

# Gender Conflict in China in the Context of New Media Is the Vision Represented by Yang Li a New Model of Chinese Feminism?

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## ABSTRACT

Feminism has evolved over history. This evolution has been found to play a significant role in the shaping of Chinese feminism. Conflict theory, a direct opposite of functionalism, is the backbone on which the modern Chinese and feminism, in general, is based. In general conflict theory elaborates on the various parts of society that contribute to ongoing inequality. Unlike functionalism, it is regarded as a hallmark of a progressive society. From the conflict theory, the feminism theory developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this case, gender inequality is the main cause of the conflict.

In recent years, many female activists have come up in China's central stage to air out their bitterness on the rapid increase in gender inequality and sexism. The young women have been protesting against sexual harassment in public transport, in schools, and even at workplaces. In schools, the young women claimed that they were not admitted automatically to their male counterparts. Most young ladies feel that they would instead look for money and be rich than having an abusive and violent relationship with a man. As a result, the current generation of women in China have decided not to depend on men to speak for them; they have decided to come out and speak for themselves, fight for their rights on their own. When they speak on their own, the women feel they will be heard, and action is taken compared to when they leave everything to the male gender.

Different organizations have decided to promote this step that the women in China have taken. These organizations have decided to make women advertise for them, making them famous and developing them to be voices of reason in society. Prominent activists like Yang Li have taken this to a higher stage, resulting in different ideas on modern-day feminism. This takes us back to history to see how modern Chinese feminists differ from the ancient cultural-based analogies.

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Functionalism, Conflict Theory*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Conflict theory and functionalism the root of feminism*

Conflict theory brings a deeper understanding of modern feminism. It appears to differ from functionalism in many different ways. The irony and paradox are that they seem to originate from the same base and concept. Conflict theory states that the society or any organization works so that every individual participant and their associated group struggle to maximize their cost-benefit ratio; this inevitably contributes significantly to the change that occurs in society. Despite being very difficult from each other, the

two theories have originated from the Industrial Revolution, with enormous contributions from Karl Marx (1818–1883) and his companion, Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). The two academicians differed significantly from the prior sociologists who were skeptical of the rapid change in society. Marx and Engels believed in industrialization, and they did not believe it was the core etiology of mass violence; instead, they had an alternative explanation of the same. They exploited the conditions they felt were the root cause of the mass violence; they concluded that the society capitalists were the real catalysts responsible for these conditions. Instead of being skeptical of the disintegration of social order and socialization that mass violence represented, they instead had a positive thought

of revolutionary violence being crucial in eliminating capitalism, misery, and the low socioeconomic status they appreciated. The concept of this ideology is that these issues are inevitable in the current society. We must integrate them with us for our benefit (Marx, 1867/1906; Marx & Engels, 1848/1962).

Eagles was not a big fan of capitalism. The conflict theory of sociology was later generated based on the hard work the two put on paper. According to the two, the society in any set was divided into two socioeconomic statuses based on wealth which is a marker of the amount of property owned by these individuals. In a capitalist society, there are the owners of the production chain and those who provide labor. In this setting, those who own the production are referred to as the bourgeoisie; this class is considered the high socioeconomic class and often considers themselves the ruling class. On the other end, the production of products is regarded as the laborers and is referred to as the proletariat or working class. These cohorts are the lower class and have little to own, if any; they are usually bossed, exploited, and oppressed by the owners, the bourgeoisie. This inevitable socioeconomic class creates an automatic conflict of interest for survival. Simply put, the bourgeoisie is interested in retaining the control of society. At the same time, the proletariat's interest lies in the bottom-up approach, which refers to the rising and toppling of the bourgeoisie to create egalitarianism in the society. According to Marx and Engels, in the setting of a capitalist society, the nature of the social setting creates a structural contradiction that inevitably generates conflict. In this society, those in power do anything to maximize profits; therefore, profit is the main thing. To maximize profits, these cohorts need to reduce the production cost as much as possible, involving very low wages and poor working conditions. This core principle of capitalism, put forward by Marx and Engels, eventually triggers the rise among workers because of their class consciousness or the awareness of the reasons for their exploitation. This consciousness and the need to raise the ladder that influences their rebel against the bourgeoisie to eliminate the exploitation and oppression they suffer.

As the years passed, the concepts proposed by Marx and Engels on the socioeconomic class relation and the nature of capitalism and have immensely affected the economic, social, and political theory and also triggered revolutionaries globally. However, the concept of proletariats triggering Revolution basing on the nature of capitalism has not been evidenced supported by history.

For example, a scenario where workers develop some degree of resistance to the higher socioeconomic class due to some degree of consciousness has never been appreciated in the United States, according to Marx and Engels. This is because the community in the

united states is considered just by everyone irrespective of socioeconomic status. Thus the generation of class consciousness has been minimized by various aspects of American society and ideology, therefore, playing a keen role in mitigating the Revolution foreseen by Marx and Engels. Despite this shortcoming, today's conflict theory is based on their fundamental view of conflict arising from asymmetrical positions held by society members. This theory elaborates that there are different interests in the society as a result of different groups which are in different socioeconomic class. The concept of racism causing chaos has been attributed to some aspect of this theory. Other implicated differences include; gender conflicts, ethnicity, and economic structures.

### *1.2 Concept of the feminism*

Different contexts bring about this theory; gender inequality is centered on women being subordinate sex in many dimensions of political, social, and economic life. In these cases, the women are equated as the minority group in society, and their efforts to raise the ladder evoke conflicts [5].

In contrast, Marxist feminists argue that this inequality results from the rise of capitalism, like different socioeconomic classes, making women more dependent on men for economic support. The current presentation and discussions surrounding Yang li are synonymous with the Marxist feminism concept. She represents the rising ladies as developing independence and reducing their vulnerability to the ever oppressive males. Finally, radical feminists view the idea as more global and not just dependent on the capitalist concept.

Feminism in China refers to the group of ancient movements and principles targeted at readdressing women's roles and positions in China. Ideally, feminism can promote women's rights in society [5]. In present-day China, feminism is intimately connected with socialism and class issues. Feminism is about equality in all sexes regarding political, social, and economic matters. Feminism is where women feel that they are not treated well in society and try to fight for their rights.

Both men and women should be treated equally from birth until adulthood. They should be allowed equal opportunity in schools and at work. Society, where people are treated equally, has fewer crimes than those where one gender is seen as superior to the other. In situations where women are seen as inferior, their male counterparts who don't care about feminism mistreat them and assault them. Women in China have been trying to air out their views on feminism, but the society in china has been locking down upon them. For any woman who attempted to raise her voice about feminism, the community will always fight her back. A

society needs both sexes; the male needs the female, and the female needs the male. Human beings were created differently with different abilities for completion. For instance, women play a significant role in society.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 *Feminism in china***

In 21st century Wei Lighting have led activists to air out their bitterness on the rapid increase in gender inequality and sexism. The young women have been protesting against sexual harassment in public transport, in schools, and even at workplaces. In schools, the young women claimed that they were not admitted automatically to their male counterparts [3]. The young activists feel that they were not represented in the fight against gender inequality and issues to do with feminism; this has propelled them to come out in their large number to use different media to protest and let the world know about what they are feeling. The young women have been growing up with big expectations from the society as their parents have not been telling them how the situation is out there, they have been showing them a lot of care and love, and this made them expect the same. In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party was incited by the Marxist –Leninist theory and practice to develop a society with no classes by ensuring no private property ownership. This party also promoted gender equality and ensured that women were mobilized to participate in public growth and development to achieve equal political and economic status. This party brought a significant transformation in how women were viewed in society at that time; even society still faces some gender inequality [5].

During the Maoist era, "women's work" was controlled, disrupting open and crucial discussions about gender [5]. In early 1978 the Chinese Communist Party and state repositioned their focus toward economic revamping and completely doing away with the Maoist approaches and principles [5]. When the CCP abandoned the Maoist approaches, the classes came up again. Deng Xiaoping said that a section of people should get rich; this statement raised a concern. People wanted to understand who those people were to be rich before others. Prior study findings has shown that gender inequality started a long time ago in China, where feminism was fought (Tong, 2009).

In China, female gender has been on the rise to equal their male counterparts. In recent days, Chinese ladies prefer being single and without a child than entering a marriage where they are not satisfied and full of conflicts; they would instead look for money and be rich than having an abusive and violent relationship with a man [5]. When you go to media today, you will see how women from China have flooded the media, specifically the internet; they have done this by posting

entertainment programs and many news items. The Chinese women are now entirely in media seeking attention, seeking to be heard. They feel that men have failed them by not giving them a chance to express themselves or show their abilities. As a result, the current generation of women in china have decided not to depend on men to speak for them; they have decided to come out and speak for themselves, fight for their rights on their own. When they speak on their own, the women feel they will be heard, and action is taken compared to when they leave everything to the male gender. Different organizations e.g. All-women china federation have decided to promote this step that the women in china have taken. These organizations have decided to make women advertise for them, making them famous and developing them to be voices of reason in society [5].

During the 4th United nation world conference on women held in Beijing, Hilary Clinton declared confidently and in public that women's rights are also human rights [4]. In September 2015, China celebrated twenty years since the 4th united Nations conference was held in their country. The president of china repeated Hilary Clinton's words and confirmed his government is committed to ensuring that women are developed with no gender inequality [6]. The women found this ironic since they were still faced with several societal hindrances, including harassing and sending the feminist to prison, discrimination when it comes to education and employment [4]. In 2015, five feminist activists were detained for planning to commemorate international women's day [1]. In China, a woman above 25 years and unmarried is discriminated against and given the name leftover; this was very embarrassing to women that fall under this category. Women have been denied jobs merely because they are not married and they are above 25 years. In China, most women are under men in job positions [5]. The male occupies the best positions in offices and various organizations [4]. In China, activism for gender equality is very dangerous; it can lead to long-time imprisonment. Gender equality activists in China face many threats and obstacles against their lives and jobs; it only needs confidence and sacrifice [5]. Many beauty companies have come up with campaigns to help counter discrimination and gender inequality experienced in china. An example of these campaigns is the change destiny campaign by high-end beauty brand SK- II established to help those stigmatized by men because they are unmarried. The campaigns used were emotional and inspirational stories to help them come out of the stigmatization. These campaigns were also used to equip the women with what it takes for them to be independent [5]. When women hear these motivational narratives, they change their perception about marriage and start to work towards developing themselves other than concentrating and depending on men. The

celebrities and the ordinary people with experience usually tell these narratives.

Yang li is famously referred to as the punchline queen, and her presentation of modern feminism has brought many controversies. Being one of the well-established comedians in the country, she has constantly used her stage to pass some message as far as feminism is concerned. She has continuously presented controversies characterized by wild media responses. She has been portrayed as constantly testing men's limits by directly or indirectly pointing fingers. This has shown the recent China women as robust. On the verge of ascending up the ladder, phenomena have resulted in conflict on numerous occasions, as described above by the Marxist feminist [5]. Basing on her presentation, the biological difference now doesn't matter much. It is the role assigned in society that matters alone. In her presentation, she has constantly been backed by several ladies; however, most of the males have had a contrary opinion. Her comments, "do men even have limits," illustrate how she triggers criticism from the population. However, her moves have been seen as beneficial in shedding light by the oppressed ladies, despite other sociologists arguing that it is not the right way to pass a message and bridge the gap between the haves and the have nots. However, her advocacy has been characterized as man-hating [4].

Her form of Chinese feminism is presented as a new model for China. The rise of women, financial stability, and eagerness to control things constantly triggers conflicts. The apparent attacks of the other gender other than negotiated democracy presented by Yang li characterize the new Chinese woman and how they can stand for themselves. Her presentation further describes feminism as a workforce that requires a collaborative effort to eliminate oppressing men [4].

The new cultural phenomena have been tipped to represent the current Chinese women. Through her sense of humor, the constant attack of men kindly presents this, but the message is passed. Most of her supporters defend her and allude that the critics are too sensitive; however, the majority of women supporting her tells you that it goes beyond comedy.

## ***2.2 Based on compared to previous culture and the Western feminism***

Yang li endorsement, there is a marked difference between modern feminism in china and that in the western world; in that, Chinese feminism has never had a concept in the history of assuming that male and female are natural categories. Instead, in China, the culture's root culture assumes that the man and the woman are socially constructed structures rather than natural figures. Pan Suiming, a Chinese sexologist and sociologist, once argued using the constructionist

framework that "sexuality" was never be portrayed as a "biological instinct" in prehistoric China. In its natural form, sexuality does not exist. Therefore sexuality can only be demonstrated in a theoretical framework of cultural interpretation and social construction. There has been a clear difference in terms of concept between the west and China. First and foremost, the preexisted notions of different genders are based on the west concept of biological sex constructed on the scientific discourse; on the other hand, based on Yang li presentation, China illustrates a different concept. The biological sex base on the science defining gender has never been a big issue as far as the traditional Chinese culture is concerned. In this setting, gender is defined by the societal role; and the role a specific gender play has continuously been crucial over the years in the history of china.

Moreover, there has been a big paradox to leading the previous feminism movement in china; men have been at the forefront of their female compatriots [3]. Contrastingly, in the western world, it the same women that push the agenda of feminism while males are seen to be adamant in most cases. This has, however, been adopted by the push the current Chinese women have presented, as endorsed by Yang li. Unlike Yang Li's presentation of Chinese feminism, which begins with policy development and enactment, the Western feminism movement is initiated from the grassroots by the basic level activists. The concept of policy evolvement includes the ideology of the Communist Party during the Revolution in the mid-'90s, which argued that equal social participation and labor was essential to progress the prosperity of the nation. However, the emergence of radical scholars who have highlighted that gender equality was never a main issue in the early stated policies and the suggested idea of "equal labor" still illustrated a hierarchical nature of the gendered division of labor [4]. For instance, one of the most famous campaigns, the iron girl, occurring during the Communist Revolution, advertised and promoted social participation and equal labor in women. Initially, women were mobilized and organized to participate in the traditional male occupations to compensate for the shortage of labor caused by the outgoing men's labor to work as a reserve labor force and not to create gender equality. In most cases, the main aim is to make women do men's work". The local administrators have used this as a pragmatic choice when the work could not be handled by the men alone [3].

Historically feminism is analyzed differently in china in the sense that there is little focus on gender; on the other hand, Western feminism contrasts from China in that it focuses a lot on gender. Some scholars agree with the sense of translatability and transferability in Chinese feminism, while others have a contrary opinion. Translatability and transferability refer to mixing Western feminism with Chinese feminism. Support for

this concept is mostly an ideal for western feminism, but Chinese feminists like Wang Zheng also support disseminating the two-word phrase that Chinese culture uses for gender. However, based on the evolved feminism presented by Yang li, most modern Chinese women have adopted this concept. In Chinese culture, the phrase "*Shehui xingbie*" is not similar to the English word, "gender." For inner understanding, the word is split into two; "Shehui" meaning social, whilst xingbie meaning gender/sex. The phrase points up the constructed gender roles in China, which many Chinese feminists have analyzed. Some Chinese feminists play with this phrase to be a way of shearing from their roles in their culture. Those who disagree with this type of feminism have attributed it to the assimilation of western culture [3].

On the other hand, feminists such as Li Xiaojiang do not; they believe that transferability and translatability are becoming the concern for feminism in china and its location in global feminism. Additionally, the presentation by filmmaker Li Yu that Chinese feminism requires a softer and quieter push than the face of Western feminism. The quiet and more subdued Chinese feminists are seen as "anti-feminist" by many Western feminists. This can be attributed to a lack of understanding of history and Chinese culture. These ideals are based on 30 years of post-Maoist China.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Chinese feminism has proved to have a rich history tracing back to the evolution of the conflict and functionalism theory. There have been different concepts by different academicians, but in general, chine feminism has been long focused on the culture other than biological sex. Additionally, In China, the male and the female gender are opposed to each other. In recent days, you will find the young Chinese lady saying they would rather be single and without a child than entering a marriage where they are not satisfied and full of conflicts. As a result, the current generation of women in china have decided not to depend on men to speak for them; they have decided to come out and speak for themselves, fight for their rights on their own. Finally, the endorsement by Yang li's intel defines the expression of the current Chinese women.

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