permanent relationship. First, the atmosphere in the gay community is unsupportive to couple relationship. Activities are only targeted for single men and there is no couple activities available. Couples are left to entertain themselves and as a result many couples depend on each other and the phenomena of relation isolation is very common among gay couples. Second, there is a tendency for couples to hide away once they have coupled. Many couples do not want to get involve with the gay community for the sake of their own survival. The end result is that few couples are available for modelling and generation
after generation gay couples have to strive on their own. All of these factors are persistently affecting gay couple’s relationship.

LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

LACK OF FAMILY SUPPORT

The majority of the participants did not dare to disclose to their family regarding their couple's relationship. Two participants have come out to their families and one was lucky enough to be accepted by his family. The other one was treated with anger and as a result he seldom goes back to visit his family anymore and he is totally cut off from them. Fred(Couple 3) talked about the time when his family found out that he was living with his partner:

F: We have a fight... I have a lot of brothers and sisters, nine of us. My parents are very traditional in their thinking and after they knew that I am living with him, they do not like it. Consequently, we seldom see each other... Everytime I go back, we quarrel. Even my brothers and sisters, they do not like it.
It seems that it is an implicit rule among gay couples not to disclose their relationship to their family. This is illustrated by Adam in the following quotation:

Being gay is that, you are bad alone but don't touch my son. You tell me that you are going with someone's son and if you accidentally walked into each other's mother, you meet eye to eye with each other's mother, how can you go through life then? A friend of mine told me that his mother when asked by relatives when he will get married replied that she intended to hide him and has him take care of her. ...The mother knew that he is gay... she is helping the son. It's so easy. But if the gay couple walk out, his mother can't do anything. It's difficult....

Greg also felt the pressure from his family:

...yes, my mother often asked. She would say, I often heard that you spend the night with your friend, why don't you bring your girlfriend home? There is a little pressure there, my sister as well. I feel she knew, but would not discuss the matter.
The pressure is intense especially when the couple wants to move out and have their own unit. Family unity or living together as a family unit is still the norm for our local population. In the traditional Chinese family, grown children are still expected to live with their parents before they are married. Therefore, the need to move out of the family home arouse suspicion or even look upon as a kind of rejection by family members. This can be exemplified by the following quotation:

E: Hong Kong is unlike China, the States or Europe where the place you work and the place you live is far apart. Or the place is a lot bigger. In Hong Kong no matter if you live in Tuen Mun or the outlying islands you only need an hour or so to go back and forth. Your mother may ask you why you want to move out? The pressure is intense.

Fred further confirms Eddy's point on family pressure:

Even grown children moving out to live or having a family and move out. The other family members feel bad if one member is like this. I am talking about Hong Kong Chinese Family.... but in Hong Kong the man and woman are very attached тысяч.
According to them, family is a factor that is affecting the couple's decision of moving out and having their own unit. Adam has mentioned that not many couples are like them who can live together and have their own unit.

A: ...I'm lucky that I can move out and he doesn't have a family here, when we say we move, then we actually can move in... but some can't.

B: some can't... some of them are only sons..

Thus, family obligations and pressures are factors that can affect gay couple's relationship. As we all know that the more one is invested in a relationship, either emotionally or financially then it is more difficult for one to get out of the relationship. One has to consider a lot more if one has invested a lot in the relationship. Conversely, if the couple has not invested too much on the relationship, then breaking up or getting out of the relationship is much easier. This point is also raised by Couple 3, Eddy and Fred.

E: ... for couple who live together in the same unit, you understand each other better.... they can maintain longer
because you have many common possessions. Joint names on the unit, sharing time together watching T.V., doing activities together, like eating, sweeping the floor together, going out to get things, bedsheets, cushion covers... the feelings are stronger...

As it is not feasible for most gay men to move out of their family home in our local culture, living together can not be easily accessible. Consequently, couple's relationship will not be too long lasting as their investments in the relationship is small.

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Besides having no support from family, there are also pressures from the local community. Charles had experienced homophobic reactions:

C: ... in the restaurant when we were a bit close and they have that kind of look. Or when I asked them where the toilet at, their reactions were a bit cold. You can sense a little, but as I go there as a consumer, I don't care about those people.
However, couples learn ways to regulate their behaviours so as to avoid suspicion and negative reactions from others. All couple have their own unique self-regulatory system.

Adam and Brian (Couple 1)

B: We did not do anything to arouse suspicion... e.g. when we go out shopping or going to the movies, we act like just two ordinary boys, ... people think we are classmates, friends or colleagues.

Adam and Brian try to normalize their behaviours when going out. Moreover, Adam also acts as a screening device to select friends. He selects people to introduce Brian to them so as to avoid rejection.

Charles and Dave (Couple 2) also censor their intimate behaviours when in public.

D: ... before we act intimately, we look around first. It does affect alot, affect alot on the relationship. You can not be spontaneous, to do what you feel and express it. There is a blockage somehow and it binds you ... the most frequent behaviour for us is to put our hand on the others shoulders. Very infrequent for more intimate actions. Unless we go to a very quiet location or we looked and nobody is there.
They reduce their intimate level, reduce it to the level of going out as friends. If they want to be more intimate, they will look around and make sure that nobody is around. There seems to be an invisible rule that requires them to have self-restraint when they are going out in public.

Eddy and Fred (Couple 3) also commented that they do not arouse suspicion as they dress or look ordinary.

F: Going out, going to the movies, no, nobody gives us any kind of despised look... people don't know that we are gay... it's difficult to tell especially for straight people, they don't look at two men, they seldom do. We wear simple T-shirt and jeans. Just like an ordinary man. But if you wear in such a way, colourful and sparkling (\[\text{\textcolor{red}{\frac{\text{red}}{\text{red}}}}\]), then everybody knows.

Henry (Couple 4) also talks about his self-regulatory behaviours.

H: ... I think I don't feel the pressure because I tend to avoid those situations that made me feel uncomfortable...
Henry will not go out together with Greg with friends that do not know that they are a couple. In public, Henry avoids any intimate behaviours as well.

H: I want to put my hands on his arm but is not possible or he would push my hand away and in this way reminded me that it's not for us to do. I don't want to kiss him in public, but little things like this, I could not do as well... sure I do not feel good at all. I just want to be more close but we have to transcend it to just putting my hand on his shoulder... I do not feel good at all.

Due to society's homophobia, couples internalized the homophobic reactions and they themselves in turn would avoid situations or behaviours that would arouse suspicion. However, they have a price to pay as they can not be spontaneous in their expressions of feelings. Discriminatory conditions are upsetting and frustrating and this definitely can damage and undermine the couple's relationship. As a result, gay couples have to work twice as hard to maintain their relationship.

Moreover, the unsupportive environmental conditions both in the heterosexual world and the gay community have led couples to develop a unique pattern of behaviours. They tend to be constantly relying on one another and as a result minimize outside contacts. This
pattern is known as relationship isolation (Driggs & Finn, 1991) and can be exemplified by Couple 1.

A: We have a group of gay friends, but few and we don't have much going on in society...

Fred (Couple 3) also commented that they have very few straight friends and their relationship with them is very superficial i.e. just chat when we see each other but we never visit one another.

E: Few contacts... partly because I am more busy, also, as having a partner, I spend more time with him as he wants me to spend time with him.

Couples tend to be more by themselves and the phenomena, "We are two against the world" fits in the picture. With little or no support from the family, the gay community and the heterosexual society, gay couples inevitably have to face extra challenges that are unique to them. They have to overcome many problems in order to establish a long lasting relationship.

SUMMARY ON THE LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

The unsupportive atmosphere for couple relationship in the gay community, family as well as the dominant heterosexual society
undermines the couple life. The surrounding external conditions are very unfavourable to the couple and it sure would affect the couple life together.

The lack of social support resulted in relationship isolation. All of the couples were being affected as most of them have few friends and the phenomena of "Two against the world" is visible in their relationship. Only the youngest couple, Charles and Dave(Couple 2) is more active in the gay community, whereas the other couples they do not join any gay activities or go to any gay social gatherings. They solely depend on each other for support and interdependency between them is strong. It is well documented that a well function support network is important to the mental health of an individual. Gay couples have to struggle on their own without a well function support network. If anything goes wrong with their relationship, they have nobody to turn to as they do not dare to reveal their gay relationship.

Couples have internalized homophobia and they would not be spontaneous in reacting to their emotions. All of them have acquired some kind of self-regulatory behaviours to ward off suspicion. Couples have to restrict their behaviour and their affection. As noted by Henry(Couple 4), Greg pushed his hands away when he wanted to hold his hand. This kind of self-regulatory behaviour definitely affects the couple relationship and is very defeating to their morale.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is a search for answers to the difficulties and issues encountered by local gay couples. As have been revealed in the study, gay couples face additional pressures that are unique to them. All of the areas of difficulties discussed in the study - monogamy or open relationship, values in the gay sub-culture, the unsupportive atmosphere for couple relationship in gay community, family and the predominant heterosexual society. These factors include internal as well as external conditions that are constantly affecting couple's life and threatening their relationship. All these add further strains to the couple's relationship and no wonder gay couples often feel that their relationship can not work and long lasting relationships are not for them.

The experiences encountered by our local gay couples are similar to those overseas. Though we can not generalize the experiences of our four couples but common themes are easily pick out and they are as follows:

1. Sexuality - monogamy or open relationship is an ever present issue among gay couples, whether overseas or in our local context. Gay couples have to negotiate their way through this issue if their preference is different from that of their partner. If both partner agree at the onset that monogamy is for them and they abide by it, then there will not be any problem for them. Or vice versa, if both agree to be non-
monogamous and they stick to it, then there will not be any problems for them either. The difficulty concerning this issue is that people can change the agreement later in their relationship when their needs change. Conflicts will arise if preference is different between couples and this issue is detrimental to the couple's relationship.

2. Values in the local gay sub-culture is similar to those gay communities overseas. The emphasis on youth and sex appeal dominates the local gay scene. Gay men who are not young or good looking do not fit in the picture. The gay community has gone to the extreme to establish their unique identities. In doing so, they have left out a lot of gay men who do not hold the prevailing values of the gay sub-culture. This can be exemplified by the conflict experienced by Charles (Couple 2) who commented that the sub-culture values the "looks" more than the "person". It is high time for the gay community to contemplate and reflect on their values partly because as a minority group they cannot afford to exclude any of its members. Moreover, it is very destructive to the mental health of those being rejected. Therefore, it is necessary that the gay community have to include and accept individual differences so that all types of gay men can be accepted.

In a subculture that focus on singlehood, there are few activities available for couples. Couple relationship is not supported and it is expected to fail. The belief that couple relationship is doom to fail is pervasive in the local gay community.
3. Both overseas and the local gay persons are lack of family and social support. However, the situation in Hong Kong has its own particularities and we have to take cultural factors into consideration. First, it is more difficult for gay couples to live together in the local environment. According to traditional Chinese culture, unmarried adults children are still expected to live with their family and they are not expected to move out and live alone by themselves. As a result, it is extremely difficult for a gay couple to live together even if they want to do so. Second, Chinese gay men face more difficulties simply because they are "Chinese men". Local gay men are expected by their family to maintain the family status quo and they dare not disrupt it. This can be exemplified by the fact that only two participants had took the risk to disclose his gay identity to his parents. One was fortunate enough to be accepted by his family, but it told him a long time to educate them and to gain their approval and acceptance. However, the other participant was being totally rejected when he told his family about his sexual orientation and he had to bear the negative consequences of abandonment by his family.

The unsupportive atmosphere leads to two interesting phenomena: relationship isolation and internalized homophobia in gay men. As a result, gay couple relies solely on each other and interdependency needs are strong and they tend to cut themselves off from outside contacts.
4. While homophobia is pervasive in our local community, we seldom recognize it in ourselves. I hope that this study can arouse our awareness of homophobia and to remind ourselves that we are also part of the picture and as social service providers we have the responsibilities to involve in the changes of a more equal society.

5. I am not proposing that having seen all these difficulties, gay couples should resign and accept their fate. On the contrary, I hope this study can provide knowledge and information to social service providers and to help them understand the issues and to increase their repertoire on gay relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study revealed that gay couples are in need of services. However, there are no services available for gay couples at the present moment. The followings are possible measures suggested to assist gay couples and gay community.

1. Provision of Services - It is recommended that social service agencies provide services and activities such as hotline services, individual and couple counselling, support group, relationship courses, self-awareness courses for gay couples so as to help them deal with the
additional pressures inflicted on them by the gay community and the heterosexual society.

2. Training for Social Service Providers - Homophobia exists not only among the general public but also among our social service providers. I agree that there is no such thing as "value free" therapy but the present situation is so repressive that it demands our attention. Ethical issues have to be taken into consideration because homophobic attitudes might generate behaviours that are counter-therapeutic and counter-productive to homosexual clients. Consequently, clients suffer as a result of the worker's inability to accept homosexuality and thus hinders the clients to develop and grow as a fellow human being. We must address the question of how effective are our fellow workers in handling homosexual clients.

There are a number of items that social service providers may not have been in conscious awareness. First, our own values and views about homosexuality. We are being brought up in a heterosexual society and everything is geared towards maintaining such status quo. Homosexuality challenges existing values, and society values conformity and devalues deviant behaviours. As workers reflecting the prevailing social mores, should we "help" homosexual clients to be more socially acceptable according to our norm? Second, should we respect the determination of our clients and "help" them to be an open and happy gay person?
Furthermore, not many social service providers understand the problems encountered by gay couples. It is suggested that in-service training is essential for all service providers and topics on different sexual orientations should be included in the training of helping professionals.

College should offer human sexuality course for its students and specifically a unit on homosexuality is vital for social work students. As for counselling homosexuals, student could be introduced to a variety of potential problems and issues related to gay lifestyles.

3. Public Education - The general public harbours many misconceptions on homosexuality and gay men in particular. Public education is an effective means to correct misconceptions and to instill respect and equality for persons of different sexual orientations. The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education should be responsible to organise publicity and promotion campaigns in promoting equal opportunities for persons with different sexual orientations.

4. Legislation - The Equal Opportunities Bill (EOB), which was a Private Members's Bill and was introduced in 1994-95 (Hong Kong Government, 1996). It contained provisions to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexuality. Commitment to this cause is essential if we want to protect and respect the rights of all individuals.
On a broader scale, social workers can participate in advocating equal treatment of homosexuals as they are being discriminated against in various settings. i.e. gay persons have been forced out of their apartments by their landlord right after discovering their sexual orientation, gay persons being fired after revealing their identity, gay persons being harassed by police etc. Furthermore, social workers can help to "de-label" the negative effects on homosexuals and thus alleviate the sufferings of this invisible minority.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The study of homosexuality has been and still is a lonely field. More studies are needed so as to provide more knowledge and information on this special group. To further develop our knowledge of this population, there are many topics that are worth studying. For example, questions on how relationships work and what makes it work, the quality of relationship among gay couples. Besides gay men, lesbians and bi-sexuals are interesting targets to be studied. So far not much have been written about them and knowledge and information on these groups is minimal. Research on social service providers' knowledge on homosexuality is also recommended.

It is only through study and research that we can uncover what is hidden, excluded and neglected by society. Without thorough
understanding of our deep-rooted fears of homosexuality, homophobia will continue to exist. It is important especially for the helping professionals to have access and accurate information about homosexuals and persons with different sexual orientations. Research can help to reflect the diversity and complexity of "being gay" in our community.
Appendix I

Couple & Community

1. 作爲一對 gay couple，你們有冇因爲別人懷疑你們的關係，而遇上一些問題或困難？

1.1 居住

1.2 工作

1.3 社交生活 - 娛樂, 朋友

1.4 重有冇其他？

1.5 這些問題冇沒有影響到你們之間的關係？
如果有又是甚麼？

1.6 如果冇有，你們用甚麼方法減低影響？

Couple & Sub-culture

2. Couple 之後，你們的生活方式有冇改變？
   有冇甚麼導致到這些改變？

2.1 你們身邊的 gay friend，對你們的態度有冇不同？

2.2 你們覺得，Couple 之後，有冇甚麼需要在 gay 圈子內是滿足唔到？

Couple System

3. 你們點解會選擇單一/公開性關係？

3.1 在單一/公開性關係裏面，你們面對有冇甚麼問題/困難？
   有困難時後，你們點處理？

3.2 愛滋病對你們有冇影響？

3.3 在你們的關係之中，經常出現衝突是甚麼？
   有衝突時後，你們怎樣？

3.4 你們覺得 gay couple 同異性戀 couple 有冇唔同？
Appendix II

同意書

本人_________ 同意參加理工學院應用社會科學學系碩士學
張賢惠進行的同志研究。並同意用錄音方式作資料搜集。所有有關資料
保密處理，而參加者之個人資料絕不會公開。

簽署：

姓名：

日期：
Appendix III

同志研究問卷

訪問日期：
地點：
時間：

1. 被訪者姓名：
2. 年齡：
3. 性別：
4. 出生地方：
5. 家裏排行： □ 一 □ 二 □ 三 □ 四 □ 五 □ 六
6. 教育程度： □ 小學 □ 中學 □ 大專/大學 □ 其他
7. 在那裏接受教育：
8. 職業：
9. 年薪：
10. 站出來時間：
11. 接受自己作爲一個同志程度：

非常不接受 | | | | | | | | | | 非常接受
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

12. 家人有誰知道自己是同志： □ 兄/弟 □ 姊/妹 □ 父 □ 母
13. Couple 時間：
14. 性關係： □ 單一 □ 開放
15. 居住情形： □ 同居 □ 與家人同住 □ 獨居 □ 其他：
16. 宗教： □ 基督教 □ 天主教 □ 佛教 □ 其他：
Appendix IV

Couple 1 verbatim

I: As a gay couple, have you encountered any problems or difficulties because others suspected of your relationship?
A: Oh, this one you have to ask him.
B: (silence for a short while) Um, no.
I: You don't feel any.
A: He doesn't feel any.
B: I don't feel any.
I: You don't feel or had met any problems?
B: Not among friends
A: Um, Um
B: Not among family members, they may suspect but they had never mention it in front of me. They seem as if nothing had happened, so I don't feel any.
I: What about outsiders, have you met any
B: You mean strangers, neighbours?
I: Yes, have you met any
B: No, I don't feel any because I don't know my neighbour(ha, ha)
I: outsiders? for example, while you were going out? If you don't feel it, what have you done so that others don't suspect you are a gay couple?
B: On the other hand, because we did not do anything to arouse suspicion.
I: What you didn't do then? (all laughed aloud)
B: For example, when we go out shopping or going to the movie, we act like just ordinary two boys, going shopping or the movie, people think we are classmates, friends or colleagues. They don't feel we are special.
A: Tell about the Shatin fruit stall, how that person
B: Oh, yeah, someone had mistaken that we are brothers
I: umh,....
B: For example, one day he bought a pack of cigarettes and asked me to go downstairs to get another pack, and the fruit stall hawker said your elder brother used to get this brand...
A: but actually he is older than me (laugh)
B: Some of this sort happened but I don't think it is a problem or it bothers me.
I: cause you haven't done anything to arouse their suspicion? You have been doing well, what about you, A?
A: I don't feel anything, prior to my involvement with him, I have lots of friends who know me and my gay background, so when I am with him, it seems that I bring him tag him along to my friends, so I don't have that kind of worry or problem. So I don't have any memory of this matter.

I: What have you done or avoid doing to arouse suspicion?
A: I select friends to introduce, for example, one day I went to the movie with him and my colleagues and my colleague's boyfriend were on the same elevator and I would not purposely introduce him to my colleague as I think that I could introduce him later. Sometimes, there are things that you don't purposely spread it all out, I think it is a personal matter. When at a time I feel comfortable, then I will introduce my partner to others. When I feel that cats and dogs are around(everybody), I don't have the need to introduce then I would not. But because of my work, when I have not been coupled with him, more people suspect then. Because there were more people around you, but when there is only him, people don't care anymore, do you know what I mean? People think that it is official that you go out with him very often. You are always together, they don't care whether you are gay or not, but that both of you are always together. You see one then you see another. So there isn't alot of problems.

I: These are people that you know, what about people that you don't know? Strangers on the street?
A: Neighbours, they are alright because we have been renting apartment all along. We tend to adopt a "you are willing to chat with us, and we are also willing to chat with you. If you are quiet, I will not initiate the conversation". When we lived in Shatin, our neighbour did chat with us or say hello. We did the same, I don't feel anything special...

B: Neighbour did see two of us in and out ...
A: The next door neighbour, the mother with two daughters were something, they didn't chat with us and we didn't chat with them.
B: Maybe because they were all women and us men, so they did feel...
A: So they didn't chat with us, and we didn't chat with them
I: This may not be...
A: So I didn't care what they think, now we moved to estate and it is not a big problem, it is very obvious that our left and right neighbours are a family, big and small, in and out. When we see each other, we say hello and nothing else.
B: Maybe we used to live where the majority of our neighbours are families and it is only us that are two young men, maybe we are more straight and maybe we are not often lousy,...
A: We don't tag along a big gang to party ( לנשוץ ) or having a costume party. (Laugh) So you don't attract people to meddle in your affairs. So it is not a big problem.
I: Do you feel the Society, in Hong Kong the local society, is there any homophobic atmosphere that as a gay couple, it is difficult for you? This society.
A: Haven't encountered yet... yes.. but haven't encountered..
I: If you feel there is, what is it?
A: Maybe, when I talked about Shatin three mother and daughters, though they may not be homophobic, but they have some strange actions. I am not saying that they are homophobic, but for people who are homophobic, they may have the same phenomena. All of us are going out of the elevator, don't know you are living next door because don't see each other that often. But our two doors were next to one another, and when seeing me opening the door, they just stood at the end of the corridor and would not walk near until I had walked into my apartment. Or when she opened the door first, she would do it so quickly and banged the door shut. I don't know what happened, as if getting rid of ghost. Very funny, shutting the door so loud, but they were used to shut the door that loud. For example, banged the door no matter there were someone there or not.
B: Banging, banging...
A: I feel that maybe something like this, in the future we may encounter, a very rejecting attitude. I believe this something like this exists.
I: Have you experience similar situation when going out for entertainment?
A: We don't have too much entertainment
B: Just like average, going to the movies
A: We have a group of gay friends, we don't have much going in the society, the most prominent is him accompanying me to my company's event, my friend's wedding cocktail party. Nothing much happened, they know me and others I don't care. As for my "old" friends, we are all old, we been around and even if I introduce him to them as my friend they are not obvious to have any attitude towards us. Unless he has some negative experience, I haven't met any myself.
I: Does B has any?
B: No.
I: Have you done something that others would not treat you badly?
A: You live in the same building, you say hello and you are nice, others are nice in return. They don't purposely think that you are gay that two men must... It's amazing that homophobic is people who deserve it, the average layman does not purposely think two men together
must be gay, they are not that intentional, it must be someone who scandalize first, and talk about it and feel scare. On the whole, in daily living, you treat them nice, they treat you nice in return. It's normal.

B: For example, we two live together, if you don't disturb others or do things that is outrageous, nobody cares.

A: Yes....

B: In Hong Kong, you don't know your neighbour's surname. It's like that, unless you bring along a group of people to party all night.

I: Do you think that your appearance is a factor too? You two are very straight looking.

B: Yes, maybe a little bite.

A: Not really, sometimes I'm quite crazy, but

B: But you are not so on the streets

A: But I'm not kam, As for straight looking because of my work sometimes I can be very extreme, but he can be fairly extreme as well, he is fashionable, and I'm rough. So "quote and quote", what you said about gay look, we don't. We don't wear ear rings, we don't have anything special.

I: Will not make a scene?

A: Yumm

B: What people have in mind, the sterotype, they could not find.

A: It's difficult to find the sterotype in the first place. It's only in the bar that you can find them....

B: It's not so, most gay are not like that..(Both talking at the same time)

A: I have seen people in our estate with ear rings all along the ears and holding a girl tight walking along. You understand? You know they are not gay, but their looks are more gay. There are more those people than us.

I: I hear that there isn't anything out there that influence your relationship?

A: ugm

I: I would like to know after you coupled, have you changed your lifestyle? Is it very different from being single?

B: (Laughter)

A: Yes, certainly. According to mature ladies, marriage is a big risk. Yes, I think for anyone who have the opporunity to get into a steady relationship will find out that they will have to encounter many typical problems. I laughed my head off from stories that I heard from friends. Complain "Why you leave the towel wet after you clean your face?" I am talking about other people business.

B: We are no different from other married couple, the problems we encounter are no different.
A: Yes, no different. When we first consider moving in, we talked 
about this. We were taking a van, and he said, he felt like we were like 
his sister and her husband, having nothing to say. 
B: Yes, so natural. He sat outside and I sat inside, etc. Very natural, 
nothing to say. 
A: Just sitting, nothing to say. We haven't moved in yet, we were just 
looking for apartment. 
B: But we see each other very often prior to moving in, we meet 
everyday for very long, we meet after work till late at night and 
each goes back to his place. 
A: Now is different, we changed around, we don't see each other till 
late at night. Our lifestyle changed alot, for example, 
B: Before, we both live with our family 
A: Very simple, before I slept by myself, now we sleep together. But 
my lifestyle, I try hard to fight for a space of my own, before I 
moved in, I said I wanted two rooms, I want a room of my own. I 
want my own bed, I am not against two persons sleeping together. I 
forsee I demand space, what about quarrelling, it is not feasible to 
go out but having two rooms, at least there is more space. These 
are only thoughts, but somehow there are alot of changes. For 
example: I have to bear everyday that there is someone in the 
apartment cleaning every corner, wiping every little space. To me, it 
is a torture, I am not a clean person, I don't clean up. He has his 
complains. 
B: Yes, I have to clean up his things as well. These are everyday 
simple matters, if I am tired after work and have to rush to cook 
for his share... There is no difference between a heterosexual 
couple and us. 
I: Yes.. but a big difference when you were single.. 
B: Yes, I was living with my mom. 
A: Yes, we are arguing whether moving to an outlying island, 
B: There is no need to argue, Before I live with my mom and she takes 
care of me, I come home tired and just lie there and dinner prepared 
by my mom. But now is different, I have to rush home after work to 
cook, wash clothes, clean up etc. etc. 
A: Yes, right. 
I: What about your friends, your gay friends, do they change their 
attitude after you became couple? 
A: Yes, Yes, sometimes, they made remarks and at times they seem 
concern. And... 
B: I am different from him, all the gay friends we know are known 
through him, he has been around.. they know me after we have 
coupled. They knew him when he was single..
A: They made sneer remarks such as: rushing to go home or have you got permission? My colleagues sometimes do that too. But my gay friends sometimes ask like: how come we haven't seen daughter-in-law? What has happened? I forgot what they exactly said...

B: Some gay friends called and asked: When will you guys break up?(Laughter)

I: What do you think? Are they joking? being sarcastic? or what?

B: They are joking but a bite sarcastic.

A: They want to see how the relationship is going. They want to know if the relationship can stand the strain.

B: If it breaks up, then they have a topic to gossip about,

A: If going back home a little bit late or haven't seen the other partner for a while, why don't you treat daughter-in-law better? I'm not treating him well? What did he say?

B: Once when he was out of town, I was boring and I went to a disco and I met some gay friends. Two or three days later, everybody knows what happened. I seldom go to those places, either I go with him, I seldom go by myself.

A: So he can't be a widower.. (laughter) Even a saint has sinned.. I'm different, I'm bad all along..

B: I usually go back home right after work, so all of them talk about it..

A: He is even more homely than "unmarried young girls". But yet he showed up one night at PP, so people who know us thought that.. Oh, no.. can't patch up, at last he is out. It is common for me to go out, but for him to go out, and alone by himself, and at a time when I was not in Hong Kong.

B: At last, he is out for fun..

I: What is it like for you? Do they want you to come out and have fun? What's behind?

B: I think for them it's just for gossip..

A: I think for this kind of problem, besides being nosy, for single gay man, they are looking forward to what's happening with a couple.. who's going out for affairs. So they can gradually think that it's normal, but he is different. Whereas, I am what they think, he is their ideal image. He broke their image and their confidence when he went out. For us, we should comfort them.(laughter)

B: But I left early that night, not even 12:00 midnight yet..

A: It doesn't matter, your actions tell them that the last one is gone...no, no..

B: But I go to those places when I was young, years ago in other country, but once I came back I haven't been to that kind of place. Not even when I was single, I did not go looking for lovers. To them, I'm a new face, and I met them through him, I can I say..
A: They know your background that you are very good.
B: They don't know my past.
A: When you fool around (=<?= , .plus), you were not in Hong Kong. They don't have any evidence that you are like that... if in Hong Kong, then someone would say: I remember, over 10 years ago, he's been around... and who & who had a thing with him — . I'm lucky, I haven't come across anyone saying that cos. I made it oassionally, I go out 3 - 4 times a year, not 3 - 4 times a week...
I: not much.
B: some goes every night...
A: that's why there is a difference.
I: Do you feel that there is some pressure of being a couple in the gay community, I heard that besides being nosy how you guys been doing lately..
B: I feel there is no pressure, I don't care about others and their pressures, no matter they are family or non gay friends, or gay friends.
A: To me, their over concern, even small matters they will come and talk to me. How you are treating him, what's the matter?
I: They seems anxious (=<?= , 2). ...
A: Yes, they are overly anxious and it seems to be a big thing, made me feel that I have over looked the matter... You can't say they are bad, but because of them, you have to explain your relationship..
B: Maybe because... among our gay friends, if we have any problems between us, they think I'm the victim,..
A: Yes, yes...
B: They think it must be him who treated me bad, or they will say similar things to him.
A: The first day we been together, they said, "You better not treat him what...what." ...
B: They know how he is like when he is single...
A: "You better not...what..."
B: People don't know my history,
A: He walked out so fresh and "saintly"..
B: I walked out with him only..
A: That is why I am like a devil's messenger, but I enjoy this, I have more reasons to continue my lifestyle. Have advantages (laughter).
I: Do you feel that they admire you two?
A: I believe every single person admires couple,..
B: May be majority of them... majority of single person hopes to have somebody..
A: Even now, I too admire others, I admire some friends, because the gay society hasn't developed to such an extend that, like when I am with my high school friends, all of them have family and children,
they have a common topic. I wonder why gay couple could not have such a phenomena, a group gather together talk about us or others. Like us, we don't have much opporunity to have dinner with other gay couples, and talk to others separately, such as the time he did this, or I got a ring etc. We don't have this kind of gossip, or show off, not having any communications with other couples. This is the most admired event, like going to New Year's visit, bathing your kids and you can ask to bathe mine too. I'm not saying children, but between couple, the common everyday lifestyle, the sharing.

B: the sharing...
A: I think that's important...
B: like a group of women talking about their husbands...
A: or places they have visited on holidays. those kinds of things.
I: You think that in the gay circle, not many couple come out?
A: Very little, because not many couples. Very few gatherings, partly because of living, not many can live together, even those we knew, they are not living together. Very few.. David..
B: Yes, yes..
A: But living together, for both Chinese, no.. just our friends.
B: They give me an impression that relationship is unstable,
A: But some are due to living.. I'm lucky that I can move out and he doesn't have family here, when we say we move, then we actually can move in.. but some can't...
B: some can't.. some of them are only sons..
A: that's who... Small John, some case, if they are better off, they can afford to move out. that case, there is some changes..
B: Those we know, we are the only ones...
A: Just us, but our circle is not big, for just chinese, just us, not chinese, a few...
B: But the problem is I'm single in Hong Kong.. If..
A: It's the lifestyle in Hong Kong, first, economic then family.
B: If my family is in Hong Kong...
A: If his mother is in Hong Kong, then we can't cos he has to stick with his mom.
B: May not be so, don't have to stick with..
A: Your mom has to stick with you, it is the same..
B: May have many..like why you want to move out, it's not because there is no space.. have a comfortable home..
A: For me is different, I'm wild, I move then I move..
B: He's weird...
A: Yes, I'm weird... so yes, it's all depends, from the time we know each other to the time we move in together, it was not more than 3 months. So we are a strange breed...
B: You decide to move in.
A: October, I met him in Canada. October, he came back to Hong Kong, January 1st, we decided to look for an apartment and March the 1st we moved in together. Our development, many people may not dare, many people asked me.
B: Your colleagues....
A: I asked myself, there is one thing that he agreed, if two people felt that they wanted to get together, they have to do it. If they think about it, it's not there.
B: It's weird, he never mentioned that we move together, he did not say anything like that.
A: Really, I forgot, what did I say?
B: I have been thinking, I come back to Hong Kong to look for a job so I look for a place to stay. If he likes, he can come up. One day, he suddenly asked, "How much can you pay for rent." and I naturally answered that I can pay such and such. I suddenly realized that he may want to move in, I naturally did not reject his suggestion.
A: We did not purposely discuss it, not purposely and clearly.. going steady or relationship... We did discuss clearly like.. you pay the rent and I pay such and such, you wash the dishes and I cook, these are clear.
B: Actually, we did not talk about it, but we live and ...
A: No, we have.. I talk about not washing dishes and you know.. There are somethings that are clear.. understood...
I: From what you are saying, that there are few gay couples living together?
B: Yes.. very few.
A: From what we know, are mis..chinese and.. live together.
I: What about for those not living together? Do you have any opportunity to get together as couple and not single?
A: Yes, occasionally, not purposely.
B: Yes.
A: The most immediate, is the one we orgainse in this coming Sunday. Before that, there is no couple inviting us as couple to their place to have dinner. But this Sunday, we will invite two pairs to come up to our place to have dinner,
I: So nice...
A: It's our first time as couple, before that we have single friends who organise party..
B: There's twenty...
A: No opportunity for pure couples, not everyone has a place and one of us isn't too sociable.
B: Not sociable.. let you finish...
A: So it turns out we don't invite too many friends to come. Before when we live in Shatin, it is difficult, the place is small.
B: Don't have a dining table, can put one in.
A: Yes, don't have... we put a cloth on the floor picnic.. But we did have once, and once here for house warming.
B: Actually, for being sociable, I'm not...
A: Don't have to explain... Say couple party is enough, don't have to explain.
B: Continue...
I: It's few...
A: Yes, partly because there is no concept for chinese, if invite then will be a group of people, not pure couples.
B: Would it be that all are too busy, no time to do...
A: Um...
B: Think, it's Hong Kong peoples habit... even for gay couple. Their lifestyle maintain as being single, Saturday and Sunday they go out for entertainment, and not asking friends to come and have dinner or play.
A: Maybe, don't have much comment here..
B: It's Hong Kong people's habit.
I: What you feel as a couple, that the gay circle can not fulfill or meet your needs?
A: Very obvious, couple's meeting. Yes, there are, but a failure, I think. XXX's support group called couples group. They are couples and want to be couples, but ended up a number of pairs.
B: There are Eddy, us.... Some broke up,
A: No,
B: Broke up but still there...
A: Only us left as couple attend the meeting, I want to quit, I want us to be as couple to discuss very "in" topics, for example: open relationship or not? So we have more sharing and communication. But many times, you see many singles, they don't understand, they hope to be couples but they are not. Their lifestyles are not yet, and the one who is in charge broke up. Now the one who is responsible is at the edge, they have holidays and haven't seen each other for three weeks so..
B: Even the one who is responsible is..
A: So the two pairs are also chinese, it is difficult to find couples to talk about..even though the group talk about relationships..
B: Is it because most of the ....
A: It does not go beyond couple's level.
B: Many times, we want to talk, but later we found out that several months later the pictures changed(partners changed) or they became single again.
A: Yeah,
B: So it is meaningless...
A: Three years to someone is a miracle. But there are many people that said there are lots that have been together for many year, but they (sigh!). you know
I: To speak frankly, I have heard a lot about similar...
A: Don't know where they are... Why we as a couple is so "outward", because it's my problem, I have been constantly joining clubs. So in this circle, we are highly known as not single. Many are not single, but they don't live together. Those having the chance of living together is us.
I: So why do you think that couple do not want to join gay groups? Is it as you just said, once coupled, they will hide more...
A: Yes, yes. Hong Kong gay are mostly volunteer work as for social services concerned. It is the only opportunity for them to meet other members openly. By "members", I mean gay persons. For once they have got what they wanted, they want to treasure the relationship and they don't want any changes in the relationship. This desire is stronger than the desire to continue volunteer work. If you ask them to help, it is alright. But you can not ask both of them. If there is a meeting or event, I can go but do not expect both of us to go.
I: Yes, but what is the difficulty....
A: Too many people think that if you bring your partner along, he will get snatched... They think it is a phenomena and a fact...
B: Is it because they are insecure?
A: But it is a personality problem, not related to relationship. I don't remember when we have argue about this, but I think it is personality problem. Security, after some time you need to reaffirm each other why? If there is a problem, you need to deal with the problem but not reaffirm the relationship. If you bring your partner along, you afraid that he will run, and you hold him tight and the chance is that you squeeze him dead. There is no result. There are many many gay development which is disabled. How should I say...
I: You mean...
A: The whole society is very disabled. People feel that once you "show"(出示...) something out, that person will go away. Will be snatched(抢) by someone or robbed off(抢). Or may be.....
I: Feeling fearful...
A: Yes, very high in fear. This is why I think that couple disappear. They are afraid and another thing is that they may want to move out and afraid that if they have a group of friends with them, it may affect their living environment. This is what I guess, may not be true. Going in and out, some friends may be quite wild, like "Hey,
how are you?" (in a high pitched tone), and acted crazy and banged at the door. They may not want to be disturbed and may be afraid to expose their identity. That is why they are hidden.

B: Maybe...
A: We are lucky we do not have such phenomena. On and off, we do have single friends coming to visit and we do not...
B: Ours friends mostly...
A: We do have "kam" friends,
B: Very little...
A: but not as "kam" and disturbing type. They are a bite feminine but not the disturbing kind. But some are disturbing, like X...(laugh)... B: Yes, we do have those.
A: But actually, the person himself is disturbing, unrelated being "kam" or not.
B: Attention seeking.
I: Hearing what you have just said, as a gay couple, you may need some kind of services in this circle. Is it so?
A: Not going that far to have services...
B: Yes...
A: It is that the society is not developed to such a stage. If every street corner, there are gay couples then it is easier.. Going New Year visiting, even going as a group (囍囍). But firstly, the society would not allow gay issue and even worse as couple.
B: As couple....
A: Gay is that, you are bad alone but don't touch my son. You tell me you are going with someone's son and if you accidently walked into each others mothers. You meet eye to eye with each others mother, (laughter by B) how can you go through life then? It is very difficult. Very difficult. If you are just alone, your mother can just "hug" with you[囍囍]. A friend of mine told me that his mother once playing mahjong with relatives. When relatives asked when will your son go out or get married? Then the mother can reply "Going out or married? I intend to hide him and have him to take care of me." The mother knew that he is gay, and sort of saying that I would not have him married so that he could be on my side. She is helping the son, it is so easy. But if couple walked out, his mother can't do anything. It is difficult, the society is disabled, is not complete.
I: Not supportive, the whole society..
A: Service or not service, it is the society itself is disabled, therefore you think of services, but if itself is healthy, then there is no need to think about services... So I don't think ....
B: In H.K., the gay circle does not have any activities for couple.
A: (Sigh)
B: For single, there are a lot, but activities for couple there are none.
A: It's hard to say, but those who initiate are single, so they will attend to their needs first.
B: It's true.
A: Find their own prey first...
B: They organise...
A: They don't even have, how can they serve you?
B: So they organise all these activities are for finding prey.. and you have partner.. they don't....
A: Joking? So I think ...
B: So just now we mentioned that many couple disappeared, those initiate functions are single... they have a purpose... once pick, they don't need to join the activities..
A: Everyone wants to get...
B: Once they have chosen, they don't have to come out, their purpose served.. both would hide..
A: But they can just organise... don't have to get involved..
B: But maybe the partner would not let him do so..
A: Yes, afraid of getting involved.... and being involved... (laughs).  
B: That's the reason.
A: It's difficult, very difficult, unlike...
B: You are aware that the activities that you organise, most of the attendants are single...
A: I have faith in you, but I don't have faith in them..
B: Yes, that's it.
A: It's the same...
B: It's unlike just playing mahjong for fun, there is a purpose
I: To explore more indepth with you, at the beginning, you have chosen to have a monogamous relationship, why do you pick such a choice?
A: You answer.
B: Such a choice...
A: His answer is the answer.
B: I think there is no difference between a man and a woman married and us. In my opinion, a man and woman married they have a commitment or whatever, they treat the partner as the only sex partner, why can't us? OK. Before, I can have a number of dates at the same time, like some girls they have several boyfriends or some man who have several girlfriends. There is no difference, I look at it as usual and nothing special. Now I live together and I think it is monogamous. Until the relationship turns bad or breaking up then there is nothing to say. It is similar as a married couple going through separation or divorce etc. The developmental process is the
same in my opinion as heterosexual, is there any difference, I don't think so. I choose monogamy because to me, if you really love someone, you don't go out to find one night stand etc.

A: I know what is wrong with this question
I: Yes,
A: I know how to answer this question. The question is about monogamous sex partner and open sex partner. And it is not just monogamy. It is monogamous relationship. I can answer, this is my habit. In the past, when I am with other people, I found out that I am not capable of caring for more than one person and the relationship. I think that if you have a partner relationship with someone, don't talk about sex relationship, it is two different things. Partnership relationship is tiring, you have to do a lot of things for your partner. You have to do a lot of things for both of you. So I think for me I am withering...

I: Enough?
A: Yes, enough. If I have to develop another, I can not. Another thing is that I am being influenced by my parents traditional view point. I think if you go haywire, it is not good. This is my concept.

I: Your value.
A: Yes, my value but I emphasize that it is monogamous relationship and not monogamous "sex" relationship. There is a difference.
I: Monogamy, not sex. But one person...
A: So monogamy or open relationship, I know how to answer.
B: What about open "sex" relationship?
A: Oh, it is difficult to say. If you go into sexology, I think the gay circle itself includes too many sex types. If you can not get your...what you call it...
B: desire...
A: No, it is not desire. I use sex types. One partner can not fulfill your sex type and someone have mentioned that is it necessary to use others to fulfill your sex...
I: needs?
A: sex needs, in this sense, the gay issue is different from heterosexual issue. This is suggested by Jack Lo, there is a cleave and difference between heterosexuals.
B: But, OK, if you can not get it from your partner, are you suggesting that as a gay person, it is easy for gay to develop outside pure "sex" relationship or people?
A: No. It is not developing outside sex relationship.
B: to find?
A: It is expressing sexual needs outside. He has not develop any relationship.
B: Then like heterosexual couple, the husband not talking about having a mistress, it is a relationship, but having sex with a whore, what is the difference then?
A: Yes, there is a difference. The difference is that the wife can fulfill the needs.
B: If she can satisfy him, why he still wants a whore?
A: That is another issue. I am talking about the gay sex types,
I: the gay sub-culture?
A: There are a lot. In heterosexual, if he is going out to get S & M, I think it is OK. If he is going just to get a whore, then I will categorize him using the traditional view point as going the wrong path. Cause he is going out to find something he possess, do you understand?
I: Yes...
A: His wife can fulfill his sexual desire, but he is looking forward to another thing. I am finding another hole, it is handy and I can pay. I love to buy it with money. It is different from sex types of gay. Using heterosexual as an example, if he needs S & M and his wife can not, and he goes out to find someone to fulfill his S & M feelings, I personally buy this kind of relationship. But he is not developing a relationship.
I: Not an emotional relationship.
B: Pure sex..
A: Yes,
I: Just a transaction.
A: I will buy this. So monogamy and open relationship is two things. I think there is a difference there.
B: Yes, there is a difference. But in my opinion, homosexuals and heterosexuals are no difference in their expectations.
A: in emotional life, absolutely,
B: Sure, in sex, man and woman are different. It is not exactly the same.
A: How to say...(pause). Now it concerns something with our meeting. What I learnt is that in Open relationship there is an adjective missing. It suppose to be open sex relationship. In that meeting, I want to say, but I think it's OK... I think that the adjective whether it is near to relationship or not, it is a different matter.
I: I mean, for monogamy, there is only one partner both for emotional and sex. Open relationship, is that emotionally, he may have only one partner, but sex, as you just said, needs S & M, he will go for outside sex. Do you think that in gay sub-culture, if you choose monogamous relationship, do you find it difficult? (Pauses)
B: Monogamy..
I: Do you have difficulties? do you find that the sub-culture itself is not for this kind of relationship?
B: Difficulty, yes. Picking or choosing is more difficult and more restricted compare to heterosexuals.
A: But at the end this not be a problem. In this world, you pick up this person...
B: Sure, once you picked up, it is not...
A: There are millions of thoughts prior to picking up, my thinking is very theoretical. Actually people are not that rational. I think that to a certain extend, you will open up to your decision. It must, a relationship that comes to a rational level, there is no problem theoretically but in everyday living, there are problems. Even for heterosexuals, it is the same, theoretically, no problem. But in actuality, "living", there are problems. The thing is how you confront it and how you and your partner together confront it.
I: If there are problems, how are you going to resolve it?
A: We are very handicapped, fairly handicapped. I remembered the time I was very rational and detached to talk with him. We talked for quite sometime and I asked, "How come you are sitting on the dinning area and I am sitting on the sofa. I have my back at you?"
   But I feel comfortable. If I have to sit next to him and talk, I have difficulty then. I am just saying...
B: Cause you need spaces...
A: It's that I am not able to confront, and I know I have to deal with this issue, or both of us have to deal with it. I feel that after I have done it, then I know, I need the...
I: You feel more comfortable when having alot of spaces.
A: Yes. Sometimes I scold myself, why I have to need such a space in order to talk to him about important issues. I am responsible, but I have to admit that I have to deal with the issue then, I don't deal with that now.
B: I don't concern that. I don't think it's a problem. I know it is his habit that he likes to sit over there. To me, it's a habit, it's alright.
A: Maybe both of us are not the same regarding the problem. You may not aware of the intensity of the problem to me.
B: Maybe..
I: I hear that you both are for talking about the problem?
A: NO..
B: NO...
A: We have to wait for a long time for one like that.. We collected a huge lump and ...
B: It should be like that... we want to say, but can't.. sometimes it's like on the tip of my tongue.. but somehow I swallowed it....like that ...but later a few minutes, it seems nothing has happened...I
think of many excuses... he does that because... or I do that because... so and so... I think of a lot of reasons to argue back...

A: Sometimes I let go. He has his thing and I have mine. So forget it. There is a difference, if I can't resolve, I will burn but my attitude is calm, though my insides are burning.

B: To the last minute, I think that it's like that. He can not live up to my expectations as I can not live up to him either. As long as you think that in general, we are comfortable with each other. I think that don't focus on that specific day that I am mad but think of the good times we have had. In general, we feel comfortable with each other I think of this and I tend to forget it.

A: Most of the time, I react very directly. But my reactions, he will ask, "What are you talking about?"

B: For example, I remembered not quite well whether we have been living together or not. He suddenly said something in an angry tone.

A: But I don't feel that.

B: Yes, he did not feel it. For example, when I am holding something, he will say...

A: Watch out!(in a loud voice).

B: That is better, but he said, "What are you doing, you are crazy." Suddenly, he would say something like that. I don't even know what has happened... I remembered once I went with him somewhere in Central to buy things. At that moment, he said something which I did not get, I stood there for a while and he was angry and said"What's wrong, I want that." Then he went away, even the salesperson said he did not have to be that angry. Even a third person said that.

A: Yes, it is usually when a third person said something then he sensed the problem.

B: No, I have the problem but I don't know...

I: You don't know how to feedback.

B: He "Bomb" and I don't know how to feedback. It is usually after that I am angry. He often do that in the public, he never did that at home. I don't like to quarrel in the public and I will not say anything but bottled up...

A: I will say it out in the public.

B: I was so angry that my hands shaked that time. After a couple more times, I told him not to treat me like that. I am very calm.

A: I don't realize that I am so angry.

B: I now know that he does not know, the most recent time, we have dinner and we were paying for it.

A: When? I don’t remember...

B: that time with Z...

A: Whose Z?
B: after the meeting
A: Oh...
B: I gave too much and suddenly he was angry and threw the money out on the table. Many people were then and I don't like to quarrel...
A: Why? Why you always made me feel like that? (Laugh)
B: I feel like that time, what's the big deal? Why you have to react like that? like a volcano bursting... That time I feel that he felt that he had done something bad...
A: I was bad...
B: He would not do anything to make you feel better, (laugh) He would not say anything and sit next to me.
A: What can I do then? It is not that I purposely not speak with you.
B: Usually, if this happens, it will not be long. It's for an hour or half an hour. I forget and don't put it in my heart.
A: I am more sensitive, I remember what he did but forget what I did (laughs) Usually when I am angry I am angry about principles. If you say you are not willing to do something, you wouldn't. If you promise, you would. I expect to hear that kind of language. But he is very nice, he will do it but the result is that in my eyes he has not finish the job. I will be angry with that.
B: But there are somethings that require somebody to do it. I can not make you do it. So I have to do it.
A: You can say that out and your attitude can show that..
B: But I have to do it anyway...
A: But the principle, at that moment if you said that you do it, then you have to take up the responsibility as well.
B: Sometimes I think is not that big deal and I don't mind.
A: I am bad too. Once he had said it, then I presume it is so. Even the small matters, as long as he has not said it. It doesn't matter. If he had said it, then it does.
B: When I first live with him, I have alot of expectations..
A: But I told you before hand, and you did not believe me.
B: Those are details..
A: Yes, I told you but you don't think that it matters.
B: To me, it does not affect me that much. But I know your lifestyle. You are not that neat and organise.
A: dirty..
B: It is afterwards that I found out, you are so dirty...
A: The definition of dirty is that... oh, no... can't be...
B: To that extend, but it doesn't affect me to not live with him.
I: You do not accept yet you can..
B: Yes, daily living has not affect my affection towards him.
A: Not me, I can't.
B: When I first live with him, I expect we can go out shopping, movies, eating out on Saturdays and Sundays etc...
A: You tell Z, I'll quit....(laughs)
B: I think it's normal, or else why I choose to live together.
A: That's silly. Living together for going out on Saturdays and Sundays.
B: No, I was thinking about that then. Just like a couple newly married.
A: I am telling you, before we live together we spend more time, we stay out till twelve.
B: Cause we have no place to stay.
A: No, you want to see that person so you go out. But now, I know where you are at and I don't have the impulse...
B: So it happens that I don't expect him to keep me company on Saturdays and Sundays. Partly because his working schedule is very unstable, have to work as well. If we can arrange it, then we go out. If not, I go out by myself. I am all alone. It's like living alone in the past...
A: He now reaches my expectations(laughs)
B: It turns out like that, but you can not reach my expectations.
A: It's OK..(laughs)
I: What's the usual conflicts?
A: Washing dishes.
B: Washing dishes.
A: That's what I said about principles.
B: I am not mad that he does not wash dishes and I have to wash. It is that when I have so many things to do when I get home from work...
A: sweep the floor, clean the floor, cook, wash dishes, clean the apartment, touch(她) the TV....
B: Before I do all these, I have to clean up his dishes that he left behind in the morning. I sometimes feel like that there are endless chores and he does not empathize. He gets off work and watch TV. He would not move, you do whatever. I will not do any. If you do not like doing it, don't do it.
A: But I did say it to him, if you don't want to do it, you can do so. I feel that he felt unequal and he continues living this unequal life.
B: I feel that he does not care. I will not change, you change to fit in with me. If you do not like it, don't change either. We don't change. I feel he is leaving it like that.
I: Both of you can not compromise?
B: What the use of living together then? But I will not say to him. You just want someone at home, walk around, cook for you, clean the apartment, wash the clothes? I feel like that.
A: Like I don't want him in my room, he does not buy it? I told him not to clean my room, sweep the floor, he does not buy it. But, I am very weird, I think there are somethings its better to leave it there without meddling it.

B: I think that people can change, I now live together, I change. I think my best quality is that I can adjust very well.

A: Good boy!

B: Now, I go out by myself, shopping and movies. Thinking back, if he is with me everyday, I may not like it at all. I think that he is bothering me. To have someone always at home, bothering me. So I think that may be it is the best if we can find time together, then it's alright. If not, it's OK as well. Most important is not affecting our affection, its OK.

A: Heaven has open his eyes!(天開眼).

B: I did not talk to him about this,

I: What about having conflicts, if you do not talk about it?

B: It may develop to such an extend,

A: Having nothing to say to each other.

B: No, that our affection towards each other change and we don't even realize it. We don't feel it,

A: Its boring..

B: I have think about that will happen...

A: I have talked to him before hand. He asked me what I expect of him prior to moving in. I told him I expect him to listen to me and is very independent as well. It's just that simple. I know there is a conflict, marriage to many people is a bonding so that two becomes one. But to me, marriage includes two individuals yet there is something inside but there is also each individual as well. It's not like two diffused that you can not separate one from the other....

B: Sticking together...(laughs)

A: That kind of love, I am fear of. Before we move in, I have said that. I want two separate rooms, it's not that we sleep separately but there are times that we do. That's not affecting our relationship. Why two individuals being together have to squeeze, smashed into each other. I know that this hurts. Maybe I foresee it, I have a very mothering mother. I don't like him doing things like coming in my room, cleaning up or picking my books. I don't like someone entering my already organise life to reordering it again. Like what to get for the dinning room, I don't care much. Unless it is something I really dislike. Sometimes I fight, if I can not, then forget it.

B: But the difference between me cleaning your room and your mother cleaning your room ...

A: It's the same. I put something there, I can't find it until I ask you.
B: Listen to me first. The meaning is not the same.
A: It is. You can't say it is not love.
B: No.
A: My mother say that. In the future, you will say that too.
B: No. I think that room is too messy and I can't stand a messy home.
A: I say I close the door and he wouldn't. I have to put on a lock...
B: Even if he closes the door, my impression is still messy. I can't stand it and have to clean it.
A: Then he will tell others that his house, I don't like.
B: What my house?
A: Not my house. What is the difference?
B: I am better now. I can't stand it.
A: But when I was away for two months...
B: I can't stand it. He is a person that put garbage not into garbage cans but on the table.
A: Can't help (laughs)
I: OK, our last question, do you think there is any difference between gay couples and heterosexual couples?
A: We have talked a lot... What we have experienced are similar to heterosexual couples. The only difference is that we don't have any children.
B: The only difference is that heterosexual couples have many plannings once they are married. Together to have a family, ....
A: to plan to save money to get a home,
B: plan to have children.
A: In the law, they can share many power which help them to make their living better.
A: We don't have such law protection and power. We don't have children.
B: We just think of whether we are happy or not. Maybe, just think of the happy things. As for planning, no.
A: Yes. I have, I wish. (laughs).
B: What?
A: Yes, I wish.
B: I think that big difference is this.
I: Thanks for the interview....
Couple 2  verbatim

I: As a gay couple, have you ever experience any difficulties because people suspect you are gay?
C: What about family?
I: Can you tell more?
C: When talking on the phone, they saw that the impressions or the attitude is different, the frequency is more and they saw that you were more tense about the call, that's how they became suspicious. They will accidentally talk about this topic.
I: Family members raised the topic? How did you react?
C: I just told them that we are just friends. Boys have "boys" friends and that is normal, I don't purposely inform or explain to them. I treat this as ordinary.
I: You think that family members are suspicious about your relationship. What about D? Have you met any difficulties?
D: No. As for my friends, my highschool friends, when I do not go out with them that often, they may talk about who I am playing with now. But I have "come out" to one friend and he had kept it as a secret. Because I have not been back for a long time, they may chat about it. As for my family, my parents are quite old and our educational background is quite different and they do not concern about my living. However, they may suspect because I talked alot on the phone.
I: They suspect you because you talk on the phone. Besides, family members, while you were going out, e.g. movies, do anyone outside suspect you two are a gay couple and they gave you some sort of looks?
C: A little bit. For example, in the restaurant when we were a bit close and they have that kind of look. Or when I asked them where's the toilet at and their reactions were a bit cold. You can sense a little, but as I go there as a consumer, I don't care about those people.
I: You mentioned just now about a bit close, what do you mean by that?
C: Sitting more near, more eye contact etc..
I: You feel that, what about D? Do you feel that?
D: I am not that sensitive and I don't feel that. I don't mind whether they know as I don't know those people. But I am more concern about the future, my friends may have the opportunity to meet him or his friends have the chances to meet me. Maybe they will suspect more then, partly because when we go out, unconsciously our behaviors or actions may "out", up to now it has not yet happened.
I: Have you introduce each other to your friends or classmates?
C: Yes, just last week. They are interested and they know...
D: they know...
I: They know you are coupled. Have they done anything to make you uncomfortable?
C: No.
I: Besides, friends or being suspected by family members, have you any other experiences?
D: When we go to the park at night. We may be a bit intimate. It's not their problem or ours, but we are more cautious, having our ears up,(laugh). Before we act intimately, we will look around first. It does affect alot, affect alot on the relationship. You can not be very spontaneous, to do what you feel and to express it. There is a blockage somehow to bind you.
I: I hear that you can not be open like heterosexuals, e.g. to hold hands or what ever. Why?
D: It may not be others but it is my worries about others. The most frequent behaviour for us is to put the hand on the others shoulders. Very infrequent for more intimate actions. Unless we go to a very quiet location or we looked around and there is nobody.
I: From what I hear, you did do something to reduce the impact or influence by others. e.g. look around? What else?
C: If we go to a quiet place, we will look around first.
D: We reduce our intimate level, maybe, reduce to the level of going out as friends.
I: Does that affect your relationship as you just mentioned that you can not do as your heart desire?
D: Perhaps, like we talk about wanting to hold hands, but we can not do it.
I: In that circumstances, is there any way or have you thought about ways to let the other person knows?
D: We will talk about it.
C: As we can not act out, we use words to talk and "sense" about it. Or we walk closer to each other. But for opposite sex couple, they still can not be too close in public place. I personally can not accept. If we can not do it, we talk more, communicate more...
D: Sometimes it feels like so sneaky, I don't know how to say.
C: Sometimes he want to hold hands, but is aware of others and being alert and then try to avoid the situation.
D: Like this.....(D show the action)(laughs)
I: So you think of some small actions and hope to send the signal out to your partner.
D: Yeah...
I: You guys are smart by choosing many different ways to send signals out in public when the situation is not that permissive. What about after being coupled, do your lifestyle change? Comparing to not yet coupled, as a single gay person?

C: Yes, there are. When not yet coupled, I usually go out with friends to disco and those places. But after being coupled, I don't want to go to those places as I am frighten that it will affect our relationship. Because there can be attraction in those places and as for the male sex, sense stimulation is important and if he meets someone better looking he wants and the other person also requests and comes up to approach my partner then I feel unhappy. Those places make me uneasy and I don't like to go to those places. Before when I was single, I like going there because I don't have to worry about this kind of circumstances. Even when someone approaches me, as long as he is decent, I can "play" with him, it's alright cause it's my business. But having a partner, I worry that he could not resist, sometimes I treasure this relationship and I don't want this to affect our relationship. I don't want to feel bad, if going there leads to being unhappy, I don't want that. So minimize going to those places. There is a worry there, but the enjoyment overtight the worry, that is why I still enjoy this relationship.

I: What do you worry about?

C: Worry, due to past experiences. Before coupling, I met him there with someone having one night stand. Perhaps that is a very bad impression, a condition when I go to those places, I will think of these things again. I am frighten that he will do it again thus strengthening my unhappy feeling. Also, because of being a traditional Chinese, I can not accept my lover having an intimate relationship with another person. Difficult to accept, and in those circumstances when many people approach him and (pause) distract him of his concern, I worry that he will compare me with other. Secondly, in those circumstances when seeing him being approached by many people and I being approached by few, there is a competition there.

I: You mean between you and him having the competition?

C: I think so. There is a competition between gay couple where there is none among opposite sex couple. These two points. If I see those approaching him having request and seeing him enjoying the company, I worry as well. I worry that the situation will be the same as before we coupled. Also, I worry that he feels that our relationship restraints him. For example: If he feels that the other person is pretty good, and the other person has a request and he feels like it. But because of my presence, he feels constraint. I afraid that if this kind of occasion happens frequently, then it will be a
pressure. I worry going to those places, though going there, I feel close cause it is a gay place.

I: You feel comfortable.

C: But going there, many people seek sex partner, seek one night stand. There are many, there is a conflict but it is difficult to say, those places provide a very limited space for gay people, but it is also a place for "cruising". There is a conflict there, sometimes I don't know whether to go or not to go. If going to straight places, I sometimes feel uneasy cause it could not provide a close place. I don't have the ability to live together, it is affecting the relationship. It is affecting greatly, concluding the few suggestions, there are worries...

D: But no personal space...

C: Yes, there are worries, if partner wants to go, would not quarrel about it because both are mature beings. You can go anywhere you like, you have the freedom to do so. But expect that I don't like it that much. If he still wants to go, I'll accompany him. If he gives me some signals that he wants to go by himself, I wouldn't feel bad, but I would not force myself to go with him.

I: From what I heard, you worry about your partner more than yourself.

C: I trust myself. I am settled down. When I was single, I was moved (laughs). But now settled down, I am very stable, even though I meet someone that attracts me, I don't have that kind of feelings anymore. Maybe, I refer to my partner's background, he repressed a lot before. After coming out for only a short time, he keeps me then. I feel that he has not yet seen enough. Even though I myself have not seen enough too. He is my second partner, the first one I have sex with. But, I don't know why, maybe everyone has a different character, I feel that I am easily settled down. But I feel that his behaviour, language etc. have not settled down. I worry more than him.

I: How about you? D? Have being coupled change any of your lifestyle?

D: I think there is a different. First of all, I talk a lot on the phone(laugh). Spend every night on the phone, and I have less contact with straight friends. And work wise, I worked for two months, but recently I quit. Work wise, there isn't much effects. Others, like lifestyle, there isn't much changes. I don't usually go to disco or gay bars. Even when I was in the States, I seldom go to those places. If I go, I go to the gay organisation at the school. There are more privacy, comparatively speaking, in there than here. I live by myself, I can go to friends place and we get together as a group. After I come back, I go even less often to gay
bars. But I attend more activities organized by gay groups, like 10% Club and Isvana. There isn't much changes in other areas of my lifestyle.

I: How long have you been back?
D: I came back in July.

I: Is there any difference in the attitude of your gay friends after you coupled? Before, you guys being coupled? Is there any difference? Does your friend know that you have coupled?
C: Yes.
D: Some knows, some doesn't...
I: Do you feel there is a difference?
C: Previous, they asked me out to play or to get to know others, and they ask me fairly often and play with me openly(笑). Now being coupled, I don't want to go to those places and refuse them. They will complain and being coupled...pause...if before someone is interested in you, but after being coupled, they treat you coolly. There are incidents like that..
I: Do you see any differences, D?
D: Actually, I don't have alot of gay friends after I been back. His friends are my friends. I have some in the States, but not many in HK. So I don't feel it.

I: You don't feel it. What about being coupled, is there anything that in gay circle that can not satisfied your needs as a member?
D: You mean the organizations?
I: Yes... The circle as well...
D: First, there are few couples in this circle. The atmosphere is not strong. The community, the messenges being send out are all negatives. That it is impossible for long term relationships. I think that all these sayings have conceptually an effect on people. They think that "keep as you can" (有得就幾耐) "keep as long as it is" (怎耐). There is a culture here, unlike a straight couple, they have a panning, marriage etc...
I: There isn't any steps?
D: No, steps at all. Just keep as you may (keep啦). You feel that and the whole community and culture are like that. The atmosphere is like that. Secondly, the circle does not provide any activities for couples, I haven't been to any. I have never joined any for support and there is no relationship group in HK. As we have said earlier, we don't have much privacy. In public places, we can not express our feelings. In a gay bar, the place is more comfortable, but there are many who are cruising and there are alot of attractions there. There is a blockage there for a couple in those places. The environment, plus many people do not have much knowledge on
relationship, therefore, seeing that relationship lasts only for one or
two months, the atmosphere is there...
I: umm...OK..
D: There is not enough atmosphere...
C: Can you explain more?
I: I want to ask, as a gay couple in the gay sub-culture, are there needs
that are not being satisfied or fulfilled?
C: The gay culture does not favour couple. I don't know why, I see
that if one partner of the gay couple is handsome and the other one
isn't, many people would talk about it, many negative comments.
Using myself as an example, I heard negative comments more than
positive ones. Many negative comments...
I: Can you give some examples?
C: For example, if I am you, I will dump him or quickly break them
up...
I: All these are unsupportive...
C: Even if they joke about it, but these comments really hurt...
D: For example, some friends, I don't know why they are prejudice
against me. They always say to him that I am promiscuous. They
say that I like foreigners, I never said that and I don't know nor
understand why they say things like that.
I: I heard that they exaggerate things, tell him things that are not true...
D: Yes...
C: If they are interested in your partner, they ask you many things
about him. They ask you out but they want to see your partner
instead. Their behaviors and manners reveal that they want to
approach him. They do not matter whether the person is coupled or
not as long as they like him. They don't care about your
relationship.
I: Coupled?
C: Maybe in this circle, the model is not that good. For example, some
modelling show that even though they are keeping together but they
individually still go out and fool around. They think that they can
still keep together for so long. They set this model and when people
talk about long term, they brag and feel proud of it. They implement
some ideas as if playing dominoes, and influenced that being couple
isn't a serious matter. There is no difference with being coupled or
not. Moreover, there isn't any commitment, for both partners. For
example, seeing couple getting along, they say something bad. What
they say is very destructive, isn't supportive at all. For example,
there is no family support, or support from friends. But from what I
heard is that, if they are interested in either one of you, or they think
that you two does not match, they will make a lot of comments and
gossip. I think that they affect the relationship.
D: I can add some more. I don't have a concrete example to tell you about the actual situation. For example, if a couple being coupled and there is a third party breaking up the relationship(第三者). This I don't know, but hearing from what they said I can explain. In straight couples, there is such act as well. But the norm and the blame is stronger and the guilt as well. But in gay community, I don't know if this is true or not, but there is less blaming.

I: Blame the one who break up the relationship...

D: Yes, it is not that strong..

C: They see relationship is not as serious, they think that keeping a relationship is some kind of support and developing outside relationship doesn't matter that much. This relationship can be sex or emotional communication. There is no commitment and they don't take it serious. If by fate (缘分) they meet someone that fits, they will not control themselves just because they are in a relationship. They feel comfortable to meet second or third person. They don't look at it too serious and they will approach the other person as long as he fits them. They don't care about the constraint of their relationship. For example, I see someone who has a partner but as long as he agreed, I don't feel sinful......

D: Can you quote some examples?

C: Umm...

D: (Laughs) Just imagine it out of the air?

C: Yes, there are. But in such a short time, I can't say.... Sense alot. So alot of old timers remind me that once you keep someone don't go out to those activities or too many interface with the gay community.

I: They say that?

C: Yes. They say it from their hearts. Heard an example that one has kept a partner for a few months but did not go out to any activities. Finally, he brought him out for two to three months and someone knew that he has a partner (is keeping) but like snatching the partner (缘分). Nobody mentioned it to him even though they knew. The relationship broke up and even though we are keeping but they don't care and still approach (coughed and coughed). Heard that someone had been keeping for four years but in between he went out having the second, third wives(缘) that how he described. He also go to those places searching again but he still thinks that the terminal is the first one. He thinks that this is nothing and he defines this as a relationship...

D: Or maybe he is for an open relationship.

I: An open relationship.

C: He promotes this.

I: This kind of relationship pattern?
C: For example, he knows that you are keeping (D keeps on coughing) but he likes your partner and he unavoidably sends signals to him to see if there is any feedback. He doesn't care what your partner thinks, the most important thing is that the receiver responds.

I: From what I heard, is a person doesn't choose an open relationship, his values may be fairly different from the gay sub-culture?

D: For example, if I am open and he is monogamous, then the conflict is there.

C: Maybe, it's the environment. He was educated in the States. He accepted the American culture. I grew up in Hong Kong and what I see are straight models. I accept the traditional values, for example, watching old Chinese films, the second concubine (Ⅲ) is usually bad and the first wife suffers. I had never been overseas, I don't know. They may accept a lot on being independent and individualism. Their behaviours are not influenced by others, whether happiness, anger or joy. He accepts this attitude very much. As for me, being predominantly Chinese, the conglomerate idea and emphasize very much on doing things together. Stresses on bonding but he stresses on being independent. He doesn't like a bond, he has another interpretation, maybe it's due to culture, he adapts one kind of thinking, foreign culture... I being in Hong Kong, I am used to this kind of culture. Moreover, I think that in Hong Kong the majority has this kind of thinking and I am comparatively speaking, a traditionalist and thus have this kind of thinking in this environment.

D: I don't agreed on East or West. I think that many people use the dominant culture to interpret the gay community culture. They think that relationship is like straight couple, monogamous husband and wife pattern. They reinforce this on their minds as couple relationship. The actual quality is different but they force into it and a person strive to get it therefore cause many struggles. The problem is more like this than borrowing from the western culture. I think that people adapt the dominant culture, monogamous relationship between husband and wife and put all these concepts on gay couple. For example, asking who plays the male or female role in gay couple, who is the more dominant or weak partner, using these concepts on gay couples are impossible and not real. If you often use these concepts to control your relationship, the problem is there. I emphasize that gay couple relationship has so many problems because, heard what others say, we learnt from straight relationship since birth how straight relationship works and we do not have the opportunity to learn or see, we are the 1st generation that is more active in Hong Kong gay culture. The previous generation has not left us anything at all. That is why we borrow
from straight relationship. Maybe we can be models for younger generation and they can learn from our problems. I think I'm searching for gay relationship and I'm more acceptable to different patterns, whether it's monogamous or open, I think that right now the people in Hong Kong is searching in such a stage.

C: On the other hand, I think it's the background that counts. If you know more people who are in open system, then you accept it more. For example, I don't have many experiences in relationship and I haven't met too many couples, so I may not handle love maturely. I can't accept loving one person especially my first courtship and knowingly accept a few others more. Maybe, if I experience more and then I will understand the rules of the game. Maybe others know the rules so they accept more. I haven't been out in this community for long and my age and experience are limited. I have traditional values and that influence me... and when you love someone, it is natural that it is selfish, can't help it. I don't have any religion to help me out, not many people can resolve it as well. When you talk about gay issues/problems, many give very negative view. Comments on handling relationship. "Everybody is fooling around, so don't be serious."...these very...(defeating)...and they are very negative. If they tell me to forgive once or twice, that is more constructive then saying everybody is fooling around. I feel disappointed and if everyone is like that, fooling around, the system is too confusing. Then walking down the street, this guy has a thing with my lover and the spread of AIDS at the present moment, it's a worry. That has an influence, I'm not scare about my lover but his previous partners, cause I don't know them.... What to say...... I don't know if I haven't work it out yet, or I haven't seen alot, at this present stage, I can't accept. Maybe, I haven't seen much, my knowledge is limited, my experience is limited so I can't accept yet. For example, a primary school student can't accept the atomic principle. At this stage, I am not train yet to be so open. Having come out for a few months, what I have seen is very different from my past, straight community. Different from my values and expectations. I can't at once accept and I need an adjusting period.

D: Culture shock. (laughs)
C: Many things...
I: Many conflicts...
C: Yes, many struggles... I feel don't I have said that if I break up, I would not go out in this community. I will..... I feel very difficult, having something and yet have to suffer so much. There are so many constraints and I think being a couple is difficult. In Chinese community, it's more difficult here. For example, I have a fear. I study engineering, what you put in, such and such an input,
you have such and such an output. But in this circle, no matter how hard you try to keep a relationship, there are so many factors affecting it. The result is more difficult...

I: Not in your control...

C: Yes, sometimes I am scared. For example, I work very hard, I am worry about outside factors more than ourselves. For example, outside factors, the society. many say that the relationship in this circle lasts only two to three months, the norm is two to three months. I am scared once it is two or three months...(laughs...)

D: You often heard, for example, "Dickson and John are still together? They haven't break up yet, doing well!" This reflects the atmosphere, unlike straight couples, seeing John and ask for how Mary is doing. But seeing John, they ask, how's Dickson, break up yet? The intonation is different. The questioning is different, the culture is different and the questioning is different then.

C: I don't know if it is because we are men, it is more difficult to settle down. Unlike women who are more committed and enjoy being together. Men like more excitement... they find....

I: more sensual...

C: Yes, even being together, they like to look around nice things. Their eyes will automatically look for...(laughs...) Even being with me, his eyes automatically still look around and he later say sorry to me. Men have an irresponsible quality, even if he has a wife and when he sees another more pretty one, he will go for her. But women has a sense of responsibility to the family. Men feel that even if he does not have this one, he still can develop another family. He feels... maybe, differences between the sexes.

I: You think that is the difference between the sexes, family is not that important to men?

C: The family concept is not that emphasize, but women are. This can affect... maybe, others are selfish. They think they are still attractive, they don't want to be involved with just one, they want to try more. They will... not promise anything, they will do according to their wants and desires and will not consider the responsibility. They don't want to sacrifice, they think that the excitement outside is great and strong, they don't want to be controlled by traditional values. There are feelings of rebelliness and selfishness. They let themselves go wild,

D: Are you talking about me?

C: No. Traditional has given them too much responsibility. Now in this community, they can argue and make excuses for their behaviours and saying that they are right.

I: You mean to justify themselves?
C: Yes, they ask others to be like them. I think that is a little bit irresponsible. But to a certain extent, to others it is comfortable. Especially to those who are more attractive. They will not waste their attractiveness and for being responsible. I think it is very difficult to say, for some they think it is good. But I think it is a bit selfish. Too not consider, relationship will be too confusing, like compound. This one has something with that one, and that one has something with the previous partner, and there will be so many, not just third party, don't know how many parties. Four or more, I don't know, I just think like this. My speech is confusing.

I: No, no.. How about D? What do you think?

D: You mean?

I: So far, I have heard that the sub-culture is not that favourable for couples...

D: I think that in Hong Kong the couple atmosphere is not strong. I have said earlier, the whole atmosphere, but I am not sure, I have "come out" in Hong Kong for a short time. What I have seen are in their 20's, for the older generation, I don't know where they are, as if they have disappeared.

I: Don't know where they are, you have that feeling?

D: Don't know where, they might have coupled and hid away. What I have met are the new generation, in their 20's, I am not aware of any in their 20's who are coupled. The subculture, the atmosphere, there is not enough support from friends. There is no experience in maintaining relationship as well. There is also no places for gay couples to go dating, there are many environmental variables that affect the relationship. Certainly, there are also internal reasons, his and mine that affects the relationship. But if you speak of the culture, then these are some of the factors.

I: You have been in the States, is there any difference in the gay subculture? comparing it with Hong Kong?

D: I was not long in the States. I came back in July and I come out in October, so actually I come out for seven to eight months. In the States, I know 2 couples and both of them are women. One couple have been living together for nine years and they have a son. Another couple are students, much younger in their 20's. They have a very good relationship. As for male, I know only one, their relationship is longer. But I can't generalize it to the States, I was in a small town in Montana. They have a total population of 70,000 and it is a college town. I don't see much, mostly are singles.

C: My friend had given the following comment: One should not "keep"(have a steady partner) in the 20's, why? Because in this circle, the young has their youthfulness(幼稚), the old ones have money. When you are young, you should know more people, enjoy
your youthfulness in exchange for the others treating you out, chasing after you and wanting to know you. When you are getting older, and you have money then you can consider "keeping". It seems that you have to spend all your youthfulness while you are still young to play.

D: I think that this concept is that people use the heterosexual relationship. One is stronger, the male and the other one is weaker. One is more dominant and the other has lesser authority. Who is the initiator, and who is the more passive one. I have seen many younger ones are more passive and the older and richer ones are more active. Th relationship is still supressed, using this model, there is this kind of culture here. The younger ones wishes to get an older one. I have seen less of the kind that is more balance.

I: So you have seen that there is a difference of ages within the couple? Younger one matches an older one.

D: Yes, one is financially stronger with one who is financially weaker.

I: You think that this is fairly common among gay couples?

D: I don't know if it is common.

C: They enjoy things that are given to them. The younger one enjoys gifts from the older one. The older one is more mature and I think that the younger one has a stronger desire for love. He wants to be taken care of by others. This feeling is strong. They want to get to know older man so that they can have a feeling of being taken care of and give them many things. They enjoy being given rather than be the one that gives. When one grows older, they have money but they do not have their youthfulness, they are old. They want to meet people, then they have to use money as an exchange. I have known a couple, one is in his 30's and the other one is in his 20's. After being together for 15 years, they break up. The younger one is still in his 30's and he still has quality to get to know others. But the other one is older, and his quality is weaker. When they are somewhat of age, they like to use money to exchange love.

D: I don't know about the real situation, or if this is a misperception. But listening to C, he knows more about it than me. The relationship is emphasize on material things and appearance.

C: Our circle is very common, they consider material things and appearance. In male circle, it is strong. You can say, though it isn't a rule, but generally it is like that. Man look for the appearance, and depends on how much he can afford for materialistic things. Conversely, if one does not have good looks, but he has a nice personality, very considerate, in straight, woman may like him as they like the feelings. Man usually looks for appearance in woman, so it is common, though many say that appearance is not important, from what I heard, they say it is just talk, actually
appearance is a factor. If the appearance is not good, they can not accept. Maybe, one or twice for sex is alright, if you ask them to stay with him for all the time, they can not accept. If the appearance can not qualify, money can give a happy feeling. They think that it is alright, the position is higher. But in the end, they will not "keep" with him, maybe, I don't know if there is anyone paying totally for the other (一女二男, 兩女) I don't understand, but in Hong Kong, especially the younger generation, they are more realistic....

D: Maybe, we can not be so subjective, maybe it is just "so and so" is like that. I have rarely discuss this with other gay people,

C: I am not...

D: Just now, I have said alot but they are my subjective view my feelings... I can say that our relationship, the subculture has given us an unsafe feeling, the relationship, the organization can't give any support, the family can't, the straight friends, community can't and the whole society as well. Even the gay community, there is no support.

I: What I have heard, as a gay couple, you face alot of difficulties. Frankly speaking, you have no support whatsoever. No support from family, society, you feel more difficult, how both of you would walk through this path?

C: Yes, before I "keep", I feel comfortable, I feel I can love. I did not know about the environment and so many other external factors. I think that as I am considerate, I have the qualities to love. But after "keeping" the relationship, there are so many outside and external factors, I feel down, worry and a bit disappointed(一女一男). I have an unsafe feeling, sometimes I feel worry of him going to those kind of places all alone and meeting those people. Sometimes I have an uncomfortable feeling, he meets someone new, and his feelings for me disappear. I worry that he does things on his feelings. If just relying on feelings, it is quite easy to have... Feelings are not long lasting, sometimes I can be happy whereas, other times I can be unhappy. If a new feeling over write the previous one, then there will not be any responsibility. You then think that the one in front of you is the best. So I am afraid not being able to be together. I heard from friends that not only one, but others also, they not only look for appearance but for outlook and attraction. Secondly, they will consider how much you can spend. I have asked some friends, and it is real, they evaluate you for this. If you are a bit stingy, they then think you are not worthy to know. If the appearance is not so good, they will treat you differently. This is a fact, not just being subjective. Some are not, but the majority is like that. I have heard from friends when they share. Even though they are not good
looking, but they still like handsome ones. They will treat the handsome ones better, or who is richer and they will consider these factors, not just feelings alone. For example, there is one who has sex, and after having sex, he does not like the way the other looks. He stopped the relationship later, and this is one of the factor.

D: But I think that this happens not only in gay community but in straight relationship as well. I don't think that it is just a special problem for gay. If you ask me how or what principle I'll rely on to continue this relationship under such pressure, I think that I rely on myself more than the environment. I think its the individual, what to say...I often tell him that I'll be very open and frank with him. I'll be frank with him so we can talk and discuss problems. I think this is the best way to solve problems. If we have problems, I encourage him to ask people about it but I don't like when after he asked he'll say it's like this or that... I feel that after many discussions he does not know what path he picks. He is different and so are we, I am D and he is C and the others are others, and they are not us. I prefer to discuss and be frank with each other. But being too frank, I sometimes feel scared that I may lose him and he also feels scared that he may lose me. But many times, I feel that he puts the blame on gay community and I often try to tell him that it's his problem. I accept that he has this kind of feelings and I hope and try to help him to change his belief and his insecure feelings or having low self-confidence. The psychological factors, like he had mentioned earlier, that when others approach me, he feels scared. Even others approach me, it's just only an action, his feelings are his feelings and I think that it's his internal problems that matters more. I try to discuss it with him and sometimes it is slow but I think that both of us are improving and progressing.

C: For example, keeping a relationship and both having no promise and no commitment, for example, what to say, if someone ask you to take this path and you will find an exit but what in front of you is just darkness. You don't know, there is no guarantee, if there is some guarantee then you know and you feel safe. Like doing something, if the other person have talked about or he had done something that made you feel safe. Like after knowing you, he puts you first, or give you some signals, like some safe signals, like turning on a few lights made you have more confidence in walking. But if there is no lights at all and just ask you to walk straight ahead, you feel scared as you may enter into a crossroad, you are afraid that you take the wrong turn. I study engineering and I am more practical, I foresee that if this road is accessible then I'll take it. If not, when there are lots of problems for this road, then I will try to avoid. But he studies sociology and philosophy, he is more
theoretical. Maybe it is possible in theory but not in practice. I feel safe when I know the results, in this circle, there is no promise and no commitment. If your partner after knowing you, he doesn't want to go to functions or activities, or if he is cool when others approach him then I feel safe. But for him because he doesn't have many friends in this circle and he wants to know more. He doesn't care about others intentions and thinks that it wouldn't affect him. But he hasn't thought about that if more and more people approach him, he has more choices and more stimulations, it is difficult as there are too many temptations, one or twice is easy but it is difficult if the temptations are more and when one's control is limited. I still think that it does affect but maybe he is more individualistic, and I consider external factors. He is more individualistic, I can foresee something, I tell him that going to those places sometimes it is difficult, he doesn't believe it at first but he takes a look and he feels guilty. Sometimes I remind him but I feel annoying too if I remind too much and I try to avoid doing it. Just leave things naturally, but I think these are factors that can not be neglected, these external factors are difficult to neglect. For example, husband going to China and sees a lot of cheap and pretty girls (laughs).

D: Second wife (laughs)

C: Who can stand it? Like the husband saying that he can control but actually he has three or four up there. If there are more cheap and pretty ones, there are many choices,

I: more temptations....

C: Yes, temptations... In this world, there are few men who can constrain himself, not many at all. Not many men are very responsible, its not disbelieving you but I think that depending on feelings are problematic. I am more responsible, and rational. I think that people can not allow feelings to lead oneself, one may meet obstacles then. Or there may be some confusion, for example, I like to do my assignment according to my desire or when I like it. I don't have a deadline for myself, or having something to control myself. I think that people will feel betrayal, allowing it to lead oneself. Not... maybe its my experience, I'm practical, I give myself conditions to restrain myself...I give myself...

I: rules...

C: Yes... rules, at least, everyone is different. I go along this way and I think it is more logical and clear. For example, if in love, my concept is like this. But he is different, he thinks that one should not constrain so much, should be happy, he is very individualistic. He thinks that many problems are theoretical but in practice he neglects some problems. Though there isn't any problem right now, but I
think that if problem comes up, then it's too late. So I kind of avoid it, but he gives me a feeling that he wants the problem to come up.

D: Actually, I know I have a conflict with him on monogamy or open relationship. Another thing is how to handle the relationship, we are different there too. Thinking back, I often try to persuade him. As he had mentioned, he expects our relationship and worry about how others sees us. I am firm about how I see it and how I make decision, I think this is what I have in control. If I go to a place where many people approach me and because of this, it affects our relationship, I don't think it's a reason at all. If I break up a relationship, it's not because of this but it's that I don't like him. There are many environments, in the end it's my decision...

I: I heard that you put the responsibility on yourself...

D: I think it's more personal, but sure we have to respect each other and take care ... understand how he feels, but if there are some unnecessary unhappy feelings, I think the conflict is in here. Give an example...

C: Yes, before I "keep" him, someone is interested in him and often asked about him in details. At first, he thought D likes foreigners but after knowing that he "keeps" me, he asked him if he doesn't like foreigners and asked him alot of other things. It seems that he thinks if I have the chance to develop with D, then he also has a chance as well. I feel very scared at that moment(D laughs), scared that the other person is more experienced and he knows more techniques of getting to know others. I am often scared that he is greedy(all laugh), after knowing another one, he mind as well know some more as he doesn't have much to do now. People are greedy, knowing one, and realizing that it's not bad at all, he may want to know others. Sometimes...especially men, they don't sacrifice for the family and don't want any restraints, so it is alright to have another one. I am scared that the other person is more experienced and if I have the chance why doesn't him. It's just fair competition, I'm also scared that he feels alright though I am the "terminal" but the other is just a station, it's still alright(所 似) I have seen other models, he often says that he has a terminal but he wants to get to know more and he wouldn't control himself either. Even he has two, he wants more, three or four is alright(所 似). I have seen alot like this, no commitment, no promise, I think that it's the value difference. For him, he advocate a many, open relationship and I think the relationship is not fair then. Unfair and imbalance relationship. Also scared of sickness(��...)

I: AIDS?

C: Yes, AIDS. Seen that the other person he knows is very experienced. If they get involved, then there is sickness and what
to do then? And I have seen those who wants to know him, I don’t know why, they have a lot of sex partners. Scared because I treasure him and scared that I’ll lose him. I don’t know if he treasures it or not, but I feel that he doesn’t care(??), no promise and sees things very simple. He always ask me to be confident but you see what’s going on (the environment), it is difficult to have trust. Having living in Hong Kong for so long, there is a lack of ability to trust. I hope that if our relationship happens and develops overseas, then I think that our trust level is higher. But in Hong Kong, even trusting friends are difficult, and trusting this relationship...

D: I think it’s his imagination. I think it’s his friends, they gossip and say that I like foreigners and I am promiscuous. In fact, is it? I know very well. I’ve been back for four months and how many sexual partners do I have? One, it’s him and there is also another one. Totally, two. I have a boyfriend in the States, and totally I have four in my life. He knows my past as I have told him before. I don’t know why they put the promiscuous label on me. Maybe, when in bars, many people approach me. Sometimes people buy drinks for me, and he sees it and he doesn’t like it. He projects many imaginations and in addition the gossips made by his friends, he thinks I am the type that couldn’t sit still, and look for excitement. Just now, he had said a lot about me couldn’t sit still or look for excitement, or stimulation, looking for new partners, I’m not. For example, he had asked me, if someone asked your address and telephone, would you give it to him. I said I would give my pager number to him. But he doesn’t like it. I think in such situation, he invades my privacy. I was angry then and I quarrelled with him. But later after I have thought over it, and I understand his feeling. But I still will act this way, give my pager number to that guy. I have told him frankly, but I think I did not do a good job here as I should understand his feelings...

C: Is it alright to fill in some of the gaps and background? I have been "keeping" him for sometime when this happened. There were a lot of happenings then and I felt the burden, I felt the pressure. I was almost at the top and I just wanted him to give the pager number to that guy later. So that when I don’t feel the pressure that much. I hope he understands. But I was a little bit unhappy as he did not understand my feelings. He just thought of the incident individually, but I tried to see things from other’s perspective. He thinks that seeing things from other’s perspectives is wrong, his thinking is different from me. He seldom thinks about others, and didn’t consider my feelings. I just want him to delay it a bit, give me time to relax as there were allot happening then. I was facing a lot of
pressures and I couldn't talk to anyone about it as they would give negative comments. I feel I have to handle it myself, I hope to delay and I tried to explain to him, he was unhappy as well. But later, I did explain and I think the most important thing is to explain the situation, he later understands a bit. Base on the reasons, why others say he is promiscuous is that they saw him having one night stand with a foreigner. Maybe traditional Chinese seldom have one night stand, and so its just deduction from that incident which is a bit superficial. For example, seeing that he has one night stand and he enjoys talking with foreigners. The one having sex is also a foreigner and he seems eager to want to know them. When someone asked him about demographic (his type), he replied that the shape he likes are similar to foreigners... and he had mentioned that he likes the Daddy type and my friends would conclude from these that he likes foreigners, you are not his type but is just a temporary substitute...

I: and that scares you?

C: no promise and there are also other things, the night after he had sex with the foreigner and when that guy called him he had the eagerness to go out with him. Even though he is keeping with me, he is still eager to go out. I see that I can not fully satisfy him and feel that there is something that I can not satisfy him. He still has desire that besides this relationship, he wants something else to fulfill his needs. At first, I think that he is stable and he doesn't have these feelings, I trust him then. But after he received the call he couldn't eat and he admitted that he wanted to see the guy. He said unintentionally that even having sex is alright... Maybe due to all these factors, I am worried... I don't know what to say...

I: you are worried...

C: maybe, everyone is different as far as accepting one night stand. He thinks that sex and love can separate. I think that sex and love should be stick together. Everyone has different values and in a short time, it is not possible to accept. Like the first time your partner has one night stand, can't accept it that quickly. Can't digest all at once and accept it, have to go slowly. I feel that I tried not to think about it, I just enjoy the process and not the result. Before, I focus on the result, I don't know why, but now I enjoy the process. As long as we are happy during this period of time, I feel that in this circle it is difficult to make any promise and commitment, the environment is bad. Encountering a wave, you don't know if your ship sinks or not. But I try to do my best and hopefully the anchorman is a good lead. There are also other things that I have to consider, not just on love or else the output is worst. I listen to him...
and work out myself. I don't put too much weight on here and I feel more comfortable then.

D: To analysis myself, whether what I am doing is right or wrong, I think I stress on one point that for every matter it depends on the individual rather than the culture. Or how the culture....this and that... rather than blaming it. The second point is that I don't know, but I think that relationship should be honest, to discuss problems or anything. I am sure I can absolutely do this. For example, discuss any kind of feelings, e.g. the other guy called me and I felt eager to go. I can tell him this feeling but this may made him worry, I don't know if because I am too honest or if it's his problem. I sometimes think like this, or is it that I should not talk about certain feelings or keep it to myself. I feel that I have been thinking about this. The third point is that I always try to persuade him, I have a strong tendency to persuade him to change his believes. I don't know whether what I am doing is right or wrong, I have a conflict here...

D: I feel... I appreciate your honesty. I keep this relationship... I hope that my partner thinks about or have consider myself as well. That he thinks about my feelings and not just about what he feels. Hope that he will think of me but I don't want to be a burden. I think that to a certain extend I hope that he will consider my feelings. I am not the kind of person that is easily unhappy and there must be certain factors that caused my unhappiness. I admit that I am not very mature, to a certain extend I can't be that mature all at once. I am lack of experience, I hope that my partner will consider these factors. But what I heard from him sometimes he doesn't seem to understand and he wants to put his individualistic thinking on me. I think it's a bit difficult to digest, when I go back home, the environment is very Chinese, very traditional, and suddenly he brought this thinking back to Hong Kong, I feel difficult. To treat family members... I am not unsympathetic (⾮同情的) so when getting older, ask them to take care of themselves, I can't do that. My family values are quite strong. When I do things I just don't do it as it is, everytime I will think of others. I feel that others are a factor, can't just do things without taking others into consideration. Can't just do things without considering others or else the society will be too "separate". Sometimes I have stress too, I have a wrong impression that this is selfish and...

I: egocentric?

C: selfish and egocentric, maybe I can't accept it because I have not been living abroad. In Hong Kong environment, if having others helping me I feel very happy. I enjoy the feeling of having others being considerate to me. In a short time, I can't adapt to other feelings so maybe... I am more considerate, I will consider many
things for him and think for him. He may like my feelings (attention), but for him, I think that seeing me like this he attempt a little bit to be like me. But having used to individualism, it's difficult to accept or consider so much. I don't mind this, I love this person and no matter how bad he is, I'll accept him. I don't complain or comment and the burden resides in me. I try to listen to him and if I think it's right, then I'll accept. If it's wrong, I have reservation then. Having attained a certain educational level, I tend to be selective in receiving information. To a certain extend, I try to avoid any quarrels and listen to him more, be more considate. I will do my part well. Even though he may not trust me, to a ceratin extend, he thinks he is right. He always think that my thinking is wrong but I think that everyone has his own judgment and has his own way of doing things. I don't blame him for commenting on what I think, it's helps me to think carefully and if it's right then I'll accept. But... it's mutual learning, I have experienced that in the past. People told me but I would not listen, but it's only after a while that I realized. I think it's a learning process and I don't... though there is some pressure, I learn in the process. I still enjoy...

D: I feel that our relationship... we can learn and we can discuss and our strength is our ability to discuss and it is the high point of our relationship.

C: I feel a bit bothering...

D: so it solves many problems and we have improved alot. I enjoy this aspect very much.

I: I heard and learnt that when you two have conflicts or when you try to resolve conflicts or value differences you tend to discuss and talk about it as a way of handling conflicts.

C: Discuss and improve oneself but there are other external factors that made one uncomfortable. It's human nature to protect oneself and in an unfavourable environment one will worry and have fear. This can not be denied, this can not be handled maturely in a short time. As for me, I don't blame myself and hope that he doesn't blame me as well in some things. I expect... to me, being considerate and have an understanding of the other person and not just rely on one's own feeling or put one's feelings first. It is not to be denied that one has one's own way but one has to accept other's suggestions. It can not be that everytime you feel it's right and then do it. So it is important to discuss...

D: We found out one thing, his strength is my weakness and my strength is his weakness. He doesn't have much confidence in his appearance, his internal qualities or others, but he is confident in his study and in doing things and he can do well. Conversely, I am not confident in doing things or being responsible, but in appearance or
social or in bullshitting, I have a lot of points and have confidence. We are mutually learning, we discover and are starting to learn mutually.

I: From what I heard, there are differences between you two but yet both of you can learn from each other. You have mentioned that in open relationship or closed relationship both of you haven't decided yet and are still discussing it. Haven't have an answer yet, but C had mentioned about AIDS, and how do you see that D?

D: I see AIDS as a sickness and being promiscuous or having a lot of sexual partners has higher chances of having it. Besides, I am quite clear of different ways of transmitting AIDS, it's through blood, sperm or needles injection or others. I think if you have prepared and practice safe sex but yet being transmitted, I think it's like cancer. It's your life path, I don't think that... I don't know how to say, I think that being transmitted is not because of being promiscuous... the relationship is not strong.

I: What you mean that after you have practice safe sex, you...

D: The chances are better, but after you have been transmitted then you are transmitted. I don't have a very positive life view, and I think that if it's time to end one's life then it's the time.

C: Maybe, I am more positive, I feel that I still have a long road ahead. I'm only in my twenties, if I have contracted this sickness, it's too bad. Why I am so worry that he has sex with others is because from what I have heard him said it's very dangerous. For example, haven't used condom or having oral sex. I think that he knows it, all the precautions, but yet when doing it, he throws it all out. Do it first and think later, he enjoys the process. I know he has this problem and that is why I mind him having sex outside. I think that when he is sexual and he will throw all these rules out and enjoy sex. The people who have sex with him in the past, the four partners including me, two are having a lot of sex partners and they are much older and more experienced. I think it is unfair, but if one is 47 or 48 years old and contracted this sickness, one is almost 50. They are almost half way through life. But if they transmit it to you, (laughs) you are only in your twenties and though you enjoy this process but is it worthwhile? Maybe because he is pessimistic, and if its your time then have nothing to say.

D: Actually, I need to think over this matter...

C: But he is like this. My friends advise me that if he gets it he is very unfortunate, but if you get it from him, you have him as your only partner, then you suffer the most. Sometimes they talk to me this way, why they comment that he is promiscuous because of his previous partners. They are in their forties and even the one you met on the street, you don't know how many partners he had. I
think his actions, having sex is not alright, I am not too concern, I always ask myself not to be overly concern. But because of what he told me, his background, when he is sexually aroused, he wouldn't think and would not take this precaution and throw it all out. Maybe he has been supressed his gayness, his gay personality too much. He doesn't like to be bound by anything, even in sex. He knows alot but he would not do it. Still engage in dangerous relationships, maybe I am more cautious and he doesn't like it. You may say that I do it for him or for myself, but for a certain extend, this is one of the reasons that I don't want him to be too open in relationships. For example, those who had approached him, they have numerous sex partners. If he gets involved, maybe he thinks I am overly worried, but he is like that. Like once with the foreigners, he didn't have and he is lucky. If the second or third time, the partner then has gathered a bunch and you also have accumulated another bunch, so how you know that you don't... Sometimes I think that he can't control himself. Maybe I see things further, I am worry because of this and feel scared as well. It affects me a little, made me uncomfortable. Maybe I can control, for example, if I meet someone very good looking, I will not have sex with him or use my hands. I think I will forget it, even though they request I'll not do it. I am very rigid in this because you are the one I love and I respect you. But for him, because he is very individualistic and he thinks that it will affect his sexual feelings then even if others request oral sex, if he likes it and he thinks it is alright and will not be bound by anything. Maybe I foresee something like this, if having done it and regret later then it is too late. I think there are things that we have to remind ourselves, don't let feelings and sex to over... life is valuable and if just because of a little happiness and then it affects the rest of your life, is it worthwhile? I am very different from him in attitudes. But since I love him(sighn), what can I say?

D: seems (へんへん).(laughs)

C: even now I have sex with him, I don't use condom or whatever... Since loving him I don't want to be restricted by him. If he really loves me, I hope he will respect me and think of my presence before engaging in sex. That's all, I don't know how to say... One word, I just hope safe sex, but not only just talking but take the action as well.

I: What about D? any feedbacks?

D: feedbacks? I can understand his worries and concerns and the reasons behind it. I tell him that it is safe but he does not know about the process. As a listener and as it affects him as well, it sure is worrying.
C: But did you take precautions?
D: I think that the whole process is safe. (laughs)
C: Can you give an example? Not using condom and still...
D: (laughs)
C: Sorry that it seems I am talking bad things about him. Sometimes I give signals to him, people that I know I'll tell him about that person and their background and reminds him. He often says that I talk about people being promiscuous and I am putting a value judgment on them. I know something and am I not suppose to say it? I maybe not too skillful in doing it but my motive is sincere.
D: The way he talks as if I have alot of sexual partners.
C: No, but I just remind him, sometimes you don't know.
D: As if I have a bunch... (laughs)
C: I have to remind him when someone approaches him. I can't... I think that if one is being reminded... for example, home safety, everyone knows but due to carelessness we neglect. I just remind him, hopefully for those I know I can give a guidance to him. Even if he meets them he has to be aware, it's not that easy...
D: ... You can continue...
C: Perhaps, if he is constantly safe. I don't know how to describe safe, using the books, safe is...
D: first...second...third... (laughs)
C: but he can't do it and still say he is safe. I don't even know how to define, but I don't know if he admits.
D: I just think it is safe...
C: for example?
D: I can't describe the whole process, but I understand why you are worried. I understand... There is also another conflict on personalities differences. Just now we talked about sex issue and AIDS, open or closed relationship. I find that I usually talk myself, I find that he says things for me. Just now during the interview process, he says what I think. My thinking is my thinking, no matter who, nobody can say what I think. I remind him that I don't like it and sometimes this is a conflict point.
I: I think you mean that very often he says things for you.
D: Yes, he says things for me. Even if it's correct or incorrect... but what he says for me is that it comes out of my mouth but he has added his value judgment on it. Those things are conflicts... you are this and that... you are...so...and... so...you are like that. I think these are the things that I don't like.
C: I am learning slowly now, maybe because I am too involved, I think of his feelings and project many things as well. I know it is a problem but I am learning slowly now. Also, the terms like, promiscious, or bring him out, he is very sensitive about those
terms, whereas, I don't care that much. But many things especially our focuses are different. To a certain extend, we have to learn slowly and even now we do not know any of the methods are correct, maybe both are wrong. We have to learn to adjust and make this relationship better.

I: to adjust...
D: Many relationships are like that as well.
I: Many thanks for your participation.
Couple 3 verbatim

I: As a gay couple, have you experienced any difficulties or problems because others suspect that you are gay?
E: No, actually, no.
I: You have not.
E: Others may suspect, but whether it is a problem, not much...
I: You don't feel it, but have you done something that avoid others giving you any problems?
F: But actually they know, the watchman, however, we do not give them any trouble so, to them it's our own business so they don't bother us.
I: From what I heard just now, it's related to your living environment. But are there any other situations? e.g. going out, going to the restaurants?
F: No, nobody knows.
I: Did you do anything to avoid suspicion?
E: We don't do it purposely. We go to the supermarket together, going out together, sometimes we have fun by dressing more alike. Our neighbours see us like that but nothing much happened. The watchman has come up to our apartment and seen that there is only one bed. Nothing much happened(有時). In the working environment, he has come up to my office and no problem with that. As for family, it's OK as my family members know. My sister has met him and my two brothers and their girlfriend or wife have also met him. There is nothing (有時). But his family seems to have problems..
F: Yes, my family...
E: Knowing that he lives with me...
F: We have a fight(反時面).
I: They do not like it
F: I have a lot of brothers and sisters, nine of us. My parents are a bit traditional in their thinking and after they know that I am living with him, they do not like it. Consequently, we seldom see each other...
I: So you are detach from your family...
F: No, not detach. Every time when I go back, we quarrel. Even brothers and sisters, they do not like it.
I: What they dislike about? You and E living...
F: They do not like me as this kind of a person(依時人).
I: Family do not accept. and your relationship with them is not good.
F: Yes.
I: Besides, family what about friends? You are fairly "open"...
E: Most friends are gay friends,
F: Very few straight friends. Do have some, just chat when we see each other but not in depth like they will not go to my place.
I: yes.
F: Friends will not cause any problems, we have not been harassed by others. Very few, not because we are of the same sex. Going out, going to the movies, no, nobody gives us any kind of despised look. Going out, people don't recognize that we are gay. Nobody say anything like that.
I: So you haven't meet any?
F: It's difficult to tell especially for straight people, they don't look at two men, they seldom do. Especially when you wear simple T-Shirt and jeans. Just like an ordinary man. But if you wear in such a way, colourful and sparkling (光), then everybody knows. You have seen those, very colourful and sparkling. People will suspect those, they easily arouse suspicion.
I: So you are no different, just the same as others. I would also like to know, after you have coupled, are there any changes in your lifestyle?
E: Yes, there are. Umm... watching more T.V on the Chinese Channel whereas, in the past, I often watch the Pearl Channel. Less going out because he does not like to go out for picnic as he does not like to go out. Less frequent in doing exercise as when I was single and having no dates, and having time to spare, I go swimming and hiking. I brush my teeth before I go to bed, but now I am lazy. Those small things. Have more Chinese dinners.
I: What about F?
F: Have to cook.
I: You don't cook?
F: When I was small, I do cook. But ever since I've been working my mom cooks for me. But after I moved in with him, I cook.
E: washing clothes, dusting,
F: yes... and sleeping together, I don't sleep with anyone then. I can't sleep with anyone. I have this strange habit, I couldn't sleep with others. When the other person moves, then I wake up. So I seldom sleep with others, and sleeping with him takes at least a year or half for me to adjust. I wake up the whole night after he moved and can not go back to bed. Have a dog now.
I: There aren't any other things then, what about your gay friends. Have they treat you differently after you coupled?
E: Yes... all my friends (朋友) have been driven away by him. (laughs). Few contacts, partly because I'm more busy. Also, as having a partner, I spend more time with him as he wants me to spend time with him. He also doesn't like my friends that much.
Sometimes it's not getting along, and it's difficult to barch in our circle. So we do not contact that much.

I: What about you, F?
F: No, just the same.
I: Same friends?
F: Yes, same friends, no change. Having more rather than less.
I: How do they view your partner?
F: I don't care about them. It depends whether I like him or not. I don't care about them.
E: It's funny. His friends and my friends are totally different types.
F: So they don't get along, can't play together.
E: So it's like the man's side 男 and the woman's side 女.
F: They can't play together...
E: Or when my friends are here, he seldom talks to them.
F: When my friends are present he will not be there or when his friends are present, I will not be there as well.
E: Or when his friends come for dinner, even when I am there, I don't have much to say.
F: He is there, but nothing to talk about...
E: Yes, nothing to talk about and I will watch T.V. instead. Or I'll go to my room to read.
I: But do you feel comfortable?
F: I can't go out with his friends, I feel uncomfortable with them.
I: You feel uncomfortable(E laughs), what does his friends do that made you feel uncomfortable?
F: What? I guess being stingy ( 小气). Mind a lot about everything. I am not that at all, my friends are like that doesn't mind about everything or money. For example, this time I treat them and the next time they'll treat me. But his friends are different, I'm not used to it. They divide everything up, after paying in the restaurant, they will pay individually and everyone in the restaurant is looking. It's embarrassing, I'm not used to it. Or I prefer, to pay back later at home or somewhere else. But they are not like that, they will talk so loud, like each has to pay thirty something. I'm not used to it and I don't like to give them a long face(面子). I'm not happy so I rather not go. I don't want to force myself to entertain his friends and I don't stop him either. He wants to go to play then go, I just don't want to go with him. His friends always said that they don't see me.
I: Will it be that friends will talk about this? Why both of you don't go together?
F: Maybe. But for so many years, I have never go and now his friends are used to it and they will not ask. They ask before but now they will not ask. They called and said, I have asked yours to go out, let him stay out longer. They will call like this.
I: They don't say anything else?
E: My friends and his friends are very different, my friends like to go out drinking, going to disco, coffee shop and eat out. His friends like things that are different, it's difficult that the two groups play together. If he follows me, he then have nothing much to chat to my friends, it'll be boring to him. So often, he goes out with his friends and I go out with mine. Previously, the first four years, they ask but now they are used to it and will not ask.
I: They accept this lifestyle.
E: Only at times, when they ask about him, I say that he doesn't like this kind of environment and it's OK. Don't have to explain anymore.
I: After you coupled, do you feel that you have needs as a couple that the gay circle can not fulfill? (pause), I have seen that both of you are very individual, you have your own friends, and I like to ask if you have any couples friends?
E: You mean in this circle, are there any?
F: Like us, as couples?
E: I think that there are not many like us. Many people are angry if their partner will not go out with his friends.
F: Some have to bring their partner along ... I have seen many times... If their partner not there, they may worry that others will think that they and their partner have broke up. They can't ... They want...
E: Some want to follow everywhere... and worry about his partner whereabouts...
F: Others are worried that the friends may teach bad things to his partner... like going to fool around... or worry that his friends' friends may get to know him. If he goes along then he is telling others that he is the lover and don't touch his lover... a kind of control... but in this circle, very few like us.
I: Individual like you, are few. From what I heard you saying, both of you are very individual, unlike other couple, they go together...
E: yes, if they don't then people will talk...
F: like his so called younger brother, Z, he and his partner are always together, they will never leave each other out of sight. They like sugar and bean. He check each other out. Now it is not that much, but for the first two years, if you see one then you see the other. Even during late hours, in midnight or one or two o'clock, the other one still shows up.
E: This pair is very special. I often go to meetings with members and then go to discos, bars with them. I go every where, here and there. I go to seminars and workshops. He goes with his so called sisters, ( ). Going here and there as well, I don't know where he goes. Somtimes I go home and he is not there and I wait
for him. I seldom care or control him and the most I do is to call home before getting off from work and if he is not home, I'll leave a message on the phone telling him that I'll not be back for dinner. I don't care (.related) about him.

I: But your lifestyle, do both of you feel comfortable? Both of you give each other alot of spaces?

E: It's a slow progress. In the beginning, we are also a little over anxious. It is impossible that we don't, especially during the first year and half. I do ask about his whereabouts, like where have you been it's so late and he'll ask me who I was drinking with. But slowly we develop to the stage that we do not purposely control the other person.

F: Don't purposely ask, only sometimes when staying in bed and suddenly ask, 他 起 where do you go for your meeting today? I just ask once and when he answered I don't want to talk about it. I'll tell him that I'm just asking for the sake of asking and I don't mean it. He then ask me where I've been to and I'll tell him that I go to the market and cook. Then he will not ask anymore. Unlike others, they ask about the details, some people will call their partner's office over ten to twenty times a day to check. For example, going to meeting after work? Can I come with you?

I: It's interesting, what made the two of you so different from others? I have heard alot that others are very anxious about the partner or lover?

E: They have not been "keeping" for a long time.

F: No, some have been keeping a long time and still are like that. It's the personality that counts.

E: We have not been keeping too long, only four years. Perhaps it's personality and confidence.

I: What made you two having such confidence with each other?

F: I don't know, maybe feelings.

I: Yes...

F: I have never thought of breaking up. Never thought of these two words. We have never thought of doing something wrong and break up. Up till now, I have never thought of it. Like he fools around outside and I'll break up with him, I have never thought of it and if I don't thought of it then it could not happen. Others are different, they may think that if you go out to fool around, I'll break up with you. If you are unfaithful, then I'll break up with you. They have this concept and if that happens then they will break up. We don't have this concept and we are not that anxious, maybe because of this that we can maintain our relationship.

I: This is what F thinks, what about E?
E: (Pause), Me...sometimes I think of it. He isn't working and he is home everyday, sometimes I wonder why I'm not that anxious(laughs). But sometimes I think that if it belongs to you, it does. If it doesn't then even if you use an iron rope to bind it, it is still useless if he is physically yours but in his heart he is not. I think that if one lives together with another person, you know unless you are fairly dumb, blind, dumb etc. Or else you understand that person and when you live and dine together, whether he is that kind of person that seeing a handsome guy he'll leave you. He is not and also that strengthen our confidence. Both of us, because we give each other so much space and yet nothing important had happened, only one or a half times. So there isn't anything that causes us to break up and it even strengthen our faith with one another. Perhaps we feel very comfortable and even when someone else appears, we feel that we are not that comfortable. I guess it is like this...

I: Both think that been together is very comfortable...

F: No pressure at all. If you see alot of freedom and spaces, you don't feel that he is disgusting. If he constantly check on you, you feel disgusted. You rather stay home cause at home your parents are like that as well... so troublesome. (laughs)

I: Then you have an extra mom?

F: Yes, some are even worse than your mom. I heard that some come back late and they will ask you alot of things. Like where you have been... so doesn't matter leave it or let it be, keep one eye open and the other eye shut better not ask at all. Don't think of going anywhere, think that he has been to a movie. Think that he may date another lover, always think of all these bad things will only made you unhappy. It's useless, he will not tell you the truth anyway. It's useless to force him, if he wants to tell you he'll tell you and you don't need to force him.

E: We are not calculative, the small details and because we don't we feel comfortable.

I: Very special, you have your own unique pattern...

F: But this pattern is not very acceptable to many people.

I: Not many people accept?

F: In this circle, we are very strange. All have said that we are a strange couple...

I: To speak frankly, when I ask about interviewing couple, they recommend me to talk to you two... there must be something very unique...

E: Many people don't understand, how come he lets me go out and fool around, having sex and playing late. He is not constantly with me as they seldom see him go out. Some like friends, or people from other groups, after dinner we chat and they often asked me,
"aren't you worried that your "wife" would go out to find another
man? Aren't you afraid?" It's strange to them, we have not discussed
it, like four years ago, we did not sign a contract or in any written
form. We develop and progress naturally this way.

I: Both of you are comfortable with this pattern? Just now, E
mentioned that you two chose an open relationship unintentionally,
do you think that it affects your relationship?

F: What's open?

I: For example, suddenly E may meet someone and the three of you will
be together, would it affect your relationship with each other?

E: Not at the moment. I have a lot of innocent young men falling for
me. He doesn't mind and sometimes he is very open like the
pious wife, "if you like it, go ahead". I don't know... I feel that
goinh home and being with him is more comfortable than being with
the other ones. I feel that I may be interested in others but
whether there is love, it's different. So even though he allows it, I'm
not willing to keep another lover. One is already hard work and as
for two it would be even worse. Once, he met someone, I don't mind
either. That time it almost affects our relationship, he has to decide
whether he wants me or the other person. But I'll let him tell this
story. To me, it doesn't matter, if it has to happen it has to
happened. If it doesn't, no matter how it wouldn't happen then. It's
destiny that if he is the one that is by your side then he is the one. I
always think... since I was eighteen, I'm open from then till now. I
keep a number of lovers. I think that you can not bind them, what
you can bind is their body not their heart. Also the other person is a
human being, he is not your possession or your dog, nor your caged
bird, nor your jeans or CD. He is a human being, he can move
around and he has his own thinking. Have to treat him as a person
having his will and control. If it's his life that he meets another third
party and he loves that person and though he still loves me but he
decided that he doesn't want me. Even though I may be very angry
or unhappy but the final decision belongs to him. To respect him
and his decision, to love someone, you have to respect him. This is
my point of view.

I: What about F? How do you see it?

F: How to see...

E: this matter...

F: pause...

E: the third party, has he affected our relationship?

F: Yes, that time. It's funny. We know, both of us are frank..

I: that they know, and being very frank...

F: Yes, they know. He is my friend's friend. We have been known, that
I have a lover. At first, he said that he doesn't mind, he knows I
have a lover and said that he would not affect our relationship. But
later, he knows that our relationship is getting deep and I am being
nice to him. He manipulated me by constantly threatening me, force
me ... saying that he could not share the other half with others. I told
him that he knew ... in advance, I did not lie to him. If I did, then I
deserve it. But he left a couple of times, and in the end he came
back and begged me. The last time, I couldn't stand it, emotionally
it's too much. So I don't care then and it ended this way.
E: That time was a bit complicated. His side is complicated, he has to
go to both sides. One night with me, the other night with that guy.
Our relationship is always open, we are very frank with each other,
though not loyal. This is much better than disloyal and dishonest. I
know, he always tell me that the other guy pressure him to choose
between the two of us. He asked me, and I told him that he has to
make the decision himself. Or else, you could have both of us, I
don't mind that on Monday, Wednesday and Friday you are with
me. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday that you are with the other
guy. However, the other guy did not like it this way. He is not like
me who is very generous. Many times I have met other guys and
many people will tell them that I have a wife. They tell them not to
be near me, but those guys even met him(meaning F) and chat with
him. I don't know why, they know that we are together but they
don't mind and still stick with us. This is our situation.
I: But to you both as a couple, the effect is not that much?
F: There is a bit, but only once since we've been together for so many
years. There is no other times.
I: What made...I like to find out that even both of you having a third
party but still did not affect you two too much?
F: Even if he has, I'm not too emotional about it. I'm not emotional.
Many people constantly called him and I don't feel emotional. I even
asked him to go out with them cause they are pretty sad, but he
would not go out with them.
I: Um...
F: I don't know why, I'm not very concern, I'm not concern about this.
I think that if he is yours, then he is yours. If going out with others
and then he leaves you, it's not worth to have such a relationship. I
am not concern, I'm not not(double negation) concern over him, but
I'm not concern having a third party and so easily snatch him. Being
too concern is even worse(...), if he wants to leave, no matter
whether you are concern or not, he will leave. So let he do what he
wants, maybe he is bored with my company so let him have other
stimulation(laughs). I'm like that...
I: Your perspective is like that...
F: I'm like that, even in the past. Even when I was not with him I treat my ex-partners the same as I treat him. I never ask them where they went. But it's only them asking me where I've gone. What's the use of asking, if they want to tell, they'll tell you. If I ask then they can just lie to me and I don't even know. So if they like to tell me, they'll tell me then. I'm like that...

I: Yes...

E: Maybe because we are very true to each other, so we are not frighten that we will be affected by outside relationship.

F: I have not thought about this at all... So far, we haven't thought of this...

E: We are very simple, we are couples living in the housing estate(laughs). After work, we care about having dinner ready or not...

F: Not so complicated at all...

E: I think of providing enough money for him...

F: Like the ones that have just began the relationship, they made things complicated. They cried over the matter, you... Why being together is so painful? Being together should be fun and not cry over the relationship. If they are together for a much longer time, they then have to die over the relationship? Because of some small things they have to commit suicide. In the very beginning, they are overly concern, it's suffering. In the beginning, they have to make a contract and sign it, i.e. if I keep you, you are not going out to fool around, not permitted to look at other people... it's for life... just talking about it, in a week's time they already separate. So it's useless to talk about it and made it clear at the very begining. Men and women are the same, even after signing the papers, it's still useless and turn around, you have to sign divorce paper. It's just troublesome to sign again some other time.

I: You are very true and honest in your relationship, it is seldom seen and this truthfulness between you two helps to keep you together. (silence) In your relationship, how do you resolve conflicts, and what kind of conflicts are common?

E: about money...

I: Yes...

F: Not too much, so so... When he has temper, I'll keep quiet and when I have temper, he keeps quiet as well. So we don't throw things, in the beginning, we do but now for so many years we don't do that anymore. When he is angry, I will not say anything, and later we will talk again and nothing happens. We will not make a scene, or say we want to separate. We don't use separation as a threat, if we want to separate, then we will separate. It is boring and disgusting to hear the word too many times and do not separate.
E: When we were first together four years ago, our relationship begins very fast. On Saturday we met and we called each other on Sunday and Sunday we went out for tea and we are together ever since. We did not even have a courtship period, we are faster than matchmaking in the olden days (laughs). Even those matchmaking couples, they have to wait for a while to get married. But we met on Saturday and exchanged phone numbers and went out on Sunday. From Sunday we are together till now. So in the beginning when we were together, we were not familiar with each other's lifestyle, living habits, thinking, taste etc. We live together then, I was very bad temper then, he bought some plastic sofa and I grumble and told him how could he picked such an ugly thing. I grumble but let it be. Sometimes he speak back and quarrel or when he nag alot I found him annoying, or when I got drunk and came back late and he was mad that I woke him up etc. etc. A year or so later, fairly quickly, he seldom said much. It's only when we have problems financially that he had temper or when he is angry then he would be quiet. We would not say anything to each other but the most we do is keep silence. Later after our anger has passed then we will think of some topics to start the conversation again. Basically, it's only in the first half year that we quarrelled and we seldom do now.

I: That you two have adjust to each other, personality and otherwise... So as you said, the way to resolve conflict is that one party will keep quiet for the time being and later you two will discuss the matter, is that it?

E: Mostly our conflicts are minor issues...

F: There isn't much to resolve, after a while, will forget about it... The next day, as if nothing has happened, we will talk to each other again, forget about what has happened last night. We will not discuss about the issue...

I: Would not talk about the issue? or try to resolve it?

F: No, it's just like normal. i.e. call him to find out whether he will be coming back for dinner. Did not mention about that issue and he said he'll come back and that's it. Not purposely saying honey, let's get together and discuss the issue. It's natural, it's Ok.

I: What about E? Are you like that as well?

E: I nag alot as you well know, I'm used to talk in the public and I like to preach (laughs). I nag and explain to him why I was angry but not purposely to sit down and discuss how to resolve the issue. Or the next time, how we are going to deal with it. We don't need to talk about too many trivial things, living is living, living is real and alive, it's not just talking. So when his anger has passed or when my anger has passed, he seldom say anything, but I usually nag and explain to
him i.e. "I have my reasons to be angry last night, I hope that you will understand my view point, at that moment such and such... etc etc.,"

I: E will explain and F usual practice will not do so?
F: No. He said one sentence and that is it.
E: He wants me to say...(laughs) I know why you are angry with me.(laughs).
I: So you explain it for him...(laughs) OK, that's your style in resolving issues. Besides, money, is there any other conflicts?
E: Sometimes going out too late without letting him know, he's not really angry with me, he just give me the silence treatment when I come back home. So what I do is to beg him a little, saying that I know you are angry with me.. but I go out to social and it's difficult to call you etc, etc...
F: But he often say that he'll come back at 11:00pm but actually he comes back at 3:00am in the morning. You shouldn't call to say to come back at 11:00 but come back at 3:00am instead. 3:00am I don't know what has happened...
I: a bit afraid...
F: Yes, shouldn't call or if you call just say you will be back late. Shouldn't say be back at 11:00 and actually come back at 3:00am. I am sleepy but I am easily awake and when he is back, I'll wake up by his noise. When I wake up, it's difficult for me to sleep again. The dog is noisy and when the dog sees him, it'll jump and make allot of noise. It wakes me as well. I nag and I often say, please be quiet and sleep. I am tired please don't say anything.
I: Yes...
E: Actually, all these are small things in our living.
I: small lifestyle differences...No big problems...(pause) Is there any difference between a gay couple and a heterosexual couple?
E: Differences, yes... no children, no legal status, no, very difficult to get public acceptance, I can't hold his hands in public, lots of pressures if I hold his hands... however, the problems we face are similar, i.e. adjusting to each other, temper, lifestyle, habits etc., how to communicate, how to resolve emotional conflicts, lifestyle conflicts. What we face are fairly similar, but public or legal recognition or privilege is small. That is the unique difference between us and heterosexual relationship. But I feel that we are more free, first, we do not have children to bother us, even if we separate or live together, we don't have too much trouble i.e. marriage ceremony, wedding banquet etc. Even divorce, don't have to explain to parents and to deal with too many rituals ( ). On the other hand, our marital framework is very heterosexual. Partly because he seldom goes out to work and stays at home and I
am very busy. I have to work and attend to the Club's meetings and so on... Very often, I go to work, attend meetings, and he concentrates on housework. Cleaning, sweeping and I'm not concerned about household chores.

I: So you depend on him...
E: So I think that we are similar to man and woman...
I: Your roles are very clear in this respect...
E: He takes care of household chores, sometimes I'm bad because after I get home after work and have dinner, I'm tired and I just put down my stuff and sit on the sofa to watch T.V. (laughs) All the cleaning up... when I live by myself in the past, I think of doing washing or else I don't have clean clothes to wear, I'll also think that it's time to clean up as well. Now I don't think about these things at all. I don't even know when the clothes have been washed. I have been taken care of.

I: You two have define your roles clearly. Your roles are clear, and do you feel comfortable about this arrangement?
E: Yes, I'm very comfortable (laughs)...
I: What about F? How do you feel about this arrangement?
F: I'm used to it. I do it at home, I've a habit of doing housework and I've been doing it since I was very young.
I: You do it at home?
F: Yes, I started to cook since 5 or 6 years old. I've a habit of doing it.
At that time, my mother has to go out to work, nobody takes care of me, if I don't cook then I have nothing to eat so I'm used to it. I'm used to wash clothes as well, if I don't wash then I've nothing to wear. It was until I've been working that my mother didn't need me to do it. But when I'm with him, I do it again. At first I'm not used to it but now I'm used to it.
I: You two have so well defined your roles, do you feel OK?
F: Yes.
I: You feel comfortable? no conflicts?
F: Yes, I'm so used to it. If I don't wash the clothes then I'll have nothing to wear. He doesn't care at all so I've have the habit of cooking and cleaning. I don't ask him to do it...
I: Don't say anything like "why don't you do it?"
F: No, after dinner, he usually sits around. But I'm used... I can't just sit around, I don't feel comfortable. I'll clean up and have to clean all the washes and then I'll feel comfortable. I can't put the dishes out...
I: Not even watching T.V. for a while?
F: No, I've to wash the dishes and clean the floor before watching T.V.
I: I heard that you accept the division of labour, your roles are very clear.
F: Yes, even others say that our roles are very clear. Some people are not clear. When you do your interview, some don't live together...
I: Yes, some don't...
F: It's more difficult for those who don't live together. I think that you have to live together so as to understand your feelings, perseverence. I think that those who do not live together can not be said to "keep" each other. Once you say goodbye, you go back to your own home. You haven't really live together in a house, you don't know his personality. When going out, if one having a temper, you can just leave and call later to make things up. But now is different, you live together, you see his face. It's difficult, he sleeps besides you, you can't ignore him and even if you tense and turn in bed he is still there. But for those, it's different. Just a phone call and you can't see him. You don't have to take care of household chores, your mother does that at home. Only for those who live together are... what to say...
E: Are...
F: like couples. Like husband and wife. If married, it's unreasonable to live by oneself. I think it's unreasonable to be married and the husband lives in one place and the wife lives in another place. For those who said they have "keep" for many years, I think they haven't "keep" at all. They haven't really live together.
E: I think that going out shopping, movies, dining and living together are entirely different matters. If two people actually live together, you see alot of things. You can understand each other better. I think, for couples who live together in the same unit, they can maintain longer because you have many common possessions. Joint names on the unit, sharing time together watching T.V., join activites like eating together, sweeping the floor together, going out to get things, bedsheets, cushion covers,
I: Both of you own it... the feelings of coupleship...
E: Yes, the feelings are stronger. i.e. If tonight meet at 8:00pm and go out dining, movie, shopping, night snack and after that take him home. The feelings of togetherness is not that strong, I think it is one of the reasons that people break up.
I: Because of the situation in Hong Kong, not many gay couples can afford living together...
F: Yes, 9 out of 10 couples can not live together. That is the reason that many couples break up.
E: It is not due to financial reasons, in Hong Kong there are many...
F: It is that both of them do not want to give...
E: there are many one bedroom...
F: or even studio apartments...
E: if two young people are working they can at least earn over $6000 per month. If each of them pay $1000 or so they can rent a studio apartment...

F: It's only $2000 something for studio apartment. Maybe some of them are afraid that it is more difficult to move out, have to wash clothes, pay utility bills but right now they live with their family and they pay $2000 or $3000 and it includes everything. Some may fear that it is extremely troublesome because even now not living together is already troublesome. Whereas, living together the other person check on you everyday and you can't stay out. Now you can tell the other person that you are going home, but actually you go out to meet others or fool around, you can't say anything.

E: Hong Kong is unlike China, the States or Europe where the place you work and the place you live is far away. Or the place is alot bigger. In Hong Kong no matter if you live in Tuen Mun or outlying islands you only need an hour or so to go back and forth to and from your work place. Your mother may ask why you want to move out? The pressure is intense.

I: Right, family pressure is strong.

E: When I moved out in my teens, I work in Central and I live in Yuen Long. But still my mother grumble about my moving out. (laughs). Even for such a good excuse, still my mother grumble and said that nobody made soup for you, nobody takes care of you. So if you live in Yaumautei and your work place in Mongkok and you tell your mother you want to move out with your friend to Jordan, the distance is so short. Your mother will...it is difficult. However, many things you have to fight for. I did not mention, comparatively speaking, I don't think my mother is more open than others. She is an older generation, she hasn't much education. Why I can move out in my teens? I think it depends whether you fight for it.

F: It's personality, like my family, I move out in my late teens, I don't really move out, but I seldom stay at home. When I go back home it's almost 2 or 3 am in the morning. I got up very early for work, at approximately 7am. My mother said that I treat the place like a hotel. What is the use of going back early? I have nothing to say to them and they go to bed very early at 7:00pm. She asked whether I can go back home early to chat, but I told her that they sleep so early. They get up very early for their morning walk. She often said that I treat home like a hotel but I said it is better this than not even treating it like a hotel. Later, she get used to it and often she said that I'm married( تعیین زوجه). She treats me like a daughter. It all depends on the individual, I'm not used to be control by others. My mother asked me where I've been to, I would not answer. Even if I tell her what kind of movies I've seen, she wouldn't understand. So
when she asked me why I was so late, I would tell her that I have gone to Disco. She asked for some time and later she stopped asking. It depends on the personality. My mother used to watch out for me, she stays up and look out of the window for me at the bus stop. I asked her not to, what if I got run over by a car and she is watching then. She never does that after what I said to her as she said I have a bad mouth. My brothers as well, they come back at 4:00am and she also watches out for them. But after I said that, she never watches over us as she is scared that it might happened. She then get used to it, I'm big now. Once I have stayed home for a week without going out as I was very tired. My mother is worried and asked my sister to ask me why I did not go out at all. She is worried that I become so restless that I'll die(laughs). She is used to it now. As for those couple, not being together, it is tiring as well. They go to movies, karaoke, disco, go back home after these. They don't have a place like home, a family of two. If one wants to go out and the other doesn't and one forces the other to go out and they may quarrel over this matter and as time passes later they may break up. That's a reason as well, before I live with him, I have been with other partners. On Sunday, we go shopping from Tsimshatsui to Mongkok and walk back from Mongkok to Tsimshatsui. We walk for a couple of hours, it's very tiring. I ask him not to walk and he better has plan some activities before asking me out. I'm too tired for this if every week we have to spend like this. It is very boring, we can't hold our hands while walking, we can't put our hands on each other's shoulders, people will look at you. It's very boring, just go window shopping and not buying anything. I have asked one to rent a place, but he said no. Renting a studio costs only a little over $2000, it's better than this. After getting up, you don't have to go out, just staying home, watch T.V., cooking and that'll be a day. Going out is boring as in Hong Kong, there aren't that many places to go and it's boring going out. Many break up because of this. Many do break up because of this. It is also easy for having a third party because you often go to those places, i.e. discos. You keep on going, going a few days per week and you know, people can be attracted and meeting others that are better than you. It's fast... if you have a house, maybe, the house help to maintain the relationship. Going home and just sitting there and be with you feel more comfortable than having all those people around. It's more easy to maintain relationship then.(pause)

E: We often feel very comfortable because we can really get along. Can get along, living together. This is not my first time living with others, but living with him is comfortable. Compare with others, they see each other, dine out, and then find a place to make love.

hhh
But it's different, being at home, I can wear anything just sitting on the sofa, (laughs), cutting fingernails, cleaning the ears, it is comfortable. So easy going, he goes to the fridge, gets some drinks, nag at you a little bit, talk about the T.V. program, and laugh about it. Unlike others, in the summer, have to walk around, it's difficult.

I: Umm, I heard that many long for having a home...
F: Yes, but depends, some wants to give whereas others don't want. Some think that living together deprives them of their freedom, they have to do many thing and to attend to many matters. It's difficult for one to sneak around, or more difficult to fool around. For those who haven't live together, many of them think like this. Living together can really test if both of you are fit for each other. Some live together for a short time and then break up. Living together can test this.

E: Sometimes I think that in this circle, no matter organising what kind of functions, i.e. barbacue, sailing. Gay people themselves, despite legal aspects... what to say, they know how to court each other but they don't know how to be married. They meet and they exchange phone calls, and go through the courtship period just like heterosexual couples. But for homosexuals after courtship, they get married. They live together, the man may live with the wife's family or vice versa. Anyway, both live together...

F: For them, they have purpose and plan in courtship. But for gay people, they don't have any plans. They go dating, one day at a time. They enjoy telling others that they have lovers, they may not even like their partner, it's just for that instance that they have someone. They will pick another one whom they think is better and they will break up with this one. They have this kind of mentality. They will not at the very beginning to think of establishing a family. No...

E: So that is why we trust each other. No matter how you fool around, you still have to come back home(laughs). Whereas, the others they are not like us...

F: After fooling around, they go back to their own place and if they quarrel, they may not call each other and that's the end of the relationship. But for us, even leaving has alot of other things and connections...

E: Just like a man and a woman, after dating he sends the girl home and he may have another date that evening. The girl may be more concern of his whereabouts. But once married, the woman will not be too concerned, where can the man go after work?(laugh) Should be back by 7pm but back at 9pm instead. The concern is not as great now as before marriage. There is more security now. As for
gay people in Hong Kong, there are objective reasons, like financially can afford to rent a place, whether the family would allow one to move out. Though this depends on the individual, whether one will fight for it or not. But many people think that they are "keeping" (having partners), but actually see each other a few hours a day, a few days of the week. To me, this is dating or courtship, but not living together. Living together and courtship do have some similarities but their definitions are not the same. Living together is another thing, just seeing each other for 3 hours or so, you may keep quiet even though there is something that you dislike. But if you see him everyday, you sleep with him, even if you turn around... then...

F: There is something in your heart. You think alot, when will he apologize? will he make up with me? Then you can not sleep the whole night. But it's different, when you go back to your home, even though you are angry but you can sleep. You just let it be, both of you will not call each other. But living together, he has to come back. For those not living together, it's easier for them to breakup, both do not want to step aside, they don't see each other. You wait for the other to call you and the feelings are not that strong anymore. Meanwhile, a third party may enter the scene, and the other partner seems not to be important anymore. But for us, it is different. The next day, you see him and have to say something. You can't stop talking for the whole week, you are not dumb and the house is not 2000feet big. Just a small place, and even going to the toilet you can bump into each other. That's the reason why for those not living together it is much easier for them to break up.

I: Yes. Just now, E have mentioned a point that gay people know how to date but they don't know how to be married. Why do you have such an opinion? What made you think like this?

E: I think... living is actual. Look at our parents, not all of them are like fairy tales, romantic and loving. But gay people have a false impression that once we are lovers, we have to be for good, for life, our love is made in heaven, it should be romantic. If we have quarrels, psychologically then there are problems in our relationships and we have to break up. But from my past experiences, looking at my parents, my sister's and her husband, many couples quarrel with each other from time to time and even get into fights. But if every couple quarrels and fight and then break up... like my sister has married for over twenty years and my mother is something, till death do they part. But for gay people, they just date, the period is like heterosexual courtship. Like you wait for her to get off work or when you are late and the girl is angry and during
her birthday, you did not send her flowers. All these followed by quarrels and arguments and the girl is angry and hang off the phone. At last, you need a third party to mediate the problem. Gay relationship is like that even if I met him and we do not live together. The whole world and even ourselves accept that we are lovers. Why do we use the term "lover"? and not "spouse". I think it signifies that we get stuck at lover's stage and not spousal stage. At lover's stage, or the courtship period, it's usually very concern, wants to control the other person. Like asking "Where have you been last night?" "Why don't you call me?" "Who has you been going out with?" and the boy will ask "How come you have lunch with your male colleagues?" "What have you been talking about?" like this kind of conversation. But married husband and wife are different. I think that gay people due to many factors, they don't know how to deal with being couple. The couple experience is not good and we need to learn a lot. If being called a couple, companion( ), he is so important in your life, maybe even more important than your parents, one who accompanies you to your death. Why not respect him as a person, rather than interrogate him like a prisoner, even more nagging than his mother. Would not trust him and respect him. Would not have empathy towards him, don't know this.

I: What you see is that there are important qualities, like living together, having a home, similar to marriage and the relationship is very important. But why they don't go to the marital stage? What's blocking them? As you mentioned correctly that they called each other lovers rather than spouse/companions?

E: Umn... I think as I have said, in Hong Kong the financial situation, renting a place requires almost half a month salary, family is also another issue. Family ties are strong in Hong Kong...

F: Especially if he is an only child, his parents will not allow him to move out, some even force them to get marry...

E: Or as he mentioned, some do not have the courage...

F: Some can not rebel against the family. I have answered a phone call, his parents asked him to go for matchmaking and he is fairly old, in his thirties. He even asked me how to deal with his parents as he can not rebel against them. I asked him how old is he, and if he is financially independent. He told me that he is financially very independent and he can earn alot of money. I told him to move out and a couple of times every week he can go back home to have dinner with his parents. But he said that his is obedience ( ) they ask him to get married and he thought that they are very annoying. Even that is already disobedience. He can make it clear to them that he can decide for himself what to do. But he
said no and he said that they will scold him. What can I tell him, he is over thirty and still afraid of scolding. I can not say anything, ask him to get a killer to kill his parents (laughs). He is over thirty and not in his teens, he said, maybe he'll get someone to marry him and then divorce. Yow, this kind of mentality is bad, he is hurting the girl, he said he doesn't like girls. But he'll ruin the girl's life, he is very selfish. Just wanting to please his parents, he is very selfish. There are many this kind of cases.

E: So I think the issue is the person himself, in Hong Kong, like the drama on Family Relationship ( 親 情 ). A family live together in one unit even though they are not poor...

F: Have to be in a big family...

E: Even grown children moving out to live or grown and have a family and move out. The family members feel bad if one member is like this. I am talking about Hong Kong Chinese family, in Taiwan, they have spaces. In China, I have been to there a couple of times and found out that if the son is grown, he can have his own house. Even though it is still in the same village, but at least they don't live together in a unit. In other overseas places, it is no need to say, when you reach 18, you just drive away. But in Hong Kong, the man and woman are very attached ( 帶 紛 促 ). Like you, still studying and doing your research and yet you have a unit all by yourself and even me, I feel strange. So for my parents, or my brothers they will wonder why bothering moving out. They don't think that it should be like this, once grown, one should have one's space. This issue, for external factors, like the family, rent is high in Hong Kong. The internal factors are that the individual has a weak personality, they don't fight for things not even for their own rights. Everyone is Pak In ( 白 漁 ) (laughs). Not many people stand out, like me and Chau Wah Sau to fight for gay rights. Everybody is Pak In ( 白 漁 ), they think that fighting is like Lee Heung Kam ( 李 香 琴 ) (laughs). This is personality and I think it is because one can not accept oneself i.e. I'm this kind of person, should I fight for these things? Sure they do not think of it purposely, but unconsciously their psychological made up is like this. This internal factor exists that one does not fight for one's rights. One also does not want to be responsible because being independent is not an easy thing. At home, the mother does everything, you go back and the dinner is ready, at home you have the washer, water, electricity. Even though that month, you don't have enough, others can share the responsibility. Living independently is different, from rent to electricity, from big things to small things, you have to tackle and deal with it. i.e. After one moves out and live with him, one has to pay $1000 something and he has to pay his share as well. One has
to be together to do everything, some may not have the courage to be responsible. So it is one internal factor that minimized one's opportunities to practice gay marriage.

I: Yes, living together...
E: So it is not that good to just stay in the courtship period. For a man and a woman, it is married life that is put under the test. It is the test of the truth, gay people always want to get to know others but would not want to develop the relationship. Some say that gay relationship is fairly easy to break up, this objective criticism has its point. One met a boy in sauna or Satsanga activities. But so what, the relationship stops there. It's a full stop. But for a heterosexual couple, they think of living together, and one meets a lot of problems with living. One grows that way, he grows and I grow as well. Both of us face old age, holding hands and think of the future...

I: There are goals...
E: There are many ongoing activities, but for most gay people they meet each other and that's it. They don't develop at all. It is a problem that needs to reflect and think about.

I: Thank you very much, you have given a lot of good opinions and suggestions.
Couple 4 verbatim

I: As a gay couple, have you met any problems or difficulties because others suspect that you are a gay couple.
G: Yes. Colleagues suspect because a guy called you fairly frequently.
I: Your colleagues suspect...
G: Yes, colleagues suspect why there aren't any calls from girls and this guy call so often.
I: They suspect you, but do they cause you any problems or trouble?
G: No, I explain that he is my best friend. But they will often ask me why my girlfriend doesn't call.
I: They will ask this kind of questions...
G: They said, there is no reason why you don't go dating. I just laugh about it.
I: But according to you, is it a pressure?
G: A pressure... I'm used to it. I don't feel the pressure. They question and I only smile back. If they question a little more, I will not say anything. I don't want to explain.
I: What about H?
H: Us as a couple?
I: Yes, do people give you any trouble because they are suspicious of your relationship?
H: If it is one way like my colleagues have never met G, so they suspect who my partner is?
I: No, not this.
H: If others suspect my relationship, no.
I: I.e. when you two go out, social activities, do you feel any problems because people suspect your gay relationship?
H: I think I don't feel the pressure because I tend to avoid those situations that made me feel uncomfortable. E.g. I have a friend that live in the New territories, I have told him I am gay a few years back. But I don't feel he accepted me somehow. So I never go to his place with G, I try to avoid situations that may cause problems. It's not that there is no problem but I try to avoid those situations.
I: Besides not going to your friend's place with G, what other avoidance techniques did you use to escape from being suspected?
H: For example, among my colleagues many of them are getting married and when they ask me, I would answer that I was married already but I did not have the wedding banquet.
G: (laughs)
H: I have a commitment already. I wore a wedding ring and nobody asked me what sex did I married with. Nobody is that crazy to ask if you married to a man or a woman. If they are that nosy, they must be crazy. This is my boundary, I do feel uncomfortable as I am not
that honest. I feel I mislead others and let them think that my partner is a woman.

I: Besides, your colleagues, when you two go out, go to restaurants, have you meet any difficulties?

G: At the very beginning, I feel the pressure. e.g. going to a very nice restaurant and reserve a nice table. I feel a little bit of pressure, two men going to those nice places. One time H even brought some flowers and put it on the table. At first, I felt the pressure, but I'm now getting used to it. I don't care how others look at it now.

I: Besides the pressure or the fear of how others see you, I heard that there is also the fear on your part as well. e.g. the time that H brought the flowers, did you sense anything from the waiter or waitress or the customers?

G: Yes, that time he asked the waitress to bring out the flowers I did not know about it. I felt embarrassed but yet happy. After that time and a couple more, I don't care about what others will think now.

I: The way you handle now is that you don't care what others will say.

G: Yes, I don't care now.

I: What about H?

H: For dining out no matter how romantic the atmosphere, I felt alright. But for Valentine's day, it's more difficult. For our usual dinner of the month or dining out, it's alright. But for Valentine's Day and doing what we have done for our dining out, it's more of a pressure. For every table on that day will be a man with a woman. I want to do it but I don't know if for our usual dinner of the month, if we run into people we know, it's still alright. Like I would say I like to have a good meal with a friend and that sounds reasonable. But if it's on Valentine's Day then there is a catch there. You can't make any excuse if you run into colleagues.

I: What about other situations besides social activities?

G: Does it include family members?

I: Yes...

G: Yes, my mother often asked. She would say, I often heard that you spend the night with your friend, why don't you bring your girlfriend home? There is a little pressure there, my sister as well. I feel that she knew, but would not discuss the matter.

I: So what are your worries?

G: I worry that they don't accept and thought it strange.

I: Do you consider of letting them know?

G: I'll talk to my sister, but I'm not prepare yet. But I will not tell my mom. She is a very traditional woman, even if I told her she would not understand. As for my sister, I think that she will accept.

I: What about H's family?
H: I have thought of talking to my aunties. My sister and brother in law they accept. My sister even asked me if I want to let her husband’s side of the family knows but I don’t think that is necessary. Actually it’s not necessary or not, in fact, when I go to dinner with them, they will ask about how’s big brother is doing. Actually I don’t know how to handle the situation, how they will look at my sister having a gay brother. I think it is a kind of internalized low self-esteem. I don’t know it’s low self-esteem or what, but I don’t feel comfortable anyway. As for my aunties, I am not afraid of them it’s just that they are very ignorant. When I grew up, they looked down on us because we came from a broken home. If I tell them it just reinforces them to look down on us. That’s the reason that I don’t want to let them know.

I: I have heard that not many people suspects that you are a gay couple, but I would like to ask what have you done to avoid not being suspected?

G: I don’t think I avoid anything. Sure we will not kiss or hug in public. But I guess we will not go out together with friends that don’t know we are couple. If we go out with them I feel uncomfortable. We usually go out with gay couples or lesbians.

I: what about H?

H: I think that we do purposely avoid doing something. Sometimes when we go out, I want to put my hands on his arm but is not possible or he would push my hand away and in this way reminded me that it’s not for us to do. I don’t want to kiss him in public but little things like this I could not do as well. Sure I do not feel good at all. I just want to be more close but we have to transcend it to just putting my hand on his shoulder and I do not feel good about this at all.

G: I do not have the urge to hold him, so I don’t feel that I try to avoid doing anything.

H: I like to hold his hands and want to be more close to him, especially when the street is more quiet. But could not do it as the environment would not permit. I don’t even know if the atmosphere is not that ready. Now I am thinking of just holding hands in the street and see if people on the street will talk about this.

I: But will this affect your relationship with H? Just now I heard that he mentioned that you shrug off his hand will that affect your relationship?

G: He never mention it to me. At present, I don’t think that it affects our relationship. But sometimes I feel that when he wants to hold me and I shrug off, I don’t think it’s good either, I will try to change my behaviour.

I: Especially when you know he has the needs.
G: I don't think it affects our relationship but sure it doesn't feel good at that moment. But I know that it is not him or us, many couple can not do it as well. The social atmosphere doesn't allow us to do that. You will not give up your relationship with him because of this minor thing. It's sad, because you don't want to express your intimate relationship in a closed zone, e.g. at home. By intimate relationship I don't just mean sex or kisses, I don't want to have intimate relationship at home only. I would like to express it openly and freely when I feel it. But unfortunately, it's not possible for gay people right now. But sometimes when I really want to hold him from the bottom of my heart, but it's not possible. I think it's not our pity but pity for every gay person.

I: I would also like to ask that is there any changes in your lifestyle after you two coupled?

G: Single... I have very limited time for being single. Before meeting H, I have a partner. After a very short time that I broke up, I went out with H. The difference is that H is very different from my previous partner. Being with H, I see and learn a lot of things. I want to have his kind of lifestyle which is very different from my past. After coupled with him, I found out that we want to same kind of lifestyle.

I: What about H?

H: The difference is great (laughs). That I can't fool around, and I don't have the need to fool around either. Right now, I am still used to think of myself rather than considering him e.g. like going out to travel, I'm used to just pick a place, get the ticket and fly over in the last minute. But with him is different, I have to plan, we have to pick the most available time, which is the peak seasons as he can then have his holidays. Thus it is the most expensive time, the peak season. There is also a change, life is more luxurious. It is better for two as you can have someone to share and enjoy it with. But I think that luxurious is not the best, I think that the most appealing thing in life is not luxury but the simple things in life. There is also a difference as now you can not just leave things behind, sometimes it is worrysome as I may lose my old self. A little bit afraid, it is worth it. I think that couple is like that, unlike some parents, not having to take care of their children and doing their own things. I think that one has to think over again. It's no longer just yourself, but have to think about the other person as well. Or else the relationship can not work at all. If one insists on the individual, now I understand why married men sometimes suggest to single guys not to marry too young as it is very constraining. I guess is it a difference or it is a change or a process, I'm not sure.
G: I have another thing. We are not living together and we see each other only twice or so a week. Now I heard that he has so many worries and if we live together then there will be more problems. I heard that he mentioned his worries of losing his individuality, having to think of the partners and things like that. But if we live together then the problems are more...

I: I think that the changes are great for H as he has been living all alone by himself. He is used to living all alone and so his changes are great.

G: He gives me an impression that he wants to enjoy family life and yet he sometimes say that he wants to do his own thing.

I: You heard there is a conflict there...

G: Yes, I have heard a conflict there...

I: What about your gay friends? Do they treat you differently after you had been coupled?

G: It doesn't affect me that much as I don't have many gay friends.

I: What about H? Do they treat you differently?

H: My sister, brother-in-law, such and such... they all want us to be coupled.

I: I mean members, your gay friends, not your relatives...

H: Gay friends, those who are interested in you, once they heard that you have coupled, they don't bother to call you anymore. Once you are coupled, they would not call anymore.

I: Do they give you any comments as gay couple?

G: They want us to be long lasting, I feel they do.

H: I heard some comments that they think we match, we both look good and nice, we have a couple "face".

I: I heard from you that they are very supportive to your relationship...

H: Yes, quite happy...

I: Yes, quite positive. Have you heard any negative comments then? e.g see how long they can last? etc etc...

H: Yes, I can sense that, I feel that if G didn't show up for once, some people will think that we break up. I sense it from their body language. I think that they are very nosy, and they are quite sick, but I think that it is because they don't have successful past relationships. Yes, there are people like that.

I: After you have coupled, is there anything that the gay community could not provide for you two?

G: the gay circle? (pause)

H: Very few couples friends, I don't know where they are.

I: Why is there such a phenomena? You don't know where they are?

H: I guess that they are afraid and frightened. They are frightened that once they are introduced to each other, the relationship is being threatened. e.g. If A & B and C & D are couples, once introduced,
they are worried that A may go with C and so on so forth. I think that more couple friends are good. We have talked about it as well, we want to know more couple friends, some are very nosy and we don't like them. Others hid away somewhere we don't know. We only seen a few, we know there must be many couples but don't know where they are, they don't come out. So when we go out together with gay friends, then they all look towards us ... oh, you two are really good.

I: They admire you guys...
H: Admire and envy as well.
I: If so, do you feel any pressure, as you are the only couple out?
G: I can feel their query eyes, wondering how we can maintain our relationship. It is very unnatural, they look at us specially. I want us to come out as a group and share and talk but this I can not get. I feel the gay circle can't give me a long lasting feeling. It seems that it's easy to break up.

I: What gives you such a feeling? A not longlasting relationship?
G: I heard a few cases, I don't think that they will break up but I don't know what happens. It seems that breaking up is easy. Maybe they haven't try to work things out.
I: I heard that in this circle, it is not longlasting...
H: It seems that it is a must... It seems that breaking up is normal.
G: So when H and I go out, they feel strange, why we are still coupled.
I: Why they have such a concept? that relationship is not long lasting?
G: I think that the majority emphasizes on sex. Even if their have a partner, but when they meet someone else they want sex. They don't think about their partner. They just emphasize on sex, they are so open. Unless both partners are open, or else the other one can't accept. I think they emphasize on sex too much.
I: So it affects their relationship...
G: Yes, they don't work hard, live together to find out each other, their interest, or the future. They do not put their heart with this person, they just emphasize on sex.
I: You think that they don't put much efforts on maintaining the relationship?
G: Yes, whether they emphasize on sex at the very beginning or they want to be together... I don't know. But for gay, there is a feeling that once they meet, they want sex. It is rather rare, that they will talk and know each other.
I: It seems that it's a kind of pattern among members, the way they get to know each other.
G: Yes, I think so.
I: How do you see that H?
H: I think that it is a vicious cycle. Each one is very selfish they just want to protect themselves. One may just want to enjoy that moment of sexual pleasure. Or one may mistaken that passion is true love. Not clear at all what it is.
I: Yes, looking at another point, couple usually has a common goal or path. But it seems that the sub-culture among members are not for this.
H: Common...
I: Yes, as couple one would think about the couple's future. The future for the couple. Have you thought about this?
G: When I first met H, I didn't think about it. It is only later after talking and as time past, that I think about this. You can feel that your partner has been thinking about this, if your partner also think about this then it's OK. But if you are the only one that think about it, it is one sided. But we want a future together, that is why we work hard on it.
H: Are you talking about ourselves or others?
I: I heard that the atmosphere are not for couple...
H: No, deep down inside everybody wants it, but their behaviours are different.
I: Why the difference?
H: Maybe everybody equates sex with love. Once I have sex with you then it is natural to develop love. But when the old timers find that these are two different things, maybe they think that love and sex are two different things. If they think that they can not develop love, maybe they have sex instead. This maybe one conception of an old timer. But if an old timer meets with a young gun, then there is a problem. If an old timer mets with another old timer, there is no problem here. They do it in the sauna and do not even know the other's name. That's the end of the story. Some are so used to this kind of rule of the game that they may not want to develop a relationship.
I: Yes, so somehow when one reaches the old timer stage, one understands the rule of the game of the sub-culture. That sex and love are two different things.
H: Yes, but what's prior to the old timer?
I: Yes, yes...
H: Will it be that society couldn't provide an atmosphere to gay persons so that they can develop a relationship e.g holding hands, candle light dinner..etc etc. There are many minor things that do not require going back home and get stuck in a room. However, as the society's atmosphere would not permit doing so, thus, people tend to associate sex with love. But I think that the consequence of having sex leads one to associate many expectations. e.g. I have sex
with you and I then require you to do this and that etc. etc... I think just having a sexual relationship is fairly misleading. This may be the vicious cycle due to society's non-permissiveness. I don't want to make society to be responsible for everything but this is one of the influence that society has on gay people.

I: Besides wanting to have more couple's friends, are there anything else that the gay sub-culture can not fill your needs?

H: more people to recognize us.

I: You mean gay people or straight ...

H: I do not care but more people to recognize us and to have more respect. Recognize and respect, e.g. I feel that my sister recognize us but does not respect us as a couple (husband and wife) relationship. She accept the relationship between G & I but I feel she does not respect it as I respect a husband and wife's relationship. Suddenly I realize that recognition and respect are two different things.

I: How do you expect others to respect your relationship? Can you explain?

H: How? I think like a heterosexual couple, there are some kind of respect there. e.g. when they get married, you know that you have to give them a gift. I think it's a kind of respect. You go to that kind of setting, you know what to do. For example, when you go to a wedding in the Church, you know what to do. I guess society has not provide the opporunity for my sister to learn to deal with gay couples. You ask me what I want, I think a set of patterns of respect for gay couple. Like if going to a gay wedding party, others know what to do. It is quite likely for now that if people are invited to a gay wedding party, they feel out of nowhere. They don't know what to call you, the roles are not clear. Like in a heterosexuals wedding, the mother knows that she is going to give the dragon and phoenix bracketes, the aunties know what to get as well. But there is no such pattern, e.g there are bride and glooms glasses that can be bought at Hallmark, but there is no such... no such... no matter how good your relationship is, still there is no such respect.

I: You mean the respect is given by others and gay couples lack public recognition?

H: Yes...

I: What about G?

G: I think that if others do not respect us, I feel the pressure. e.g. He asks his sister out to dinner and his sister asks her husband and me out as well. Though I know that his sister knows we are a gay couple and she accepts us, but I do feel IIembarassed.

I: Why do you feel embarassed? What make you feel uncomfortable?
G: Even though superficially they accept you. They accept you, but deep inside, I feel very odd.
I: Though you know that they accept you two as a couple, but deep inside you feel uncomfortable. This kind of uncomfortable feeling can you explain more?
G: Though superficially they accept you but deep down they don't. They don't think it's right and superficially they will say oh, you two are very good, but actually they do not like it.
I: You are suspicious of their acceptance?
G: Yes, I suspect.
I: What made you suspect, are there anything that caused your suspicion? Or is it out of nowhere? You just has this gut feeling?
G: They have not done anything.
I: You don't see or feel anything?
G: Maybe because I seldom contact them...
I: Besides them, are there any others who accept you two as a gay couple, but you don't feel good about it?
H: David...(H suggested David to G)
G: You think David?
H: You don't accept David's wife..
G: Yes, of all his friends, I feel comfortable with David, I feel that he totally accepts me. However, his wife, I feel very embarrassed.
H: She is a Christian..
G: She feels frighten and as she is frighten, I am even more frighten than her.
I: Yes...I can see, she has something there that made you uncomfortable.
G: I can see that too, it's not that I don't like her but I feel embarassed to see her.
H: My sister, she is so... no matter what sex orientation you have, you can't stand her.
I: What about H? Do you have any friends whether gay or not, they say they accept you two as a couple, but somehow you still don't feel comfortable.
H: If others say they accept us, I don't care I believe them. However, there is one pair, the pair that lives in NT. I don't understand why...I don't know, they are my friends, fairly good ones. Up to now, I still haven't introduce G to them. It was very late that I told them I am gay. After I told them, I don't even want to see them. I guess I can't accept that they know about my sexual orientation. There are incidents like this, even when I have not coupled.
I: That is a very interesting issue that you raised. What made you not accept him accepting you after you told him?
H: Maybe because his reactions are so indifferent.
I: He doesn't discuss it with you or mention anything to you?
H: Yes...maybe, what my sister said is true. Some people will not treat you any special because you are a gay couple. If that is true, then it's good. But I know they don't think like that. I guess they don't know what they can do, or they don't know what to do. They don't know where they could put you, even though we were great friends in the past. But can not handle it. After I tell others, I want others to pamper me. Or say some blessing words. But thinking back, he did say something like, I have wonder about you... But the next time I visit him, he never mention anything. Did not ask me about my boyfriend. He never mention anything, like there is a blank spot which we will never mention or talk about. Do you think so? (signalling G)
I: Another thing, as a gay couple, your relationship... why you pick a monogamous relationship?
G: I think that human are very elegance (高雅), we can not go wild regarding sex. I think like that, even my first love, I have the same feelings. If he is not monogamous, then I'll leave him. That is my concept...
I: That is the way you see love...
G: Yes, that is the way I see love... I think that if both partners want a monogamous relationship then it shows that you want to build a relationship that has a future. If open, then it means that you do not have trust in him. You accept him having other partners, and even if he tells you, I don't think it's possible. That's my concept.
I: What about H?
H: Let me say, in my past relationships, I accept monogamous relationship, I don't develop two relationships at the same time. But in the past, my relationships are fairly short term but now I can see how a monogamous relationship works. It needs time, sacrifice and compromise. I think that if you want a good relationship you have to sacrifice, compromise and needs lots of time. One relationship takes so much already, we are talking about only one relationship. Like sacrifice, I know that I have to sacrifice my individualistic part, and sacrifice is not enough. But one has to admire what comes after sacrifice and compromise, or else you just know how to blame your partner for all the sacrifices you made. I am talking about a quality relationship, you have to put so much in it, now I'm thirty three and I began to think about this. You want quality or quantity. The game in gay community is so phoney that it's so real as well. What I mean by that is you know it is not long lasting but at that very moment you act very real.
I: What do you mean by that? Can you give some examples?
H: For example, being more concrete, in a very short time you are very intimate and you tell each other many of your feelings. Or in a very short time, together you plan to buy an overseas property. Or helping him do a lot of things, like helping him to renovate his apartment. Doing a lot of things, making him to think that you are really involved with him. However, all these can be gone the next day, don't you think that being phoney yet so real as well. In just a second on the very next day, everything disappear and I don't want to see you any more. Or I try to avoid your phone calls and try to avoid any contacts with you. It's so horrible, so phoney yet so real. 謊得越來越真, Talking about it makes me shiver.

I: Why such a phenomena?

H: Maybe if both are being phoney, they are not that high. Can not stimulate their love feelings, the kind of ambivalent feelings, now you get it now you don't (善得善失). Like if I and Peter know that our relationship is phoney, then we have sex and it's over. But having sex is not so fulfilling and it's better to have feelings of discomfort, like you don't know whether you get him or not, it's like first love. The relationship is more exciting then. But now it seems that all these are wasabe, a little dip (laughs). Only last for a short moment and after this, there is nothing.

I: I heard that the relationship can be very...

H: 强烈

I: Loving so hard, that both parties are very involved. Or in a very short time, they move out without much consideration and after staying together for a short period, or they separate the next day...

H: Yes, can not stand each other any longer. (pause)

I: Why is such a phenomena? In a short time, two persons can be very intimate and yet they break up quick as well. I called this pseudo-intimacy, like H has mentioned. 两 persons together in a short time and their love is so strong (強烈).

H: Very contradictory, I don't know how to say. I think that there are two kinds. There are people who are so detached and defensive that they can not even find sexual partners. There are some sex partners who want a real relationship. (emotional relationship). The old timers will pretend to be real (emotional) and the inexperienced ones will die. (善善善). After having so many failures, the inexperienced ones will learn to be phoney yet real 假善善 真 Somest may not have consider too much and they moved out to live together, some are successful I know a few couples who had known one another for a few days or weeks and they stay together ever since.

I: For long term as well...
H: Looking at their pattern, they do not match at all. I think that they are willing to sacrifice or compromise, and they learn to value their relationship, it's not impossible, they do make it works...
I: They work on it...
H: Depends which one comes first, sex before love or love before sex... may not be impossible.
I: depends on the couple...
H: I think that if sex before love occurs in a relationship then there is a greater chance of that the relationship depends on luck.
G: What do you mean by depends on luck?
H: If sex before love occurs then there is a greater chance that it depends on luck(\frac{1}{2}) But I have heard others saying that "what the heck, you had him in bed already." They think that they gain something out of it. I think that sex is important but it isn't important to that extend. As I am getting older, I tend to think this way.
I: Is it by any chances that in the gay community different age groups' members have different views regarding the importance of sex?
G: Yes, I have seen that the younger age group, their behaviours are outrageous. They put on a show signalling others that they want to meet guys. They dress up very well and want to attract you. They want to have sex first and want to try out with various partners. It's difficult to be emotionally involved with them.
I: They want to fool around...
H: I have seen another situation in which the young are very innocent. They want to have a lasting relationship. On the contrary, those that are older and who have experienced alot, having been hurt alot, the old timers tend to fool around. Older in age doesn't represent...
G: I don't mean representing... but the majority are like this...
I: For example, as you have choosen a monogamous relationship do you have experienced any problems?
G: Problems meaning... if there is another...
I: Because you have been committed and choosen a monogamous relationship, are there any problems because you have choosen such pattern of relationship?
G: After I chose my partner... would that made me...
I: e.g. there are other man after you, because you have choosen a monogamous relationship, unlike an open relationship where it is alright and there are no problems.
G: There are no problems, but sometimes it's confusing. e.g. I chose my partner, there are many things that we can get along. However, there are some differences in dealing with daily living. We are not that compatible and if you meet someone else, at an instance you...
may wonder whether this person is better than your partner. However, if you respect your relationship with your partner, then you will give up the new relationship and involve with your partner again. I think you have to decide whether you should do this. I think that for every couple there are instances like this.

I: What about H?

H: I think that is what commitment means. I think that there must be others that are better than the partner you have right now. If you keep on looking...

G: You just guess, you may not find one...

H: I think you can find one...

G: you don't know, but you just guess...

H: Yes, there must be others that are better, in the end there must be others that are better. One mountain is higher than another. That is how I interpret commitment, I think that there are others that may be better than your partner, but as you are committed to this relationship that is it. As you just asked, whether there are problems after we been coupled? Yes...I think that I have learnt a lot in this relationship because our lifestyle is quite different. e.g. I am used to a lot of things, like being very independent, knowing where to go for social activities. But going out with him would be tiring as I have to watch over him. I am not bragging about you but I feel that I was moved by G because he is so true. e.g. what he likes or dislikes, his reactions are very lovely. I think that there are losses and gains in a relationship. At the very beginning, I am not used to it. I feel not worthwhile as I lost one thing after another. It is only slowly that I realized that I have gained a lot. It's difficult to tally loses and gains. Sure there are problems, e.g. when others that are interested in him asked him out and he can not refuse others. He also feels uncomfortable because I am so involved in the gay community and have lots of chances of meeting others. I will tell him that I will not have affairs, I will tell him in every details the people I met. He will ask in details every name that I have mentioned(laughs). The first few times I will explain, but after awhile, I don't. I understand how he feels.

G: When I ask the name, it doesn't mean that I am worried but I don't have a good memory. If everytime I'm worried then I will be in trouble.

I: Yes... in your relationship, are there any specific or common conflicts in your relationship?

G: There are minor issues, like I am used to have the T.V. on while I am having my dinner. But H doesn't like it. He thinks that as we do not have dinner that often, he wants us to chat instead. I agreed but
sometimes he just turn off the T.V. without asking(laughs). I would ask why you don't let me watch T.V.

H: I also turn on the T.V. when I am alone having dinner by myself. But as we do not have too many chances to have dinner together, as we do not live together, I treasure every moment of our time together. You work everyday, there is no time to communicate, even if we live together in the future, still chatting is not enough. The most frequent time spend on chatting will be during dinner, but if we have the T.V. on then we will be affected by it. My value on T.V. is very negative, nowadays not many family members communicate with each other because they watch T.V. while dining. They don't communicate with each other and turn out to be fairly distance. It's just not between couples but among parents and children as well.

G: But you have often say "You are not watching?" and then, turn the T.V. off. Instead I am watching and what you have done is not right.

H: Yes, too bad...

G: I am watching and it's not good...

H: Once I did not know, I turned it off even though the news was on(laugh).

G: I would not do that. I will not turn off the T.V. if you are watching. Or I will not ask you to stop working on your volunteer work. That is disrespectful, but he has this behaviour that he would not ask you first. If he does not want you to do it, he will stop you from doing. At least he can ask first.

I: You hope he will ask first...

G: It's not just T.V. watching, but other things as well. If you are doing other things, he should not stop it. I would never do that, I would never turn off the music if he is listening to it. If we live together, then there may be many problems.

I: You are worry about the lifestyle differences... and conflicts may arise from this. Are there anything else? Thank you for your participation.
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