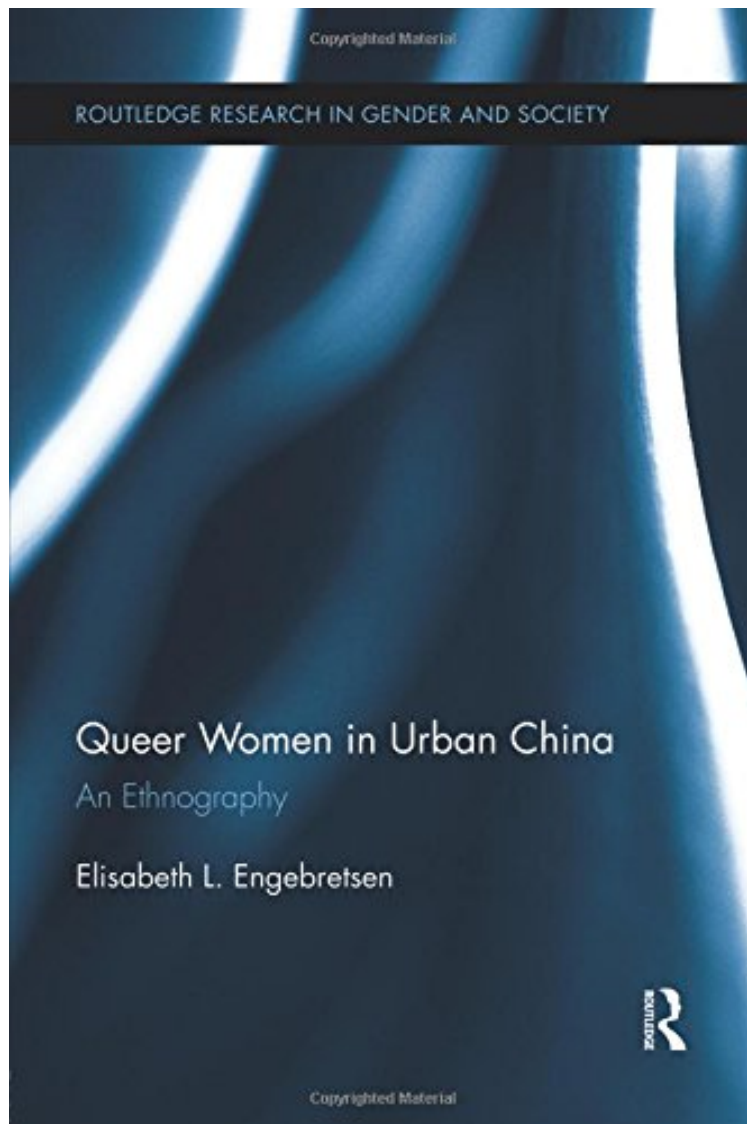


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Elisabeth L. Engebretsen

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Elisabeth L. Engebretsen : Queer Women in Urban China: An Ethnography (Routledge Research in Gender and Society) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Queer

Women in Urban China: An Ethnography (Routledge Research in Gender and Society):

Lala (lesbian) and gay communities in mainland China have emerged rapidly in the 21st century. Alongside new freedoms and modernizing reforms, and with mainstream media and society increasingly tolerant, lalas still experience immense family and social pressures to a degree that this book argues is deeply gendered. The first anthropological study to examine everyday lala lives, intimacies, and communities in China, the chapters explore changing articulations of sexual subjectivity, gendered T-P (tomboy-wife) roles, family and kinship, same-sex weddings, lala-gay contract marriages, and community activism. Engebretsen analyzes lala strategies of complicit transgressions to balance surface respectability and undeclared same-sex desires, why "being normal" emerges a deep aspiration and sign of respectability, and why openly lived homosexuality and public activism often are not. *Queer Women in Urban China* develops a critical ethnographic analysis through the conceptual lens of "different normativities," tracing the paradoxes and intricacies of the desire for normal life alongside aspirations for recognition, equality, and freedom, and argues that dominant paradigms fixed on categories, identities, and the absolute value of public visibility are ill-equipped to fully understand these complexities. This book complements existing perspectives on sexual and gender diversity, contemporary China, and the politics and theories of justice, recognition, and similitude in global times.

"[] an extremely valuable contribution to the study of queer life and politics in China." Dr. Howard Chiang, University of Warwick "Engaging, revealing, well-rounded and accessible, Engebretsen's valuable multidisciplinary study is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the development and negotiation of non-normative sexual identity within contemporary Chinese society." Gareth Shaw, University of Nottingham "Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen's *Queer Women in Urban China* is an engaging and thoroughly researched, ethnographic study of the lives of lesbian or lala women in Beijing. Engebretsen's investigation of Chinese sexual nonnormativity provides a much-needed counterbalance to Euro-American-centric theories of queer culture. This is a valuable book for anyone interested in non-normative sexualities and contemporary Chinese society." Leta Hong Fincher, author of *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (Zed, 2014) "Engebretsen's ethnography constitutes an important contribution to the study of kinship, family and gender in urban China. Far from being appealing only to scholars in queer studies, it will be of great help to all those who are looking for a theoretically informed and ethnographically rich study of the family in urban China. Its enjoyable style and vivid descriptions will also appeal to scholars interested in urban anthropology and global cities; finally, this book can be recommended to all social scientists interested in modes of affect and intimacy in the globalised world." Roberta Zavoretti, *Women and Gender in Chinese Studies* "Its adroitly-put arguments, special attention to the generational differences and subtleties of urban lala self-making and subject-positioning, and powerful critiques of both academic and social dilemmas concerning the genders and sexualities of Chinese women combine to make it appealing to read and of great value to students and scholars, as well as those within the general public who are interested in Asian queer cultures." Jing (Jamie) Zhao, *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* "The book is a significant contribution to the field of queer Asian studies and queer China studies. It is a timely ethnographic study of the emerging queer women community and activism in China after the new millennium. One of the most important contributions of the book is the insightful discussion of the complex issues that are faced by lala women in China and how queer subjects in different cultural, political and social contexts cope or even work with normative ideologies to create new forms of self and desirable life." Lucetta Y. L. Kam, *The China Quarterly* About the Author Elisabeth L. Engebretsen is a Research Fellow (Asian Cities Cluster) at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands.