



Panel's title : Bachelorhood in China: strategies of mate selection, sexuality and perception of gender roles in a context of high sex ratio

Titre du panel : Célibat masculin en Chine: stratégies de choix du conjoint, sexualité et perception des rôles sexués au défi du déficit de femmes

Coordinator (Affiliation, University...):

Isabelle ATTANÉ (Research Unit “Population, Gender and Societies”, Institut National d’études démographiques, Paris);

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Language : English

Topics : Demography, China, bachelorhood, sex ratios, gender roles, marriage strategies

Panel presentation :

This panel is devoted to the presentation of the results of DefiChine project (2013-2017), funded by the ANR and HeSam University. The project focuses on male bachelorhood in China, where heterosexual marriage remains the norm and still determines access to various prerogatives (e.g. cohabitation with a partner, family formation, social participation, etc.). Based on a quantitative survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted in 2014-2015 in three rural counties of Southern Shaanxi and in Xi’an city among migrants native of these rural counties, DefiChine investigates the relationship between a reduced availability female partners (which results from the imbalanced sex ratios at adult ages) and various aspects of the life of unmarried men (living conditions, living arrangement, sexual behavior, strategies of mate selection, perceptions of gender roles) who, due to their bachelorhood, are facing critical situations with respect to the norm. The objective is the understanding of the processes and conditions (including socioeconomic) that determine access to women where they are locally in lesser number than men in the marriage/partnership and heterosexuality markets, given that women’s practice of hypergamy makes access to women dependent on men’s social and economic status. The project analyzes how men’s practices and attitudes (including perception of gender roles) are configured when they experience an involuntary bachelorhood. The panel investigates in particular strategies of mate selection, sexual behavior, and gender roles with a focus on marriage and prostitution. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are conducted to compare samples of married and never married men, migrants and non-migrants.

Key words : Demography, China, bachelorhood, sex ratios, gender roles, marriage strategies

Participants :

1) **Name(s) (Affiliation, University...):** Su WANG (Research Unit “Population, Gender and Societies”, Institut National d’études démographiques) and **Qunlin ZHANG (Xi’an Polytechnic University, China) [speaker]**

Communication's title: Determinants of male singlehood in a context of reduced availability female partners in rural China

Titre de la communication : Déterminants du célibat masculin dans un contexte de pénurie de conjointes potentielles en Chine rurale

Language : English



Presentation :

This presentation analyzes the determinants of male singlehood in a context of reduced availability female partners in three districts of rural China. Single men characteristics will first be described and compared to those of married men using a multiple correspondence analysis that will characterize male singlehood in rural China and the strategies deployed in the marriage market to access a woman. Then men's life-course parameters, yet rarely studied, will be analyzed by the method event history analysis. Besides age, level of education, economic and housing conditions, we will focus mainly on two life events: the occurrence of the first migration and the first sexual intercourse. The chronological sequence of these events with regard to marriage will enable us to demonstrate the causal link between migration, marriage and the first sexual intercourse. We'll then test the hypothesis that the occurrence of the first migration and the first sexual intercourse are factors accelerating the timing of the marriage of men. Furthermore, opinion items, such as self-assessment of socioeconomic status or health will be taken into account in our analysis.

Key words : China; male singlehood; marriage strategies

2) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **Yang MENG (IPDS, Xi'an Jiaotong University) [speaker]** and Shuzhuo LI (IPDS, Xi'an Jiaotong University)

Communication's title : Men's Mate Selection Strategies in a Context of Marriage-Squeeze: Does Migration Experience Matter?

***Titre de la communication :* Choix du conjoint chez les hommes dans un contexte de pénurie en partenaires féminines : l'expérience migratoire importe-t-elle ?**

Language : English

Presentation :

Masculine sex ratios in adulthood lead to a reduced availability of female partners on the marriage market, since there are more men than women expected to look for a partner of the opposite sex. Studies have shown that men with poor socioeconomic conditions are more disadvantaged in the marriage market. This communication compares samples of married and unmarried men to test three hypothesis: 1) The purpose of rural bachelors' rural-urban migration is not only to increase their income, but also to enlarge their pool of potential mates by increasing their personal income to afford marriage costs, and improve their attractiveness on the marriage market; 2) Men who face difficulties in finding a potential mate are ready to overstep the patterns of virilocal marriage and patrilineal family; 3) Migration increases the probability to overstep the traditional marriage patterns.

Key words : China; male bachelorhood; marriage patterns; migration; virilocal marriage

3) Name(s) (Affiliation) : **Tania ANGELOFF (IEDES Université Paris 1) [speaker]** and Su WANG (INED, Paris)

Communication's title : "The « Reality Principle»: When Men Speak of their Ideal Partner in a Context of a Shortage of Women

***Titre de la communication :* Le « principe de réalité » : quand les hommes parlent de leur partenaire idéale dans un contexte de pénurie de femmes**

Language : English



Presentation :

The purpose of this communication is to understand how the reduced availability of female partners on the marriage market is affecting the way single men and their family invent new strategies to find a spouse. The presentation analyses qualitative interviews to focus on men's views of their ideal partner. Do they alter their standards in terms of partner's characteristic? How do they adapt, resist or overcome the stigma of being considered as a « bare branch », in a country where marriage remains a family issue and individual love a fantasy, and when the reality principle requires to find a spouse, no matter the (social and symbolic) cost? The communication will also deal with the permanence and disruption of both the collective and individual representations and expectations when marriage and filial piety are at stake. Relying on men's point of view, we will analyse gender roles norms from the masculine perspective.

Key words : China; male bachelorhood; gender roles

4) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **Michel BOZON (INED Paris) [speaker]** and Qunlin ZHANG (Xi'an Polytechnic University, China)

Communication's title : Male sexual behavior in a context of high sex ratios in rural Shaanxi, China: does marital status matter?

***Titre de la communication :* Comportements sexuels masculins dans un contexte de déséquilibre des sexes en Chine rurale: le statut matrimonial importe-t-il ?**

Language : English

Presentation :

Masculine sex ratios in adulthood in China lead to a reduced availability of female partners affecting both heterosexual marriage/partnership and sexuality markets, since there are more men than women expected to look for a partner of the opposite sex. Therefore, a share of Chinese men fails to ever find a wife or a stable female romantic and/or sexual partner. But the issue is not trivial in China, where a high value is still placed on marriage. In addition, in the cultural context of China where marriage often remains the legitimate setting for sexuality, having sexual relations with a stable partner is an aspect of life from which single men may be partially excluded. Assuming that most people look for an active sex life, these men might thus adopt compensation practices, such as casual sex, masturbation, use of commercial sex or other sexual services, to compensate for the absence of a regular sexual partner within marriage. This communication uses quantitative data to compare the sexual behavior of unmarried men aged 30+ to those of the married in rural counties in Shaanxi, to evidence similarities and differences and determines to what extent marital status matters in the intensity of sexual activity, and leads or not to a diversification of sexual behavior.

Key words : China; male singlehood; sexual behavior

5) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **Giovanna MERLI (Duke University NC, USA) [speaker]** and Isabelle ATTANÉ (INED Paris)

Communication's title : Use of sexual services by men in a context of male-marriage squeeze: does migration matter?

***Titre de la communication :* Le recours aux services sexuels dans un contexte de disponibilité réduite en partenaires féminines : l'expérience migratoire importe-t-elle?**



Language : English

Presentation :

This communication uses data from two concurrent quantitative surveys designed to examine men's attitudes and practices in a context of reduced availability of female partners in China. This parallel data collection covered men resident in rural Southern Shaanxi province as well as men from the same places of origin in Xi'an, the main destination of rural migrants in Shaanxi province. While most inquiries about sexual behaviors in China focus on urban areas where the use of commercial sex services is often higher among married men who use it as complementary practice, we investigate the association between marital status and the use of sexual services in a rural context where reduced availability of sexual partners may lead to the adoption of compensatory sexual behaviors. We also draw comparisons by migration and marital status because the association between marital status and the use of sexual services in rural areas may be confounded by selective migration.

Key words : China; male bachelorhood; sexual behavior; sexual services; internal migration

6) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **Lisa EKLUND (Lund University, Sweden) [speaker]**

Communication's title : A qualitative inquiry into the moral underpinnings of commercial sex in China: Is the male surplus fuelling an increasing acceptance of commercial sex work?

***Titre de la communication* : Investigation qualitative sur les fondements moraux de la prostitution en Chine: le surplus d'hommes alimente-t-il une tolérance croissante vis-à-vis du commerce du sexe ?**

Language : English

Presentation :

Commercial sex work (CSW) has increased in China since the Reform era started and caused much concern over the spread of STIs, including HIV/AIDS, as well as moral distress as evident from numerous crack down by the police. One argument put forward in the literature is that the increase in CSW has been partly fuelled by the growing sex ratio imbalance, where men seek commercial sex as a compensation for sexuality within marriage. Based on in-depth interviews with 51 women and men on topics related to family and intimate relations, this communication explores how CSW is viewed and practiced in light of a shortage of women. Is the male surplus fuelling an increasing acceptance of CSW? How are the moral underpinnings of CSW explained, and practices motivated? The analysis generates four main findings: 1) that morality is intertwined with class and status of the client, 2) that constructions of male vs female sexuality shapes how CSW is explained and practiced, 3) that CSW needs to be understood in relation to the institution of marriage in China. From the narratives of the 51 interviewees, the notion that surplus males fuelled CSW is not supported. Rather, the communication concludes that the increasing commercialization of sexuality and intimate relations, growing income inequality, and conservative views on marriage and divorce are the main drivers for accepting and explaining CSW in China.

Key words : China; gender imbalance; commercial sex