



Finding the Other Half

Chinese Parents act as go-betweens
for Unmarried Children

The International Department of Shude High School

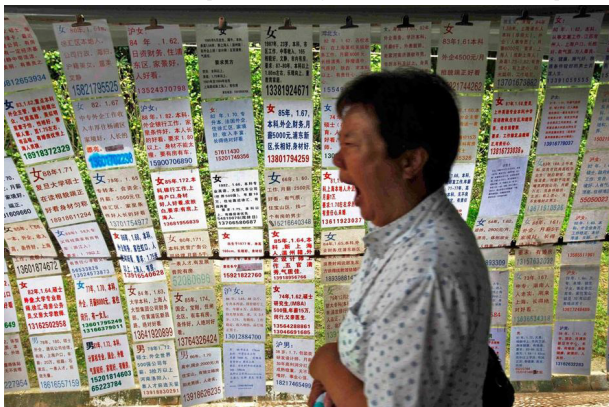
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Under the shade of flourishing trees, that senior citizens converged to chat in a hubbub with each other about their unmarried children is no longer a rare scene. The fences along the road are pasted countless pieces of paper profiles where the basic personal information (including age, profession, wage) of single people is provided. While those profiles may catch the eyes of newcomers, they are carefully read by some worrying parents, who're weighing upon different factors to determine whether the profiles may match their ideal standards. All of these happened in July 2018, in merely one spot in Chengdu People's Park - the blind dating corner.

A tired old woman walked past the marriage information

- Jinpei Sun



Rising Parental Interference

In 1970s, China, many young people from cities were forced to go down to the countryside to engage in the agricultural activities due to the political reasons. When those educated urban youth returned home as 30-year-olds in the 1980s, they often didn't marry. They did have their desire to find the other half, but were all blocked by

the aforementioned policies and regulations. Gradually, the desire turned into the fear of not being able to find a soul mate.

The unmarried youth was such an imperative issue at the time that the mainstream media, People's Daily, reported it for many times. Local governments at all levels responded accordingly. Workers, youth, and women organized social activities, and the Women's Federation provided registration and referral services as well. This has not only paved the way for the openness and the socialization of personal marriage issues, but also made it more readily acceptable by the civilians to follow the same approach, foreshadowing the emergence of future blind dating. As cities underwent rapid capital accretion and managerial changes, parents still possess the fear garnered in the past, and their only child who've been nurtured

under the one-child policy becomes the sole hope of their lineage intensifies the fear even more.

As one major kind of blind dating, attending the blind dating gathering could be described as the process that parents gather at specific areas, typically in public places, such as parks and squares, to establish relationships and exchange information with other parents on the purpose of supervising firsthand to check out if there is someone good enough for their own child. To fathom out how this phenomenon is consolidating its status as an indispensable means of finding the other half in China, our team visited the blind dating corner in Chengdu People's Park, handing out questionnaire and doing interviews.

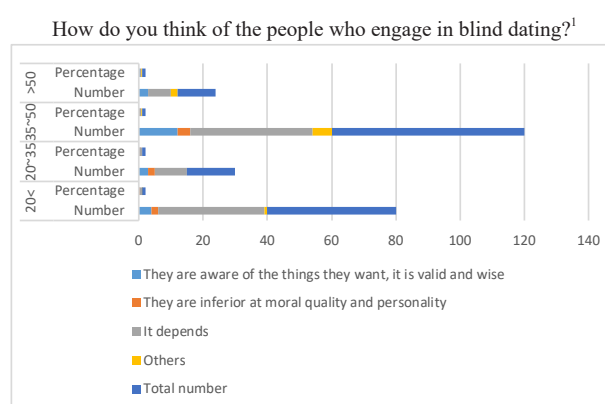
Parent-child Paradox

In order have a broader understanding of people's present opinion towards blind dating, we conducted an online questionnaire and field interviews. A number of questions are raised in the questionnaire and answered by 127 citizens from diverse age range. The result of the questionnaire and two of our interviews could best reflect the mainstream simultaneously.

Mr. Wang has been in deep anxiety recently, "She wouldn't even listen to any single word I said about blind dating or the guy I chose for her. What a stubborn girl!" He complained to both of us and other parents at the Blind dating corner. When asked about the reasons, he elaborated his present worries, "My daughter is in her 30s, yet she refuses to split even a small proportion of her time to look for a spouse. All of her coworkers have already had children. She's totally out of her peers' track."

Mr. Wang's situation is no longer novel in China. There are millions of senior parents worrying for their children's marriage, and that could be caused by several reasons. "People would throw acrid words at us when they know our children are still single, and our children would be regarded as those who are discarded by the opposite sex due to the so-called inferior

financial background or character flaws. That disreputability would definitely make it hard for us to find a position in the community. I admit that some people with problems in social communication and financial independence do compose a portion of the total number. However, that is not true for all of the cases - My daughter has such an entrepreneurial spirit that she doesn't want to waste even 1 minute on men!" There was a sense of indignance when the man in his 60s discussed about the corrosive comments from other citizens. The old man's speech effectually tugged at the heartstrings of the other parents at the corner who put self-esteem to priority.



"The younger the people, the larger percentage of them think a person cannot be judged based on whether or not they have participated in blind dating.

A relative larger percentage of people aged between 20 and 35 consider people engaged in blind dating to be inferior in moral quality and personality.

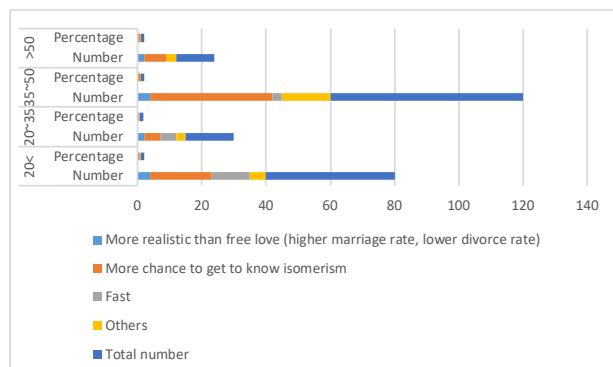
Much fewer people, nearly 10 percent, aged under 20 regard people participated in blind dating to be conscious of the things they want, while 25 percent of old people above 50 think it is wise and valid for people to do blind dating.

Being afraid of the sneers in the community is not the only reason why parents are so concerned about their children's marriage. Witnessing their children to form families of their own and being able to welcome their third-generation are the biggest dreams of many Chinese parents. "I am an old man who soon will go through the 70th birthday. I do not know how much time there is for me to accompany my future grandson. I wish I could send him to school and watch him grow up day by day like other old people do." Sounds of approval arise, "I know she would object finding the other half through this channel,

¹ All of the samples are from the questionnaire handed out.

but she could still gain benefits somehow, like making more friends, which would help her career anyways."

What do you think is the most important advantage of going on a blind date?

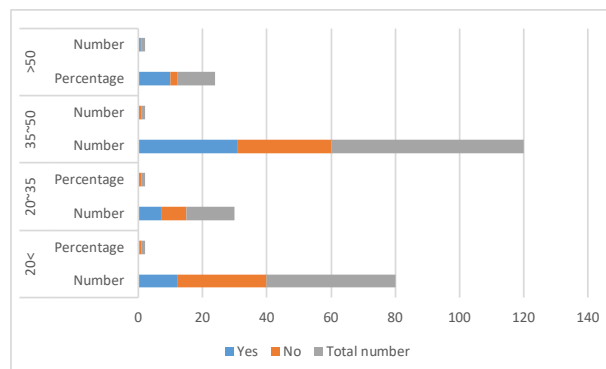


Regardless of the age range, people consider more chances to get to know isomerism is the most advantage of going on a blind date.

Interestingly, a large proportion of the elder generation has more confidence in blind dating than some other people do. A considerable number of them have gone through successful marriage by being cognizant of the other half through specific social activities held decades ago, when free love was not the mainstream. Moreover, some parents would think that looking for the other half on children's own would not generate stable life in all cases, because the financial background of the two people may not be well-matched, and the money problem would ruin the marriage to a large extent. However, in blind dating, this nuisance could be avoided.

The younger generation holds different opinions. Miss Zhang, a 27-year-old passer-by, asserts her thoughts about blind dating, "There are a lot of variants in this field, one cannot make a conclusion by seeing the whole picture yourself. As a result, he couldn't really believe the self-introduction information written on the paper." Apart from possessing doubts on the validity of information displayed at the blind dating corner, many young people prefer to look for their spouses in a more natural process: contacting each other for some time before dating and stepping into the marriage rather than starting dating as strangers with the

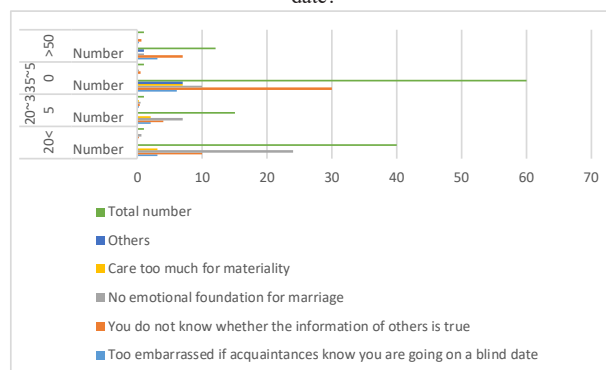
Would you like your parents to go on a blind date looking for your future company?



Most people at the age of 20 below dislike the action. Nonetheless, the older generation is, the more the action is appreciated.

mere purpose of getting married. " What makes it go from bad to worse is that there is no emotional communication for the two participants of blind dating, " said Miss Zhang, " I think Blind dating is more of materialism rather than love, and thereby the marriage ensued is merely a way for people to gain stability, have children, and more importantly, avoid parental pressure. It is like a complex market, and we, the children, are being put on price tags and traded as products of our parents. The standards that they judge our worth are horribly the same: houses, wealth, height, economic background or even Chinese Zodiac." This forms a so-called disdain chain, which means that people should only match with the ones who have similar backgrounds

What do you think is the most serious shortage of going on a blind date?



For people aged more than 50 years old, the shortage of blind dating turns out to be that people do not have access to confirm whether the information provided by the others is trustworthy.

For people aged less than 20 years old, emotional foundation would be put at priority.

How Do the Foreigner Think?^[5]

According to a video posted online about an interview with different foreigners towards their attitudes about arranged marriage, we can discover that many of them are opposed to this idea, especially those who are forced by religious conditions. "I came from christian upbringing. In christianity, they have the kind of the idea that you should get married young. They want to marry from a christian...and trying like force a relationship. You feel pressure from your family, your religion. But I think it's wrong, it's playing people's lives. I think it's emotionally bad for people." said one young lady. For interviewed people from New York, parents interfering their children's marriage is rare and uncommon," they probably have some personal pressure, but it's not like parent pressure". Everyone of them think that people should personally get ready for their own marriage."I think it is important to marry someone when you feel ready, have some connection with someone. It is not the parent's choice". Some also express under standing toward the arranged marriage in Asia"It makes sense for developing countries for economic reasons, I understand where it comes from. I will not say it is not ok, that's how many people find financial stability. And arranged marriage worked out well in place like India, so it sometimes makes people happy. I think like recommendation or semiarrange won't take away your individuality. But forcing someone to marriage, I think it is somewhat exaggerated."

and capabilities as themselves. For example, a woman with a doctor's degree should at least pair up with a man who earns 20 thousand RMB per month. This kind of audacious way of dividing people into different levels to obtain great marriages would isolate the bottom citizens from the "game", thus contributing to class solidification and preventing more generations of blind dating. Moreover, this set of distorted values is severely repelling the youth from blind dating. "Personally speaking, marriage should be a sacred portion of life, so spending more time in finding my true love would be my preference even if money would be a noticeable barrier."

The Increasing Demand for Marriage

Blind dating has become a nonnegligible issue than ever due to the skyrocketing single population. Caused by ascending divorce and imbalanced birth ratio of the male and female, the number of single people in China nowadays has already reached approximately 300 million according to the statistics from Southwest Securities. Seeking for the other half is now an urgent event, which brings the blind dating into the limelight. Although it is not feasible to predict what the future trend of single population will be, it can be fairly asserted that blind dating as an efficient channel for matching deserves enduring attention from the society.

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