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## **„Feminism under Censorship: the Case of Socialist China“**

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Zhou Yang, BSc., MSc.

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## Introduction

The international feminist movements in the early twentieth century were always accompanied by socialist movements because of similar aim for social changes and struggles (DuBois, 1991). However, the socialist ideal of proletarian internationalism means gender struggle has to give way to class struggle (Boxer, 2007), which sometimes led to “no cooperation with bourgeois feminists” (Sawer, 2011, p.2). The Chinese case is a rather unique case with the economic opening-up in the 1980s, which invited many bourgeoisie values and free market feminism (Eisenstein, 2009). The official feminist discourse changed from state feminism in the 1950s, to a more nuanced portrayal under the socialist new regime with neoliberal market reforms three decades later. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s previous Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology that emphasizes class struggle has created an uneasy alliance between socialism and feminism especially when the number of bourgeois women increases dramatically since the country’s economic liberalization (Croll, 2013; Edwards, 2016).

Some scholars claimed that the economic reform has set back women’s liberation process because the introduction of marketization and commercialization of women’s bodies has destroyed the egalitarian values established before the reform (Cook & Dong, 2011; Wu, 2010). Namely, the discourse of being a proud independent workingwoman has been twisted by hedonistic and opportunistic values, which, to be fair though, are not exclusive neoliberal values. Namely, a woman’s success is mostly determined by her marriage (Sun & Chen, 2015). This irony can be seen in liberal societies such as the U.S. as well. During World War Two, working women were needed for the war effort so women were portrayed as independent, strong, and self-reliant. After the war, women were “domesticated” to become

consumers of new technologies and champions of materialist consumerism. No matter what achievements women have accomplished by their own merits, the society at large is very judgmental on their personal lives (To, 2015). The tag of so-called “leftover women” was outrageously attached to highly educated professional single women who now have the choice of remaining single, without the needs of economic support by spouses (To, 2015). Chinese women, married or unmarried, have to face pressure from their family and from the society as well. The state is less interested in promoting gender equality in work place because of the market reforms, which left the employment policies to the hands of corporations that most of which favor male employees (Sun & Chen, 2015). What is worse, the statutory retirement age of female employees is fifty-five years old, which is five years earlier than their male counterparts (Yan, 2015). Undeniably, some women welcomed this law because it means fewer years of hard labor. However, this drastically denied women’s opportunities to get promoted while aging. Female leaders in all level of state-owned enterprises and government bodies are forced to render their power a few years earlier than men (Yan, 2015). All is considerably detrimental to women’s ascension to the highest post of their field.

Since the new millennium, gender-role attitudes in China have returned to the traditional division of labor where men take care of finance and women take care of family (Wei, 2015). Nevertheless, it is important to note that even the previous seemingly female-friendly policies were actually made under the patriarchal system, which ignored gender inequalities in the domestic sphere in the first place (Bian, Logan, & Shu, 2000; Zheng, 2005). Let alone the resulted degradation of femininity during the proletariat state-feminism era. The state turned a blind eye on the implicit recruitment discrimination, and urged women to get married and encouraged them to focus on domestic work. Admittedly, women’s

participation in grassroots democracy has slightly improved over the years, as the Organic Law of the Village Committees of the People's Republic of China stipulated that female representatives should account for more than one third of the village committee (Bai & Li, 2008). The reality is that the percentage of senior female politicians is still extremely low. There has been no woman in the Standing Committee in the Political Bureau, nor in key ministerial or diplomatic positions. However, the party state is apparently conveying a message to the nation that women's status is already fairly high in China. The White Paper on Gender Equality and Women's Development in China (2015) ardently praised the national mechanism for promoting the status of women, especially the establishment of Women's Federations and the gender statistics system.

How do Chinese people perceive the women's status in China? Is trust in media an important predictor of people's perception on feminism? Does trust in state media and trust in non-state media differ under high level of censorship? The state media is closely associated with the party state; the weight of state authority it carries is axiomatic. Whereas non-state media, except for those tabloids purely intended for entertainment, has a certain function of investigative journalism that periodically challenges the official discourse by bringing more information and perspectives. This study aims to find out how trust in media influences people's perception on feminism and censorship respectively, controlling for political efficacy (internal and government). Internal efficacy measures perceived personal capability and government efficacy is an indicator of one's trust in government. These questions are important because they would shed light on how strategic censorship, together with discipline and propaganda; establishes its cultural and ideological authority in authoritarian regimes (Bourdieu, 1984; Billiani, 2014; Foucault, 1979). As the state media dominates the public

discourse, trust in state media and government efficacy are important parameters to determine the effectiveness of propaganda in China.

Why does the state emphasize the “high” status of Chinese women meanwhile propagating traditional gender role? The reason can be that the state tried to confine women to non-political sphere to preserve the Neo-Confucian culture, which emphasizes the masculine nature of politics (Evans, 2008; Herr, 2014; Foust & Tan, 2016; Zhao, 2008). The reason can also be that the state feared the consequences of further liberalization: the butterfly effect of encouraging formerly disenfranchised social groups into political decision-making threatened the authoritarian rule. Feminist movement has experienced several setbacks in China in recent decades (Sun & Chen, 2015; Wesoky, 2013). The state no longer endorses feminist discourse (Sun & Chen, 2015). The state’s censorship on radical feminist movements and propaganda of women’s maternal duties and unsuitability to political career posed questions about the relationship between media and politics in China. Censorship can be seen as a proxy for state’s authority. The overarching research question of this thesis is how does trust in media (state and non-state) influence people’s perception on feminism and censorship respectively. The study will employ ordinal logistic regression method to analyze the reasons behind one’s satisfaction on women’s status in China and one’s approval of censorship in China.

## **Literature Review**

### **Media and Politics**

The relationship between media and politics is exceedingly intriguing in both democratic and nondemocratic regimes. Scholars who advocated press-party parallelism can find their root in a patron-client relationship existed between the government and media

organizations (van Kempen, 2007). Others who championed mediatization of politics suggested that politics are increasingly manipulated by socially constructed media (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014; Hepp, 2012). The term “mediatization”, according to Couldry and Hepp (2013), can find trace in Foucault (1979)’s theory of power. That power no longer resided in a few powerful institutions and people, but embedded in the society as institutionalized rules (Asp, 2014; Hjarvard, 2008).

However, in the Chinese case, coercive state power still prevails in many aspects, including control of media. China introduced market reforms in most industries including the field of media industry without any fundamental change in its political structure (Pan, 2000; Wang, 2010). Admittedly, the media now has to make a profit from advertising revenues instead of living solely with state subsidies; the underlying relationship between media and politics is still that of patron client relationship, despite tensions between propaganda duties and market principles (Pan, 2000). The state still reserves every right to suspend media outlets without obtaining injunction order. Executive directions outweigh court rulings. After all, the party is above political and judicial structure (Lu & Weber, 2007). China’s media system has long been of instrumental use to party propaganda (Lee, 1990), yet the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) allowed some investigative journalism to reveal local corruption, local police brutality in order to solve or cover those issues depending on the severity of the issues, with an ultimate aim to consolidate its authoritarian rule. The CCP also allowed some criticisms against the government on the Internet (King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013; Tai, 2014), so as to give the public the illusion that the government is open to public scrutiny. However, once they deemed the critiques as overly inflammatory, with the possibility of resulting in collective action, the government would quickly censor those information using highly sophisticated techniques to uphold social morality. In fact, Internet has made things easier for

the CCP to monitor because of the panopticon style of forced visibility and authentication of Internet users (Tsui, 2003). The party state sees its role as an active and central participant in establishing authority in the communication realm (Lu & Weber, 2007). This demonstrated strict government control by unaccountable political party who exercised unchallengeable power over the communication realm (McConnell & Becker, 2002).

Given that the government owns the vast majority of newspapers, TV and radio stations, media has become a mouthpiece of the party, propagating government policies. Media and politics in China are in a client-patron relationship: the media has to unconditionally serve the interests of politics, and the party provides resources to the media for them to do the prescribed job (Wang, 2010). Clientelism refers to an asymmetric social structure where the patrons have control over certain resources, which they give to the clients in exchange for their political loyalty (Brun & Diamond, 2014; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In the Chinese case, the CCP acted as the patron, demanding the clients, namely the media, to deliver what the party wanted: propaganda tasks or cover up domestic scandals. The patron never ceased to monopolize control over the clients (Tong, 2011). The social resources that the clients needed for their survival included the following: access to the state's Xinhua News Agency, networking with incumbent political elites, and protection of their work and personal safety.

To cope with the explosion of Internet and big data, the CCP has expanded the duties of the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) and the State Council Information Office (SCIO), by establishing the Internet Information Management Bureau (IIMB), which aims to channel and control news online (Zhao, 2008). All relevant government departments are subject to the directives of the Propaganda Department (PD), which provides unthinkable power in sustaining the party's dominance in people's mindset with its notorious self-

righteousness (Zhao, 2008). The PD regularly criticized incidents and opinions they deemed “politically incorrect”, guiding the public opinion to their direction. Therefore, the media at large is governed by political logic in China, which constitutes a clear exception for the mediatization theory that has dominated Western discourse in recent decades. Government media in particular, has been considered as the most reliable media source by most Chinese people (Tai, 2014).

### **Censorship**

Censorship is a form of manipulative rewriting of discourse, aiming at filtering information from one source to another (Billiani, 2014). The importance of censorship is that it not only rewrites discourse on the expression of power structures, but also affects the public and private spheres in their ideological and cultural dimension (Bourdieu, 1984). Censorship establishes its cultural authority by orchestrating a careful interplay of punishment and surveillance, which fits with the socially acceptable norms that lasted for a long period of time (Billiani, 2014).

Though “there is no formal, institutionalized, and universalized pre-publication censorship apparatus” in the Chinese case (Zhao, 2008, p. 30), the deterrence is so huge that the journalists and editors succumbed to its disciplinary power and even introduced self-censorship (Tong, 2009). This means journalists and editors have pre-publication censorship by themselves. China has developed media policies to boost harmony, and the state is very proud of its “improved supervision to ensure news media and advertising agents exercise strict self-discipline and avoid any discrimination against women” (The State Council Information Office, 2015). There are also human censors and media monitors in every state-owned news organizations that served as judges and snitchers to determine the fate of



publications (Tong, 2009). The “intermediary censorship” by the owners of digital platforms further amplified supervisory power of the state (Zuckerman, 2013). The power of agenda setting has fallen into the state’s hands completely. Chinese citizens are asked to trade off already limited political and social freedoms for expanded economic freedom (Lu & Weber, 2007). Unfortunately, many people are submissive to this ‘normality’ (Zhao, 2008).

Censorship in China mostly covers two parts: sensitive political issues and explicit description of sex (Chang, 2008, p.230). Sex was considered a taboo and indecent topic in China’s conservative culture (Lung, 2003). Feminist discourse, which contains any erotic elements, was banned for a long time (Yu, 2015). Some feminist discourse was labeled “spiritual pollutants” and considered detrimental to public moral in the Chinese political atmosphere (Zhang, 1998, p. 156). Even those without any expressive images were banned because those were deemed conflictual with Chinese culture. In reality, it serves the ultimate purpose of consolidating the patriarchal state power using cultural guises. Feminist discourse such as “marriage is not a necessity for women” was discouraged to prevent social disturbance (Croll, 2013; Foust & Tan, 2016). The state is very concerned about the phenomenon of marriage squeeze, which means more men cannot find a wife because of the structural gender imbalance. This, in turn, was caused by traditional preference for male heir that resulted in abortion and abandonment of baby girls (Leung, 2003). Censoring information advocated for women’s true independence is outrageous. Yet censorship is coercive and supported by law, and this paper hopes to find out whether it is legitimate in people’s perceptions and what attributed to those perceptions.

### **Trust in Media**

Under censorship, trust in media has become contestable. Trust in media means trust in their specific selectivity of topics, facts, depictions, and journalistic assessment rather than in objectivity or truth (Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Williams, 2012). There are three types of media trust: trust of content; trust of journalists; and trust in media establishments (Williams, 2012). In democracies, media enjoys no more trust than other institutions in spite of its watchdog function if they are afflicted with the government (Gunther, Hong, & Rodriguez, 1994). A study conducted by Lipset (1987) showed that when the media is perceived independent from the government, trust in the executive branch of government and trust in media was often negatively correlated. Mistrust in media can lead to inattention and boycott (Kiousis, 2001), which means people might fall into political apathy or protest against the media outlets. This in turn influenced political trust because media trust and political trust are related (Jones, 2004). Many factors may influence people's trust in media including one's own partisan leaning (Gunther, 1992; Lee, 2010), one's choice and frequency of using a particular medium (Kiousis, 2001), and perceived media bias from journalists' political leaning (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2011). Whereas in China, where the government tightly controls the media, inattention and seeking alternatives is impossible due to massive surveillance and censorship, trust in government and trust in media go hand in hand (McIntyre, 1993). However, there were exceptions. Chen and Shi (2001) noted that after the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989, people's trust in media and trust in government fluctuated, hence unable to establish a stable link. Moreover, in China, one's partisanship is negligible due to the party-state nature. Admittedly, party factions existed within the CCP, but unlike the liberal-conservative divide, the Chinese party factions were led by current and past party leaders. Perception of bias stemming from journalists' political leaning is also negligible because

most journalists and anchors in state-owned media outlets are like robots dispensing news (Lu & Weber, 2007).

One may safely assume that in China, the proportion of media skeptics, who tend to use alternative information sources than mainstream media sources (Jackob, 2010; Tsfatı & Cappella, 2003), is much smaller compared with open societies because first, Chinese dissidents face grave consequences, second, the propaganda work is so effective that people pledge their loyalty to the government and state media, in an act of voluntarily defending the regime against international media and domestic critics online (Han, 2015). The very few media skeptics who trust non-state media sources tend to disapprove censorship and propaganda (Han, 2015). Hence, the hypotheses are as followed:

H1a: there is a positive relationship between trust in state media and people's approval of censorship.

H1b: there is a negative relationship between trust in non-state media and people's approval of censorship.

H2a: there is a positive relationship between trust in state media and people's satisfaction on women's status.

H2b: there is a negative relationship between trust in non-state media and people's satisfaction on women's status.

### **Political Efficacy**

There are many forms of political efficacy (Morrell, 2005), most prominently internal and external political efficacy. Gil de Zuniga et al. (2015) introduced the concept of government efficacy to substitute the inconsistent measures of external political efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to the perception of personal capability and competence in pursuing

political causes (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990; Morrell, 2005). External efficacy reflects one's perception of government's responsiveness to its citizens (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2015). Specifically, it examines one's feeling that whether the government serves its people diligently. Responsiveness requires certain level of interaction and exchange of opinions between citizens and the government (Richardson, 2013). As discussed earlier in the censorship section, the Chinese government allows a limited level of information exchange between the ruler and the ruled in order to solve potentially serious problems and kill any unrest in infancy. Government efficacy, according to Gil de Zuniga et al. (2015), can be perceived as a "proxy for perception of democratic legitimacy" (p.6). China is no democratic country, but the ruling party claims its legitimacy by economic development and emancipation of peasants and liberation of women (Wesoky, 2013). The scale for government efficacy can be borrowed due to CCP's self-claimed democratic nature. In the party manifesto, the CCP asserted to have represented the interest of most Chinese people. The state media has been propagating this since the People's Republic of China was established. It would be extremely interesting to see how the Chinese people actually think about it. Undeniably this concept is closely related to trust in media. This paper posits that internal efficacy and government efficacy can influence people's perception of feminism and censorship in different ways. The ones with high level of internal efficacy are less likely to approve censorship and the state's propaganda on women's status. On the other hand, the ones with high external efficacy are more likely to approve censorship and accept what the state media feed them.

H3a: there is a positive relationship between internal efficacy and people's approval of censorship.

H3b: there is a negative relationship between government efficacy and people's approval of censorship.

H4a: there is a positive relationship between internal efficacy and people's satisfaction on women's status.

H4b: there is a negative relationship between government efficacy and people's satisfaction on women's status.

### **Feminism under Socialism**

The so-called socialism with Chinese characteristics has been viewed as contradictory by nature because the “universal ideal of an egalitarian and democratic society” can never happen when socialism has become “an instrument of parochial pragmatic goals” (Dirlik, 2012). The CCP's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology that emphasizes class and ideological struggle has created an “uneasy alliance between socialism and feminism” (Croll, 2013). This “symbiosis”, aiming at ensuring their own survival, allows for “struggles” amongst class and gender (Kurokawa, 1997; MacKinnon, 1982). The party-state administered women's liberation process to confront its legitimacy crisis after opening up in the 1980s (Croll, 2013; Wesoky, 2013). Fraser (2009) condemned how feminism was used to legitimize neoliberal transformation of capitalism. Indeed, neoliberalism may have needed feminism to provide legitimacy, not the other way around (Prugl, 2015).

Under Mao's China (1949-1976), all citizens were “liberated,” and state feminism “guaranteed” women's emancipation from patriarchy through her entry into productive labor force (Yang, 1999). The official discourse claimed that women's emancipation includes political, class, and social dimensions from the traditional patriarchal system that ensures social justice and reconstruction of gender equality, which are reflected in democratic

participation in village self-governance in rural China (Gender Equality Policy Advocacy, 2015). However, party policy and discourse always placed class above gender (Wallis, 2015). Unsurprisingly, urban Chinese women are encountered with more difficulties than their less educated and less prosperous female comrades in rural China. The invention of concept “left-over women” specifically referred to highly educated professional women who remain single (To, 2015). The state is undoubtedly practicing a double standard: promoting “advanced gender culture based on gender equality” on one side (Foust & Tan, 2016), and discouraging women to be truly independent on the other side. The arrival of consumerist society has changed people’s lifestyles and women have been repressed and alienated implicitly. Although China’s contemporary visual and narrative cultures contain a wider depiction of sexuality than in the past, which means a lessening of censorship, the state media continuously places tags to women (Evans, 2008). Some successful women are treated as unique cases (Sarikakis, 2011), they are never treated as role models unless they are good mothers and wives at the same time. What is “good” is defined by the patriarchal state. Media deploy a masculinist discourse that being feminine means subordination (Wallis, 2015). Marginalization of women has been conveyed through the state media under cultural cover. The alarming trend is that people, including many women, are satisfied with the status quo.

## **Methods**

### **Data**

This study employs original online survey administered in February and March 2017. The population is all Chinese people where the sample is drawn. The sample was drawn by convenience sampling instead of random sampling due to limited resources. A total of 619 completed responses were collected in April 2017.

## Measures

All the variables except for demographics are based on 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The study did not use 7-point or 9-point scale which is common in behavioral studies (Zhao & Cai, 2008), in order to avoid overcomplicating interpretation.

The first dependent variable is *approval on censorship* (M=3.14, SD=.89). This dependent variable also has four items: “the government has the right to censor certain information” (M=2.98, SD=1.10), “sometimes censorship is a necessary evil to achieve greater good” (M=3.41, SD=1.07), “harmony is more important than freedom of speech” (M=2.99, SD=1.16), “without censorship China will become unstable” (M=3.16, SD=1.05). Factor analysis of these items produced a single factor (eigenvalue =2.62, variance explained =65.54%, all loadings >.75). Internal consistency was demonstrated with an alpha of .823, M=3.14, variance=1.20.

The second dependent variable is *satisfaction of women's status* (M=2.76, SD=.81). This dependent variable has four items: “Chinese women gained equal status as Chinese men” (M=2.57, SD=1.11), “Chinese women's status in the society has improved dramatically in the recent decades” (M=3.62, SD=.98), “Chinese women are happier than women in most other countries” (M=2.90, SD=.99), “Chinese women need not to fight for more rights in political/economic/social arena” (M=1.97, SD=.96). Factor analysis of these items produced a single factor (eigenvalue =2.57, variance explained =64.47%, all loadings >.76). Internal consistency was demonstrated with an alpha of .816, M=2.76, variance=1.02.

The independent variables are *trust in state media*, *trust in non-state media*, *internal political efficacy*, *government efficacy*, and controls (*age*, *gender*, *income*, *education*, *experience of living abroad*). Scales of internal political efficacy and government efficacy are

adapted from Gil de Zuniga et al. (2017), whereas other scales are newly designed for this study.

*Trust in state media* has one item: “I regard state media as a very reliable source” (M=2.93, SD=.81). *Trust in non-state media* also has one item: “I regard non-state investigative media as a very reliable source” (M=2.84, SD=.66). *Internal political efficacy* (M=3.35, SD=.76) has three items: “I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing China” (M=3.04, SD=.89), “I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people” (M=3.59, SD=.94) and “I consider myself well-equipped to participate in politics” (M=3.42, SD=1.00). Factor analysis of these items produced a single factor (eigenvalue =1.92, variance explained =64.18%, all loadings >.76). Internal consistency was demonstrated with an alpha of .721, M=3.35, variance=.893. *Government political efficacy* (M=2.79, SD=.88) also has three items: “my government works on everyone’s behalf” (M=2.90, SD=1.05), “my government makes decisions based on what citizens want” (M=2.82, SD=.97), “Democracy with Chinese characteristics work well” (M=2.64, SD=1.01). Factor analysis of these items produced a single factor (eigenvalue =2.28, variance explained =76.14%, all loadings >.83). Internal consistency was demonstrated with an alpha of .841, M=2.79, variance=1.03.

There are five categories of *age*: “less than 18” (coded as 1, N=17), “18-30” (coded as 2, N=347), “30-50” (coded as 3, N=170), “51-70” (coded as 4, N=85), “senior than 70” (coded as 5, N=0). *Gender* is also an important indicator (Male coded as 0, N=225, Female coded as 1, N=394). There are four categories for annual *income*: “less than 60,000” (N=287), “between 60,000 and 100,000” (N=146), “more than 100,000 and less than 200,000” (N=89), and “more than 200,000” (N=83). The reason for this classification lies in the fact that China’s GDP per capita is approximately 50,000 RMB in 2015 according to the



National Bureau of Statistics. Taking into account the GDP growth rate of China in 2016 (7 percent), I arrive at approximately 60,000 RMB as average annual personal income for 2017. Income will be recoded into a binary variable using 60,000 RMB as the threshold (lower than 60,000 RMB coded as 1; more than 60,000 RMB coded as 0). There are four categories for *education*: “less than college” (N=128), “bachelor’s degree” (N=316), “master’s degree” (N=149), and “PhD” (N=24). Even though the sample leans heavily on highly educated people, we still use whether or not having a college degree as the variable being coded binary (no college degree coded as 1; college degree and higher coded as 0). The last question asks whether the respondent has lived in democratic societies for more than 3 months, namely, *experience of living abroad* (Yes: 1, N=150; No: 0, N=469). It is important to control this because it matters whether the person has ever tasted freedom of speech for a certain period of time.

This study aims to prevent employing excessive variables in order to gain more predictive power of a few but highly relevant variables. Given the nature of this study, the objective was to search for determinants of attitudes towards two ordinal outcome variables (DV1: *approval of censorship*; DV2: *satisfaction on women’s status*), two ordinal logistic regressions will be performed with trust in state media, trust in non-state media, internal political efficacy, government efficacy, and demographics as independent variables. In both regressions, model 1 tested how do *trust in media* (state and non-state) alone influence people’s perception on women’s status and censorship respectively, model 2 tested how do *trust in media* (state and non-state) influence people’s perception on women’s status and censorship respectively, controlling for *political efficacy* (internal and government), and model 3 added all the control variables.

## Results

### Correlation

A partial correlation was run between trust in media, political efficacy and two dependent variables while controlling for age, gender, income, education, and abroad (Appendix A, Table 1).

*Trust in media.* Firstly, there is a strong, positive relationship between trust in state media and the degree of approval of censorship ( $r = .406$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Secondly, there is no significant correlation between trust in non-state media and people's approval of censorship ( $r = -.053$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Thirdly, there is a moderate, positive relationship between trust in state media and people's satisfaction on women's status ( $r = .279$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, there is no significant relationship between trust in non-state media and people's satisfaction on women's status ( $r = .031$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Hence, H1a and H2a were supported, whereas H1b and H2b were rejected. In other words, there is no relationship whatsoever between trust in non-state media and people's perception on feminist movement and censorship respectively.

*Political efficacy.* There is a weak, yet negative relationship between internal efficacy and people's approval of censorship ( $r = -.089$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .05$ ). There is a positive relationship between government efficacy and people's approval of censorship ( $r = .568$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There is no significant relationship between internal efficacy and people's satisfaction of women's status in China ( $r = .018$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p > .05$ ). There is a positive relationship between government efficacy and people's satisfaction of women's status in China ( $r = .451$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, H4a were rejected yet H3a, H3b and H4b were supported. Interestingly yet unsurprisingly, satisfaction on women's status and approval on censorship are positively correlated ( $r = .413$ ,  $N = 619$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Ordinal logistic regression

As Table 2 below showed, three regressions were run, and the results are displayed as model 1, 2, and 3. Model 1 included trust in state media and trust in non-state media, and it explains 22.6 percent of the dependent variable (DV1: approval of censorship). Model 2 included trust in state media and trust in non-state media, and internal efficacy and government efficacy, explaining 39.5 percent of the dependent variable. Model 3 included all predictors and control variables, which explains 41.4 percent of the total variance.

*Model 1.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 3.722 (95% CI, 3.04 to 4.56), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=161.74, p<.001$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media was associated with a decrease in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of .542 (95% CI, .43 to .68), Wald  $\chi^2(1)= 27.74, p<.001$ .

*Model 2.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 1.963 (95% CI, 1.58 to 2.45), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=36.31, p<.001$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of .62 (95% CI, .49 to .78), Wald  $\chi^2(1)= 16.77, p<.001$ . An increase in internal efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of .80 (95% CI, .67 to .96), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=5.61, p<.05$ . An increase in external efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 3.547 (95% CI, 2.89 to 4.35), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=146.88, p<.001$ .

*Model 3.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 1.956 (95% CI, 1.568 to 2.44), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=35.33$ ,  $p<.001$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media was associated with a decrease in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of .60 (95% CI, .48 to .75), Wald  $\chi^2(1)= 18.99$ ,  $p>.05$ . An increase in internal efficacy was associated with a decrease in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of .76 (95% CI, .63 to .92), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=8.13$ ,  $p<.01$ . An increase in external efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 3.34 (95% CI, 2.72 to 4.11), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=131.23$ ,  $p<.001$ . An increase in age was associated with an increase in the odds of approving censorship in China, with an odds ratio of 1.44 (95% CI, 1.17 to 1.76), Wald  $\chi^2(1)=12.29$ ,  $p<.001$ . The odds of male approving censorship in China was 1.34 (95% CI, 1.00 to 1.80) times that of female, Wald  $\chi^2(1)=3.87$ ,  $p<.05$ . The odds of someone who had not lived abroad for more than 3 months approving censorship in China was 1.02 (95% CI, .72 to 1.45) times that of someone who had lived abroad for more than 3 months, Wald  $\chi^2(1)=.01$ ,  $p>.05$ . The odds of people with college degree or higher approving censorship in China was 1.07 (95% CI, .75 to 1.54) times that of people without college degree, Wald  $\chi^2(1)=.15$ ,  $p>.05$ . The odds of people earns more than the average income approving censorship in China was 1.08 (95% CI, .79 to 1.46) times that of people earns less than average income, Wald  $\chi^2(1)=.22$ ,  $p>.05$ .

In *Model 3*, control variables including education ( $b=-.071$ ,  $SE=.184$ ,  $p>.05$ ), income ( $b=-.073$ ,  $SE=.155$ ,  $p>.05$ ), and experience of living abroad ( $b=-.02$ ,  $SE=.179$ ,  $p>.05$ ), are insignificant.

Table 2. Summary of Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Approval of Censorship (N=619)

DV: Approval of Censorship	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR
Media trust gov	1.314***	0.103	3.722	.675***	0.112	1.963	.671***	0.113	1.956
Media trust non-gov	-.612***	0.116	0.542	-.479***	0.117	0.62	-.513***	0.118	0.598
Internal efficacy				-.223*	0.094	0.80	-.273**	0.095	0.761
Government efficacy				1.266***	0.104	3.547	1.206***	0.105	3.341
Gender							-.294*	0.149	1.342
Age							.363***	0.104	1.438
Abroad							-0.02	0.179	1.02
Education							-0.07	0.184	1.073
Income							-0.07	0.155	1.076
$\chi^2$		157.08***			308.26***			328.13***	
df		2			4			9	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		0.226			0.395			0.414	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

As for the second dependent variable, as Table 3 demonstrated below, Model 1 solely included trust in state media and trust in non-state media, and it explains 10.9 percent of the dependent variable (DV2: satisfaction on women's status). Model 2 included trust in state media and trust in non-state media, and internal efficacy and government efficacy, explaining 26.1 percent of the dependent variable. Model 3 included all predictors and control variables, which explains 42.3 percent of the total variance. Trust in government media ( $b=.791$ ,  $SE=$ .

096,  $p < .001$ ) is highly significant in predicting people's satisfaction on women's status in Model 1. Although it is still significant in Model 2 and Model 3, its explanatory power decreases as more variables are added. In Model 3, when controlled for all demographics and political efficacy, the more one trusts the state media, the more likely one believes women's status is satisfactory in China.

*Model 1.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 2.205 (95% CI, 1.825 to 2.663), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 67.32$ ,  $p < .001$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media was associated with a decrease in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of .914 (95% CI, .731 to 1.142), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .626$ ,  $p > .05$ .

*Model 2.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 1.257 (95% CI, 1.105 to 1.556), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.399$ ,  $p < .05$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 1.044 (95% CI, .834 to 1.307), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .141$ ,  $p > .05$ . An increase in internal efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 1.058 (95% CI, .881 to 1.269), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .361$ ,  $p > .05$ . An increase in external efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 2.931 (95% CI, 2.402 to 3.575), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 112.33$ ,  $p < .001$ .

*Model 3.* An increase in one's trust in state media was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 1.287 (95% CI, 1.037 to 1.597), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 5.252$ ,  $p < .05$ . An increase in one's trust in non-state media

was associated with a decrease in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of .916 (95% CI, .73 to 1.149), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .579$ ,  $p > .05$ . An increase in internal efficacy was associated with a decrease in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of .97 (95% CI, .806 to 1.168), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .102$ ,  $p > .05$ . An increase in external efficacy was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 2.71 (95% CI, 2.218 to 3.312), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 95.03$ ,  $p < .001$ . An increase in age was associated with an increase in the odds of being satisfied with women's status in China, with an odds ratio of 2.049 (95% CI, 1.665 to 2.523), Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 45.73$ ,  $p < .001$ . The odds of male being satisfied with women's status in China was 3.142 (95% CI, 2.323 to 4.25) times that of female, Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 55.23$ ,  $p < .001$ . The odds of someone who had not lived abroad for more than 3 months being satisfied with women's status in China was 1.347 (95% CI, .949 to 1.911) times that of someone who had lived abroad for more than 3 months, Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 2.77$ ,  $p > .05$ . The odds of people with college degree or higher being satisfied with women's status in China was .52 (95% CI, .36 to .75) times that of people without college degree, Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 12.53$ ,  $p < .001$ . The odds of people earns more than the average income being satisfied with women's status in China was 1.382 (95% CI, 1.02 to 1.87) times that of people earns less than average income, Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.37$ ,  $p < .05$ .

In *Model 3*, trust in non-state media ( $b = -.088$ ,  $SE = .116$ ,  $p > .05$ ), internal efficacy ( $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .095$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and experience of living abroad ( $b = -.298$ ,  $SE = .179$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were found insignificant.

*Table 3. Summary of Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Satisfaction on Women's status (N=619)*

DV: Women's status	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR
Media trust gov	0.791** *	0.096	2.205	0.228*	0.109	1.257	.252*	0.11	1.287
Media trust non-gov	-0.09	0.114	0.914	0.043	0.115	1.044	-0.09	0.116	0.916
Internal efficacy				0.056	0.093	1.058	-0.03	0.095	0.97
Government efficacy				1.075** *	0.101	2.931	.997***	0.102	2.71
Gender							-1.145***	0.154	3.142
Age							.718***	0.106	2.049
Abroad							-0.298	0.179	1.347
Education							.653***	0.185	0.52
Income							-.323*	0.155	1.382
$\chi^2$		71.16* **			186.27 ***			337.69 ***	
<i>df</i>		2			4			9	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		0.109			0.261			0.423	

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

In the vast sea of literature of communication and sociology, the concept censorship and feminism are not connected except in the case of pornography. There is plenty of uncharted water in this field. This study aims to find out how trust in media (state and non-state) influence one's perception of women's status and one's approval of censorship, controlling for political efficacy and demographics. As shown in the results section, the two



dependent variables are positively correlated. This, to some extent, confirms the research findings that satisfaction on women's status and approval of censorship reflected the effectiveness of propaganda. China's long past of consolidated and semi-institutionalized censorship has facilitated a nuanced public attitude towards alternative sources of information (Cao, 2009). To begin with, censorship was considered as necessary to ensure "harmony" ( $M=2.99$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ) and "stability" ( $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ) according to this sample.

Interestingly, Schwartz (1999)'s research found that China scored very high on "hierarchy" and "mastery", and relatively low on "egalitarianism" and "harmony". Respecting hierarchy and striving for achievement is highly similar to Confucian ethics which also emphasizes on maintenance of status quo and traditional order. This seemingly inconsistent interpretation of the Chinese culture can be partially explained by the change of official discourse from "let some people get rich first" under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (1978-1997) to "harmonious society" during the Hu Jintao administration (2002-2012). China's double-digit economic growth since 1978 resulted in dramatic income inequality by discriminative government policies favoring some industries. But most people obeyed the ascribed role obligations within a legitimately unequal distribution of resources. A low degree of egalitarianism implies high gender inequality and class rigidity. The study by Schwartz (1999) showed a cultural accentuation on competitiveness and self-assertion instead of fitting harmoniously into the environment. In this regard, harmony is less important than order and stability in the Chinese society, as this sample revealed.

This study focused on people's perceptions only, with no indication of any behavioral effects. Media was to blame for eroding trust of citizens and political apathy, due to massive negative campaigns (Pinkleton et al., 2012). The Chinese case is structurally different because of very limited media plurality. The state media generates homogenous and most of

the time positive reporting about domestic affairs. Above all, for authoritarian regimes, ensuring stability by silencing dissenting voice is a top priority for the incumbent elites. The false hope raised since the Internet Boom that we are entering a new phase of democracy went to burst as the authoritarian states developed more complicated instruments to curb free exchange of information. Oddly though, the clear invasion of human rights was internalized by Chinese people. This has been shown in the item “without censorship China will become unstable” ( $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ). The propaganda has apparently worked well. Amongst all items constituting the index censorship, “censorship is a necessary evil to achieve greater good” ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ) received the highest recognition. Many dreamed that good things can come out of bad deeds. These conviction helps mobilize the populace against anyone advocating free speech. Herman and Chomsky (1988) stressed how dominant institutional actors exploit their political power to exert control over media. Fear was materialized as a nationalist control gadget and used to legitimize public policies.

Guo and Feng (2012) presented the submissive dimension of authoritarian personality and third-person perception as explanatory factors of support for censorship in China. People with authoritarian personality are more likely to obey established order and support official discourse and values that are promoted by authorities (Adorno & Brunswik, 1950). The submissive personality traits were partially exhibited in internal efficacy scale. It was found significant in predicting one’s attitudes towards censorship, but not towards feminism. One’s positive attitudes toward social control in the form of censorship coincide with this facet of authoritarian personality. This indicates that those individuals tend to regard conformity with authorities as a more important task, even if that means sacrificing their own rights (Guo & Feng, 2012). The third-person effect stipulated that people are inclined to perceive public discourse as more influential on others than on themselves, usually in the context of

undesirable message such as ones that promote violence (Davison, 1983). In this case, people may think the negative influence of censorship will haunt after others than themselves.

Moreover, people tend to believe that they are more immune from persuasive communication, therefore less vulnerable to brainwashing manipulation. By contrast, people are more likely to show a first-person effect when the message seemed to have positively associated with the self (Perloff, 2009). When encountered positive messages such as “men and women are equal”, people are more likely feel that they are influenced more than others. When one perceives more social distance between oneself and the people in the message, it is more likely that third-person effect would increase (Gunther, 1995). Gunther (1995) found gender difference and attitudes toward freedom of speech explained support for censorship to regulate pornography. The Chinese case is different in terms of the scope of censorship. It is outrageously comprehensive that not only pornography, but also the entire political sphere is reserved only for the politically enfranchised groups. Commoners are not allowed to enter the sanctuary of public political debate. In this study, gender difference is highly significant in feminist perceptions but only mildly significant in censorship approvals.

People's tendency to have a favorable opinion over those who they perceive as in-group members (Efferson, Lalive, & Fehr, 2008). In that case, women are more likely to perceive their identity and responsibility as more sacred and important than men. As Q1 reflected, male sample on average tends to agree on the basic and inferior duties and responsibilities of women “the most important duty for women is to produce offspring” (Men:  $M=2.19$ ; Women:  $M=1.59$ ) and “women should not enter public sphere in the first place” (Men:  $M=1.78$ ; Women:  $M=1.35$ ). Status is theoretically open to everyone but enjoyed by only a few. Many still believe that women do not have the calmness of temperament or the balance of mind to exercise judgment in political and social affairs.

Since China embraced capitalism in 1978, the economic reform brought two challenges to women. On the one hand, without guaranteed employment during the socialist collectivist period, women faced greater risk of being laid off than their male counterpart. This is particularly the concern for women laborers working in factories. This also created grave pitfall for women researchers and politicians who are subject to early retirement. On the other hand, the employment market in general favored male workers, as in most part of the world. Many jobs are exclusively reserved for men. Outrageously, unfair dismissal due to pregnancy are common practice in China despite the law says otherwise. Unfortunately, respondents from the sample in general tend to be satisfied with women's status in China. As shown in the items "Chinese women's status in the society has improved dramatically in the recent decades" ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.98$ ) and "Chinese women are happier than women in most other countries" ( $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=.99$ ), there is a notable tendency towards satisfaction on women's status in China. Though the item "Chinese women need not to fight for more rights in political/economic/social arena" ( $M=1.97$ ,  $SD=.96$ ) showed disagreeing sentiments, a great many people believed that "Chinese women gained equal status as Chinese men" ( $M=2.57$ ,  $SD=1.10$ ). A randomized survey conducted in 2010 by the All-China Women's Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics showed that approximately 85 percent of women interviewees said they are satisfied with their status in the household despite the fact a quarter of the same women declared they suffered domestic violence. Admittedly, my sample leaned towards highly educated people (roughly 80 percent respondents have a bachelor's degree or above), therefore the results is less dramatic and more sensible compared to the nationwide survey. According to Socialist feminist discourse, women are exploited in the capitalist society no matter they work in industries or at home (China's mixed economy only partially qualified the description). The theory behind this discourse brings to a pessimistic picture that

true equal status of men and women can only be achieved when economic exploitation is eliminated.

If we put the radical theory aside and look into China's new social policy, again a mixed picture is presented. Now with the "Second-Child Policy" replacing the "One-Child Policy" (1979-2016), women are advised to return home and bear offspring. Despite that having children is an absolute right for women, many are forced or pressurized to conceive a second, preferably male heir. The government, once pushed strongly for the idea of male-female equality in order to push through the "One-Child Policy", has torn apart the slogan propagating that daughters could also carry the honor of the family line. As Sudbeck (2012) noted, the "One-Child Policy" has indirectly benefited girls that were born during the past 36 years for the better nutrition and education they got. Yet one should not forget the inhumane treatment of women during that period. Many pregnant women were forced to have an abortion or even sterilization. Now, with the window for a second child open, discrimination on the job market soared because employers are worried that women will take more maternity leave. Chinese women do not suffer from *de jure* discrimination, instead, they suffer from *de facto* discrimination despite any policies.

One very important control variable that is highly significant in both regressions is government efficacy. Government efficacy is associated with trust in the establishment (Pinkleton et al., 2012), hence can be seen as a proxy to trust in government. It is logical that the more faithful you are about the government, the more you trust the institutions and the state-sponsored propagandas. Age is also highly significant in predicting both dependent variables. The older one gets, the more likely one becomes more conservative, thus agreeing with what the state feeds to them. As victim of long-term brainwashing, older people tend to accept the status quo compared to younger generations. Income is significant in predicting

satisfaction of women's status but not in predicting attitudes towards censorship. People with lower income are less likely to perceive women's status as satisfactory. This is a rather odd finding, which can be attributed to one factor that university students are normally without income and hence belongs to this category. Education is also only significant in predicting satisfaction of women's status but not in predicting attitudes towards censorship. This can be attributed to the very fact that Chinese schools and universities are loyal implementers and executors of the Party's directions. Longer schooling may reinforce the patriotic feeling instead of becoming critical thinkers. Surprisingly, the experience of living abroad for at least three months is not a significant predictor in explaining one's perception on women's status or one's approval for censorship. It was assumed that anyone who has tasted the fruit of freedom of speech to harbor stronger opinion against censorship and challenge state discourse. Maybe three months were not enough for one to change one's view. Should the time in question be extended to one year, results may be different.

## **Conclusion**

Women's issue has been used as an instrument for many purposes. Nation states may exploit women's liberation agenda as means to achieve political ends, be it authority building, legitimization, or fueling nationalism. In the age of social media, where lack of authority of traditional public broadcasting media and lack of trust in government can be observed in myriads of democratic regimes, China, the world's second largest economy, controlled by massive surveillance and comprehensive censorship, however, have not seen its people's trust in state media eroding. There is a client-patron relationship between media and politics in China where media pledges loyalty to the government in exchange for resources. Trust in state media is closely related to government efficacy. Internal political efficacy and

government efficacy can influence one's perception on women's status and censorship in different ways. This study surveyed Chinese people from all walks of life and collected 619 valid cases in the end. After performing two ordinal logistic regressions controlling for political efficacy and demographics, it has been found that trust in state media and trust in non-state media did not differ significantly in terms of predicting people's perception on women's status, yet they were highly significant in predicting people's approval on censorship. As this sample revealed, trust in state media was positively related to one's approval of censorship in China. Whereas trust in non-state investigative media was negatively related to one's propensity to approve censorship. The fact that political rights of its citizens are compromised in exchange for more economic freedom, namely, to be able to engage in capitalist activities in a formally socialist regime provided that one pledges its loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party and the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology displays the complex nature of the Chinese culture and political environment. As the Party-State relentlessly harass and pressurize activists who stood against government agendas, the masses have been terrorized and eventually patronized to believe in government propaganda and its controlling measures. Amongst all predictors, government efficacy has an extraordinarily high explanatory power in both regressions, which can be seen as a triumph for the government propaganda. This study, though drew from non-representative sample, still shed light on feminist progress under censorship in the case of China. Women, as de facto politically and socially disenfranchised group, have a lot of rights to fight for. The sad fact that many men and women are satisfied with the status quo brought challenges to human rights activists. The alarming fact that the great evil of censorship was deemed acceptable and dire consequences unknown to many respondents brought another challenge to media scholars and practitioners.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Table 1. Partial Correlation controlling for age, education, abroad, gender, and income (N=619)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Media trust gov	-					
2. Media trust non-gov	0.329***	-				
3. Internal efficacy	0.012	0.062	-			
4. Government efficacy	.486***	0.067	0.045	-		
5. Approval on Censorship	.406***	-0.053	-.089*	.568***	-	
6. Satisfaction of women's status	.279***	0.031	0.018	.451***	.413***	-
N	619	619	619	619	619	619
M	2.93	2.84	3.35	2.78	3.14	2.76
SD	0.81	0.66	0.76	0.88	0.89	0.81

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Appendix B

#### Questionnaire

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1: totally disagree; 5: totally agree)

您从多大程度上认同以下观点? (Chinese translation)

1a. "The most important duty for women is to produce offspring."

1a. 对于女性来说最重要的职责是传宗接代。(Chinese translation)

1b. "Women should not enter public sphere in the first place."

1b. 女性从一开始就不应该涉足公共领域。(Chinese translation)

From one to five, how would you rate the following statements? (1: totally disagree; 5: totally agree)

2. 从1到5，您从多大程度上认同以下观点？（1代表完全不同意，5代表完全同意）

2a. “I regard state media as a very reliable source.”

2a. 我认为官方媒体是可以信赖的信息来源。(Chinese translation)

2b. “I regard non-state investigative media as a very reliable source.”

2b. 我认为非官方调查性媒体是可以信赖的信息来源。(Chinese translation)

3a. “I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing China.”

3a. 我对中国正在面临的重要的政治问题有深刻的了解。(Chinese translation)

3b. “I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.”

3b. 我觉得我可以跟其他任何人一样有能力担任公职。(Chinese translation)

3c. “I consider myself well-equipped to participate in politics.”

3c. 我认为我自己足够参与政治讨论与活动。(Chinese translation)

4a. “My government works on everyone’s behalf.”

4a. 我的政府为所有人服务。(Chinese translation)

4b. “My government makes decisions based on what citizens want.”

4b. 我的政府根据公民的意愿来制定政策。(Chinese translation)

4c. “Democracy with Chinese characteristics works well.”

4c. 中国式民主发展得很好。(Chinese translation)



5a. “Chinese women gained equal status as Chinese men.”

5a. 中国女性取得了和男性同等的地位。(Chinese translation)

5b. “Chinese women’s status in the society has improved dramatically in the recent decades.”

5b. 中国女性的社会地位在近年来有了显著提高。(Chinese translation)

5c. “Chinese women are happier than women in most other countries.”

5c. 中国女性比世界上大多数国家的女性都要快乐。(Chinese translation)

5d. “Chinese women need not to fight for more rights in political/economic/social arena.”

5d. 中国女性不需要再争取任何更多的政治经济社会权利。(Chinese translation)

6a. “The government has the right to censor certain information.”

6a. 政府有权利和谐掉有些信息。(Chinese translation)

6b. “Sometimes censorship is a necessary evil to achieve greater good.”

6b. 有时候为了达到更好的目的，媒体管制是必须的。(Chinese translation)

6c. “Harmony is more important than freedom of speech.”

6c. 和谐社会比自由言论更重要。(Chinese translation)

6d. “Without censorship China will become unstable.”

6d. 没有了媒体管制，中国会变得不稳定。(Chinese translation)

7. Gender (性别)

8. Income (收入)

9. Age (年龄)

10. Education (教育程度)

11. Have you lived in a liberal democratic country for more than three months?

11. 你有在自由民主国家生活三个月及以上的经历吗? (Chinese translation)

### **Abstract**

Facts have shown that women's status in China is not what the government claims to be. The Party-State, out of political and possibly cultural considerations, instructed the state media to paint the image of happy Chinese women to deter feminist movements and other collective action movements. The media landscape in China is highly controlled, where comprehensive censorship is in place to filter information that is deemed as sensitive or detrimental to public morals. Since women's rights and freedom of expression are all on the agenda of human rights, Chinese women are experiencing simultaneous oppressions. Yet not many people, men and women, are aware of this calamity. This study investigates how do one's trust in media (state and non-state) influence one's perception on censorship and women's status in China, controlling for political efficacy (internal and government) and demographics. An online survey was sent out to Chinese citizens, a total of 619 valid cases were collected. This study ran two ordinal logistic regressions and found that trust in state media is a significant positive predictor of one's attitudes on censorship and women's status; whereas trust in non-state media has a negative relationship with one's perception on censorship but no significant impact on one's satisfaction on women's status. Government efficacy is highly significant in explaining one's approval of censorship and satisfaction on censorship.

*Keywords:* Censorship; Feminism; Media Trust; Government Efficacy

### **Abstrakt**

Fakten haben gezeigt, dass der Status der Frauen in China nicht das ist, was die Regierung behauptet. Die Partei-Staat, aus politischen und möglicherweise kulturellen Erwägungen, beauftragte die Staatsmedien, das Bild der glücklichen chinesischen Frauen zu malen, um feministische Bewegungen und jede Art von kollektiven Handlungsbewegungen abzuschrecken. Die Medienlandschaft in China ist hoch kontrolliert, wo eine umfassende Zensur vorhanden ist, um Informationen zu filtern, die als empfindlich oder nachteilig für die öffentliche Moral gelten. Da Frauenrechte und Meinungsfreiheit alle auf der Agenda der Menschenrechte stehen, erleben chinesische Frauen gleichzeitige Unterdrückungen. Doch nicht viele Menschen, Männer und Frauen, sind sich dieser Katastrophe bewusst. Diese Studie untersucht, wie sich das Vertrauen in Medien (Staat und Nicht-Staat) auf die Wahrnehmung der Zensur und den Status der Frauen in China auswirkt und die Kontrolle über die politische Wirksamkeit (Binnen- und Regierungs) und die Demographie hat. Eine Online-Umfrage wurde an die chinesischen Bürger verschickt, insgesamt wurden 619 gültige Fälle gesammelt. Diese Studie lief zwei ordinale logistische Regressionen und stellte fest, dass Vertrauen in staatliche Medien ein signifikanter positiver Prädiktor für die Haltung gegenüber der Zensur und den Status der Frauen ist; In der Erwägung, dass das Vertrauen in nichtstaatliche Medien eine negative Beziehung zu der Wahrnehmung der Zensur hat, aber keinen signifikanten Einfluss auf die Zufriedenheit der Frauen auf den Status der Frauen hat. Die staatliche Wirksamkeit ist bei der Erläuterung der Zustimmung der Zensur und der Zufriedenheit bei der Zensur von großer Bedeutung.

*Schlüsselwörter:* Zensur; Feminismus; Medienvertrauen; Regierungswirkung