

The governing of femininity in socialist China

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Introduction

In this article, I examine the state-led media representations of female in early socialist China and explore how Chinese women's identities and values have been shaped and constrained by state's demands in the transition to socialist state. The literature on Chinese feminism movement or women's liberation has provided us with plenty of clues to figure out how processes of modernization have changed the gender order in China. But the evaluations towards Chinese socialist state's gender policies are always inconsistent. Compared to Capitalist countries, Chinese socialist modernization proceeds under the slogan of "gender equality" which is characterized by high female labor force participation. However, on the other hand, many scholars also contend that the implement of "gender equality" was characterized as "gender sameness" which masculinized women by forcing women to behaving like men in public realm, ignoring and even diminishing female physiological differences and personal desires(Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter,1988). As a result, the "gender equality" policies in socialist China are also criticized for imposing so much burden on women's shoulder by distorting natural femininity and shelving the problems of domestic labor. However, the propaganda of "gender sameness", which was especially vehement during the cultural revolution can't be taken as the panorama of the governing of femininity in socialist China.

In order to illuminate the social meaning of femininity which is delineated by socialist China, I employ the materials from the comic magazine "*Lianhuanhuabao*" the monthly comic-strip journal for the purpose of propaganda and mass education. Because of the extremely low literacy at the early stage of socialist China, "*Lianhuanhua*", which is characterized as a kind of exoteric and intelligible comics, becoming an appropriate vehicle to disseminate social values. For this reason, "*Lianhuanhuabao*" is also a good material to explore what kind of femininity is

expectable in socialist country. By analyzing stories about women in “*Lianhuanhuabao*”, I argue that the state-led “gender equality” in socialist China should be interpreted as a vacillating process from historical perspective.

This study also challenges the claim of “masculinization” which is continually used to stress the characteristics of female image in socialist China. In addition, this study also poses a question for how should we evaluate the gender equality process in China and What lesson can we learn from history of socialist women’s liberation.

Previous research on Chinese female representation in socialist China

As I mentioned at the beginning, scholarship on women in China has flourished in the past decades, and the researches on women in socialist China attracted many scholars in or outside China as a clue to understand how socialist state feminism changed women’s life. The studies of female representation in socialist China have focused on literary analysis or media analysis, and some of the most compelling studies have been made on analysis of representative female icons like “Iron Girls”(Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter,1988;Jin,2007; Wang,2017),or representative female characters in socialist China like the White-Haired Girl(Meng,1993;He.).As many studies were made on late socialist China ,it has been recognized that socialist womanhood was characterized by “masculinization”. However, as Wang (2017) and Hershatter(1988)mentioned, since 1980s, the representative female image in late socialist period came to be criticized as “masculinization” in the framework of anti-Maoism. Without a thorough reconsideration and understanding of the process of socialist feminism, and also because of the lack of theory building on gender, female image in socialist China turned to be loaded with negative connotation and be reduced to “gender sameness”, which led to a new discourse advocating gender differentiation since 1980s(Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter,1988).

Affected by post-modernism, there has been a renewal of interest in rectifying the assumptions regarding socialist China as a monolithic party-state and attempting to expose diverse and even contradictory visions on equality between men and

women .(Wang,2017) Although some attempts has been done to demonstrate that the female representations in socialist China couldn't been understated as political tool , there has been few studies that tried to deconstruct these female images.

I take my cue from Ashley Pettus's study about the governing of femininity in Vietnam in different periods (Ashley Pettus,2003). Ashley Pettus examines how different definitions of Vietnamese femininity was invented within nationalist discourses when Vietnam transformed from a socialist to a market economy. Although my study is mainly limited to socialist China, discussing little about post-socialist China, there are many similarities between my findings and Vietnam's case. Considering different pre-revolutionary condition in China (such as China has stricter sex segregation) and Vietnam, although the discourse of femininity is very similar, the interpretation and scholars' attention could be different.

Materials and Methods

“Lianhuanhua”, or “serial pictures”, is a type of pocket-sized illustrated stories that emerged as a popular art form in the early twentieth century Shanghai. “*This inexpensive art form of picture books attracted a larger audience base consisting of middle and lower-income readers.*”(Zhongguo Xiandai Meishu Quanji,1998) In May 1942, Maozedong, who founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, gave his famous talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Arts which produced a roadmap for literature and art in socialist country. Mao recognized that in feudal era, Literature and Art always represented the interest of ruling class and proletariat was marginalized from it. Mao declared that Literature and Arts should serve the masses especially workers, farmers and soldiers rather than a small part of bourgeois and he encouraged artists to learn from masses and represent the culture of masses who had been voiceless for a long time. The tenet of Mao's Yan'an Talks had a significant effect on Literature and Art in socialist China which also pave the way for prosper of “lianhuanhua”. In 1950, Mao conveyed the instructions to Zhou Yang, the deputy head of the Publicity Department of the central Committee of the CPC (The Communist Party of China), who was in charge of ideological propaganda after 1949:

Not only children, but also adults, illiterates and Intellectuals read the “lianhuanhua”, so why don’t we establish a publishing house and publish new “lianhuanhua”?
(Jie,2004)

In 1951, People’s Fine Arts Publishing House was established, in the same year, “lianhuanhuabao” was first published. It was suspended in July 1960 because of the economic collapse and republished in July 1973. “lianhuanhuabao” was published twice a month, the single copy price of it is 0.15 CNY, after second edition of the Renminbi was introduced in 1955. “lianhuanhuabao” was edited and produced by a team of artists (most of whom are men) organized by People’s Fine Arts Publishing House. On September 2nd 1951, People’s Daily--an official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party published an article titled “*An pictorial with a large number of readers*” to introduce “lianhuanhuabao”:

The sales of “lianhuanhuabao” has raised from 200000 copies(first issue) to 400000 copies(fourth issue) after being published. This prominent increasement showed how people loved this kind of art form and also proved that it is sensible to publish this pictorial for the purpose of educating people in a large scale and popular way...Artists should recognize that it is the pictorial which has most readers, and also the best tool for us to popularize science among masses. Therefore, artists should try their best to support this magazine and make it better. (People’s Daily,1951)

In this paper, I examined 219 issues of “lianhuanhuabao”, published from 1951 when it was launched, to 1960 when it was suspended. Naturally, considering the stagnation of the publishment in late socialist period, it is difficult to say the womanhood depicted in “lianhuanhuabao” can represent womanhood in whole socialist period. And this is exactly my point that there is no stable, persistent womanhood in socialist China, instead, womanhood was constantly reconstructed according to different demands from

state in socialist China. Allowing for this, I managed to take a close look at how women were represented under different political orders and how different ideological resources conspired in this process. The analysis includes the female characters of the stories in the magazine “*Lianhuanhuabao*”, centering not only on the text, but also on the visual representation of female in early stage of Maoist China. I begin first section with a brief introduction to Chinese women’s situation from premodern period to socialist period. Next, I selected the stories from “*lianhuanhuabao*” which were created based on social reality in socialist China and categorized the stories into several types by theme. And this work can help us to clarify how womanhood in this era was recast by catering for state’s different demands and it can also help us apprehend why there are always inconsistency underlying the norm of Socialist Chinese women. Finally, I demonstrate how the traditional patriarchy, Marxism-Leninism ideology and the inheritance of a May Fourth discourse entangled in the process of female representation by analyzing what roles the female characters played in stories and how women from different groups were portrayed. I chose “*lianhuanhuabao*” as material because of it’s popularity and it’s educational function, besides, the combination of texture and picture is also an important reason.

Chinese women from Qing to People’s Republic of China

As female image in socialist China, the “traditional Chinese women” is also an ideal type, women’s life varied considerably geographically and with class. But one of the features of women in Qing that cut across geography and class maybe the extremely limited access to public sphere. Absolutely the extent to which women's movement was restricted varied a great deal in different regions and the female seclusion in southern China seems to be laxer than northern China. But it is no denying that the limited contact to public sphere and poor network in society made Women very vulnerable. In the emergent urban environment of China’s nineteenth-century treaty ports, women found new opportunities for study and work.(Hershatter,2019)

Although only a small number, some work began to open to women, such as factory workers, nannies or domestic workers. But as the same time, women also exposed to

some new dangers from workplace or familiar environment because of the absence of law and social approval. The birth of May Fourth Movement became a powerful vehicle to carry the advocacy of women liberation into public discussion. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) inherited the views of May Fourth Movement that women should be educated, independent financially, and free to choose their spouses and made great effort to legitimize women's public activities, make arena for women to participate public activities. Women's labor was an important issue of party's agenda across socialist China.

Female characters in "lianhuanhuabao" (1951-1960)

As I mentioned before, Mao stated that art and literature must serve the masses on Yan'an Talks, it is no surprise that most stories in "lianhuanhuabao" are mainly about rural women or urban factory women. Maybe because it is prior to the "Cultural Revolution", there is little trace of so-called masculinization of female image in "lianhuanhuabao". And this also demonstrated that female representation in socialist China was not monolithic. Although the emphasis of stories changed slightly in different periods, it can be seen that the prominent purpose of these stories are affirming the values of women and empower women. I categorized these stories into several types and explored why women were portrayed in this way, referring to social environment in socialist China.

1. From victims of pre-revolutionary period to master of country

The "May Fourth Movement" I mentioned earlier praised the values of individualism and regarded the "traditional family" as an oppressive system which should be overthrown in order to make autonomous, free individual. Therefore, women, who are considered to be the most oppressed under feudal family system attracted intellectuals' concern and became increasingly visible in public discussion, but, not surprising, as victims. Although the "May Fourth Movement" had a profound impact on Chinese society, the accuse of patriarchal family system and claims of women emancipation evoked an echo among intellectuals, it hardly reached rural areas. Hence, Raising consciousness of anti-feudalism and women emancipation became an urgent

issue for CCP in order to proceed the policy of women labor mobilization. Thus, there are more stories telling how to get rid of control from feudal families and develop into an autonomous personality at the beginning years of people's republic of China(PRC).For instance, in the story titled "xiuguisao mai ma(xiuguisao selling linen)" ¹, an ignorant rural women without so much social experience struggling whether sale linen to her brother or to a co-operative established by state. First, she goes to her brother's shop where the customers and shop assistant are both men wearing traditional clothes. Her brother tells her the linen was inferior and offers a poor price. Then the women leaves her brother's shop and goes to co-operative where she is treated warmly by a female comrade. Finally, co-operative offers a very nice price and the female comrade sees her off enthusiastically "like a sister". This story presented anxiety and worry carried by women when they leaves home and goes out confronting a male-dominated society, and it sends a message skillfully that CCP has constructed a safe, equal, trustful place for women protecting them from fraud and some potential dangers. It also signaled that for women, compared to kinship connections sometimes the connections between comrades are more reliable.

¹ Lianhuanhuabao,1951,3 issue,p25-27



(xiuguisao maima,lianhuanhuabao,1951,3 issue,p26)

Besides potential dangers out of home, opposition from husbands or in-laws is also an essential factor which prevents women from participating public activities. In 1950, the New Marriage Law was promulgated, which gave women legal equality with men. The New Marriage Law prohibited feudal practices of former times such as arranged marriages, child daughters-in-law and it also legitimized widow's remarriage. The core of New Marriage Law is to weaken the family's control of marriage and devolve the decision to individual. There are many stories to disseminate "free marriage", and most protagonists in stories are women. Middle-aged women are more passive, submissive, and they usually need to be educated, encouraged, young women, however, seems more active. We should notice that, generally, rather than rebel "feudal families" by themselves, these women gain their rights by the help of

communist cadres, most of whom are men. The story titled “fengbo (storm)²” narrated a progressive girl helped her widow mother gain the right of remarriage by seeking help from government. Young daughter who represents socialist new person contrasted with the mother who are the victim of feudal family. Facing the oppression from head of family, the mother chose to die(the most common way traditional women choose to resist “feudal power”)whereas the daughter convinced people by socialist thinking and New Marriage Law, what’s more, her initiative and spirit of revolt .However, not all stories encouraged women to divorce and to pursue free love. Only the stories in which women suffered extremely accuse or desperate widow without mother-in-law to care ends with women’s divorce. Widow in the story“xin (letter) ³” has a different end. The protagonist “Zhilan” is a young woman living with mother-in-law and her husband sacrificed in the Korean war. “Zhilan” doesn’t tell her mother-in-law about her husband’s die, instead, she takes on most chores and write letters with husbands’ tone to her mother-in-law in order to comfort her. In last scene, her mother-in-law know the truth, they hang together and decide to live toughly together. We can see although women’s free will of marriage was encouraged in socialist China, it doesn’t mean women can divorce as long as they want, the “appropriate divorce” shouldn’t violate general moral code, such as filial piety, and sometimes, the moral code is stricter for soldiers’ families. We can say that the policy to free women from unwilling marriage is a compromise with traditional value.



(the head of family and the widow mother)

² fengbo,lianhuanhuabao,1954,73issue,p8-14

³ xin,lianhuanhuabao,1957,158issue,p7-10

fengbo,lianhuanhuabao,1954,73issue,p10)



(the young daughter

fengbo,lianhuanhuabao,1954,73issue,p13)



(Zhilan and her mother-in-law

xin,lianhuanhuabao,1957,158issue,p10)

2. Latecomer of public sphere

Although women's labor was crucial to household survival before PRC was established, much of this was out of public sight and was not considered as an occupation. Thus, in a sense, women are latecomer of public sphere in socialist China, and it is inevitable that they had to confront some circumstance they had never experienced before. Sometimes women were excluded from some occupation or belittled by their male counterparts because women especially rural women were easily regarded as backward, ignorant and weak. Sometimes women were prevented from some filed because of superstition, for instance, in some areas, letting women go to sea is unpropitious. Considering this, it is unsurprising that there are many stories

introducing examples how women doing well in some traditional male work. The protagonists of these stories are very active, they had a strong will, very diligent and optimistic. Confronting the ridicule or contempt from male counterparts, they don't get angry, instead, they work very hard to prove their capability. These stories showed the possibilities that women are not inferior to men and they can do well even though others think it's impossible. We should notice that these women don't be successful all by themselves, mostly, they are under CCP's support and encouragement, or by instructions from male mentors. The point to observe is that so-called "masculinization" of women is not evident in these stories. Not only that, some stories even stress some "women's traits" to praise protagonists' s outstanding performance. The story titled "xinzhongguo de diyige nǚtiaosanyuan (the first female parachutist in PRC)⁴", described how a rural woman grew up to a qualified parachutist. Instead of praising the masculinities, this story emphasizes female parachutist's proficiency and meticulousness, which is always regarded as traditional female traits.

However, there are also some changes after 1954, Before 1954, The stories about women's activities in traditional male realm in "lianhuanhuabao" focused on narrating how women proved themselves by persistent efforts. After that, some stories about competition between women and men emerged. And this kind of stories increased after the "Great Leap Forward" began. "Great Leap Forward" was an economic and social campaign led by CCP, in which gender segregation in occupation was broken extensively and many women began to flock to heavy industry where physical work is a pressing need. The most emblematical story is "tieguniang (iron girls) " which was usually considered as a powerful female icon appearing in 1963,actually,has emerged in "lianhuanhuabao" in 1959. In the story titled " wuge tieguniang(five iron girls)⁵", five young girls grew up in a small Shandong village, where the sandy wasteland affected people's life heavily. With the help of a branch secretary of CCP, the five girls established a brigade to improve the sandy wasteland. At the same time, a brigade

⁴ xinzhongguo de diyige nǚtiaosanyuan,lianhuanhuabao,1952,27issue,p16-19

⁵ wugetieguniang,lianhuanhuabao,1959,188issue,p15-18

consists of young boys launched a competition with girls and girls always moved ahead of boys. Finally, they made great contribution to their village and state, and be commended on a county board meeting. Similar narrative can also be found in other stories after “Great Leap Forward”, such as “mianhuaguniang(girls growing cotton) ⁶”, “duozhuangyuan (contending for best) ⁷”. Rather than glorify to which extent these girls behave like a man, these stories talks more about their creativity and diligence and sends a message that the labels of “backward” “inferior” which has been attached to women for a long time are not unchangeable, women can even do better than men if they receive equal resource.



(xinzhongguo de diyige nǚtiaosanyuan,lianhuanhuabao,1952,27issue,p19)

⁶ mianhuaguniang,lianhuanhuabao,1959,187issue,p15-18

⁷ duozhuangyuan,lianhuanhuabao,1959,205issue,p21-22



(wugetieguniang.lianhuanhuabao,1959,188issue,p16)

3. Women with less access to public sphere

Not every woman has chance to acquire a formal occupation. As Jiang(2001) stated,1949-1957 can be seen as a “incomplete employment stage” which means, for women, especially urban women ,acquiring a formal job was still restricted. Although most stories are about women peasants or female workers in “lianhuanhuabao”, there are also a few examples showed how to be a decent socialist woman without formal occupation. The protagonists of these stories can be classified into two types: soldiers’ families and workers’ families. Soldiers’ families are always respected for their sons/husband’s contribution, and therefore, needing care from society. Thus, some stories praised people who showed much care and enthusiasm for soldiers’ families. At

the same time, there are also some qualities bound up with soldier's families. Soldiers' mothers are usually described as supporter of their sons by making military coats or donating money to state. Soldiers' wives or intended wives always manage all family affairs of husbands' family and take good care of husbands' parents to support their husbands. Sometimes, they are also responsible for persuading their husbands' parents to approve of their husbands joining the war.

Workers' families usually refer to workers' wives, identified as "housewives", who are easily associated with "uneducated" "backward" and "negative". Before 1957, housewives generally appeared with the theme of "literacy campaign" or participated in unpaid social work or report reactionary. Housewives were encouraged to improve their political consciousness and literacy and to participate some social work, however, under the condition that they have managed family well. The story titled "dudawei jie xifu(dudawei meets his wife)⁸" described a man who hesitated to let his wife live with him because his wife is illiterate. At his colleagues' suggestion, he asked his wife to come and let her study with other housewives in the neighborhood. But he is discontented that his wife is remiss about cooking because of study. This is known by "jiashuwei yuanhui(family committee)", a mass organization established to deal with workers' family issues. The family committee sent a commissar to educate her. This commissar said

"you should learn to manage time and housework, you shouldn't let dudawei (protagonist's name) make dinner after a hard day's work"⁹

In comparison with working women, women who has worse access to work were demanded to study to keep a progress thought, take good care of families and ensure that their husbands can concentrate on production. When "Great Leap Forward" began, the stories about housewives changed to describe how they work hard in various field after being liberated from housework.

⁸ dudawei jixifu, lian huan huabao, 1953, 49 issue, p8-10

⁹ dudawei jixifu, lian huan huabao, 1953, 49 issue, p10



(dudaweiijexifu,lianhuanhuabao,1953,49issue,p10)

4. Double standard between public sphere and private sphere

It is not to be denied that representation of socialist women played an important role in getting rid of stigma of women. However, we shouldn't look over the fact that these representations are established on compromise with traditional moral value. I called this "double standard between public sphere and private sphere", which means, women are encouraged to compete with men in public sphere, but are suggested to be submissive in private sphere as long as the head of family's behavior is not against socialist moral. On the other hand, only when elders or their husbands go against socialist moral or have a "backward thought" they can resist them by a socialist language or support from CCP. Mostly, women's resistance to family, both natal family and husband's family, is always moderate, and the ends that families are moved by woman's virtue or convinced by socialist moral are invariable. In this situation, women

are more like a spokesman of state to disseminate socialist moral rather than an individual who fights for one's own right. In the story titled "Baotonghua"¹⁰, a woman called "Baotonghua" who are in an arranged married were always beat by her husband and mother-in law. Then, she was informed that women and men are equal in new society by a female cadre and she moved out from husband's house began to live by herself with her little son. Being affected by socialist education, Bao's husband realized his wrong, and he is forgiven by Bao. Someday, Bao's mother in law fell ill. Hearing that, Bao went to her home immediately and took care of her without complaint. Her mother-in-law moved by her tolerance and they live together again. In another story titled "yimian xiaobaiqi de fengbo (a storm caused by a white flag)"¹¹, a woman who is a vice leader of co-operative criticized his husband because he didn't work on the land patiently. However, her mother-in-law criticized her:

"Although the public affair is important, you shouldn't let man lose face!"¹²

As stated above, although women can challenge traditional gender hierarchy in public sphere, when private affairs are involved, things become complicated. Women's femininity were torn in two parts, one part was subordinated to state, one part was subordinated to family. The stories in "lianhuahuabao" described that women erased gender prejudice by excelling at various of fields, and in some stories, women even become leader, and guide their male counterparts to manage production. However, as I mentioned before, women can hardly make success without the help of cadres of state or a male mentor, and what can be seen as a success is also decided by state, usually in the form of public commendation ceremony convened by state's department.

¹⁰ Baotonghua,lianhuahuabao,1953,43issue,p4-11

¹¹ yimianxiaobaiqidefengbo,lianhuahuabao,1954,84issue,p11-12

¹² yimianxiaobaiqidefengbo,lianhuahuabao,1954,84issue,p12



(Baotonghua,lianhuanhuabao,1953,43issue,p5)



(Baotonghua,lianhuanhuabao,1953,43issue,p11)



(yimianxiaobaiqidefengbo,lianhuanhuabao,1954,84issue,p12)

Conclusion

1. Reconstruction of femininity in early socialist period

So far, we have seen that Chinese femininity was reconfigured remarkably in different

needs. Since the early years of PRC, women as oppressed victims of feudal family system were still the center of discourse, which continued the discourse of May Fourth story (Gail Hershatter,2019). After that, women who are active in various field were introduced widely as a model, to encourage women work hard and prove that they are not inferior to men. After “Great Leap Forward”, as more and more women flooded into heavy industry, which would be considered nontraditional work for women, the theme related to competition between men and women increased, and women are always portrayed as winner because of their diligence, strong will and creativity. From this process, we can see that the discourse inherited from May Fourth movement fade, instead, Marxism discourse became strong increasingly. Although not evident, traditional values, such as “filial piety”, “women manage inner realm” are concealed in normal practice, naturally as a tacit contract.

2. Contradictory femininity and postponed gender equality

Considering that before PRC was established, women’s activities were closely bound up with family, the examples telling how to get rid of family’s control with CCP’s help actually provide an access for women to public sphere, especially for low-class women, and this also make it possible that women can take advantage of help from state for their own interests. In addition, as Gail Hershatter(2019,155) stated:

“Whether or not women had bound feet, whether they worked indoors—the preferred location for reasons of respectability—or in the fields, rural women’s labor was crucial to household survival.”

“But it did not necessarily raise their status or loosen the control of family authority.”(Gail Hershatter,2019,155) Because their labor was not recognized as personal income, even though their labor can be exchanged into money in market ,it still invisible in patriarchy family. In socialist China, state “liberated” women by visualizing their labor and giving their labor social meanings and legitimacy. Glorifying women’s labor also plays an important part in getting rid of prejudicial labels attached

to women, providing women a discourse to resist. On the other hand, as Ashley Pettus (2003,9) argued:

“Socialist states, despite their ideological commitments to ‘gender equality’, have tended to replace one form of patriarchy with another.”

By “liberating” women and compromising with family, state profits most from this process and this also made further gender equality difficult.

3. Rethinking masculinization

Generally, the widely discussed masculinization of femininity in socialist China has two aspects. One refers to masculinization of female image, such as mannish-looking in propaganda posters. The other means that measuring women’s worth by men’s standard, for instance, making women do same physical labor as men without considering their physical features. There is little trace of masculinized female image in “lianhuanhuabao”, even though the stories of women in traditionally masculine fields increased after “Great Leap Forward”, it still needs to be discussed that whether it can be used as an excuse to blame socialist women’s liberation in China. As Gail Hershatter(1988) and Wang(2017)stated, after market reform, masculinization of femininity in socialist China began to be condemned as “ultra-leftist imposition of gender equality” (Wang 2017) by some scholars and women became victims of history again. In this new discourse, these scholars suggested restoring gender differentiation and reconstructing female standard based on natural femininity, but without discussion about what is natural femininity, they used a discourse of biological determinism, imposed traditional female traits on women again.

What caused this sharp division between socialist women’s liberation and the views of scholars mentioned above? The lack of gender theory can be an important factor. As my study showed, although women were assumed that they are not inferior to men in public sphere, reproductive labor imposed on women, as if a kind of biology destiny, had never been questioned, or, were not allowed to be raised as a question. Indeed, in socialist China, it was hard to voice criticisms about gender disparity, because this

kind of thought maybe attacked as bourgeois feminism which places a higher value on individual interests rather than collective interests. Therefore, even if someone wanted to raise this question, the ideological resource can be used was very restricted, and this also constrained the possibility to construct gender theory, or communicate with foreign scholars in that period. The concept of gender was introduced to China in 1995, on Fourth World Conference on Women ,which can explain why the discourse suggesting gender differentiation prevailed in 1980s. What we should do is to explore what socialist women’s liberation left to us with appropriate gender theory and to hear the real voice from people who experienced it, rather than repack that history with the word of “masculinization”.

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Resources

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