

## MASTER'S THESIS

### An exploratory study of asexual marriage on a Chinese website

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## Abstract

The process of individualization is increasingly permeating all levels of Chinese society. This research attempts to highlight some aspects on how Chinese individualization is emerging in marriage and the family through the prism of China's emerging "asexual marriage" – a consensual partnership that has no sex or a limited amount of sex. Collecting qualitative data in different ways, this study first examines the less obvious and less studied effects of China's sexual revolution as part of the individualization process brought to the asexual individuals on a specific matchmaking website WX920. One can see that these individuals undergo great suffering and are under pressure to find a partner in light of the sexual imperative in the couple relationship. My study also focuses on the idealized view of asexual marriage currently promoted by the rhetoric of affection. What is particularly striking is that the same ideal is perceived as equally worthy of a relationship in a proforma marriage with a homosexually inclined person, when one cannot meet an asexual partner. In addition, this study suggests the reintegration of individuals into a new type of collectivity – the family, which is primarily structured as a unit of emotional importance to the individual's marital decision. Nevertheless, the other side of family connection constitutes a crucial dilemma for some non-conformist individuals, who are confronted with a dual demand for satisfying personal aspirations and family expectations. Drawing on the concept of "negotiated familism", this study reveals how these individuals are by no means passive recipients and they actively engage in negotiation about their ideal of personal life through a marriage in form only. Finally, I will engage a discussion on individualizing trends by exploring asexual people's reorganization of conventional norms of marriage and other expectations such as reproduction is given.

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