

Project Title

Queer families with Chinese Characteristics: An Exploratory Study of 'sexless marriage' websites in China (2011-2013)

Funding Source and Amount

FRG II \$49,140

Description

Sexual norms have changed rapidly in China after decades of reforms. Nowadays, satisfactory sexual relations are held as an important element in maintaining conjugal harmony and familial stability. The new expectation of sexual fulfillment in marriage generates pressure for those *tongzhi* who opt to web. Some gays and lesbians form strategic unions with each other in order to pass as heterosexual couples. Other may pursue sexless marriage with asexual people. Online marriage brokers for sexless marriage have emerged to cater for the distinct needs of homosexuals and asexuals. This study employs the method of virtual ethnography to explore the culture in these sexless marriage websites and the implications of sexless marriage as an alternative form of marriage in contemporary China. An investigation of why and how individuals form sexless marriage tells us much about the opportunities and constraints facing the only-child generation, their negotiation of cultural preferences and personal (a)sexual lives, and the emergence of queer families with Chinese characteristics.